

Complete Works of

Henry David Thoreau

DELPHI CLASSICS

Series Three

The Complete Works of

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

(1817-1862)



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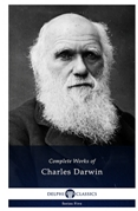
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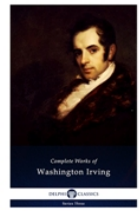
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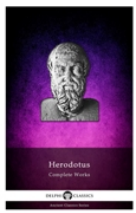


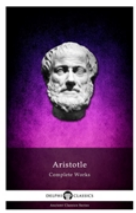


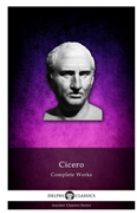


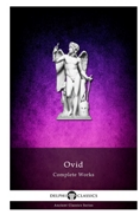


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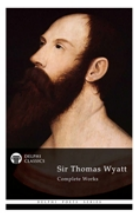






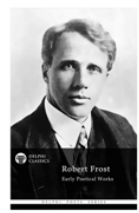
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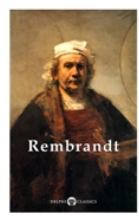
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The Complete Works of

HENRY DAVID THOREAU



By Delphi Classics, 2013

The Books



341 Virginia Road, Concord, Massachusetts — Henry David Thoreau's birthplace. He was born to modest New England parents John Thoreau, a pencil maker, and Cynthia Dunbar.



A sketch of the birthplace in 1897



The house in the late nineteenth century



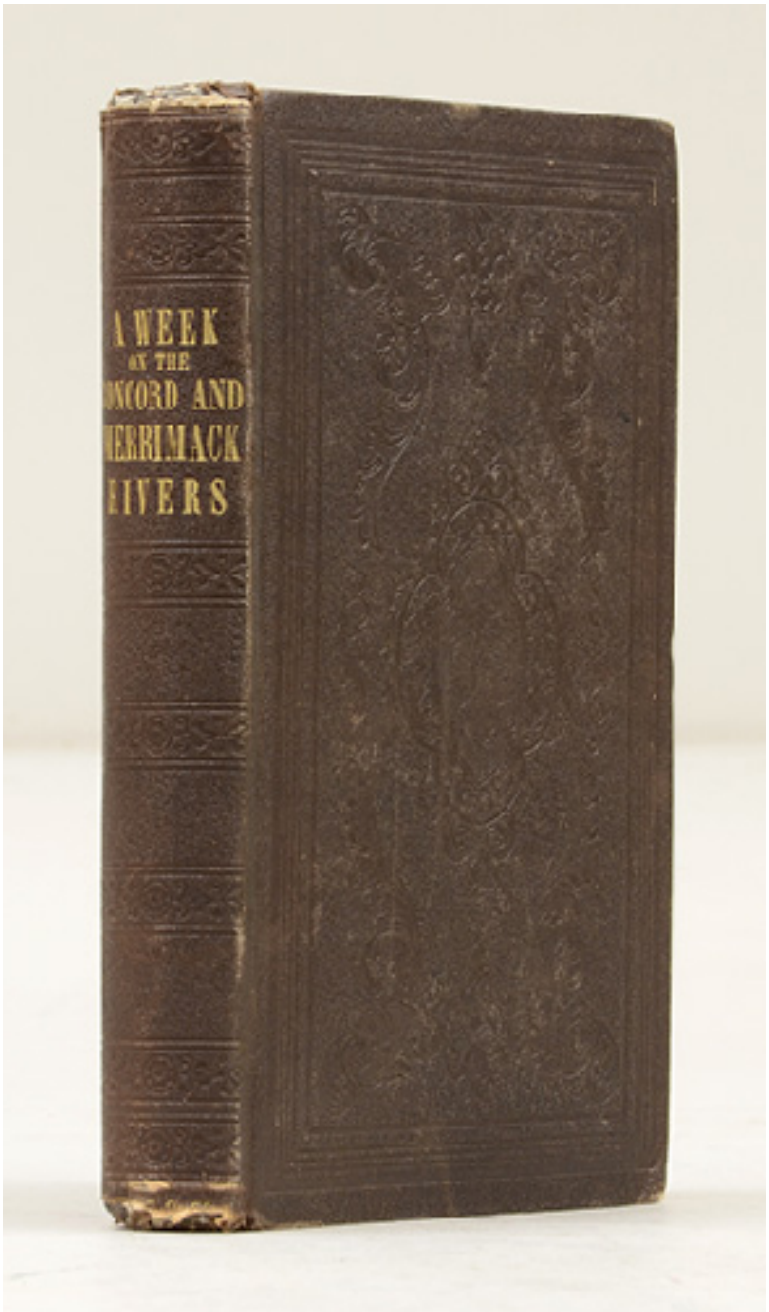
Thoreau as a young man

A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS



First published in 1849, this book is ostensibly the narrative of a boat trip from Concord, Massachusetts to Concord, New Hampshire and back, which Thoreau had taken with his brother John in 1839. As John had died from tetanus in 1842, Thoreau wrote the book as a tribute to his memory. The book's first draft was completed while the author was living at Walden Pond. Upon completing the work, Thoreau was unable to find a publisher willing to take it on and so had it published at his own expense. Few copies of the book sold and Thoreau was left with several hundred extra copies, finding himself in debt.

While the book may appear to be a travel journal, broken up into chapters for each day, with some literal description of the journey from Concord, Massachusetts, down the Concord River to the Middlesex Canal, much of the text is in the form of digressions by the Harvard-educated author on diverse topics such as religion, poetry, and history. Thoreau relates these topics back to his own life experiences, often framed by the rapid changes taking place in his native New England during the Industrial Revolution, many of these being changes that Thoreau laments.


A WEEK
ON THE
ONCORD AND
ERRIMACK
IVERS

The first edition, of which less than 300 sold of the 1,000 copies printed

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A WEEK

ON THE

CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS.

BY

HENRY D. THOREAU.

BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGE:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
NEW YORK: GEORGE P. PUTNAM. PHILADELPHIA: LINDSAY AND BLACKISTON. LONDON: JOHN CHAPMAN.
1849.

The original title page

Where’er thou sail’st who sailed with me,
Though now thou climbest loftier mounts,
And fairer rivers dost ascend,
Be thou my Muse, my Brother — .

I am bound, I am bound, for a distant shore,
By a lonely isle, by a far Azore,
There it is, there it is, the treasure I seek,
On the barren sands of a desolate creek.

I sailed up a river with a pleasant wind,
New lands, new people, and new thoughts to find;
Many fair reaches and headlands appeared,
And many dangers were there to be feared;
But when I remember where I have been,
And the fair landscapes that I have seen,
Thou seemest the only permanent shore,
The cape never rounded, nor wandered o'er.

Fluminaque obliquis cinxit declivia ripis;
Quae, diversa locis, partim sorbentur ab ipsa;
In mare perveniunt partim, campoque recepta
Liberioris aquae, pro ripis litora pulsant.
Ovid, Met. I. 39

He confined the rivers within their sloping banks,
Which in different places are part absorbed by the earth,
Part reach the sea, and being received within the plain
Of its freer waters, beat the shore for banks.

CONCORD RIVER.

”Beneath low hills, in the broad interval
Through which at will our Indian rivulet
Winds mindful still of sannup and of squaw,
Whose pipe and arrow oft the plough unburies,
Here, in pine houses, built of new-fallen trees,
Supplanters of the tribe, the farmers dwell.”
Emerson.

The Musketaquid, or Grass-ground River, though probably as old as the Nile or Euphrates, did not begin to have a place in civilized history, until the fame of its grassy meadows and its fish attracted settlers out of England in 1635, when it received the other but kindred name of *Concord* from the first plantation on its banks, which appears to have been commenced in a spirit of peace and harmony. It will be Grass-ground River as long as grass grows and water runs here; it will be Concord River only while men lead peaceable lives on its banks. To an extinct race it was grass-ground, where they hunted and fished, and it is still perennial grass-ground to Concord farmers, who own the Great Meadows, and get the hay from year to year. “One branch of it,” according to the historian of Concord, for I love to quote so good authority, “rises in the south part of Hopkinton, and another from a pond and a large cedar-swamp in Westborough,” and flowing between Hopkinton and Southborough, through Framingham, and between Sudbury and Wayland, where it is sometimes called Sudbury River, it enters Concord at the south part of the town, and after receiving the North or Assabeth River, which has its source a little farther to the north and west, goes out at the northeast angle, and flowing between Bedford and Carlisle, and through Billerica, empties into the Merrimack at Lowell. In Concord it is, in summer, from four to fifteen feet deep, and from one hundred to three hundred feet wide, but in the spring freshets, when it overflows its banks, it is in some places nearly a mile wide. Between Sudbury and Wayland the

meadows acquire their greatest breadth, and when covered with water, they form a handsome chain of shallow vernal lakes, resorted to by numerous gulls and ducks. Just above Sherman's Bridge, between these towns, is the largest expanse, and when the wind blows freshly in a raw March day, heaving up the surface into dark and sober billows or regular swells, skirted as it is in the distance with alder-swamps and smoke-like maples, it looks like a smaller Lake Huron, and is very pleasant and exciting for a landsman to row or sail over. The farm-houses along the Sudbury shore, which rises gently to a considerable height, command fine water prospects at this season. The shore is more flat on the Wayland side, and this town is the greatest loser by the flood. Its farmers tell me that thousands of acres are flooded now, since the dams have been erected, where they remember to have seen the white honeysuckle or clover growing once, and they could go dry with shoes only in summer. Now there is nothing but blue-joint and sedge and cut-grass there, standing in water all the year round. For a long time, they made the most of the driest season to get their hay, working sometimes till nine o'clock at night, sedulously paring with their scythes in the twilight round the hummocks left by the ice; but now it is not worth the getting when they can come at it, and they look sadly round to their wood-lots and upland as a last resource.

It is worth the while to make a voyage up this stream, if you go no farther than Sudbury, only to see how much country there is in the rear of us; great hills, and a hundred brooks, and farm-houses, and barns, and haystacks, you never saw before, and men everywhere, Sudbury, that is Southborough men, and Wayland, and Nine-Acre-Corner men, and Bound Rock, where four towns bound on a rock in the river, Lincoln, Wayland, Sudbury, Concord. Many waves are there agitated by the wind, keeping nature fresh, the spray blowing in your face, reeds and rushes waving; ducks by the hundred, all uneasy in the surf, in the raw wind, just ready to rise, and now going off with a clatter and a whistling like riggers straight for Labrador, flying against the stiff gale with reefed wings, or else circling round first, with all their paddles briskly moving, just over the surf, to reconnoitre you before they leave these parts; gulls wheeling overhead, muskrats swimming for dear life, wet and cold, with no

fire to warm them by that you know of; their labored homes rising here and there like haystacks; and countless mice and moles and winged titmice along the sunny windy shore; cranberries tossed on the waves and heaving up on the beach, their little red skiffs beating about among the alders; — such healthy natural tumult as proves the last day is not yet at hand. And there stand all around the alders, and birches, and oaks, and maples full of glee and sap, holding in their buds until the waters subside. You shall perhaps run aground on Cranberry Island, only some spires of last year's pipe-grass above water, to show where the danger is, and get as good a freezing there as anywhere on the Northwest Coast. I never voyaged so far in all my life. You shall see men you never heard of before, whose names you don't know, going away down through the meadows with long ducking-guns, with water-tight boots wading through the fowl-meadow grass, on bleak, wintry, distant shores, with guns at half-cock, and they shall see teal, blue-winged, green-winged, shelldrakes, whistlers, black ducks, ospreys, and many other wild and noble sights before night, such as they who sit in parlors never dream of. You shall see rude and sturdy, experienced and wise men, keeping their castles, or teaming up their summer's wood, or chopping alone in the woods, men fuller of talk and rare adventure in the sun and wind and rain, than a chestnut is of meat; who were out not only in '75 and 1812, but have been out every day of their lives; greater men than Homer, or Chaucer, or Shakespeare, only they never got time to say so; they never took to the way of writing. Look at their fields, and imagine what they might write, if ever they should put pen to paper. Or what have they not written on the face of the earth already, clearing, and burning, and scratching, and harrowing, and ploughing, and subsoiling, in and in, and out and out, and over and over, again and again, erasing what they had already written for want of parchment.

As yesterday and the historical ages are past, as the work of to-day is present, so some flitting perspectives, and demi-experiences of the life that is in nature are in time veritably future, or rather outside to time, perennial, young, divine, in the wind and rain which never die.

The respectable folks, —
Where dwell they?
They whisper in the oaks,
And they sigh in the hay;
Summer and winter, night and day,
Out on the meadow, there dwell they.
They never die,
Nor snivel, nor cry,
Nor ask our pity
With a wet eye.
A sound estate they ever mend
To every asker readily lend;
To the ocean wealth,
To the meadow health,
To Time his length,
To the rocks strength,
To the stars light,
To the weary night,
To the busy day,
To the idle play;
And so their good cheer never ends,
For all are their debtors, and all their friends.

Concord River is remarkable for the gentleness of its current, which is scarcely perceptible, and some have referred to its influence the proverbial moderation of the inhabitants of Concord, as exhibited in the Revolution, and on later occasions. It has been proposed, that the town should adopt for its coat of arms a field verdant, with the Concord circling nine times round. I have read that a descent of an eighth of an inch in a mile is sufficient to produce a flow. Our river has, probably, very near the smallest allowance. The story is current, at any rate, though I believe that strict history will not bear it out, that the only bridge ever carried away on the main branch, within the limits of the town, was driven up stream by the wind. But wherever it makes a sudden bend it is shallower and swifter, and asserts its title to be called a river. Compared with the other tributaries of the Merrimack, it appears to have been properly named Musketaquid, or

Meadow River, by the Indians. For the most part, it creeps through broad meadows, adorned with scattered oaks, where the cranberry is found in abundance, covering the ground like a moss-bed. A row of sunken dwarf willows borders the stream on one or both sides, while at a greater distance the meadow is skirted with maples, alders, and other fluviatile trees, overrun with the grape-vine, which bears fruit in its season, purple, red, white, and other grapes. Still farther from the stream, on the edge of the firm land, are seen the gray and white dwellings of the inhabitants. According to the valuation of 1831, there were in Concord two thousand one hundred and eleven acres, or about one seventh of the whole territory in meadow; this standing next in the list after pasturage and unimproved lands, and, judging from the returns of previous years, the meadow is not reclaimed so fast as the woods are cleared.

Let us here read what old Johnson says of these meadows in his "Wonder-working Providence," which gives the account of New England from 1628 to 1652, and see how matters looked to him. He says of the Twelfth Church of Christ gathered at Concord: "This town is seated upon a fair fresh river, whose rivulets are filled with fresh marsh, and her streams with fish, it being a branch of that large river of Merrimack. Allwifes and shad in their season come up to this town, but salmon and dace cannot come up, by reason of the rocky falls, which causeth their meadows to lie much covered with water, the which these people, together with their neighbor town, have several times essayed to cut through but cannot, yet it may be turned another way with an hundred pound charge as it appeared." As to their farming he says: "Having laid out their estate upon cattle at 5 to 20 pound a cow, when they came to winter them with inland hay, and feed upon such wild fother as was never cut before, they could not hold out the winter, but, ordinarily the first or second year after their coming up to a new plantation, many of their cattle died." And this from the same author "Of the Planting of the 19th Church in the Mattachusets' Government, called Sudbury": "This year [does he mean 1654] the town and church of Christ at Sudbury began to have the first foundation stones laid, taking up her station in the inland country, as her elder sister Concord had formerly done, lying further up the same river, being furnished with great plenty of fresh marsh,

but, it lying very low is much indamaged with land floods, insomuch that when the summer proves wet they lose part of their hay; yet are they so sufficiently provided that they take in cattle of other towns to winter."

The sluggish artery of the Concord meadows steals thus unobserved through the town, without a murmur or a pulse-beat, its general course from southwest to northeast, and its length about fifty miles; a huge volume of matter, ceaselessly rolling through the plains and valleys of the substantial earth with the moccasoned tread of an Indian warrior, making haste from the high places of the earth to its ancient reservoir. The murmurs of many a famous river on the other side of the globe reach even to us here, as to more distant dwellers on its banks; many a poet's stream floating the helms and shields of heroes on its bosom. The Xanthus or Scamander is not a mere dry channel and bed of a mountain torrent, but fed by the everflowing springs of fame; —

"And thou Simois, that as an arrowe, clere
Through Troy rennest, aie downward to the sea"; —

and I trust that I may be allowed to associate our muddy but much abused Concord River with the most famous in history.

"Sure there are poets which did never dream
Upon Parnassus, nor did taste the stream
Of Helicon; we therefore may suppose
Those made not poets, but the poets those."

The Mississippi, the Ganges, and the Nile, those journeying atoms from the Rocky Mountains, the Himmaleh, and Mountains of the Moon, have a kind of personal importance in the annals of the world. The heavens are not yet drained over their sources, but the Mountains of the Moon still send their annual tribute to the Pasha without fail, as they did to the Pharaohs, though he must collect the rest of his revenue at the point of the sword. Rivers must have been the guides which conducted the footsteps of the first travellers. They are the constant lure, when they flow by our doors, to distant

enterprise and adventure, and, by a natural impulse, the dwellers on their banks will at length accompany their currents to the lowlands of the globe, or explore at their invitation the interior of continents. They are the natural highways of all nations, not only levelling the ground and removing obstacles from the path of the traveller, quenching his thirst and bearing him on their bosoms, but conducting him through the most interesting scenery, the most populous portions of the globe, and where the animal and vegetable kingdoms attain their greatest perfection.

I had often stood on the banks of the Concord, watching the lapse of the current, an emblem of all progress, following the same law with the system, with time, and all that is made; the weeds at the bottom gently bending down the stream, shaken by the watery wind, still planted where their seeds had sunk, but erelong to die and go down likewise; the shining pebbles, not yet anxious to better their condition, the chips and weeds, and occasional logs and stems of trees that floated past, fulfilling their fate, were objects of singular interest to me, and at last I resolved to launch myself on its bosom and float whither it would bear me.

SATURDAY.

”Come, come, my lovely fair, and let us try
Those rural delicacies.”
Christ’s Invitation to the Soul. Quarles

SATURDAY.

— * —

At length, on Saturday, the last day of August, 1839, we two, brothers, and natives of Concord, weighed anchor in this river port; for Concord, too, lies under the sun, a port of entry and departure for the bodies as well as the souls of men; one shore at least exempted from all duties but such as an honest man will gladly discharge. A warm drizzling rain had obscured the morning, and threatened to delay our voyage, but at length the leaves and grass were dried, and it came out a mild afternoon, as serene and fresh as if Nature were maturing some greater scheme of her own. After this long dripping and oozing from every pore, she began to respire again more healthily than ever. So with a vigorous shove we launched our boat from the bank, while the flags and bulrushes courtesied a God-speed, and dropped silently down the stream.

Our boat, which had cost us a week's labor in the spring, was in form like a fisherman's dory, fifteen feet long by three and a half in breadth at the widest part, painted green below, with a border of blue, with reference to the two elements in which it was to spend its existence. It had been loaded the evening before at our door, half a mile from the river, with potatoes and melons from a patch which we had cultivated, and a few utensils, and was provided with wheels in order to be rolled around falls, as well as with two sets of oars, and several slender poles for shoving in shallow places, and also two masts, one of which served for a tent-pole at night; for a buffalo-skin was to be our bed, and a tent of cotton cloth our roof. It was strongly built, but heavy, and hardly of better model than usual. If rightly made, a boat would be a sort of amphibious animal, a creature of two elements, related by one half its structure to some swift and shapely fish, and by the other to some strong-winged and graceful bird. The fish shows where there should be the greatest breadth of beam and depth in the hold; its fins direct where to set the oars, and the tail gives some hint for the form and position of the rudder. The bird shows how to rig and trim the sails, and what form to give to the prow that it may balance the boat, and divide the air and water best.

These hints we had but partially obeyed. But the eyes, though they are no sailors, will never be satisfied with any model, however fashionable, which does not answer all the requisitions of art. However, as art is all of a ship but the wood, and yet the wood alone will rudely serve the purpose of a ship, so our boat, being of wood, gladly availed itself of the old law that the heavier shall float the lighter, and though a dull water-fowl, proved a sufficient buoy for our purpose.

”Were it the will of Heaven, an osier bough
Were vessel safe enough the seas to plough.”

Some village friends stood upon a promontory lower down the stream to wave us a last farewell; but we, having already performed these shore rites, with excusable reserve, as befits those who are embarked on unusual enterprises, who behold but speak not, silently glided past the firm lands of Concord, both peopled cape and lonely summer meadow, with steady sweeps. And yet we did unbend so far as to let our guns speak for us, when at length we had swept out of sight, and thus left the woods to ring again with their echoes; and it may be many russet-clad children, lurking in those broad meadows, with the bittern and the woodcock and the rail, though wholly concealed by brakes and hardhack and meadow-sweet, heard our salute that afternoon.

We were soon floating past the first regular battle ground of the Revolution, resting on our oars between the still visible abutments of that “North Bridge,” over which in April, 1775, rolled the first faint tide of that war, which ceased not, till, as we read on the stone on our right, it “gave peace to these United States.” As a Concord poet has sung: —

”By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April’s breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.

”The foe long since in silence slept;

Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;
And Time the ruined bridge has swept
Down the dark stream which seaward creeps."

Our reflections had already acquired a historical remoteness from the scenes we had left, and we ourselves essayed to sing.

Ah, 't is in vain the peaceful din
That wakes the ignoble town,
Not thus did braver spirits win
A patriot's renown.

There is one field beside this stream,
Wherein no foot does fall,
But yet it beareth in my dream
A richer crop than all.

Let me believe a dream so dear,
Some heart beat high that day,
Above the petty Province here,
And Britain far away;

Some hero of the ancient mould,
Some arm of knightly worth,
Of strength unbought, and faith unsold,
Honored this spot of earth;

Who sought the prize his heart described,
And did not ask release,
Whose free-born valor was not bribed
By prospect of a peace.

The men who stood on yonder height
That day are long since gone;
Not the same hand directs the fight
And monumental stone.

Ye were the Grecian cities then,

The Romes of modern birth,
Where the New England husbandmen
Have shown a Roman worth.

In vain I search a foreign land
To find our Bunker Hill,
And Lexington and Concord stand
By no Laconian rill.

With such thoughts we swept gently by this now peaceful pasture-ground, on waves of Concord, in which was long since drowned the din of war.

But since we sailed
Some things have failed,
And many a dream
Gone down the stream.

Here then an aged shepherd dwelt,
Who to his flock his substance dealt,
And ruled them with a vigorous crook,
By precept of the sacred Book;
But he the pierless bridge passed o'er,
And solitary left the shore.

Anon a youthful pastor came,
Whose crook was not unknown to fame,
His lambs he viewed with gentle glance,
Spread o'er the country's wide expanse,
And fed with "Mosses from the Manse."
Here was our Hawthorne in the dale,
And here the shepherd told his tale.

That slight shaft had now sunk behind the hills, and we had floated round the neighboring bend, and under the new North Bridge between Ponkawtasset and the Poplar Hill, into the Great Meadows, which, like a broad moccason print, have levelled a fertile and juicy place in nature.

On Ponkawtasset, since, we took our way,
Down this still stream to far Billericay,
A poet wise has settled, whose fine ray
Doth often shine on Concord's twilight day.

Like those first stars, whose silver beams on high,
Shining more brightly as the day goes by,
Most travellers cannot at first descry,
But eyes that wont to range the evening sky,

And know celestial lights, do plainly see,
And gladly hail them, numbering two or three;
For lore that's deep must deeply studied be,
As from deep wells men read star-poetry.

These stars are never paled, though out of sight,
But like the sun they shine forever bright;
Ay, *they* are suns, though earth must in its flight
Put out its eyes that it may see their light.

Who would neglect the least celestial sound,
Or faintest light that falls on earthly ground,
If he could know it one day would be found
That star in Cygnus whither we are bound,
And pale our sun with heavenly radiance round?

Gradually the village murmur subsided, and we seemed to be embarked on the placid current of our dreams, floating from past to future as silently as one awakes to fresh morning or evening thoughts. We glided noiselessly down the stream, occasionally driving a pickerel or a bream from the covert of the pads, and the smaller bittern now and then sailed away on sluggish wings from some recess in the shore, or the larger lifted itself out of the long grass at our approach, and carried its precious legs away to deposit them in a place of safety. The tortoises also rapidly dropped into the water, as our boat ruffled the surface amid the willows, breaking the reflections of the trees. The banks had passed the height of their

beauty, and some of the brighter flowers showed by their faded tints that the season was verging towards the afternoon of the year; but this sombre tinge enhanced their sincerity, and in the still unabated heats they seemed like the mossy brink of some cool well. The narrow-leaved willow (*Salix Purshiana*) lay along the surface of the water in masses of light green foliage, interspersed with the large balls of the button-bush. The small rose-colored polygonum raised its head proudly above the water on either hand, and flowering at this season and in these localities, in front of dense fields of the white species which skirted the sides of the stream, its little streak of red looked very rare and precious. The pure white blossoms of the arrow-head stood in the shallower parts, and a few cardinals on the margin still proudly surveyed themselves reflected in the water, though the latter, as well as the pickerel-weed, was now nearly out of blossom. The snake-head, *Chelone glabra*, grew close to the shore, while a kind of coreopsis, turning its brazen face to the sun, full and rank, and a tall dull red flower, *Eupatorium purpureum*, or trumpet-weed, formed the rear rank of the fluvial array. The bright blue flowers of the soap-wort gentian were sprinkled here and there in the adjacent meadows, like flowers which Proserpine had dropped, and still farther in the fields or higher on the bank were seen the purple Gerardia, the Virginian rhexia, and drooping neottia or ladies'-tresses; while from the more distant waysides which we occasionally passed, and banks where the sun had lodged, was reflected still a dull yellow beam from the ranks of tansy, now past its prime. In short, Nature seemed to have adorned herself for our departure with a profusion of fringes and curls, mingled with the bright tints of flowers, reflected in the water. But we missed the white water-lily, which is the queen of river flowers, its reign being over for this season. He makes his voyage too late, perhaps, by a true water clock who delays so long. Many of this species inhabit our Concord water. I have passed down the river before sunrise on a summer morning between fields of lilies still shut in sleep; and when, at length, the flakes of sunlight from over the bank fell on the surface of the water, whole fields of white blossoms seemed to flash open before me, as I floated along, like the unfolding of a banner, so sensible is this flower to the influence of the sun's rays.

As we were floating through the last of these familiar meadows, we observed the large and conspicuous flowers of the hibiscus, covering the dwarf willows, and mingled with the leaves of the grape, and wished that we could inform one of our friends behind of the locality of this somewhat rare and inaccessible flower before it was too late to pluck it; but we were just gliding out of sight of the village spire before it occurred to us that the farmer in the adjacent meadow would go to church on the morrow, and would carry this news for us; and so by the Monday, while we should be floating on the Merrimack, our friend would be reaching to pluck this blossom on the bank of the Concord.

After a pause at Ball's Hill, the St. Ann's of Concord voyageurs, not to say any prayer for the success of our voyage, but to gather the few berries which were still left on the hills, hanging by very slender threads, we weighed anchor again, and were soon out of sight of our native village. The land seemed to grow fairer as we withdrew from it. Far away to the southwest lay the quiet village, left alone under its elms and buttonwoods in mid afternoon; and the hills, notwithstanding their blue, ethereal faces, seemed to cast a saddened eye on their old playfellows; but, turning short to the north, we bade adieu to their familiar outlines, and addressed ourselves to new scenes and adventures. Naught was familiar but the heavens, from under whose roof the voyageur never passes; but with their countenance, and the acquaintance we had with river and wood, we trusted to fare well under any circumstances.

From this point, the river runs perfectly straight for a mile or more to Carlisle Bridge, which consists of twenty wooden piers, and when we looked back over it, its surface was reduced to a line's breadth, and appeared like a cobweb gleaming in the sun. Here and there might be seen a pole sticking up, to mark the place where some fisherman had enjoyed unusual luck, and in return had consecrated his rod to the deities who preside over these shallows. It was full twice as broad as before, deep and tranquil, with a muddy bottom, and bordered with willows, beyond which spread broad lagoons covered with pads, bulrushes, and flags.

Late in the afternoon we passed a man on the shore fishing with a long birch pole, its silvery bark left on, and a dog at his side, rowing

so near as to agitate his cork with our oars, and drive away luck for a season; and when we had rowed a mile as straight as an arrow, with our faces turned towards him, and the bubbles in our wake still visible on the tranquil surface, there stood the fisher still with his dog, like statues under the other side of the heavens, the only objects to relieve the eye in the extended meadow; and there would he stand abiding his luck, till he took his way home through the fields at evening with his fish. Thus, by one bait or another, Nature allures inhabitants into all her recesses. This man was the last of our townsmen whom we saw, and we silently through him bade adieu to our friends.

The characteristics and pursuits of various ages and races of men are always existing in epitome in every neighborhood. The pleasures of my earliest youth have become the inheritance of other men. This man is still a fisher, and belongs to an era in which I myself have lived. Perchance he is not confounded by many knowledges, and has not sought out many inventions, but how to take many fishes before the sun sets, with his slender birchen pole and flaxen line, that is invention enough for him. It is good even to be a fisherman in summer and in winter. Some men are judges these August days, sitting on benches, even till the court rises; they sit judging there honorably, between the seasons and between meals, leading a civil politic life, arbitrating in the case of Spaulding *versus* Cummings, it may be, from highest noon till the red vesper sinks into the west. The fisherman, meanwhile, stands in three feet of water, under the same summer's sun, arbitrating in other cases between muckworm and shiner, amid the fragrance of water-lilies, mint, and pontederia, leading his life many rods from the dry land, within a pole's length of where the larger fishes swim. Human life is to him very much like a river,

"renning aie downward to the sea."

This was his observation. His honor made a great discovery in bailments.

I can just remember an old brown-coated man who was the Walton of this stream, who had come over from Newcastle, England, with his son, — the latter a stout and hearty man who had lifted an anchor in his day. A straight old man he was who took his way in

silence through the meadows, having passed the period of communication with his fellows; his old experienced coat, hanging long and straight and brown as the yellow-pine bark, glittering with so much smothered sunlight, if you stood near enough, no work of art but naturalized at length. I often discovered him unexpectedly amid the pads and the gray willows when he moved, fishing in some old country method, — for youth and age then went a fishing together, — full of incommunicable thoughts, perchance about his own Tyne and Northumberland. He was always to be seen in serene afternoons haunting the river, and almost rustling with the sedge; so many sunny hours in an old man's life, entrapping silly fish; almost grown to be the sun's familiar; what need had he of hat or raiment any, having served out his time, and seen through such thin disguises? I have seen how his coeval fates rewarded him with the yellow perch, and yet I thought his luck was not in proportion to his years; and I have seen when, with slow steps and weighed down with aged thoughts, he disappeared with his fish under his low-roofed house on the skirts of the village. I think nobody else saw him; nobody else remembers him now, for he soon after died, and migrated to new Tyne streams. His fishing was not a sport, nor solely a means of subsistence, but a sort of solemn sacrament and withdrawal from the world, just as the aged read their Bibles.

Whether we live by the seaside, or by the lakes and rivers, or on the prairie, it concerns us to attend to the nature of fishes, since they are not phenomena confined to certain localities only, but forms and phases of the life in nature universally dispersed. The countless shoals which annually coast the shores of Europe and America are not so interesting to the student of nature, as the more fertile law itself, which deposits their spawn on the tops of mountains, and on the interior plains; the fish principle in nature, from which it results that they may be found in water in so many places, in greater or less numbers. The natural historian is not a fisherman, who prays for cloudy days and good luck merely, but as fishing has been styled "a contemplative man's recreation," introducing him profitably to woods and water, so the fruit of the naturalist's observations is not in new genera or species, but in new contemplations still, and science is only a more contemplative man's recreation. The seeds of the life of

fishes are everywhere disseminated, whether the winds waft them, or the waters float them, or the deep earth holds them; wherever a pond is dug, straightway it is stocked with this vivacious race. They have a lease of nature, and it is not yet out. The Chinese are bribed to carry their ova from province to province in jars or in hollow reeds, or the water-birds to transport them to the mountain tarns and interior lakes. There are fishes wherever there is a fluid medium, and even in clouds and in melted metals we detect their semblance. Think how in winter you can sink a line down straight in a pasture through snow and through ice, and pull up a bright, slippery, dumb, subterranean silver or golden fish! It is curious, also, to reflect how they make one family, from the largest to the smallest. The least minnow that lies on the ice as bait for pickerel, looks like a huge sea-fish cast up on the shore. In the waters of this town there are about a dozen distinct species, though the inexperienced would expect many more.

It enhances our sense of the grand security and serenity of nature, to observe the still undisturbed economy and content of the fishes of this century, their happiness a regular fruit of the summer. The Fresh-Water Sun-Fish, Bream, or Ruff, *Pomotis vulgaris*, as it were, without ancestry, without posterity, still represents the Fresh-Water Sun-Fish in nature. It is the most common of all, and seen on every urchin's string; a simple and inoffensive fish, whose nests are visible all along the shore, hollowed in the sand, over which it is steadily poised through the summer hours on waving fin. Sometimes there are twenty or thirty nests in the space of a few rods, two feet wide by half a foot in depth, and made with no little labor, the weeds being removed, and the sand shoved up on the sides, like a bowl. Here it may be seen early in summer assiduously brooding, and driving away minnows and larger fishes, even its own species, which would disturb its ova, pursuing them a few feet, and circling round swiftly to its nest again: the minnows, like young sharks, instantly entering the empty nests, meanwhile, and swallowing the spawn, which is attached to the weeds and to the bottom, on the sunny side. The spawn is exposed to so many dangers, that a very small proportion can ever become fishes, for beside being the constant prey of birds and fishes, a great many nests are made so near the shore, in shallow water, that they are left dry in a few days, as the river goes down.

These and the lamprey's are the only fishes' nests that I have observed, though the ova of some species may be seen floating on the surface. The breams are so careful of their charge that you may stand close by in the water and examine them at your leisure. I have thus stood over them half an hour at a time, and stroked them familiarly without frightening them, suffering them to nibble my fingers harmlessly, and seen them erect their dorsal fins in anger when my hand approached their ova, and have even taken them gently out of the water with my hand; though this cannot be accomplished by a sudden movement, however dexterous, for instant warning is conveyed to them through their denser element, but only by letting the fingers gradually close about them as they are poised over the palm, and with the utmost gentleness raising them slowly to the surface. Though stationary, they keep up a constant sculling or waving motion with their fins, which is exceedingly graceful, and expressive of their humble happiness; for unlike ours, the element in which they live is a stream which must be constantly resisted. From time to time they nibble the weeds at the bottom or overhanging their nests, or dart after a fly or a worm. The dorsal fin, besides answering the purpose of a keel, with the anal, serves to keep the fish upright, for in shallow water, where this is not covered, they fall on their sides. As you stand thus stooping over the bream in its nest, the edges of the dorsal and caudal fins have a singular dusty golden reflection, and its eyes, which stand out from the head, are transparent and colorless. Seen in its native element, it is a very beautiful and compact fish, perfect in all its parts, and looks like a brilliant coin fresh from the mint. It is a perfect jewel of the river, the green, red, coppery, and golden reflections of its mottled sides being the concentration of such rays as struggle through the floating pads and flowers to the sandy bottom, and in harmony with the sunlit brown and yellow pebbles. Behind its watery shield it dwells far from many accidents inevitable to human life.

There is also another species of bream found in our river, without the red spot on the operculum, which, according to M. Agassiz, is undescribed.

The Common Perch, *Perca flavescens*, which name describes well the gleaming, golden reflections of its scales as it is drawn out of the

water, its red gills standing out in vain in the thin element, is one of the handsomest and most regularly formed of our fishes, and at such a moment as this reminds us of the fish in the picture which wished to be restored to its native element until it had grown larger; and indeed most of this species that are caught are not half grown. In the ponds there is a light-colored and slender kind, which swim in shoals of many hundreds in the sunny water, in company with the shiner, averaging not more than six or seven inches in length, while only a few larger specimens are found in the deepest water, which prey upon their weaker brethren. I have often attracted these small perch to the shore at evening, by rippling the water with my fingers, and they may sometimes be caught while attempting to pass inside your hands. It is a tough and heedless fish, biting from impulse, without nibbling, and from impulse refraining to bite, and sculling indifferently past. It rather prefers the clear water and sandy bottoms, though here it has not much choice. It is a true fish, such as the angler loves to put into his basket or hang at the top of his willow twig, in shady afternoons along the banks of the stream. So many unquestionable fishes he counts, and so many shiners, which he counts and then throws away. Old Josselyn in his "New England's Rarities," published in 1672, mentions the Perch or River Partridge.

The Chivin, Dace, Roach, Cousin Trout, or whatever else it is called, *Leuciscus pulchellus*, white and red, always an unexpected prize, which, however, any angler is glad to hook for its rarity. A name that reminds us of many an unsuccessful ramble by swift streams, when the wind rose to disappoint the fisher. It is commonly a silvery soft-scaled fish, of graceful, scholarlike, and classical look, like many a picture in an English book. It loves a swift current and a sandy bottom, and bites inadvertently, yet not without appetite for the bait. The minnows are used as bait for pickerel in the winter. The red chivin, according to some, is still the same fish, only older, or with its tints deepened as they think by the darker water it inhabits, as the red clouds swim in the twilight atmosphere. He who has not hooked the red chivin is not yet a complete angler. Other fishes, methinks, are slightly amphibious, but this is a denizen of the water wholly. The cork goes dancing down the swift-rushing stream, amid the weeds and sands, when suddenly, by a coincidence never to be

remembered, emerges this fabulous inhabitant of another element, a thing heard of but not seen, as if it were the instant creation of an eddy, a true product of the running stream. And this bright cupreous dolphin was spawned and has passed its life beneath the level of your feet in your native fields. Fishes too, as well as birds and clouds, derive their armor from the mine. I have heard of mackerel visiting the copper banks at a particular season; this fish, perchance, has its habitat in the Coppermine River. I have caught white chivin of great size in the Aboljacknagesic, where it empties into the Penobscot, at the base of Mount Ktaadn, but no red ones there. The latter variety seems not to have been sufficiently observed.

The Dace, *Leuciscus argenteus*, is a slight silvery minnow, found generally in the middle of the stream, where the current is most rapid, and frequently confounded with the last named.

The Shiner, *Leuciscus crysoleucas*, is a soft-scaled and tender fish, the victim of its stronger neighbors, found in all places, deep and shallow, clear and turbid; generally the first nibbler at the bait, but, with its small mouth and nibbling propensities, not easily caught. It is a gold or silver bit that passes current in the river, its limber tail dimpling the surface in sport or flight. I have seen the fry, when frightened by something thrown into the water, leap out by dozens, together with the dace, and wreck themselves upon a floating plank. It is the little light-infant of the river, with body armor of gold or silver spangles, slipping, gliding its life through with a quirk of the tail, half in the water, half in the air, upward and ever upward with flitting fin to more crystalline tides, yet still abreast of us dwellers on the bank. It is almost dissolved by the summer heats. A slighter and lighter colored shiner is found in one of our ponds.

The Pickerel, *Esox reticulatus*, the swiftest, wariest, and most ravenous of fishes, which Josselyn calls the Fresh-Water or River Wolf, is very common in the shallow and weedy lagoons along the sides of the stream. It is a solemn, stately, ruminant fish, lurking under the shadow of a pad at noon, with still, circumspect, voracious eye, motionless as a jewel set in water, or moving slowly along to take up its position, darting from time to time at such unlucky fish or frog or insect as comes within its range, and swallowing it at a gulp. I have caught one which had swallowed a brother pickerel half as large

as itself, with the tail still visible in its mouth, while the head was already digested in its stomach. Sometimes a striped snake, bound to greener meadows across the stream, ends its undulatory progress in the same receptacle. They are so greedy and impetuous that they are frequently caught by being entangled in the line the moment it is cast. Fishermen also distinguish the brook pickerel, a shorter and thicker fish than the former.

The Horned Pout, *Pimelodus nebulosus*, sometimes called Minister, from the peculiar squeaking noise it makes when drawn out of the water, is a dull and blundering fellow, and like the eel vespertinal in his habits, and fond of the mud. It bites deliberately as if about its business. They are taken at night with a mass of worms strung on a thread, which catches in their teeth, sometimes three or four, with an eel, at one pull. They are extremely tenacious of life, opening and shutting their mouths for half an hour after their heads have been cut off. A bloodthirsty and bullying race of rangers, inhabiting the fertile river bottoms, with ever a lance in rest, and ready to do battle with their nearest neighbor. I have observed them in summer, when every other one had a long and bloody scar upon his back, where the skin was gone, the mark, perhaps, of some fierce encounter. Sometimes the fry, not an inch long, are seen darkening the shore with their myriads.

The Suckers, *Catostomi Bostonienses* and *tuberculati*, Common and Horned, perhaps on an average the largest of our fishes, may be seen in shoals of a hundred or more, stemming the current in the sun, on their mysterious migrations, and sometimes sucking in the bait which the fisherman suffers to float toward them. The former, which sometimes grow to a large size, are frequently caught by the hand in the brooks, or like the red chivin, are jerked out by a hook fastened firmly to the end of a stick, and placed under their jaws. They are hardly known to the mere angler, however, not often biting at his baits, though the spearer carries home many a mess in the spring. To our village eyes, these shoals have a foreign and imposing aspect, realizing the fertility of the seas.

The Common Eel, too, *Muraena Bostoniensis*, the only species of eel known in the State, a slimy, squirming creature, informed of mud, still squirming in the pan, is speared and hooked up with

various success. Methinks it too occurs in picture, left after the deluge, in many a meadow high and dry.

In the shallow parts of the river, where the current is rapid, and the bottom pebbly, you may sometimes see the curious circular nests of the Lamprey Eel, *Petromyzon Americanus*, the American Stone-Sucker, as large as a cart-wheel, a foot or two in height, and sometimes rising half a foot above the surface of the water. They collect these stones, of the size of a hen's egg, with their mouths, as their name implies, and are said to fashion them into circles with their tails. They ascend falls by clinging to the stones, which may sometimes be raised, by lifting the fish by the tail. As they are not seen on their way down the streams, it is thought by fishermen that they never return, but waste away and die, clinging to rocks and stumps of trees for an indefinite period; a tragic feature in the scenery of the river bottoms worthy to be remembered with Shakespeare's description of the sea-floor. They are rarely seen in our waters at present, on account of the dams, though they are taken in great quantities at the mouth of the river in Lowell. Their nests, which are very conspicuous, look more like art than anything in the river.

If we had leisure this afternoon, we might turn our prow up the brooks in quest of the classical trout and the minnows. Of the last alone, according to M. Agassiz, several of the species found in this town are yet undescribed. These would, perhaps, complete the list of our finny contemporaries in the Concord waters.

Salmon, Shad, and Alewives were formerly abundant here, and taken in weirs by the Indians, who taught this method to the whites, by whom they were used as food and as manure, until the dam, and afterward the canal at Billerica, and the factories at Lowell, put an end to their migrations hitherward; though it is thought that a few more enterprising shad may still occasionally be seen in this part of the river. It is said, to account for the destruction of the fishery, that those who at that time represented the interests of the fishermen and the fishes, remembering between what dates they were accustomed to take the grown shad, stipulated, that the dams should be left open for that season only, and the fry, which go down a month later, were consequently stopped and destroyed by myriads. Others say that the fish-ways were not properly constructed. Perchance, after a few

thousands of years, if the fishes will be patient, and pass their summers elsewhere, meanwhile, nature will have levelled the Billerica dam, and the Lowell factories, and the Grass-ground River run clear again, to be explored by new migratory shoals, even as far as the Hopkinton pond and Westborough swamp.

One would like to know more of that race, now extinct, whose seines lie rotting in the garrets of their children, who openly professed the trade of fishermen, and even fed their townsmen creditably, not skulking through the meadows to a rainy afternoon sport. Dim visions we still get of miraculous draughts of fishes, and heaps uncountable by the river-side, from the tales of our seniors sent on horseback in their childhood from the neighboring towns, perched on saddle-bags, with instructions to get the one bag filled with shad, the other with alewives. At least one memento of those days may still exist in the memory of this generation, in the familiar appellation of a celebrated train-band of this town, whose untrained ancestors stood creditably at Concord North Bridge. Their captain, a man of piscatory tastes, having duly warned his company to turn out on a certain day, they, like obedient soldiers, appeared promptly on parade at the appointed time, but, unfortunately, they went undrilled, except in the manuoevres of a soldier's wit and unlicensed jesting, that May day; for their captain, forgetting his own appointment, and warned only by the favorable aspect of the heavens, as he had often done before, went a-fishing that afternoon, and his company thenceforth was known to old and young, grave and gay, as "The Shad," and by the youths of this vicinity this was long regarded as the proper name of all the irregular militia in Christendom. But, alas! no record of these fishers' lives remains that we know, unless it be one brief page of hard but unquestionable history, which occurs in Day Book No. 4, of an old trader of this town, long since dead, which shows pretty plainly what constituted a fisherman's stock in trade in those days. It purports to be a Fisherman's Account Current, probably for the fishing season of the year 1805, during which months he purchased daily rum and sugar, sugar and rum, N. E. and W. I., "one cod line," "one brown mug," and "a line for the seine"; rum and sugar, sugar and rum, "good loaf sugar," and "good brown," W. I. and N. E., in short and uniform entries to the bottom of the

page, all carried out in pounds, shillings, and pence, from March 25th to June 5th, and promptly settled by receiving "cash in full" at the last date. But perhaps not so settled altogether. These were the necessaries of life in those days; with salmon, shad, and alewives, fresh and pickled, he was thereafter independent on the groceries. Rather a preponderance of the fluid elements; but such is the fisherman's nature. I can faintly remember to have seen this same fisher in my earliest youth, still as near the river as he could get, with uncertain undulatory step, after so many things had gone down stream, swinging a scythe in the meadow, his bottle like a serpent hid in the grass; himself as yet not cut down by the Great Mower.

Surely the fates are forever kind, though Nature's laws are more immutable than any despot's, yet to man's daily life they rarely seem rigid, but permit him to relax with license in summer weather. He is not harshly reminded of the things he may not do. She is very kind and liberal to all men of vicious habits, and certainly does not deny them quarter; they do not die without priest. Still they maintain life along the way, keeping this side the Styx, still hearty, still resolute, "never better in their lives"; and again, after a dozen years have elapsed, they start up from behind a hedge, asking for work and wages for able-bodied men. Who has not met such

> "a beggar on the way,
> Who sturdily could gang? ….
> Who cared neither for wind nor wet,
> In lands where'er he past?"

> "That bold adopts each house he views, his own;
> Makes every pulse his checquer, and, at pleasure,
> Walks forth, and taxes all the world, like Caesar"; —

as if consistency were the secret of health, while the poor inconsistent aspirant man, seeking to live a pure life, feeding on air, divided against himself, cannot stand, but pines and dies after a life of sickness, on beds of down.

The unwise are accustomed to speak as if some were not sick; but methinks the difference between men in respect to health is not great

enough to lay much stress upon. Some are reputed sick and some are not. It often happens that the sicker man is the nurse to the sounder.

Shad are still taken in the basin of Concord River at Lowell, where they are said to be a month earlier than the Merrimack shad, on account of the warmth of the water. Still patiently, almost pathetically, with instinct not to be discouraged, not to be *reasoned* with, revisiting their old haunts, as if their stern fates would relent, and still met by the Corporation with its dam. Poor shad! where is thy redress? When Nature gave thee instinct, gave she thee the heart to bear thy fate? Still wandering the sea in thy scaly armor to inquire humbly at the mouths of rivers if man has perchance left them free for thee to enter. By countless shoals loitering uncertain meanwhile, merely stemming the tide there, in danger from sea foes in spite of thy bright armor, awaiting new instructions, until the sands, until the water itself, tell thee if it be so or not. Thus by whole migrating nations, full of instinct, which is thy faith, in this backward spring, turned adrift, and perchance knowest not where men do *not* dwell, where there are *not* factories, in these days. Armed with no sword, no electric shock, but mere Shad, armed only with innocence and a just cause, with tender dumb mouth only forward, and scales easy to be detached. I for one am with thee, and who knows what may avail a crow-bar against that Billerica dam? — Not despairing when whole myriads have gone to feed those sea monsters during thy suspense, but still brave, indifferent, on easy fin there, like shad reserved for higher destinies. Willing to be decimated for man's behoof after the spawning season. Away with the superficial and selfish phil-*anthropy* of men, — who knows what admirable virtue of fishes may be below low-water-mark, bearing up against a hard destiny, not admired by that fellow-creature who alone can appreciate it! Who hears the fishes when they cry? It will not be forgotten by some memory that we were contemporaries. Thou shalt erelong have thy way up the rivers, up all the rivers of the globe, if I am not mistaken. Yea, even thy dull watery dream shall be more than realized. If it were not so, but thou wert to be overlooked at first and at last, then would not I take their heaven. Yes, I say so, who think I know better than thou canst. Keep a stiff fin then, and stem all the tides thou mayst meet.

At length it would seem that the interests, not of the fishes only,

but of the men of Wayland, of Sudbury, of Concord, demand the levelling of that dam. Innumerable acres of meadow are waiting to be made dry land, wild native grass to give place to English. The farmers stand with scythes whet, waiting the subsiding of the waters, by gravitation, by evaporation or otherwise, but sometimes their eyes do not rest, their wheels do not roll, on the quaking meadow ground during the haying season at all. So many sources of wealth inaccessible. They rate the loss hereby incurred in the single town of Wayland alone as equal to the expense of keeping a hundred yoke of oxen the year round. One year, as I learn, not long ago, the farmers standing ready to drive their teams afield as usual, the water gave no signs of falling; without new attraction in the heavens, without freshet or visible cause, still standing stagnant at an unprecedented height. All hydrometers were at fault; some trembled for their English even. But speedy emissaries revealed the unnatural secret, in the new float-board, wholly a foot in width, added to their already too high privileges by the dam proprietors. The hundred yoke of oxen, meanwhile, standing patient, gazing wishfully meadowward, at that inaccessible waving native grass, uncut but by the great mower Time, who cuts so broad a swathe, without so much as a wisp to wind about their horns.

That was a long pull from Ball's Hill to Carlisle Bridge, sitting with our faces to the south, a slight breeze rising from the north, but nevertheless water still runs and grass grows, for now, having passed the bridge between Carlisle and Bedford, we see men haying far off in the meadow, their heads waving like the grass which they cut. In the distance the wind seemed to bend all alike. As the night stole over, such a freshness was wafted across the meadow that every blade of cut grass seemed to teem with life. Faint purple clouds began to be reflected in the water, and the cow-bells tinkled louder along the banks, while, like sly water-rats, we stole along nearer the shore, looking for a place to pitch our camp.

At length, when we had made about seven miles, as far as Billerica, we moored our boat on the west side of a little rising ground which in the spring forms an island in the river. Here we found huckleberries still hanging upon the bushes, where they seemed to have slowly ripened for our especial use. Bread and sugar,

and cocoa boiled in river water, made our repast, and as we had drank in the fluvial prospect all day, so now we took a draft of the water with our evening meal to propitiate the river gods, and whet our vision for the sights it was to behold. The sun was setting on the one hand, while our eminence was contributing its shadow to the night, on the other. It seemed insensibly to grow lighter as the night shut in, and a distant and solitary farm-house was revealed, which before lurked in the shadows of the noon. There was no other house in sight, nor any cultivated field. To the right and left, as far as the horizon, were straggling pine woods with their plumes against the sky, and across the river were rugged hills, covered with shrub oaks, tangled with grape-vines and ivy, with here and there a gray rock jutting out from the maze. The sides of these cliffs, though a quarter of a mile distant, were almost heard to rustle while we looked at them, it was such a leafy wilderness; a place for fauns and satyrs, and where bats hung all day to the rocks, and at evening flitted over the water, and fire-flies husbanded their light under the grass and leaves against the night. When we had pitched our tent on the hillside, a few rods from the shore, we sat looking through its triangular door in the twilight at our lonely mast on the shore, just seen above the alders, and hardly yet come to a stand-still from the swaying of the stream; the first encroachment of commerce on this land. There was our port, our Ostia. That straight geometrical line against the water and the sky stood for the last refinements of civilized life, and what of sublimity there is in history was there symbolized.

For the most part, there was no recognition of human life in the night, no human breathing was heard, only the breathing of the wind. As we sat up, kept awake by the novelty of our situation, we heard at intervals foxes stepping about over the dead leaves, and brushing the dewy grass close to our tent, and once a musquash fumbling among the potatoes and melons in our boat, but when we hastened to the shore we could detect only a ripple in the water ruffling the disk of a star. At intervals we were serenaded by the song of a dreaming sparrow or the throttled cry of an owl, but after each sound which near at hand broke the stillness of the night, each crackling of the twigs, or rustling among the leaves, there was a sudden pause, and deeper and more conscious silence, as if the intruder were aware that

no life was rightfully abroad at that hour. There was a fire in Lowell, as we judged, this night, and we saw the horizon blazing, and heard the distant alarm-bells, as it were a faint tinkling music borne to these woods. But the most constant and memorable sound of a summer's night, which we did not fail to hear every night afterward, though at no time so incessantly and so favorably as now, was the barking of the house-dogs, from the loudest and hoarsest bark to the faintest aerial palpitation under the eaves of heaven, from the patient but anxious mastiff to the timid and wakeful terrier, at first loud and rapid, then faint and slow, to be imitated only in a whisper; wow-wow-wow-wow — wo — wo — w — w. Even in a retired and uninhabited district like this, it was a sufficiency of sound for the ear of night, and more impressive than any music. I have heard the voice of a hound, just before daylight, while the stars were shining, from over the woods and river, far in the horizon, when it sounded as sweet and melodious as an instrument. The hounding of a dog pursuing a fox or other animal in the horizon, may have first suggested the notes of the hunting-horn to alternate with and relieve the lungs of the dog. This natural bugle long resounded in the woods of the ancient world before the horn was invented. The very dogs that sullenly bay the moon from farm-yards in these nights excite more heroism in our breasts than all the civil exhortations or war sermons of the age. "I would rather be a dog, and bay the moon," than many a Roman that I know. The night is equally indebted to the clarion of the cock, with wakeful hope, from the very setting of the sun, prematurely ushering in the dawn. All these sounds, the crowing of cocks, the baying of dogs, and the hum of insects at noon, are the evidence of nature's health or *sound* state. Such is the never-failing beauty and accuracy of language, the most perfect art in the world; the chisel of a thousand years retouches it.

At length the antepenultimate and drowsy hours drew on, and all sounds were denied entrance to our ears.

Who sleeps by day and walks by night,
Will meet no spirit but some sprite.

SUNDAY.

”The river calmly flows,
Through shining banks, through lonely glen,
Where the owl shrieks, though ne’er the cheer of men
Has stirred its mute repose,
Still if you should walk there, you would go there again.”

CHANNING.

“The Indians tell us of a beautiful River lying far to the south, which they call Merrimack.”

Sieur de Monts, *Relations of the jesuits*, 1604.

SUNDAY.

— * —

In the morning the river and adjacent country were covered with a dense fog, through which the smoke of our fire curled up like a still subtiler mist; but before we had rowed many rods, the sun arose and the fog rapidly dispersed, leaving a slight steam only to curl along the surface of the water. It was a quiet Sunday morning, with more of the auroral rosy and white than of the yellow light in it, as if it dated from earlier than the fall of man, and still preserved a heathenish integrity: —

> An early unconverted Saint,
> Free from noontide or evening taint,
> Heathen without reproach,
> That did upon the civil day encroach,
> And ever since its birth
> Had trod the outskirts of the earth.

But the impressions which the morning makes vanish with its dews, and not even the most "persevering mortal" can preserve the memory of its freshness to mid-day. As we passed the various islands, or what were islands in the spring, rowing with our backs down stream, we gave names to them. The one on which we had camped we called Fox Island, and one fine densely wooded island surrounded by deep water and overrun by grape-vines, which looked like a mass of verdure and of flowers cast upon the waves, we named Grape Island. From Ball's Hill to Billerica meeting-house, the river was still twice as broad as in Concord, a deep, dark, and dead stream, flowing between gentle hills and sometimes cliffs, and well wooded all the way. It was a long woodland lake bordered with willows. For long reaches we could see neither house nor cultivated field, nor any sign of the vicinity of man. Now we coasted along some shallow shore by the edge of a dense palisade of bulrushes, which straightly bounded the water as if clipt by art, reminding us of the reed forts of the East-Indians, of which we had read; and now the bank slightly

raised was overhung with graceful grasses and various species of brake, whose downy stems stood closely grouped and naked as in a vase, while their heads spread several feet on either side. The dead limbs of the willow were rounded and adorned by the climbing mikania, *Mikania scandens*, which filled every crevice in the leafy bank, contrasting agreeably with the gray bark of its supporter and the balls of the button-bush. The water willow, *Salix Purshiana*, when it is of large size and entire, is the most graceful and ethereal of our trees. Its masses of light green foliage, piled one upon another to the height of twenty or thirty feet, seemed to float on the surface of the water, while the slight gray stems and the shore were hardly visible between them. No tree is so wedded to the water, and harmonizes so well with still streams. It is even more graceful than the weeping willow, or any pendulous trees, which dip their branches in the stream instead of being buoyed up by it. Its limbs curved outward over the surface as if attracted by it. It had not a New England but an Oriental character, reminding us of trim Persian gardens, of Haroun Alraschid, and the artificial lakes of the East.

As we thus dipped our way along between fresh masses of foliage overrun with the grape and smaller flowering vines, the surface was so calm, and both air and water so transparent, that the flight of a kingfisher or robin over the river was as distinctly seen reflected in the water below as in the air above. The birds seemed to flit through submerged groves, alighting on the yielding sprays, and their clear notes to come up from below. We were uncertain whether the water floated the land, or the land held the water in its bosom. It was such a season, in short, as that in which one of our Concord poets sailed on its stream, and sung its quiet glories.

”There is an inward voice, that in the stream
Sends forth its spirit to the listening ear,
And in a calm content it floweth on,
Like wisdom, welcome with its own respect.
Clear in its breast lie all these beauteous thoughts,
It doth receive the green and graceful trees,
And the gray rocks smile in its peaceful arms.”

And more he sung, but too serious for our page. For every oak and birch too growing on the hill-top, as well as for these elms and willows, we knew that there was a graceful ethereal and ideal tree making down from the roots, and sometimes Nature in high tides brings her mirror to its foot and makes it visible. The stillness was intense and almost conscious, as if it were a natural Sabbath, and we fancied that the morning was the evening of a celestial day. The air was so elastic and crystalline that it had the same effect on the landscape that a glass has on a picture, to give it an ideal remoteness and perfection. The landscape was clothed in a mild and quiet light, in which the woods and fences checkered and partitioned it with new regularity, and rough and uneven fields stretched away with lawn-like smoothness to the horizon, and the clouds, finely distinct and picturesque, seemed a fit drapery to hang over fairy-land. The world seemed decked for some holiday or prouder pageantry, with silken streamers flying, and the course of our lives to wind on before us like a green lane into a country maze, at the season when fruit-trees are in blossom.

Why should not our whole life and its scenery be actually thus fair and distinct? All our lives want a suitable background. They should at least, like the life of the anchorite, be as impressive to behold as objects in the desert, a broken shaft or crumbling mound against a limitless horizon. Character always secures for itself this advantage, and is thus distinct and unrelated to near or trivial objects, whether things or persons. On this same stream a maiden once sailed in my boat, thus unattended but by invisible guardians, and as she sat in the prow there was nothing but herself between the steersman and the sky. I could then say with the poet, —

”Sweet falls the summer air
Over her frame who sails with me;
Her way like that is beautifully free,
Her nature far more rare,
And is her constant heart of virgin purity.”

At evening still the very stars seem but this maiden’s emissaries and reporters of her progress.

Low in the eastern sky
Is set thy glancing eye;
And though its gracious light
Ne'er riseth to my sight,
Yet every star that climbs
Above the gnarled limbs
Of yonder hill,
Conveys thy gentle will.

Believe I knew thy thought,
And that the zephyrs brought
Thy kindest wishes through,
As mine they bear to you,
That some attentive cloud
Did pause amid the crowd
Over my head,
While gentle things were said.

Believe the thrushes sung,
And that the flower-bells rung,
That herbs exhaled their scent,
And beasts knew what was meant,
The trees a welcome waved,
And lakes their margins laved,
When thy free mind
To my retreat did wind.

It was a summer eve,
The air did gently heave
While yet a low-hung cloud
Thy eastern skies did shroud;
The lightning's silent gleam,
Startling my drowsy dream,
Seemed like the flash
Under thy dark eyelash.

Still will I strive to be

As if thou wert with me;
Whatever path I take,
It shall be for thy sake,
Of gentle slope and wide,
As thou wert by my side,
Without a root
To trip thy gentle foot.

I 'll walk with gentle pace,
And choose the smoothest place
And careful dip the oar,
And shun the winding shore,
And gently steer my boat
Where water-lilies float,
And cardinal flowers
Stand in their sylvan bowers.

It required some rudeness to disturb with our boat the mirror-like surface of the water, in which every twig and blade of grass was so faithfully reflected; too faithfully indeed for art to imitate, for only Nature may exaggerate herself. The shallowest still water is unfathomable. Wherever the trees and skies are reflected, there is more than Atlantic depth, and no danger of fancy running aground. We notice that it required a separate intention of the eye, a more free and abstracted vision, to see the reflected trees and the sky, than to see the river bottom merely; and so are there manifold visions in the direction of every object, and even the most opaque reflect the heavens from their surface. Some men have their eyes naturally intended to the one and some to the other object.

"A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye,
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And the heavens espy."

Two men in a skiff, whom we passed hereabouts, floating buoyantly amid the reflections of the trees, like a feather in mid-air,

or a leaf which is wafted gently from its twig to the water without turning over, seemed still in their element, and to have very delicately availed themselves of the natural laws. Their floating there was a beautiful and successful experiment in natural philosophy, and it served to ennoble in our eyes the art of navigation; for as birds fly and fishes swim, so these men sailed. It reminded us how much fairer and nobler all the actions of man might be, and that our life in its whole economy might be as beautiful as the fairest works of art or nature.

The sun lodged on the old gray cliffs, and glanced from every pad; the bulrushes and flags seemed to rejoice in the delicious light and air; the meadows were a-drinking at their leisure; the frogs sat meditating, all sabbath thoughts, summing up their week, with one eye out on the golden sun, and one toe upon a reed, eying the wondrous universe in which they act their part; the fishes swam more staid and soberly, as maidens go to church; shoals of golden and silver minnows rose to the surface to behold the heavens, and then sheered off into more sombre aisles; they swept by as if moved by one mind, continually gliding past each other, and yet preserving the form of their battalion unchanged, as if they were still embraced by the transparent membrane which held the spawn; a young band of brethren and sisters trying their new fins; now they wheeled, now shot ahead, and when we drove them to the shore and cut them off, they dexterously tacked and passed underneath the boat. Over the old wooden bridges no traveller crossed, and neither the river nor the fishes avoided to glide between the abutments.

Here was a village not far off behind the woods, Billerica, settled not long ago, and the children still bear the names of the first settlers in this late "howling wilderness"; yet to all intents and purposes it is as old as Fernay or as Mantua, an old gray town where men grow old and sleep already under moss-grown monuments, — outgrow their usefulness. This is ancient Billerica, (Villarica?) now in its dotage, named from the English Billericay, and whose Indian name was Shawshine. I never heard that it was young. See, is not nature here gone to decay, farms all run out, meeting-house grown gray and racked with age? If you would know of its early youth, ask those old gray rocks in the pasture. It has a bell that sounds sometimes as far as

Concord woods; I have heard that, — ay, hear it now. No wonder that such a sound startled the dreaming Indian, and frightened his game, when the first bells were swung on trees, and sounded through the forest beyond the plantations of the white man. But to-day I like best the echo amid these cliffs and woods. It is no feeble imitation, but rather its original, or as if some rural Orpheus played over the strain again to show how it should sound.

Dong, sounds the brass in the east,
As if to a funeral feast,
But I like that sound the best
Out of the fluttering west.

The steeple ringeth a knell,
But the fairies' silvery bell
Is the voice of that gentle folk,
Or else the horizon that spoke.

Its metal is not of brass,
But air, and water, and glass,
And under a cloud it is swung,
And by the wind it is rung.

When the steeple tolleth the noon,
It soundeth not so soon,
Yet it rings a far earlier hour,
And the sun has not reached its tower.

On the other hand, the road runs up to Carlisle, city of the woods, which, if it is less civil, is the more natural. It does well hold the earth together. It gets laughed at because it is a small town, I know, but nevertheless it is a place where great men may be born any day, for fair winds and foul blow right on over it without distinction. It has a meeting-house and horse-sheds, a tavern and a blacksmith's shop, for centre, and a good deal of wood to cut and cord yet. And

"Bedford, most noble Bedford,
I shall not thee forget."

History has remembered thee; especially that meek and humble petition of thy old planters, like the wailing of the Lord's own people, "To the gentlemen, the selectmen" of Concord, praying to be erected into a separate parish. We can hardly credit that so plaintive a psalm resounded but little more than a century ago along these Babylonish waters. "In the extreme difficult seasons of heat and cold," said they, "we were ready to say of the Sabbath, Behold what a weariness is it."— "Gentlemen, if our seeking to draw off proceed from any disaffection to our present Reverend Pastor, or the Christian Society with whom we have taken such sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company, then hear us not this day, but we greatly desire, if God please, to be eased of our burden on the Sabbath, the travel and fatigue thereof, that the word of God may be nigh to us, near to our houses and in our hearts, that we and our little ones may serve the Lord. We hope that God, who stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to set forward temple work, has stirred us up to ask, and will stir you up to grant, the prayer of our petition; so shall your humble petitioners ever pray, as in duty bound— " And so the temple work went forward here to a happy conclusion. Yonder in Carlisle the building of the temple was many wearisome years delayed, not that there was wanting of Shittim wood, or the gold of Ophir, but a site therefor convenient to all the worshippers; whether on "Buttrick's Plain," or rather on "Poplar Hill." — It was a tedious question.

In this Billerica solid men must have lived, select from year to year; a series of town clerks, at least; and there are old records that you may search. Some spring the white man came, built him a house, and made a clearing here, letting in the sun, dried up a farm, piled up the old gray stones in fences, cut down the pines around his dwelling, planted orchard seeds brought from the old country, and persuaded the civil apple-tree to blossom next to the wild pine and the juniper, shedding its perfume in the wilderness. Their old stocks still remain. He culled the graceful elm from out the woods and from the river-side, and so refined and smoothed his village plot. He rudely bridged the stream, and drove his team afield into the river meadows, cut the wild grass, and laid bare the homes of beaver, otter, muskrat, and with the whetting of his scythe scared off the deer and bear. He set up

a mill, and fields of English grain sprang in the virgin soil. And with his grain he scattered the seeds of the dandelion and the wild trefoil over the meadows, mingling his English flowers with the wild native ones. The bristling burdock, the sweet-scented catnip, and the humble yarrow planted themselves along his woodland road, they too seeking "freedom to worship God" in their way. And thus he plants a town. The white man's mullein soon reigned in Indian cornfields, and sweet-scented English grasses clothed the new soil. Where, then, could the Red Man set his foot? The honey-bee hummed through the Massachusetts woods, and sipped the wild-flowers round the Indian's wigwam, perchance unnoticed, when, with prophetic warning, it stung the Red child's hand, forerunner of that industrious tribe that was to come and pluck the wild-flower of his race up by the root.

The white man comes, pale as the dawn, with a load of thought, with a slumbering intelligence as a fire raked up, knowing well what he knows, not guessing but calculating; strong in community, yielding obedience to authority; of experienced race; of wonderful, wonderful common sense; dull but capable, slow but persevering, severe but just, of little humor but genuine; a laboring man, despising game and sport; building a house that endures, a framed house. He buys the Indian's moccasins and baskets, then buys his hunting-grounds, and at length forgets where he is buried and ploughs up his bones. And here town records, old, tattered, time-worn, weather-stained chronicles, contain the Indian sachem's mark perchance, an arrow or a beaver, and the few fatal words by which he deeded his hunting-grounds away. He comes with a list of ancient Saxon, Norman, and Celtic names, and strews them up and down this river, — Framingham, Sudbury, Bedford, Carlisle, Billerica, Chelmsford, — and this is New Angle-land, and these are the New West Saxons whom the Red Men call, not Angle-ish or English, but Yengeese, and so at last they are known for Yankees.

When we were opposite to the middle of Billerica, the fields on either hand had a soft and cultivated English aspect, the village spire being seen over the copses which skirt the river, and sometimes an orchard straggled down to the water-side, though, generally, our course this forenoon was the wildest part of our voyage. It seemed that men led a quiet and very civil life there. The inhabitants were

plainly cultivators of the earth, and lived under an organized political government. The school-house stood with a meek aspect, entreating a long truce to war and savage life. Every one finds by his own experience, as well as in history, that the era in which men cultivate the apple, and the amenities of the garden, is essentially different from that of the hunter and forest life, and neither can displace the other without loss. We have all had our day-dreams, as well as more prophetic nocturnal vision; but as for farming, I am convinced that my genius dates from an older era than the agricultural. I would at least strike my spade into the earth with such careless freedom but accuracy as the woodpecker his bill into a tree. There is in my nature, methinks, a singular yearning toward all wildness. I know of no redeeming qualities in myself but a sincere love for some things, and when I am reproved I fall back on to this ground. What have I to do with ploughs? I cut another furrow than you see. Where the off ox treads, there is it not, it is farther off; where the nigh ox walks, it will not be, it is nigher still. If corn fails, my crop fails not, and what are drought and rain to me? The rude Saxon pioneer will sometimes pine for that refinement and artificial beauty which are English, and love to hear the sound of such sweet and classical names as the Pentland and Malvern Hills, the Cliffs of Dover and the Trosachs, Richmond, Derwent, and Winandermere, which are to him now instead of the Acropolis and Parthenon, of Baiae, and Athens with its sea-walls, and Arcadia and Tempe.

Greece, who am I that should remember thee,
Thy Marathon and thy Thermopylae?
Is my life vulgar, my fate mean,
Which on these golden memories can lean?

We are apt enough to be pleased with such books as Evelyn's Sylva, Acetarium, and Kalendarium Hortense, but they imply a relaxed nerve in the reader. Gardening is civil and social, but it wants the vigor and freedom of the forest and the outlaw. There may be an excess of cultivation as well as of anything else, until civilization becomes pathetic. A highly cultivated man, — all whose bones can be bent! whose heaven-born virtues are but good manners! The

young pines springing up in the cornfields from year to year are to me a refreshing fact. We talk of civilizing the Indian, but that is not the name for his improvement. By the wary independence and aloofness of his dim forest life he preserves his intercourse with his native gods, and is admitted from time to time to a rare and peculiar society with Nature. He has glances of starry recognition to which our saloons are strangers. The steady illumination of his genius, dim only because distant, is like the faint but satisfying light of the stars compared with the dazzling but ineffectual and short-lived blaze of candles. The Society-Islanders had their day-born gods, but they were not supposed to be "of equal antiquity with the *atua fauau po*, or night-born gods." It is true, there are the innocent pleasures of country life, and it is sometimes pleasant to make the earth yield her increase, and gather the fruits in their season, but the heroic spirit will not fail to dream of remoter retirements and more rugged paths. It will have its garden-plots and its *parterres* elsewhere than on the earth, and gather nuts and berries by the way for its subsistence, or orchard fruits with such heedlessness as berries. We would not always be soothing and taming nature, breaking the horse and the ox, but sometimes ride the horse wild and chase the buffalo. The Indian's intercourse with Nature is at least such as admits of the greatest independence of each. If he is somewhat of a stranger in her midst, the gardener is too much of a familiar. There is something vulgar and foul in the latter's closeness to his mistress, something noble and cleanly in the former's distance. In civilization, as in a southern latitude, man degenerates at length, and yields to the incursion of more northern tribes,

"Some nation yet shut in
With hills of ice."

There are other, savager, and more primeval aspects of nature than our poets have sung. It is only white man's poetry. Homer and Ossian even can never revive in London or Boston. And yet behold how these cities are refreshed by the mere tradition, or the imperfectly transmitted fragrance and flavor of these wild fruits. If we could listen but for an instant to the chant of the Indian muse, we

should understand why he will not exchange his savageness for civilization. Nations are not whimsical. Steel and blankets are strong temptations; but the Indian does well to continue Indian.

After sitting in my chamber many days, reading the poets, I have been out early on a foggy morning, and heard the cry of an owl in a neighboring wood as from a nature behind the common, unexplored by science or by literature. None of the feathered race has yet realized my youthful conceptions of the woodland depths. I had seen the red Election-bird brought from their recesses on my comrades' string, and fancied that their plumage would assume stranger and more dazzling colors, like the tints of evening, in proportion as I advanced farther into the darkness and solitude of the forest. Still less have I seen such strong and wilderness tints on any poet's string.

These modern ingenious sciences and arts do not affect me as those more venerable arts of hunting and fishing, and even of husbandry in its primitive and simple form; as ancient and honorable trades as the sun and moon and winds pursue, coeval with the faculties of man, and invented when these were invented. We do not know their John Gutenberg, or Richard Arkwright, though the poets would fain make them to have been gradually learned and taught. According to Gower, —

"And Iadahel, as saith the boke,
Firste made nette, and fishes toke.
Of huntyng eke he fond the chace,
Whiche nowe is knowe in many place;
A tent of clothe, with corde and stake,
He sette up first, and did it make."

Also, Lydgate says: —

"Jason first sayled, in story it is tolde,
Toward Colchos, to wynne the flees of golde,
Ceres the Goddess fond first the tilthe of londe;
* * * * *
Also, Aristeus fonde first the usage
Of mylke, and cruddis, and of honey swote;

Peryodes, for grete avauntage,
From flyntes smote fuyre, daryng in the roote."

We read that Aristeus "obtained of Jupiter and Neptune, that the pestilential heat of the dog-days, wherein was great mortality, should be mitigated with wind." This is one of those dateless benefits conferred on man, which have no record in our vulgar day, though we still find some similitude to them in our dreams, in which we have a more liberal and juster apprehension of things, unconstrained by habit, which is then in some measure put off, and divested of memory, which we call history.

According to fable, when the island of AEgina was depopulated by sickness, at the instance of AEacus, Jupiter turned the ants into men, that is, as some think, he made men of the inhabitants who lived meanly like ants. This is perhaps the fullest history of those early days extant.

The fable which is naturally and truly composed, so as to satisfy the imagination, ere it addresses the understanding, beautiful though strange as a wild-flower, is to the wise man an apothegm, and admits of his most generous interpretation. When we read that Bacchus made the Tyrrhenian mariners mad, so that they leapt into the sea, mistaking it for a meadow full of flowers, and so became dolphins, we are not concerned about the historical truth of this, but rather a higher poetical truth. We seem to hear the music of a thought, and care not if the understanding be not gratified. For their beauty, consider the fables of Narcissus, of Endymion, of Memnon son of Morning, the representative of all promising youths who have died a premature death, and whose memory is melodiously prolonged to the latest morning; the beautiful stories of Phaeton, and of the Sirens whose isle shone afar off white with the bones of unburied men; and the pregnant ones of Pan, Prometheus, and the Sphinx; and that long list of names which have already become part of the universal language of civilized men, and from proper are becoming common names or nouns, — the Sibyls, the Eumenides, the Parcae, the Graces, the Muses, Nemesis, &c.

It is interesting to observe with what singular unanimity the farthest sundered nations and generations consent to give

completeness and roundness to an ancient fable, of which they indistinctly appreciate the beauty or the truth. By a faint and dream-like effort, though it be only by the vote of a scientific body, the dullest posterity slowly add some trait to the mythus. As when astronomers call the lately discovered planet Neptune; or the asteroid Astraea, that the Virgin who was driven from earth to heaven at the end of the golden age, may have her local habitation in the heavens more distinctly assigned her, — for the slightest recognition of poetic worth is significant. By such slow aggregation has mythology grown from the first. The very nursery tales of this generation, were the nursery tales of primeval races. They migrate from east to west, and again from west to east; now expanded into the "tale divine" of bards, now shrunk into a popular rhyme. This is an approach to that universal language which men have sought in vain. This fond reiteration of the oldest expressions of truth by the latest posterity, content with slightly and religiously retouching the old material, is the most impressive proof of a common humanity.

All nations love the same jests and tales, Jews, Christians, and Mahometans, and the same translated suffice for all. All men are children, and of one family. The same tale sends them all to bed, and wakes them in the morning. Joseph Wolff, the missionary, distributed copies of Robinson Crusoe, translated into Arabic, among the Arabs, and they made a great sensation. "Robinson Crusoe's adventures and wisdom," says he, "were read by Mahometans in the market-places of Sanaa, Hodyeda, and Loheya, and admired and believed!" On reading the book, the Arabians exclaimed, "O, that Robinson Crusoe must have been a great prophet!"

To some extent, mythology is only the most ancient history and biography. So far from being false or fabulous in the common sense, it contains only enduring and essential truth, the I and you, the here and there, the now and then, being omitted. Either time or rare wisdom writes it. Before printing was discovered, a century was equal to a thousand years. The poet is he who can write some pure mythology to-day without the aid of posterity. In how few words, for instance, the Greeks would have told the story of Abelard and Heloise, making but a sentence for our classical dictionary, — and then, perchance, have stuck up their names to shine in some corner of

the firmament. We moderns, on the other hand, collect only the raw materials of biography and history, "memoirs to serve for a history," which itself is but materials to serve for a mythology. How many volumes folio would the Life and Labors of Prometheus have filled, if perchance it had fallen, as perchance it did first, in days of cheap printing! Who knows what shape the fable of Columbus will at length assume, to be confounded with that of Jason and the expedition of the Argonauts. And Franklin, — there may be a line for him in the future classical dictionary, recording what that demigod did, and referring him to some new genealogy. "Son of —— and —— . He aided the Americans to gain their independence, instructed mankind in economy, and drew down lightning from the clouds."

The hidden significance of these fables which is sometimes thought to have been detected, the ethics running parallel to the poetry and history, are not so remarkable as the readiness with which they may be made to express a variety of truths. As if they were the skeletons of still older and more universal truths than any whose flesh and blood they are for the time made to wear. It is like striving to make the sun, or the wind, or the sea symbols to signify exclusively the particular thoughts of our day. But what signifies it? In the mythus a superhuman intelligence uses the unconscious thoughts and dreams of men as its hieroglyphics to address men unborn. In the history of the human mind, these glowing and ruddy fables precede the noonday thoughts of men, as Aurora the sun's rays. The matutine intellect of the poet, keeping in advance of the glare of philosophy, always dwells in this auroral atmosphere.

As we said before, the Concord is a dead stream, but its scenery is the more suggestive to the contemplative voyager, and this day its water was fuller of reflections than our pages even. Just before it reaches the falls in Billerica, it is contracted, and becomes swifter and shallower, with a yellow pebbly bottom, hardly passable for a canal-boat, leaving the broader and more stagnant portion above like a lake among the hills. All through the Concord, Bedford, and Billerica meadows we had heard no murmur from its stream, except where some tributary runnel tumbled in, —

Some tumultuous little rill,

Purling round its storied pebble,
Tinkling to the selfsame tune,
From September until June,
Which no drought doth e'er enfeeble.

Silent flows the parent stream,
And if rocks do lie below,
Smothers with her waves the din,
As it were a youthful sin,
Just as still, and just as slow.

But now at length we heard this staid and primitive river rushing to her fall, like any rill. We here left its channel, just above the Billerica Falls, and entered the canal, which runs, or rather is conducted, six miles through the woods to the Merrimack, at Middlesex, and as we did not care to loiter in this part of our voyage, while one ran along the tow-path drawing the boat by a cord, the other kept it off the shore with a pole, so that we accomplished the whole distance in little more than an hour. This canal, which is the oldest in the country, and has even an antique look beside the more modern railroads, is fed by the Concord, so that we were still floating on its familiar waters. It is so much water which the river *lets* for the advantage of commerce. There appeared some want of harmony in its scenery, since it was not of equal date with the woods and meadows through which it is led, and we missed the conciliatory influence of time on land and water; but in the lapse of ages, Nature will recover and indemnify herself, and gradually plant fit shrubs and flowers along its borders. Already the kingfisher sat upon a pine over the water, and the bream and pickerel swam below. Thus all works pass directly out of the hands of the architect into the hands of Nature, to be perfected.

It was a retired and pleasant route, without houses or travellers, except some young men who were lounging upon a bridge in Chelmsford, who leaned impudently over the rails to pry into our concerns, but we caught the eye of the most forward, and looked at him till he was visibly discomfited. Not that there was any peculiar efficacy in our look, but rather a sense of shame left in him which

disarmed him.

It is a very true and expressive phrase, “He looked daggers at me,” for the first pattern and prototype of all daggers must have been a glance of the eye. First, there was the glance of Jove’s eye, then his fiery bolt, then, the material gradually hardening, tridents, spears, javelins, and finally, for the convenience of private men, daggers, krisses, and so forth, were invented. It is wonderful how we get about the streets without being wounded by these delicate and glancing weapons, a man can so nimbly whip out his rapier, or without being noticed carry it unsheathed. Yet it is rare that one gets seriously looked at.

As we passed under the last bridge over the canal, just before reaching the Merrimack, the people coming out of church paused to look at us from above, and apparently, so strong is custom, indulged in some heathenish comparisons; but we were the truest observers of this sunny day. According to Hesiod,

> ”The seventh is a holy day,
> For then Latona brought forth golden-rayed Apollo,”

and by our reckoning this was the seventh day of the week, and not the first. I find among the papers of an old Justice of the Peace and Deacon of the town of Concord, this singular memorandum, which is worth preserving as a relic of an ancient custom. After reforming the spelling and grammar, it runs as follows: “Men that travelled with teams on the Sabbath, Dec. 18th, 1803, were Jeremiah Richardson and Jonas Parker, both of Shirley. They had teams with rigging such as is used to carry barrels, and they were travelling westward. Richardson was questioned by the Hon. Ephraim Wood, Esq., and he said that Jonas Parker was his fellow-traveller, and he further said that a Mr. Longley was his employer, who promised to bear him out.” We were the men that were gliding northward, this Sept. 1st, 1839, with still team, and rigging not the most convenient to carry barrels, unquestioned by any Squire or Church Deacon and ready to bear ourselves out if need were. In the latter part of the seventeenth century, according to the historian of Dunstable, “Towns were directed to erect ‘*a cage*’ near the meeting-house, and in this all

offenders against the sanctity of the Sabbath were confined." Society has relaxed a little from its strictness, one would say, but I presume that there is not less *religion* than formerly. If the *ligature* is found to be loosened in one part, it is only drawn the tighter in another.

You can hardly convince a man of an error in a lifetime, but must content yourself with the reflection that the progress of science is slow. If he is not convinced, his grandchildren may be. The geologists tell us that it took one hundred years to prove that fossils are organic, and one hundred and fifty more, to prove that they are not to be referred to the Noachian deluge. I am not sure but I should betake myself in extremities to the liberal divinities of Greece, rather than to my country's God. Jehovah, though with us he has acquired new attributes, is more absolute and unapproachable, but hardly more divine, than Jove. He is not so much of a gentleman, not so gracious and catholic, he does not exert so intimate and genial an influence on nature, as many a god of the Greeks. I should fear the infinite power and inflexible justice of the almighty mortal, hardly as yet apotheosized, so wholly masculine, with no Sister Juno, no Apollo, no Venus, nor Minerva, to intercede for me, <thumo*i phyle'ousa' te, kedome'ne te>. The Grecian are youthful and erring and fallen gods, with the vices of men, but in many important respects essentially of the divine race. In my Pantheon, Pan still reigns in his pristine glory, with his ruddy face, his flowing beard, and his shaggy body, his pipe and his crook, his nymph Echo, and his chosen daughter Iambe; for the great god Pan is not dead, as was rumored. No god ever dies. Perhaps of all the gods of New England and of ancient Greece, I am most constant at his shrine.

It seems to me that the god that is commonly worshipped in civilized countries is not at all divine, though he bears a divine name, but is the overwhelming authority and respectability of mankind combined. Men reverence one another, not yet God. If I thought that I could speak with discrimination and impartiality of the nations of Christendom, I should praise them, but it tasks me too much. They seem to be the most civil and humane, but I may be mistaken. Every people have gods to suit their circumstances; the Society Islanders had a god called Toahitu, "in shape like a dog; he saved such as were in danger of falling from rocks and trees." I think that we can do

without him, as we have not much climbing to do. Among them a man could make himself a god out of a piece of wood in a few minutes, which would frighten him out of his wits.

I fancy that some indefatigable spinster of the old school, who had the supreme felicity to be born in "days that tried men's souls," hearing this, may say with Nestor, another of the old school, "But you are younger than I. For time was when I conversed with greater men than you. For not at any time have I seen such men, nor shall see them, as Perithous, and Dryas, and <poimena laon>," that is probably Washington, sole "Shepherd of the People." And when Apollo has now six times rolled westward, or seemed to roll, and now for the seventh time shows his face in the east, eyes wellnigh glazed, long glassed, which have fluctuated only between lamb's wool and worsted, explore ceaselessly some good sermon book. For six days shalt thou labor and do all thy knitting, but on the seventh, forsooth, thy reading. Happy we who can bask in this warm September sun, which illumines all creatures, as well when they rest as when they toil, not without a feeling of gratitude; whose life is as blameless, how blameworthy soever it may be, on the Lord's Mona-day as on his Suna-day.

There are various, nay, incredible faiths; why should we be alarmed at any of them? What man believes, God believes. Long as I have lived, and many blasphemers as I have heard and seen, I have never yet heard or witnessed any direct and conscious blasphemy or irreverence; but of indirect and habitual, enough. Where is the man who is guilty of direct and personal insolence to Him that made him?

One memorable addition to the old mythology is due to this era, — the Christian fable. With what pains, and tears, and blood these centuries have woven this and added it to the mythology of mankind. The new Prometheus. With what miraculous consent, and patience, and persistency has this mythus been stamped on the memory of the race! It would seem as if it were in the progress of our mythology to dethrone Jehovah, and crown Christ in his stead.

If it is not a tragical life we live, then I know not what to call it. Such a story as that of Jesus Christ, — the history of Jerusalem, say, being a part of the Universal History. The naked, the embalmed, unburied death of Jerusalem amid its desolate hills, — think of it. In

Tasso's poem I trust some things are sweetly buried. Consider the snappish tenacity with which they preach Christianity still. What are time and space to Christianity, eighteen hundred years, and a new world? — that the humble life of a Jewish peasant should have force to make a New York bishop so bigoted. Forty-four lamps, the gift of kings, now burning in a place called the Holy Sepulchre; — a church-bell ringing; — some unaffected tears shed by a pilgrim on Mount Calvary within the week. —

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, when I forget thee, may my right hand forget her cunning."

"By the waters of Babylon there we sat down, and we wept when we remembered Zion."

I trust that some may be as near and dear to Buddha, or Christ, or Swedenborg, who are without the pale of their churches. It is necessary not to be Christian to appreciate the beauty and significance of the life of Christ. I know that some will have hard thoughts of me, when they hear their Christ named beside my Buddha, yet I am sure that I am willing they should love their Christ more than my Buddha, for the love is the main thing, and I like him too. "God is the letter Ku, as well as Khu." Why need Christians be still intolerant and superstitious? The simple-minded sailors were unwilling to cast overboard Jonah at his own request. —

"Where is this love become in later age?
Alas! 'tis gone in endless pilgrimage
From hence, and never to return, I doubt,
Till revolution wheel those times about."

One man says, —

"The world's a popular disease, that reigns
Within the froward heart and frantic brains
Of poor distempered mortals."

Another, that

"all the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players."

The world is a strange place for a playhouse to stand within it. Old Drayton thought that a man that lived here, and would be a poet, for instance, should have in him certain "brave, translunary things," and a "fine madness" should possess his brain. Certainly it were as well, that he might be up to the occasion. That is a superfluous wonder, which Dr. Johnson expresses at the assertion of Sir Thomas Browne that "his life has been a miracle of thirty years, which to relate, were not history but a piece of poetry, and would sound like a fable." The wonder is, rather, that all men do not assert as much. That would be a rare praise, if it were true, which was addressed to Francis Beaumont,— "Spectators sate part in your tragedies."

Think what a mean and wretched place this world is; that half the time we have to light a lamp that we may see to live in it. This is half our life. Who would undertake the enterprise if it were all? And, pray, what more has day to offer? A lamp that burns more clear, a purer oil, say winter-strained, that so we may pursue our idleness with less obstruction. Bribed with a little sunlight and a few prismatic tints, we bless our Maker, and stave off his wrath with hymns.

I make ye an offer,
Ye gods, hear the scoffer,
The scheme will not hurt you,
If ye will find goodness, I will find virtue.
Though I am your creature,
And child of your nature,
I have pride still unbended,
And blood undescended,
Some free independence,
And my own descendants.
I cannot toil blindly,
Though ye behave kindly,
And I swear by the rood,
I'll be slave to no God.
If ye will deal plainly,
I will strive mainly,
If ye will discover,

Great plans to your lover,
And give him a sphere
Somewhat larger than here.

"Verily, my angels! I was abashed on account of my servant, who had no Providence but me; therefore did I pardon him." — *The Gulistan of Sadi.*

Most people with whom I talk, men and women even of some originality and genius, have their scheme of the universe all cut and dried, — very *dry*, I assure you, to hear, dry enough to burn, dry-rotted and powder-post, methinks, — which they set up between you and them in the shortest intercourse; an ancient and tottering frame with all its boards blown off. They do not walk without their bed. Some, to me, seemingly very unimportant and unsubstantial things and relations, are for them everlastingly settled, — as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the like. These are like the everlasting hills to them. But in all my wanderings I never came across the least vestige of authority for these things. They have not left so distinct a trace as the delicate flower of a remote geological period on the coal in my grate. The wisest man preaches no doctrines; he has no scheme; he sees no rafter, not even a cobweb, against the heavens. It is clear sky. If I ever see more clearly at one time than at another, the medium through which I see is clearer. To see from earth to heaven, and see there standing, still a fixture, that old Jewish scheme! What right have you to hold up this obstacle to my understanding you, to your understanding me! You did not invent it; it was imposed on you. Examine your authority. Even Christ, we fear, had his scheme, his conformity to tradition, which slightly vitiates his teaching. He had not swallowed all formulas. He preached some mere doctrines. As for me, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are now only the subtilest imaginable essences, which would not stain the morning sky. Your scheme must be the framework of the universe; all other schemes will soon be ruins. The perfect God in his revelations of himself has never got to the length of one such proposition as you, his prophets, state. Have you learned the alphabet of heaven and can count three? Do you know the number of God's family? Can you put mysteries into words? Do you presume to fable of the ineffable? Pray, what

geographer are you, that speak of heaven's topography? Whose friend are you that speak of God's personality? Do you, Miles Howard, think that he has made you his confidant? Tell me of the height of the mountains of the moon, or of the diameter of space, and I may believe you, but of the secret history of the Almighty, and I shall pronounce thee mad. Yet we have a sort of family history of our God, — so have the Tahitians of theirs, — and some old poet's grand imagination is imposed on us as adamantine everlasting truth, and God's own word! Pythagoras says, truly enough, "A true assertion respecting God, is an assertion of God"; but we may well doubt if there is any example of this in literature.

The New Testament is an invaluable book, though I confess to having been slightly prejudiced against it in my very early days by the church and the Sabbath school, so that it seemed, before I read it, to be the yellowest book in the catalogue. Yet I early escaped from their meshes. It was hard to get the commentaries out of one's head and taste its true flavor. — I think that Pilgrim's Progress is the best sermon which has been preached from this text; almost all other sermons that I have heard, or heard of, have been but poor imitations of this. — It would be a poor story to be prejudiced against the Life of Christ because the book has been edited by Christians. In fact, I love this book rarely, though it is a sort of castle in the air to me, which I am permitted to dream. Having come to it so recently and freshly, it has the greater charm, so that I cannot find any to talk with about it. I never read a novel, they have so little real life and thought in them. The reading which I love best is the scriptures of the several nations, though it happens that I am better acquainted with those of the Hindoos, the Chinese, and the Persians, than of the Hebrews, which I have come to last. Give me one of these Bibles and you have silenced me for a while. When I recover the use of my tongue, I am wont to worry my neighbors with the new sentences; but commonly they cannot see that there is any wit in them. Such has been my experience with the New Testament. I have not yet got to the crucifixion, I have read it over so many times. I should love dearly to read it aloud to my friends, some of whom are seriously inclined; it is so good, and I am sure that they have never heard it, it fits their case exactly, and we should enjoy it so much together, — but I

instinctively despair of getting their ears. They soon show, by signs not to be mistaken, that it is inexpressibly wearisome to them. I do not mean to imply that I am any better than my neighbors; for, alas! I know that I am only as good, though I love better books than they.

It is remarkable that, notwithstanding the universal favor with which the New Testament is outwardly received, and even the bigotry with which it is defended, there is no hospitality shown to, there is no appreciation of, the order of truth with which it deals. I know of no book that has so few readers. There is none so truly strange, and heretical, and unpopular. To Christians, no less than Greeks and Jews, it is foolishness and a stumbling-block. There are, indeed, severe things in it which no man should read aloud more than once.— "Seek first the kingdom of heaven."— "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth."— "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."— "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" — Think of this, Yankees!— "Verily, I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." — Think of repeating these things to a New England audience! thirdly, fourthly, fifteenthly, till there are three barrels of sermons! Who, without cant, can read them aloud? Who, without cant, can hear them, and not go out of the meeting-house? They never *were* read, they never *were* heard. Let but one of these sentences be rightly read, from any pulpit in the land, and there would not be left one stone of that meeting-house upon another.

Yet the New Testament treats of man and man's so-called spiritual affairs too exclusively, and is too constantly moral and personal, to alone content me, who am not interested solely in man's religious or moral nature, or in man even. I have not the most definite designs on the future. Absolutely speaking, Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you, is by no means a golden rule, but the best of current silver. An honest man would have but little occasion for it. It is golden not to have any rule at all in such a case. The book has never been written which is to be accepted without any

allowance. Christ was a sublime actor on the stage of the world. He knew what he was thinking of when he said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." I draw near to him at such a time. Yet he taught mankind but imperfectly how to live; his thoughts were all directed toward another world. There is another kind of success than his. Even here we have a sort of living to get, and must buffet it somewhat longer. There are various tough problems yet to solve, and we must make shift to live, betwixt spirit and matter, such a human life as we can.

A healthy man, with steady employment, as wood-chopping at fifty cents a cord, and a camp in the woods, will not be a good subject for Christianity. The New Testament may be a choice book to him on some, but not on all or most of his days. He will rather go a-fishing in his leisure hours. The Apostles, though they were fishers too, were of the solemn race of sea-fishers, and never trolled for pickerel on inland streams.

Men have a singular desire to be good without being good for anything, because, perchance, they think vaguely that so it will be good for them in the end. The sort of morality which the priests inculcate is a very subtle policy, far finer than the politicians, and the world is very successfully ruled by them as the policemen. It is not worth the while to let our imperfections disturb us always. The conscience really does not, and ought not to monopolize the whole of our lives, any more than the heart or the head. It is as liable to disease as any other part. I have seen some whose consciences, owing undoubtedly to former indulgence, had grown to be as irritable as spoilt children, and at length gave them no peace. They did not know when to swallow their cud, and their lives of course yielded no milk.

Conscience is instinct bred in the house,
Feeling and Thinking propagate the sin
By an unnatural breeding in and in.
I say, Turn it out doors,
Into the moors.
I love a life whose plot is simple,
And does not thicken with every pimple,
A soul so sound no sickly conscience binds it,

That makes the universe no worse than ‘t finds it.
I love an earnest soul,
Whose mighty joy and sorrow
Are not drowned in a bowl,
And brought to life to-morrow;
That lives one tragedy,
And not seventy;
A conscience worth keeping,
Laughing not weeping;
A conscience wise and steady,
And forever ready;
Not changing with events,
Dealing in compliments;
A conscience exercised about
Large things, where one *may* doubt.
I love a soul not all of wood,
Predestinated to be good,
But true to the backbone
Unto itself alone,
And false to none;
Born to its own affairs,
Its own joys and own cares;
By whom the work which God begun
Is finished, and not undone;
Taken up where he left off,
Whether to worship or to scoff;
If not good, why then evil,
If not good god, good devil.
Goodness! — you hypocrite, come out of that,
Live your life, do your work, then take your hat.
I have no patience towards
Such conscientious cowards.
Give me simple laboring folk,
Who love their work,
Whose virtue is a song
To cheer God along.

I was once reproved by a minister who was driving a poor beast to some meeting-house horse-sheds among the hills of New Hampshire, because I was bending my steps to a mountain-top on the Sabbath, instead of a church, when I would have gone farther than he to hear a true word spoken on that or any day. He declared that I was "breaking the Lord's fourth commandment," and proceeded to enumerate, in a sepulchral tone, the disasters which had befallen him whenever he had done any ordinary work on the Sabbath. He really thought that a god was on the watch to trip up those men who followed any secular work on this day, and did not see that it was the evil conscience of the workers that did it. The country is full of this superstition, so that when one enters a village, the church, not only really but from association, is the ugliest looking building in it, because it is the one in which human nature stoops the lowest and is most disgraced. Certainly, such temples as these shall erelong cease to deform the landscape. There are few things more disheartening and disgusting than when you are walking the streets of a strange village on the Sabbath, to hear a preacher shouting like a boatswain in a gale of wind, and thus harshly profaning the quiet atmosphere of the day. You fancy him to have taken off his coat, as when men are about to do hot and dirty work.

If I should ask the minister of Middlesex to let me speak in his pulpit on a Sunday, he would object, because I do not *pray* as he does, or because I am not *ordained*. What under the sun are these things?

Really, there is no infidelity, now-a-days, so great as that which prays, and keeps the Sabbath, and rebuilds the churches. The sealer of the South Pacific preaches a truer doctrine. The church is a sort of hospital for men's souls, and as full of quackery as the hospital for their bodies. Those who are taken into it live like pensioners in their Retreat or Sailor's Sung Harbor, where you may see a row of religious cripples sitting outside in sunny weather. Let not the apprehension that he may one day have to occupy a ward therein, discourage the cheerful labors of the able-souled man. While he remembers the sick in their extremities, let him not look thither as to his goal. One is sick at heart of this pagoda worship. It is like the beating of gongs in a Hindoo subterranean temple. In dark places and

dungeons the preacher's words might perhaps strike root and grow, but not in broad daylight in any part of the world that I know. The sound of the Sabbath bell far away, now breaking on these shores, does not awaken pleasing associations, but melancholy and sombre ones rather. One involuntarily rests on his oar, to humor his unusually meditative mood. It is as the sound of many catechisms and religious books twanging a canting peal round the earth, seeming to issue from some Egyptian temple and echo along the shore of the Nile, right opposite to Pharaoh's palace and Moses in the bulrushes, startling a multitude of storks and alligators basking in the sun.

Everywhere "good men" sound a retreat, and the word has gone forth to fall back on innocence. Fall forward rather on to whatever there is there. Christianity only hopes. It has hung its harp on the willows, and cannot sing a song in a strange land. It has dreamed a sad dream, and does not yet welcome the morning with joy. The mother tells her falsehoods to her child, but, thank Heaven, the child does not grow up in its parent's shadow. Our mother's faith has not grown with her experience. Her experience has been too much for her. The lesson of life was too hard for her to learn.

It is remarkable, that almost all speakers and writers feel it to be incumbent on them, sooner or later, to prove or to acknowledge the personality of God. Some Earl of Bridgewater, thinking it better late than never, has provided for it in his will. It is a sad mistake. In reading a work on agriculture, we have to skip the author's moral reflections, and the words "Providence" and "He" scattered along the page, to come at the profitable level of what he has to say. What he calls his religion is for the most part offensive to the nostrils. He should know better than expose himself, and keep his foul sores covered till they are quite healed. There is more religion in men's science than there is science in their religion. Let us make haste to the report of the committee on swine.

A man's real faith is never contained in his creed, nor is his creed an article of his faith. The last is never adopted. This it is that permits him to smile ever, and to live even as bravely as he does. And yet he clings anxiously to his creed, as to a straw, thinking that that does him good service because his sheet anchor does not drag.

In most men's religion, the ligature, which should be its umbilical

cord connecting them with divinity, is rather like that thread which the accomplices of Cylon held in their hands when they went abroad from the temple of Minerva, the other end being attached to the statue of the goddess. But frequently, as in their case, the thread breaks, being stretched, and they are left without an asylum.

"A good and pious man reclined his head on the bosom of contemplation, and was absorbed in the ocean of a revery. At the instant when he awaked from his vision, one of his friends, by way of pleasantry, said, What rare gift have you brought us from that garden, where you have been recreating? He replied, I fancied to myself and said, when I can reach the rose-bower, I will fill my lap with the flowers, and bring them as a present to my friends; but when I got there, the fragrance of the roses so intoxicated me, that the skirt dropped from my hands. —— `O bird of dawn! learn the warmth of affection from the moth; for that scorched creature gave up the ghost, and uttered not a groan: These vain pretenders are ignorant of him they seek after; for of him that knew him we never heard again: — O thou! who towerest above the flights of conjecture, opinion, and comprehension; whatever has been reported of thee we have heard and read; the congregation is dismissed, and life drawn to a close; and we still rest at our first encomium of thee!'" — *Sadi*.

By noon we were let down into the Merrimack through the locks at Middlesex, just above Pawtucket Falls, by a serene and liberal-minded man, who came quietly from his book, though his duties, we supposed, did not require him to open the locks on Sundays. With him we had a just and equal encounter of the eyes, as between two honest men.

The movements of the eyes express the perpetual and unconscious courtesy of the parties. It is said, that a rogue does not look you in the face, neither does an honest man look at you as if he had his reputation to establish. I have seen some who did not know when to turn aside their eyes in meeting yours. A truly confident and magnanimous spirit is wiser than to contend for the mastery in such encounters. Serpents alone conquer by the steadiness of their gaze. My friend looks me in the face and sees me, that is all.

The best relations were at once established between us and this man, and though few words were spoken, he could not conceal a

visible interest in us and our excursion. He was a lover of the higher mathematics, as we found, and in the midst of some vast sunny problem, when we overtook him and whispered our conjectures. By this man we were presented with the freedom of the Merrimack. We now felt as if we were fairly launched on the ocean-stream of our voyage, and were pleased to find that our boat would float on Merrimack water. We began again busily to put in practice those old arts of rowing, steering, and paddling. It seemed a strange phenomenon to us that the two rivers should mingle their waters so readily, since we had never associated them in our thoughts.

As we glided over the broad bosom of the Merrimack, between Chelmsford and Dracut, at noon, here a quarter of a mile wide, the rattling of our oars was echoed over the water to those villages, and their slight sounds to us. Their harbors lay as smooth and fairy-like as the Lido, or Syracuse, or Rhodes, in our imagination, while, like some strange roving craft, we flitted past what seemed the dwellings of noble home-staying men, seemingly as conspicuous as if on an eminence, or floating upon a tide which came up to those villagers' breasts. At a third of a mile over the water we heard distinctly some children repeating their catechism in a cottage near the shore, while in the broad shallows between, a herd of cows stood lashing their sides, and waging war with the flies.

Two hundred years ago other catechizing than this was going on here; for here came the Sachem Wannalancet, and his people, and sometimes Tahatawan, our Concord Sachem, who afterwards had a church at home, to catch fish at the falls; and here also came John Eliot, with the Bible and Catechism, and Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, and other tracts, done into the Massachusetts tongue, and taught them Christianity meanwhile. "This place," says Gookin, referring to Wamesit,

"being an ancient and capital seat of Indians, they come to fish; and this good man takes this opportunity to spread the net of the gospel, to fish for their souls."— "May 5th, 1674," he continues, "according to our usual custom, Mr. Eliot and myself took our journey to Wamesit, or Pawtuckett; and arriving there that evening, Mr. Eliot preached to as many of them as could be got together, out of Matt. xxii. 1-14, the parable of the marriage of the king's son. We

met at the wigwam of one called Wannalancet, about two miles from the town, near Pawtuckett falls, and bordering upon Merrimak river. This person, Wannalancet, is the eldest son of old Pasaconaway, the chiefest sachem of Pawtuckett. He is a sober and grave person, and of years, between fifty and sixty. He hath been always loving and friendly to the English." As yet, however, they had not prevailed on him to embrace the Christian religion. "But at this time," says Gookin, "May 6, 1674,"— "after some deliberation and serious pause, he stood up, and made a speech to this effect: — `I must acknowledge I have, all my days, used to pass in an old canoe, (alluding to his frequent custom to pass in a canoe upon the river,) and now you exhort me to change and leave my old canoe, and embark in a new canoe, to which I have hitherto been unwilling; but now I yield up myself to your advice, and enter into a new canoe, and do engage to pray to God hereafter.'" One "Mr. Richard Daniel, a gentleman that lived in Billerica," who with other "persons of quality" was present, "desired brother Eliot to tell the sachem from him, that it may be, while he went in his old canoe, he passed in a quiet stream; but the end thereof was death and destruction to soul and body. But now he went into a new canoe, perhaps he would meet with storms and trials, but yet he should be encouraged to persevere, for the end of his voyage would be everlasting rest."— "Since that time, I hear this sachem doth persevere, and is a constant and diligent hearer of God's word, and sanctifieth the Sabbath, though he doth travel to Wamesit meeting every Sabbath, which is above two miles; and though sundry of his people have deserted him, since he subjected to the gospel, yet he continues and persists." — *Gookin's Hist. Coll. of the Indians in New England*, 1674.

Already, as appears from the records, "At a General Court held at Boston in New England, the 7th of the first month, 1643-4."— "Wassamequin, Nashoonon, Kutchamaquin, Massaconomet, and Squaw Sachem, did voluntarily submit themselves" to the English; and among other things did "promise to be willing from time to time to be instructed in the knowledge of God." Being asked "Not to do any unnecessary work on the Sabbath day, especially within the gates of Christian towns," they answered, "It is easy to them; they have not much to do on any day, and they can well take their rest on that

day."— "So," says Winthrop, in his Journal, "we causing them to understand the articles, and all the ten commandments of God, and they freely assenting to all, they were solemnly received, and then presented the Court with twenty-six fathom more of wampom; and the Court gave each of them a coat of two yards of cloth, and their dinner; and to them and their men, every of them, a cup of sack at their departure; so they took leave and went away."

What journeyings on foot and on horseback through the wilderness, to preach the Gospel to these minks and muskrats! who first, no doubt, listened with their red ears out of a natural hospitality and courtesy, and afterward from curiosity or even interest, till at length there were "praying Indians," and, as the General Court wrote to Cromwell, the "work is brought to this perfection, that some of the Indians themselves can pray and prophesy in a comfortable manner."

It was in fact an old battle and hunting ground through which we had been floating, the ancient dwelling-place of a race of hunters and warriors. Their weirs of stone, their arrowheads and hatchets, their pestles, and the mortars in which they pounded Indian corn before the white man had tasted it, lay concealed in the mud of the river bottom. Tradition still points out the spots where they took fish in the greatest numbers, by such arts as they possessed. It is a rapid story the historian will have to put together. Miantonimo, — Winthrop, — Webster. Soon he comes from Montaup to Bunker Hill, from bear-skins, parched corn, bows and arrows, to tiled roofs, wheat-fields, guns and swords. Pawtucket and Wamesit, where the Indians resorted in the fishing season, are now Lowell, the city of spindles and Manchester of America, which sends its cotton cloth round the globe. Even we youthful voyagers had spent a part of our lives in the village of Chelmsford, when the present city, whose bells we heard, was its obscure north district only, and the giant weaver was not yet fairly born. So old are we; so young is it.

We were thus entering the State of New Hampshire on the bosom of the flood formed by the tribute of its innumerable valleys. The river was the only key which could unlock its maze, presenting its hills and valleys, its lakes and streams, in their natural order and position. The MERRIMACK, or Sturgeon River, is formed by the confluence of the Pemigewasset, which rises near the Notch of the

White Mountains, and the Winnipiseogee, which drains the lake of the same name, signifying “The Smile of the Great Spirit.” From their junction it runs south seventy-eight miles to Massachusetts, and thence east thirty-five miles to the sea. I have traced its stream from where it bubbles out of the rocks of the White Mountains above the clouds, to where it is lost amid the salt billows of the ocean on Plum Island beach. At first it comes on murmuring to itself by the base of stately and retired mountains, through moist primitive woods whose juices it receives, where the bear still drinks it, and the cabins of settlers are far between, and there are few to cross its stream; enjoying in solitude its cascades still unknown to fame; by long ranges of mountains of Sandwich and of Squam, slumbering like tumuli of Titans, with the peaks of Moosehillock, the Haystack, and Kearsarge reflected in its waters; where the maple and the raspberry, those lovers of the hills, flourish amid temperate dews; — flowing long and full of meaning, but untranslatable as its name Pemigewasset, by many a pastured Pelion and Ossa, where unnamed muses haunt, tended by Oreads, Dryads, Naiads, and receiving the tribute of many an untasted Hippocrene. There are earth, air, fire, and water, — very well, this is water, and down it comes.

Such water do the gods distil,
And pour down every hill
For their New England men;
A draught of this wild nectar bring,
And I’ll not taste the spring
Of Helicon again.

Falling all the way, and yet not discouraged by the lowest fall. By the law of its birth never to become stagnant, for it has come out of the clouds, and down the sides of precipices worn in the flood, through beaver-dams broke loose, not splitting but splicing and mending itself, until it found a breathing-place in this low land. There is no danger now that the sun will steal it back to heaven again before it reach the sea, for it has a warrant even to recover its own dews into its bosom again with interest at every eve.

It was already the water of Squam and Newfound Lake and

Winnipiseogee, and White Mountain snow dissolved, on which we were floating, and Smith's and Baker's and Mad Rivers, and Nashua and Souhegan and Piscataquoag, and Suncook and Soucook and Contoocook, mingled in incalculable proportions, still fluid, yellowish, restless all, with an ancient, ineradicable inclination to the sea.

So it flows on down by Lowell and Haverhill, at which last place it first suffers a sea change, and a few masts betray the vicinity of the ocean. Between the towns of Amesbury and Newbury it is a broad commercial river, from a third to half a mile in width, no longer skirted with yellow and crumbling banks, but backed by high green hills and pastures, with frequent white beaches on which the fishermen draw up their nets. I have passed down this portion of the river in a steamboat, and it was a pleasant sight to watch from its deck the fishermen dragging their seines on the distant shore, as in pictures of a foreign strand. At intervals you may meet with a schooner laden with lumber, standing up to Haverhill, or else lying at anchor or aground, waiting for wind or tide; until, at last, you glide under the famous Chain Bridge, and are landed at Newburyport. Thus she who at first was "poore of waters, naked of renowne," having received so many fair tributaries, as was said of the Forth,

"Doth grow the greater still, the further downe;
Till that abounding both in power and fame,
She long doth strive to give the sea her name";

or if not her name, in this case, at least the impulse of her stream. From the steeples of Newburyport you may review this river stretching far up into the country, with many a white sail glancing over it like an inland sea, and behold, as one wrote who was born on its head-waters, "Down out at its mouth, the dark inky main blending with the blue above. Plum Island, its sand ridges scolloping along the horizon like the sea-serpent, and the distant outline broken by many a tall ship, leaning, *still*, against the sky."

Rising at an equal height with the Connecticut, the Merrimack reaches the sea by a course only half as long, and hence has no leisure to form broad and fertile meadows, like the former, but is

hurried along rapids, and down numerous falls, without long delay. The banks are generally steep and high, with a narrow interval reaching back to the hills, which is only rarely or partially overflown at present, and is much valued by the farmers. Between Chelmsford and Concord, in New Hampshire, it varies from twenty to seventy-five rods in width. It is probably wider than it was formerly, in many places, owing to the trees having been cut down, and the consequent wasting away of its banks. The influence of the Pawtucket Dam is felt as far up as Cromwell's Falls, and many think that the banks are being abraded and the river filled up again by this cause. Like all our rivers, it is liable to freshets, and the Pemigewasset has been known to rise twenty-five feet in a few hours. It is navigable for vessels of burden about twenty miles; for canal-boats, by means of locks, as far as Concord in New Hampshire, about seventy-five miles from its mouth; and for smaller boats to Plymouth, one hundred and thirteen miles. A small steamboat once plied between Lowell and Nashua, before the railroad was built, and one now runs from Newburyport to Haverhill.

Unfitted to some extent for the purposes of commerce by the sand-bar at its mouth, see how this river was devoted from the first to the service of manufactures. Issuing from the iron region of Franconia, and flowing through still uncut forests, by inexhaustible ledges of granite, with Squam, and Winnipiseogee, and Newfound, and Massabesic Lakes for its mill-ponds, it falls over a succession of natural dams, where it has been offering its *privileges* in vain for ages, until at last the Yankee race came to *improve* them. Standing at its mouth, look up its sparkling stream to its source, — a silver cascade which falls all the way from the White Mountains to the sea, — and behold a city on each successive plateau, a busy colony of human beaver around every fall. Not to mention Newburyport and Haverhill, see Lawrence, and Lowell, and Nashua, and Manchester, and Concord, gleaming one above the other. When at length it has escaped from under the last of the factories, it has a level and unmolested passage to the sea, a mere *waste water*, as it were, bearing little with it but its fame; its pleasant course revealed by the morning fog which hangs over it, and the sails of the few small vessels which transact the commerce of Haverhill and Newburyport.

But its real vessels are railroad cars, and its true and main stream, flowing by an iron channel farther south, may be traced by a long line of vapor amid the hills, which no morning wind ever disperses, to where it empties into the sea at Boston. This side is the louder murmur now. Instead of the scream of a fish-hawk scaring the fishes, is heard the whistle of the steam-engine, arousing a country to its progress.

This river too was at length discovered by the white man, "trending up into the land," he knew not how far, possibly an inlet to the South Sea. Its valley, as far as the Winnipiseogee, was first surveyed in 1652. The first settlers of Massachusetts supposed that the Connecticut, in one part of its course, ran northwest, "so near the great lake as the Indians do pass their canoes into it over land." From which lake and the "hideous swamps" about it, as they supposed, came all the beaver that was traded between Virginia and Canada, — and the Potomac was thought to come out of or from very near it. Afterward the Connecticut came so near the course of the Merrimack that, with a little pains, they expected to divert the current of the trade into the latter river, and its profits from their Dutch neighbors into their own pockets.

Unlike the Concord, the Merrimack is not a dead but a living stream, though it has less life within its waters and on its banks. It has a swift current, and, in this part of its course, a clayey bottom, almost no weeds, and comparatively few fishes. We looked down into its yellow water with the more curiosity, who were accustomed to the Nile-like blackness of the former river. Shad and alewives are taken here in their season, but salmon, though at one time more numerous than shad, are now more rare. Bass, also, are taken occasionally; but locks and dams have proved more or less destructive to the fisheries. The shad make their appearance early in May, at the same time with the blossoms of the pyrus, one of the most conspicuous early flowers, which is for this reason called the shad-blossom. An insect called the shad-fly also appears at the same time, covering the houses and fences. We are told that "their greatest run is when the apple-trees are in full blossom. The old shad return in August; the young, three or four inches long, in September. These are very fond of flies." A rather picturesque and luxurious mode of

fishing was formerly practised on the Connecticut, at Bellows Falls, where a large rock divides the stream. “On the steep sides of the island rock,” says Belknap, “hang several arm-chairs, fastened to ladders, and secured by a counterpoise, in which fishermen sit to catch salmon and shad with dipping nets.” The remains of Indian weirs, made of large stones, are still to be seen in the Winnipiseogee, one of the head-waters of this river.

It cannot but affect our philosophy favorably to be reminded of these shoals of migratory fishes, of salmon, shad, alewives, marsh-bankers, and others, which penetrate up the innumerable rivers of our coast in the spring, even to the interior lakes, their scales gleaming in the sun; and again, of the fry which in still greater numbers wend their way downward to the sea. “And is it not pretty sport,” wrote Captain John Smith, who was on this coast as early as 1614, “to pull up twopence, sixpence, and twelvepence, as fast as you can haul and veer a line?”— “And what sport doth yield a more pleasing content, and less hurt or charge, than angling with a hook, and crossing the sweet air from isle to isle, over the silent streams of a calm sea.”

On the sandy shore, opposite the Glass-house village in Chelmsford, at the Great Bend where we landed to rest us and gather a few wild plums, we discovered the *Campanula rotundifolia*, a new flower to us, the harebell of the poets, which is common to both hemispheres, growing close to the water. Here, in the shady branches of an apple-tree on the sand, we took our nooning, where there was not a zephyr to disturb the repose of this glorious Sabbath day, and we reflected serenely on the long past and successful labors of Latona.

”So silent is the cessile air,
That every cry and call,
The hills, and dales, and forest fair
Again repeats them all.

”The herds beneath some leafy trees,
Amidst the flowers they lie,
The stable ships upon the seas
Tend up their sails to dry.”

As we thus rested in the shade, or rowed leisurely along, we had recourse, from time to time, to the Gazetteer, which was our Navigator, and from its bald natural facts extracted the pleasure of poetry. Beaver River comes in a little lower down, draining the meadows of Pelham, Windham, and Londonderry. The Scotch-Irish settlers of the latter town, according to this authority, were the first to introduce the potato into New England, as well as the manufacture of linen cloth.

Everything that is printed and bound in a book contains some echo at least of the best that is in literature. Indeed, the best books have a use, like sticks and stones, which is above or beside their design, not anticipated in the preface, nor concluded in the appendix. Even Virgil's poetry serves a very different use to me to-day from what it did to his contemporaries. It has often an acquired and accidental value merely, proving that man is still man in the world. It is pleasant to meet with such still lines as,

"Jam laeto turgent in palmite gemmae";
Now the buds swell on the joyful stem.

"Strata jacent passim sua quaeque sub arbore poma";
The apples lie scattered everywhere, each under its tree.

In an ancient and dead language, any recognition of living nature attracts us. These are such sentences as were written while grass grew and water ran. It is no small recommendation when a book will stand the test of mere unobstructed sunshine and daylight.

What would we not give for some great poem to read now, which would be in harmony with the scenery, — for if men read aright, methinks they would never read anything but poems. No history nor philosophy can supply their place.

The wisest definition of poetry the poet will instantly prove false by setting aside its requisitions. We can, therefore, publish only our advertisement of it.

There is no doubt that the loftiest written wisdom is either rhymed, or in some way musically measured, — is, in form as well as substance, poetry; and a volume which should contain the

condensed wisdom of mankind need not have one rhythmless line.

Yet poetry, though the last and finest result, is a natural fruit. As naturally as the oak bears an acorn, and the vine a gourd, man bears a poem, either spoken or done. It is the chief and most memorable success, for history is but a prose narrative of poetic deeds. What else have the Hindoos, the Persians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians done, that can be told? It is the simplest relation of phenomena, and describes the commonest sensations with more truth than science does, and the latter at a distance slowly mimics its style and methods. The poet sings how the blood flows in his veins. He performs his functions, and is so well that he needs such stimulus to sing only as plants to put forth leaves and blossoms. He would strive in vain to modulate the remote and transient music which he sometimes hears, since his song is a vital function like breathing, and an integral result like weight. It is not the overflowing of life but its subsidence rather, and is drawn from under the feet of the poet. It is enough if Homer but say the sun sets. He is as serene as nature, and we can hardly detect the enthusiasm of the bard. It is as if nature spoke. He presents to us the simplest pictures of human life, so the child itself can understand them, and the man must not think twice to appreciate his naturalness. Each reader discovers for himself that, with respect to the simpler features of nature, succeeding poets have done little else than copy his similes. His more memorable passages are as naturally bright as gleams of sunshine in misty weather. Nature furnishes him not only with words, but with stereotyped lines and sentences from her mint.

”As from the clouds appears the full moon,
All shining, and then again it goes behind the shadowy clouds,
So Hector, at one time appeared among the foremost,
And at another in the rear, commanding; and all with brass
He shone, like to the lightning of aegis-bearing Zeus.”

He conveys the least information, even the hour of the day, with such magnificence and vast expense of natural imagery, as if it were a message from the gods.

”While it was dawn, and sacred day was advancing,
For that space the weapons of both flew fast, and the people fell;
But when now the woodcutter was preparing his morning meal,
In the recesses of the mountain, and had wearied his hands
With cutting lofty trees, and satiety came to his mind,
And the desire of sweet food took possession of his thoughts;
Then the Danaans, by their valor, broke the phalanxes,
Shouting to their companions from rank to rank.”

When the army of the Trojans passed the night under arms, keeping watch lest the enemy should re-embark under cover of the dark,

”They, thinking great things, upon the neutral ground of war
Sat all the night; and many fires burned for them.
As when in the heavens the stars round the bright moon
Appear beautiful, and the air is without wind;
And all the heights, and the extreme summits,
And the wooded sides of the mountains appear; and from the
heavens an Infinite ether is diffused,
And all the stars are seen, and the shepherd rejoices in his heart;
So between the ships and the streams of Xanthus
Appeared the fires of the Trojans before Ilium.
A thousand fires burned on the plain, and by each
Sat fifty, in the light of the blazing fire;
And horses eating white barley and corn,
Standing by the chariots, awaited fair-throned Aurora.”

The “white-armed goddess Juno,” sent by the Father of gods and men for Iris and Apollo,

”Went down the Idaean mountains to far Olympus,
As when the mind of a man, who has come over much earth,
Sallies forth, and he reflects with rapid thoughts,
There was I, and there, and remembers many things;
So swiftly the august Juno hastening flew through the air,
And came to high Olympus.”

His scenery is always true, and not invented. He does not leap in imagination from Asia to Greece, through mid air,

<epeie` ma'la polla` metaxy'
Ourea' te skioe'nta, thala'ssa te *ech*e'essa.>

for there are very many
Shady mountains and resounding seas between.

If his messengers repair but to the tent of Achilles, we do not wonder how they got there, but accompany them step by step along the shore of the resounding sea. Nestor's account of the march of the Pylians against the Epeians is extremely lifelike: —

"Then rose up to them sweet-worded Nestor, the shrill orator
of the Pylians,
And words sweeter than honey flowed from his tongue."

This time, however, he addresses Patroclus alone: "A certain river, Minyas by name, leaps seaward near to Arene, where we Pylians wait the dawn, both horse and foot. Thence with all haste we sped us on the morrow ere 't was noonday, accoutred for the fight, even to Alpheus's sacred source," &c. We fancy that we hear the subdued murmuring of the Minyas discharging its waters into the main the livelong night, and the hollow sound of the waves breaking on the shore, — until at length we are cheered at the close of a toilsome march by the gurgling fountains of Alpheus.

There are few books which are fit to be remembered in our wisest hours, but the Iliad is brightest in the serenest days, and embodies still all the sunlight that fell on Asia Minor. No modern joy or ecstasy of ours can lower its height or dim its lustre, but there it lies in the east of literature, as it were the earliest and latest production of the mind. The ruins of Egypt oppress and stifle us with their dust, foulness preserved in cassia and pitch, and swathed in linen; the death of that which never lived. But the rays of Greek poetry struggle down to us, and mingle with the sunbeams of the recent day. The statue of Memnon is cast down, but the shaft of the Iliad still meets

the sun in his rising.

”Homer is gone; and where is Jove? and where
The rival cities seven? His song outlives
Time, tower, and god, — all that then was, save Heaven.”

So too, no doubt, Homer had his Homer, and Orpheus his Orpheus, in the dim antiquity which preceded them. The mythological system of the ancients, and it is still the mythology of the moderns, the poem of mankind, interwoven so wonderfully with their astronomy, and matching in grandeur and harmony the architecture of the heavens themselves, seems to point to a time when a mightier genius inhabited the earth. But, after all, man is the great poet, and not Homer nor Shakespeare; and our language itself, and the common arts of life, are his work. Poetry is so universally true and independent of experience, that it does not need any particular biography to illustrate it, but we refer it sooner or later to some Orpheus or Linus, and after ages to the genius of humanity and the gods themselves.

It would be worth the while to select our reading, for books are the society we keep; to read only the serenely true; never statistics, nor fiction, nor news, nor reports, nor periodicals, but only great poems, and when they failed, read them again, or perchance write more. Instead of other sacrifice, we might offer up our perfect (<telei'a>) thoughts to the gods daily, in hymns or psalms. For we should be at the helm at least once a day. The whole of the day should not be daytime; there should be one hour, if no more, which the day did not bring forth. Scholars are wont to sell their birthright for a mess of learning. But is it necessary to know what the speculator prints, or the thoughtless study, or the idle read, the literature of the Russians and the Chinese, or even French philosophy and much of German criticism. Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all. “There are the worshippers with offerings, and the worshippers with mortifications; and again the worshippers with enthusiastic devotion; so there are those the wisdom of whose reading is their worship, men of subdued passions and severe manners; — This world is not for him who doth not

worship; and where, O Arjoon, is there another?" Certainly, we do not need to be soothed and entertained always like children. He who resorts to the easy novel, because he is languid, does no better than if he took a nap. The front aspect of great thoughts can only be enjoyed by those who stand on the side whence they arrive. Books, not which afford us a cowering enjoyment, but in which each thought is of unusual daring; such as an idle man cannot read, and a timid one would not be entertained by, which even make us dangerous to existing institutions, — such call I good books.

All that are printed and bound are not books; they do not necessarily belong to letters, but are oftener to be ranked with the other luxuries and appendages of civilized life. Base wares are palmed off under a thousand disguises. "The way to trade," as a pedler once told me, "is to *put it right through*," no matter what it is, anything that is agreed on.

"You grov'ling worldlings, you whose wisdom trades
Where light ne'er shot his golden ray."

By dint of able writing and pen-craft, books are cunningly compiled, and have their run and success even among the learned, as if they were the result of a new man's thinking, and their birth were attended with some natural throes. But in a little while their covers fall off, for no binding will avail, and it appears that they are not Books or Bibles at all. There are new and patented inventions in this shape, purporting to be for the elevation of the race, which many a pure scholar and genius who has learned to read is for a moment deceived by, and finds himself reading a horse-rake, or spinning-jenny, or wooden nutmeg, or oak-leaf cigar, or steam-power press, or kitchen range, perchance, when he was seeking serene and biblical truths.

"Merchants, arise,
And mingle conscience with your merchandise."

Paper is cheap, and authors need not now erase one book before they write another. Instead of cultivating the earth for wheat and

potatoes, they cultivate literature, and fill a place in the Republic of Letters. Or they would fain write for fame merely, as others actually raise crops of grain to be distilled into brandy. Books are for the most part wilfully and hastily written, as parts of a system, to supply a want real or imagined. Books of natural history aim commonly to be hasty schedules, or inventories of God's property, by some clerk. They do not in the least teach the divine view of nature, but the popular view, or rather the popular method of studying nature, and make haste to conduct the persevering pupil only into that dilemma where the professors always dwell.

"To Athens gowned he goes, and from that school
Returns unsped, a more instructed fool."

They teach the elements really of ignorance, not of knowledge, for, to speak deliberately and in view of the highest truths, it is not easy to distinguish elementary knowledge. There is a chasm between knowledge and ignorance which the arches of science can never span. A book should contain pure discoveries, glimpses of *terra firma*, though by shipwrecked mariners, and not the art of navigation by those who have never been out of sight of land. *They* must not yield wheat and potatoes, but must themselves be the unconstrained and natural harvest of their author's lives.

"What I have learned is mine; I've had my thought,
And me the Muses noble truths have taught."

We do not learn much from learned books, but from true, sincere, human books, from frank and honest biographies. The life of a good man will hardly improve us more than the life of a freebooter, for the inevitable laws appear as plainly in the infringement as in the observance, and our lives are sustained by a nearly equal expense of virtue of some kind. The decaying tree, while yet it lives, demands sun, wind, and rain no less than the green one. It secretes sap and performs the functions of health. If we choose, we may study the alburnum only. The gnarled stump has as tender a bud as the sapling.

At least let us have healthy books, a stout horse-rake or a kitchen

range which is not cracked. Let not the poet shed tears only for the public weal. He should be as vigorous as a sugar-maple, with sap enough to maintain his own verdure, beside what runs into the troughs, and not like a vine, which being cut in the spring bears no fruit, but bleeds to death in the endeavor to heal its wounds. The poet is he that hath fat enough, like bears and marmots, to suck his claws all winter. He hibernates in this world, and feeds on his own marrow. We love to think in winter, as we walk over the snowy pastures, of those happy dreamers that lie under the sod, of dormice and all that race of dormant creatures, which have such a superfluity of life enveloped in thick folds of fur, impervious to cold. Alas, the poet too is, in one sense, a sort of dormouse gone into winter quarters of deep and serene thoughts, insensible to surrounding circumstances; his words are the relation of his oldest and finest memory, a wisdom drawn from the remotest experience. Other men lead a starved existence, meanwhile, like hawks, that would fain keep on the wing, and trust to pick up a sparrow now and then.

There are already essays and poems, the growth of this land, which are not in vain, all which, however, we could conveniently have stowed in the till of our chest. If the gods permitted their own inspiration to be breathed in vain, these might be overlooked in the crowd, but the accents of truth are as sure to be heard at last on earth as in heaven. They already seem ancient, and in some measure have lost the traces of their modern birth. Here are they who

> ”ask for that which is our whole life’s light,
> For the perpetual, true and clear insight.”

I remember a few sentences which spring like the sward in its native pasture, where its roots were never disturbed, and not as if spread over a sandy embankment; answering to the poet’s prayer,

> ”Let us set so just
> A rate on knowledge, that the world may trust
> The poet’s sentence, and not still aver
> Each art is to itself a flatterer.”

But, above all, in our native port, did we not frequent the peaceful games of the Lyceum, from which a new era will be dated to New England, as from the games of Greece. For if Herodotus carried his history to Olympia to read, after the cestus and the race, have we not heard such histories recited there, which since our countrymen have read, as made Greece sometimes to be forgotten? — Philosophy, too, has there her grove and portico, not wholly unfrequented in these days.

Lately the victor, whom all Pindars praised, has won another palm, contending with

”Olympian bards who sung
Divine ideas below,
Which always find us young,
And always keep us so.”

What earth or sea, mountain or stream, or Muses’ spring or grove, is safe from his all-searching ardent eye, who drives off Phoebus’ beaten track, visits unwonted zones, makes the gelid Hyperboreans glow, and the old polar serpent writhe, and many a Nile flow back and hide his head!

That Phaeton of our day,
Who’d make another milky way,
And burn the world up with his ray;

By us an undisputed seer, —
Who’d drive his flaming car so near
Unto our shuddering mortal sphere,

Disgracing all our slender worth,
And scorching up the living earth,
To prove his heavenly birth.

The silver spokes, the golden tire,
Are glowing with unwonted fire,
And ever nigher roll and nigher;

The pins and axle melted are,
The silver radii fly afar,
Ah, he will spoil his Father's car!

Who let him have the steeds he cannot steer?
Henceforth the sun will not shine for a year;
And we shall Ethiops all appear.

From *his*
"lips of cunning fell The thrilling Delphic oracle."
And yet, sometimes,

We should not mind if on our ear there fell
Some less of cunning, more of oracle.

It is Apollo shining in your face. O rare Contemporary, let us have far-off heats. Give us the subtler, the heavenlier though fleeting beauty, which passes through and through, and dwells not in the verse; even pure water, which but reflects those tints which wine wears in its grain. Let epic trade-winds blow, and cease this waltz of inspirations. Let us oftener feel even the gentle southwest wind upon our cheeks blowing from the Indian's heaven. What though we lose a thousand meteors from the sky, if skyey depths, if star-dust and undissolvable nebulae remain? What though we lose a thousand wise responses of the oracle, if we may have instead some natural acres of Ionian earth?

Though we know well,

"That't is not in the power of kings [or presidents] to raise
A spirit for verse that is not born thereto,
Nor are they born in every prince's days";

yet spite of all they sang in praise of their "Eliza's reign," we have evidence that poets may be born and sing in *our* day, in the presidency of James K. Polk,

"And that the utmost powers of English rhyme,"
Were not "within *her* peaceful reign confined."

The prophecy of the poet Daniel is already how much more than fulfilled!

”And who in time knows whither we may vent
The treasure of our tongue? To what strange shores
This gain of our best glory shall be sent,
T’ enrich unknowing nations with our stores?
What worlds in th’ yet unformed occident,
May come refined with the accents that are ours.”

Enough has been said in these days of the charm of fluent writing. We hear it complained of some works of genius, that they have fine thoughts, but are irregular and have no flow. But even the mountain peaks in the horizon are, to the eye of science, parts of one range. We should consider that the flow of thought is more like a tidal wave than a prone river, and is the result of a celestial influence, not of any declivity in its channel. The river flows because it runs down hill, and flows the faster the faster it descends. The reader who expects to float down stream for the whole voyage, may well complain of nauseating swells and choppings of the sea when his frail shore-craft gets amidst the billows of the ocean stream, which flows as much to sun and moon as lesser streams to it. But if we would appreciate the flow that is in these books, we must expect to feel it rise from the page like an exhalation, and wash away our critical brains like burr millstones, flowing to higher levels above and behind ourselves. There is many a book which ripples on like a freshet, and flows as glibly as a mill-stream sucking under a causeway; and when their authors are in the full tide of their discourse, Pythagoras and Plato and Jamblichus halt beside them. Their long, stringy, slimy sentences are of that consistency that they naturally flow and run together. They read as if written for military men, for men of business, there is such a despatch in them. Compared with these, the grave thinkers and philosophers seem not to have got their swaddling-clothes off; they are slower than a Roman army in its march, the rear camping to-night where the van camped last night. The wise Jamblichus eddies and gleams like a watery slough.

”How many thousands never heard the name
Of Sidney, or of Spenser, or their books?
And yet brave fellows, and presume of fame,
And seem to bear down all the world with looks.”

The ready writer seizes the pen, and shouts, Forward! Alamo and Fanning! and after rolls the tide of war. The very walls and fences seem to travel. But the most rapid trot is no flow after all; and thither, reader, you and I, at least, will not follow.

A perfectly healthy sentence, it is true, is extremely rare. For the most part we miss the hue and fragrance of the thought; as if we could be satisfied with the dews of the morning or evening without their colors, or the heavens without their azure. The most attractive sentences are, perhaps, not the wisest, but the surest and roundest. They are spoken firmly and conclusively, as if the speaker had a right to know what he says, and if not wise, they have at least been well learned. Sir Walter Raleigh might well be studied if only for the excellence of his style, for he is remarkable in the midst of so many masters. There is a natural emphasis in his style, like a man’s tread, and a breathing space between the sentences, which the best of modern writing does not furnish. His chapters are like English parks, or say rather like a Western forest, where the larger growth keeps down the underwood, and one may ride on horseback through the openings. All the distinguished writers of that period possess a greater vigor and naturalness than the more modern, — for it is allowed to slander our own time, — and when we read a quotation from one of them in the midst of a modern author, we seem to have come suddenly upon a greener ground, a greater depth and strength of soil. It is as if a green bough were laid across the page, and we are refreshed as by the sight of fresh grass in midwinter or early spring. You have constantly the warrant of life and experience in what you read. The little that is said is eked out by implication of the much that was done. The sentences are verdurous and blooming as evergreen and flowers, because they are rooted in fact and experience, but our false and florid sentence have only the tints of flowers without their sap or roots. All men are really most attracted by the beauty of plain speech, and they even write in a florid style in imitation of this. They

prefer to be misunderstood rather than to come short of its exuberance. Hussein Effendi praised the epistolary style of Ibrahim Pasha to the French traveller Botta, because of "the difficulty of understanding it; there was," he said, "but one person at Jidda, who was capable of understanding and explaining the Pasha's correspondence." A man's whole life is taxed for the least thing well done. It is its net result. Every sentence is the result of a long probation. Where shall we look for standard English, but to the words of a standard man? The word which is best said came nearest to not being spoken at all, for it is cousin to a deed which the speaker could have better done. Nay, almost it must have taken the place of a deed by some urgent necessity, even by some misfortune, so that the truest writer will be some captive knight, after all. And perhaps the fates had such a design, when, having stored Raleigh so richly with the substance of life and experience, they made him a fast prisoner, and compelled him to make his words his deeds, and transfer to his expression the emphasis and sincerity of his action.

Men have a respect for scholarship and learning greatly out of proportion to the use they commonly serve. We are amused to read how Ben Jonson engaged, that the dull masks with which the royal family and nobility were to be entertained should be "grounded upon antiquity and solid learning." Can there be any greater reproach than an idle learning? Learn to split wood, at least. The necessity of labor and conversation with many men and things, to the scholar is rarely well remembered; steady labor with the hands, which engrosses the attention also, is unquestionably the best method of removing palaver and sentimentality out of one's style, both of speaking and writing. If he has worked hard from morning till night, though he may have grieved that he could not be watching the train of his thoughts during that time, yet the few hasty lines which at evening record his day's experience will be more musical and true than his freest but idle fancy could have furnished. Surely the writer is to address a world of laborers, and such therefore must be his own discipline. He will not idly dance at his work who has wood to cut and cord before nightfall in the short days of winter; but every stroke will be husbanded, and ring soberly through the wood; and so will the strokes of that scholar's pen, which at evening record the story of the day, ring

soberly, yet cheerily, on the ear of the reader, long after the echoes of his axe have died away. The scholar may be sure that he writes the tougher truth for the calluses on his palms. They give firmness to the sentence. Indeed, the mind never makes a great and successful effort, without a corresponding energy of the body. We are often struck by the force and precision of style to which hard-working men, unpractised in writing, easily attain when required to make the effort. As if plainness, and vigor, and sincerity, the ornaments of style, were better learned on the farm and in the workshop, than in the schools. The sentences written by such rude hands are nervous and tough, like hardened thongs, the sinews of the deer, or the roots of the pine. As for the graces of expression, a great thought is never found in a mean dress; but though it proceed from the lips of the Woloffs, the nine Muses and the three Graces will have conspired to clothe it in fit phrase. Its education has always been liberal, and its implied wit can endow a college. The world, which the Greeks called Beauty, has been made such by being gradually divested of every ornament which was not fitted to endure. The Sibyl, "speaking with inspired mouth, smileless, inornate, and unperfumed, pierces through centuries by the power of the god." The scholar might frequently emulate the propriety and emphasis of the farmer's call to his team, and confess that if that were written it would surpass his labored sentences. Whose are the truly *labored* sentences? From the weak and flimsy periods of the politician and literary man, we are glad to turn even to the description of work, the simple record of the month's labor in the farmer's almanac, to restore our tone and spirits. A sentence should read as if its author, had he held a plough instead of a pen, could have drawn a furrow deep and straight to the end. The scholar requires hard and serious labor to give an impetus to his thought. He will learn to grasp the pen firmly so, and wield it gracefully and effectively, as an axe or a sword. When we consider the weak and nerveless periods of some literary men, who perchance in feet and inches come up to the standard of their race, and are not deficient in girth also, we are amazed at the immense sacrifice of thews and sinews. What! these proportions, — these bones, — and this their work! Hands which could have felled an ox have hewed this fragile matter which would not have tasked a lady's fingers! Can

this be a stalwart man's work, who has a marrow in his back and a tendon Achilles in his heel? They who set up the blocks of Stonehenge did somewhat, if they only laid out their strength for once, and stretched themselves.

Yet, after all, the truly efficient laborer will not crowd his day with work, but will saunter to his task surrounded by a wide halo of ease and leisure, and then do but what he loves best. He is anxious only about the fruitful kernels of time. Though the hen should sit all day, she could lay only one egg, and, besides, would not have picked up materials for another. Let a man take time enough for the most trivial deed, though it be but the paring of his nails. The buds swell imperceptibly, without hurry or confusion, as if the short spring days were an eternity.

Then spend an age in whetting thy desire,
Thou needs't not *hasten* if thou dost *stand fast*.

Some hours seem not to be occasion for any deed, but for resolves to draw breath in. We do not directly go about the execution of the purpose that thrills us, but shut our doors behind us and ramble with prepared mind, as if the half were already done. Our resolution is taking root or hold on the earth then, as seeds first send a shoot downward which is fed by their own albumen, ere they send one upward to the light.

There is a sort of homely truth and naturalness in some books which is very rare to find, and yet looks cheap enough. There may be nothing lofty in the sentiment, or fine in the expression, but it is careless country talk. Homeliness is almost as great a merit in a book as in a house, if the reader would abide there. It is next to beauty, and a very high art. Some have this merit only. The scholar is not apt to make his most familiar experience come gracefully to the aid of his expression. Very few men can speak of Nature, for instance, with any truth. They overstep her modesty, somehow or other, and confer no favor. They do not speak a good word for her. Most cry better than they speak, and you can get more nature out of them by pinching than by addressing them. The surliness with which the woodchopper speaks of his woods, handling them as indifferently as

his axe, is better than the mealy-mouthed enthusiasm of the lover of nature. Better that the primrose by the river's brim be a yellow primrose, and nothing more, than that it be something less. Aubrey relates of Thomas Fuller that his was "a very working head, insomuch that, walking and meditating before dinner, he would eat up a penny loaf, not knowing that he did it. His natural memory was very great, to which he added the art of memory. He would repeat to you forwards and backwards all the signs from Ludgate to Charing Cross." He says of Mr. John Hales, that, "He loved Canarie," and was buried "under an altar monument of black marble —— —— with a too long epitaph"; of Edmund Halley, that he "at sixteen could make a dial, and then, he said, he thought himself a brave fellow"; of William Holder, who wrote a book upon his curing one Popham who was deaf and dumb, "he was beholding to no author; did only consult with nature." For the most part, an author consults only with all who have written before him upon a subject, and his book is but the advice of so many. But a good book will never have been forestalled, but the topic itself will in one sense be new, and its author, by consulting with nature, will consult not only with those who have gone before, but with those who may come after. There is always room and occasion enough for a true book on any subject; as there is room for more light the brightest day and more rays will not interfere with the first.

We thus worked our way up this river, gradually adjusting our thoughts to novelties, beholding from its placid bosom a new nature and new works of men, and, as it were with increasing confidence, finding nature still habitable, genial, and propitious to us; not following any beaten path, but the windings of the river, as ever the nearest way for us. Fortunately we had no business in this country. The Concord had rarely been a river, or *rivus*, but barely *fluvius*, or between *fluvius* and *lacus*. This Merrimack was neither *rivus* nor *fluvius* nor *lacus*, but rather *amnis* here, a gently swelling and stately rolling flood approaching the sea. We could even sympathize with its buoyant tide, going to seek its fortune in the ocean, and, anticipating the time when "being received within the plain of its freer water," it should "beat the shores for banks," —

"campoque recepta Liberioris aquae, pro ripis litora pulsant."

At length we doubled a low shrubby islet, called Rabbit Island, subjected alternately to the sun and to the waves, as desolate as if it lay some leagues within the icy sea, and found ourselves in a narrower part of the river, near the sheds and yards for picking the stone known as the Chelmsford granite, which is quarried in Westford and the neighboring towns. We passed Wicasuck Island, which contains seventy acres or more, on our right, between Chelmsford and Tyngsborough. This was a favorite residence of the Indians. According to the History of Dunstable, "About 1663, the eldest son of Passaconaway [Chief of the Penacooks] was thrown into jail for a debt of £45, due to John Tinker, by one of his tribe, and which he had promised verbally should be paid. To relieve him from his imprisonment, his brother Wannalancet and others, who owned Wicasuck Island, sold it and paid the debt." It was, however, restored to the Indians by the General Court in 1665. After the departure of the Indians in 1683, it was granted to Jonathan Tyng in payment for his services to the colony, in maintaining a garrison at his house. Tyng's house stood not far from Wicasuck Falls. Gookin, who, in his Epistle Dedicatory to Robert Boyle, apologizes for presenting his "matter clothed in a wilderness dress," says that on the breaking out of Philip's war in 1675, there were taken up by the Christian Indians and the English in Marlborough, and sent to Cambridge, seven "Indians belonging to Narragansett, Long Island, and Pequod, who had all been at work about seven weeks with one Mr. Jonathan Tyng, of Dunstable, upon Merrimack River; and, hearing of the war, they reckoned with their master, and getting their wages, conveyed themselves away without his privity, and, being afraid, marched secretly through the woods, designing to go to their own country." However, they were released soon after. Such were the hired men in those days. Tyng was the first permanent settler of Dunstable, which then embraced what is now Tyngsborough and many other towns. In the winter of 1675, in Philip's war, every other settler left the town, but "he," says the historian of Dunstable, "fortified his house; and, although `obliged to send to Boston for his food,' sat himself down in the midst of his savage enemies, alone, in the wilderness, to defend his home. Deeming his position an important one for the defence of the frontiers, in February, 1676, he petitioned the Colony

for aid, “humbly showing, as his petition runs, that, as he lived “in the uppermost house on Merrimac river, lying open to ye enemy, yet being so seated that it is, as it were, a watch-house to the neighboring towns, “he could render important service to his country if only he had some assistance,” there being, “he said,” never an inhabitant left in the town but myself.” Wherefore he requests that their “Honors would be pleased to order him *three or four men* to help garrison his said house,” which they did. But methinks that such a garrison would be weakened by the addition of a man.

”Make bandog thy scout watch to bark at a thief,
Make courage for life, to be capitain chief;
Make trap-door thy bulwark, make bell to begin,
Make gunstone and arrow show who is within.”

Thus he earned the title of first permanent settler. In 1694 a law was passed “that every settler who deserted a town for fear of the Indians should forfeit all his rights therein.” But now, at any rate, as I have frequently observed, a man may desert the fertile frontier territories of truth and justice, which are the State’s best lands, for fear of far more insignificant foes, without forfeiting any of his civil rights therein. Nay, townships are granted to deserters, and the General Court, as I am sometimes inclined to regard it, is but a deserters’ camp itself.

As we rowed along near the shore of Wicasuck Island, which was then covered with wood, in order to avoid the current, two men, who looked as if they had just run out of Lowell, where they had been waylaid by the Sabbath, meaning to go to Nashua, and who now found themselves in the strange, natural, uncultivated, and unsettled part of the globe which intervenes, full of walls and barriers, a rough and uncivil place to them, seeing our boat moving so smoothly up the stream, called out from the high bank above our heads to know if we would take them as passengers, as if this were the street they had missed; that they might sit and chat and drive away the time, and so at last find themselves in Nashua. This smooth way they much preferred. But our boat was crowded with necessary furniture, and sunk low in the water, and moreover required to be worked, for even

it did not progress against the stream without effort; so we were obliged to deny them passage. As we glided away with even sweeps, while the fates scattered oil in our course, the sun now sinking behind the alders on the distant shore, we could still see them far off over the water, running along the shore and climbing over the rocks and fallen trees like insects, — for they did not know any better than we that they were on an island, — the unsympathizing river ever flowing in an opposite direction; until, having reached the entrance of the island brook, which they had probably crossed upon the locks below, they found a more effectual barrier to their progress. They seemed to be learning much in a little time. They ran about like ants on a burning brand, and once more they tried the river here, and once more there, to see if water still indeed was not to be walked on, as if a new thought inspired them, and by some peculiar disposition of the limbs they could accomplish it. At length sober common sense seemed to have resumed its sway, and they concluded that what they had so long heard must be true, and resolved to ford the shallower stream. When nearly a mile distant we could see them stripping off their clothes and preparing for this experiment; yet it seemed likely that a new dilemma would arise, they were so thoughtlessly throwing away their clothes on the wrong side of the stream, as in the case of the countryman with his corn, his fox, and his goose, which had to be transported one at a time. Whether they got safely through, or went round by the locks, we never learned. We could not help being struck by the seeming, though innocent indifference of Nature to these men's necessities, while elsewhere she was equally serving others. Like a true benefactress, the secret of her service is unchangeableness. Thus is the busiest merchant, though within sight of his Lowell, put to pilgrim's shifts, and soon comes to staff and scrip and scallop shell.

We, too, who held the middle of the stream, came near experiencing a pilgrim's fate, being tempted to pursue what seemed a sturgeon or larger fish, for we remembered that this was the Sturgeon River, its dark and monstrous back alternately rising and sinking in mid-stream. We kept falling behind, but the fish kept his back well out, and did not dive, and seemed to prefer to swim against the stream, so, at any rate, he would not escape us by going out to sea.

At length, having got as near as was convenient, and looking out not to get a blow from his tail, now the bow-gunner delivered his charge, while the stern-man held his ground. But the halibut-skinned monster, in one of these swift-gliding pregnant moments, without ever ceasing his bobbing up and down, saw fit, without a chuckle or other prelude, to proclaim himself a huge imprisoned spar, placed there as a buoy, to warn sailors of sunken rocks. So, each casting some blame upon the other, we withdrew quickly to safer waters.

The Scene-shifter saw fit here to close the drama, of this day, without regard to any unities which we mortals prize. Whether it might have proved tragedy, or comedy, or tragi-comedy, or pastoral, we cannot tell. This Sunday ended by the going down of the sun, leaving us still on the waves. But they who are on the water enjoy a longer and brighter twilight than they who are on the land, for here the water, as well as the atmosphere, absorbs and reflects the light, and some of the day seems to have sunk down into the waves. The light gradually forsook the deep water, as well as the deeper air, and the gloaming came to the fishes as well as to us, and more dim and gloomy to them, whose day is a perpetual twilight, though sufficiently bright for their weak and watery eyes. Vespers had already rung in many a dim and watery chapel down below, where the shadows of the weeds were extended in length over the sandy floor. The vespertinal pout had already begun to flit on leathern fin, and the finny gossips withdrew from the fluvial street to creeks and coves, and other private haunts, excepting a few of stronger fin, which anchored in the stream, stemming the tide even in their dreams. Meanwhile, like a dark evening cloud, we were wafted over the cope of their sky, deepening the shadows on their deluged fields.

Having reached a retired part of the river where it spread out to sixty rods in width, we pitched our tent on the east side, in Tyngsborough, just above some patches of the beach plum, which was now nearly ripe, where the sloping bank was a sufficient pillow, and with the bustle of sailors making the land, we transferred such stores as were required from boat to tent, and hung a lantern to the tent-pole, and so our house was ready. With a buffalo spread on the grass, and a blanket for our covering our bed was soon made. A fire crackled merrily before the entrance, so near that we could tend it

without stepping abroad, and when we had supped, we put out the blaze, and closed the door, and with the semblance of domestic comfort, sat up to read the Gazetteer, to learn our latitude and longitude, and write the journal of the voyage, or listened to the wind and the rippling of the river till sleep overtook us. There we lay under an oak on the bank of the stream, near to some farmer's cornfield, getting sleep, and forgetting where we were; a great blessing, that we are obliged to forget our enterprises every twelve hours. Minks, muskrats, meadow-mice, woodchucks, squirrels, skunks, rabbits, foxes, and weasels, all inhabit near, but keep very close while you are there. The river sucking and eddying away all night down toward the marts and the seaboard, a great wash and freshet, and no small enterprise to reflect on. Instead of the Scythian vastness of the Billerica night, and its wild musical sounds, we were kept awake by the boisterous sport of some Irish laborers on the railroad, wafted to us over the water, still unwearied and unresting on this seventh day, who would not have done with whirling up and down the track with ever increasing velocity and still reviving shouts, till late in the night.

One sailor was visited in his dreams this night by the Evil Destinies, and all those powers that are hostile to human life, which constrain and oppress the minds of men, and make their path seem difficult and narrow, and beset with dangers, so that the most innocent and worthy enterprises appear insolent and a tempting of fate, and the gods go not with us. But the other happily passed a serene and even ambrosial or immortal night, and his sleep was dreamless, or only the atmosphere of pleasant dreams remained, a happy natural sleep until the morning; and his cheerful spirit soothed and reassured his brother, for whenever they meet, the Good Genius is sure to prevail.

MONDAY.

”I thynke for to touche also
The worlde whiche neweth everie daie,
So as I can, so as I maie.”

Gower.

”The hye sheryfe of Notynghame,
Hym holde in your mynd.”
Robin Hood Ballads.

”His shoote it was but loosely shott,
Yet flewe not the arrowe in vaine,
For it mett one of the sheriffe’s men,
And William a Trent was slaine.”
Robin Hood Ballads

”Gazed on the heavens for what he missed on Earth.”
Britania’s Pastorale

MONDAY.

— * —

When the first light dawned on the earth and the birds, awoke, and the brave river was heard rippling confidently seaward, and the nimble early rising wind rustled the oak leaves about our tent, all men having reinforced their bodies and their souls with sleep, and cast aside doubt and fear, were invited to unattempted adventures.

”All courageous knichtis
Agains the day dichtis
The breest-plate that bricht is,
To feght with their foue.
The stoned steed stampis
Throw curage and crampis,
Syne on the land lampis;
The night is neir gone.”

One of us took the boat over to the opposite shore, which was flat and accessible, a quarter of a mile distant, to empty it of water and wash out the clay, while the other kindled a fire and got breakfast ready. At an early hour we were again on our way, rowing through the fog as before, the river already awake, and a million crisped waves come forth to meet the sun when he should show himself. The countrymen, recruited by their day of rest, were already stirring, and had begun to cross the ferry on the business of the week. This ferry was as busy as a beaver dam, and all the world seemed anxious to get across the Merrimack River at this particular point, waiting to get set over, — children with their two cents done up in paper, jail-birds broke loose and constable with warrant, travellers from distant lands to distant lands, men and women to whom the Merrimack River was a bar. There stands a gig in the gray morning, in the mist, the impatient traveller pacing the wet shore with whip in hand, and shouting through the fog after the regardless Charon and his retreating ark, as if he might throw that passenger overboard and return forthwith for himself; he will compensate him. He is to break

his fast at some unseen place on the opposite side. It may be Ledyard or the Wandering Jew. Whence, pray, did he come out of the foggy night? and whither through the sunny day will he go? We observe only his transit; important to us, forgotten by him, transiting all day. There are two of them. May be, they are Virgil and Dante. But when they crossed the Styx, none were seen bound up or down the stream, that I remember. It is only a *transjectus*, a transitory voyage, like life itself, none but the long-lived gods bound up or down the stream. Many of these Monday men are ministers, no doubt, reseeking their parishes with hired horses, with sermons in their valises all read and gutted, the day after never with them. They cross each other's routes all the country over like woof and warp, making a garment of loose texture; vacation now for six days. They stop to pick nuts and berries, and gather apples by the wayside at their leisure. Good religious men, with the love of men in their hearts, and the means to pay their toll in their pockets. We got over this ferry chain without scraping, rowing athwart the tide of travel, — no toll for us that day.

The fog dispersed and we rowed leisurely along through Tyngsborough, with a clear sky and a mild atmosphere, leaving the habitations of men behind and penetrating yet farther into the territory of ancient Dunstable. It was from Dunstable, then a frontier town, that the famous Captain Lovewell, with his company, marched in quest of the Indians on the 18th of April, 1725. He was the son of "an ensign in the army of Oliver Cromwell, who came to this country, and settled at Dunstable, where he died at the great age of one hundred and twenty years." In the words of the old nursery tale, sung about a hundred years ago, —

"He and his valiant soldiers did range the woods full wide,
And hardships they endured to quell the Indian's pride."

In the shaggy pine forest of Pequawket they met the "rebel Indians," and prevailed, after a bloody fight, and a remnant returned home to enjoy the fame of their victory. A township called Lovewell's Town, but now, for some reason, or perhaps without reason, Pembroke, was granted them by the State.

”Of all our valiant English, there were but thirty-four,
And of the rebel Indians, there were about four-score;
And sixteen of our English did safely home return,
The rest were killed and wounded, for which we all must mourn.

”Our worthy Capt. Lovewell among them there did die,
They killed Lieut. Robbins, and wounded good young Frye,
Who was our English Chaplin; he many Indians slew,
And some of them he scalped while bullets round him flew.”

Our brave forefathers have exterminated all the Indians, and their degenerate children no longer dwell in garrisoned houses nor hear any war-whoop in their path. It would be well, perchance, if many an “English Chaplin” in these days could exhibit as unquestionable trophies of his valor as did “good young Frye.” We have need to be as sturdy pioneers still as Miles Standish, or Church, or Lovewell. We are to follow on another trail, it is true, but one as convenient for ambushes. What if the Indians are exterminated, are not savages as grim prowling about the clearings to-day? —

”And braving many dangers and hardships in the way,
They safe arrived at Dunstable the thirteenth (?) day of May.”

But they did not all “safe arrive in Dunstable the thirteenth,” or the fifteenth, or the thirtieth “day of May.” Eleazer Davis and Josiah Jones, both of Concord, for our native town had seven men in this fight, Lieutenant Farwell, of Dunstable, and Jonathan Frye, of Andover, who were all wounded, were left behind, creeping toward the settlements. “After travelling several miles, Frye was left and lost,” though a more recent poet has assigned him company in his last hours.

”A man he was of comely form,
Polished and brave, well learned and kind;
Old Harvard’s learned halls he left
Far in the wilds a grave to find.

”Ah! now his blood-red arm he lifts;

His closing lids he tries to raise;
And speak once more before he dies,
In supplication and in praise.

"He prays kind Heaven to grant success,
Brave Lovewell's men to guide and bless,
And when they've shed their heart-blood true,
To raise them all to happiness."

* * * * *

"Lieutenant Farwell took his hand,
His arm around his neck he threw,
And said, `Brave Chaplain, I could wish
That Heaven had made me die for you.'"

* * * * *

Farwell held out eleven days. "A tradition says," as we learn from the History of Concord, "that arriving at a pond with Lieut. Farwell, Davis pulled off one of his moccasins, cut it in strings, on which he fastened a hook, caught some fish, fried and ate them. They refreshed him, but were injurious to Farwell, who died soon after." Davis had a ball lodged in his body, and his right hand shot off; but on the whole, he seems to have been less damaged than his companion. He came into Berwick after being out fourteen days. Jones also had a ball lodged in his body, but he likewise got into Saco after fourteen days, though not in the best condition imaginable. "He had subsisted," says an old journal, "on the spontaneous vegetables of the forest; and cranberries which he had eaten came out of wounds he had received in his body." This was also the case with Davis. The last two reached home at length, safe if not sound, and lived many years in a crippled state to enjoy their pension.

But alas! of the crippled Indians, and their adventures in the woods, —

"For as we are informed, so thick and fast they fell,
Scarce twenty of their number at night did get home well," —

how many balls lodged with them, how fared their cranberries,

what Berwick or Saco they got into, and finally what pension or township was granted them, there is no journal to tell.

It is stated in the History of Dunstable, that just before his last march, Lovewell was warned to beware of the ambuscades of the enemy, but "he replied, `that he did not care for them,' and bending down a small elm beside which he was standing into a bow, declared `that he would treat the Indians in the same way.' This elm is still standing [in Nashua], a venerable and magnificent tree."

Meanwhile, having passed the Horseshoe Interval in Tyngsborough, where the river makes a sudden bend to the northwest, — for our reflections have anticipated our progress somewhat, — we were advancing farther into the country and into the day, which last proved almost as golden as the preceding, though the slight bustle and activity of the Monday seemed to penetrate even to this scenery. Now and then we had to muster all our energy to get round a point, where the river broke rippling over rocks, and the maples trailed their branches in the stream, but there was generally a backwater or eddy on the side, of which we took advantage. The river was here about forty rods wide and fifteen feet deep. Occasionally one ran along the shore, examining the country, and visiting the nearest farm-houses, while the other followed the windings of the stream alone, to meet his companion at some distant point, and hear the report of his adventures; how the farmer praised the coolness of his well, and his wife offered the stranger a draught of milk, or the children quarrelled for the only transparency in the window that they might get sight of the man at the well. For though the country seemed so new, and no house was observed by us, shut in between the banks that sunny day, we did not have to travel far to find where men inhabited, like wild bees, and had sunk wells in the loose sand and loam of the Merrimack. There dwelt the subject of the Hebrew scriptures, and the Esprit des Lois, where a thin vaporous smoke curled up through the noon. All that is told of mankind, of the inhabitants of the Upper Nile, and the Sunderbunds, and Timbuctoo, and the Orinoko, was experience here. Every race and class of men was represented. According to Belknap, the historian of New Hampshire, who wrote sixty years ago, here too, perchance, dwelt "new lights," and free thinking men even then. "The people in

general throughout the State," it is written, "are professors of the Christian religion in some form or other. There is, however, a sort of *wise men* who pretend to reject it; but they have not yet been able to substitute a better in its place."

The other voyageur, perhaps, would in the mean while have seen a brown hawk, or a woodchuck, or a musquash creeping under the alders.

We occasionally rested in the shade of a maple or a willow, and drew forth a melon for our refreshment, while we contemplated at our leisure the lapse of the river and of human life; and as that current, with its floating twigs and leaves, so did all things pass in review before us, while far away in cities and marts on this very stream, the old routine was proceeding still. There is, indeed, a tide in the affairs of men, as the poet says, and yet as things flow they circulate, and the ebb always balances the flow. All streams are but tributary to the ocean, which itself does not stream, and the shores are unchanged, but in longer periods than man can measure. Go where we will, we discover infinite change in particulars only, not in generals. When I go into a museum and see the mummies wrapped in their linen bandages, I see that the lives of men began to need reform as long ago as when they walked the earth. I come out into the streets, and meet men who declare that the time is near at hand for the redemption of the race. But as men lived in Thebes, so do they live in Dunstable to-day. "Time drinketh up the essence of every great and noble action which ought to be performed, and is delayed in the execution." So says Veeshnoo Sarma; and we perceive that the schemers return again and again to common sense and labor. Such is the evidence of history.

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the Suns."

There are secret articles in our treaties with the gods, of more importance than all the rest, which the historian can never know.

There are many skilful apprentices, but few master workmen. On every hand we observe a truly wise practice, in education, in morals,

and in the arts of life, the embodied wisdom of many an ancient philosopher. Who does not see that heresies have some time prevailed, that reforms have already taken place? All this worldly wisdom might be regarded as the once unamiable heresy of some wise man. Some interests have got a footing on the earth which we have not made sufficient allowance for. Even they who first built these barns and cleared the land thus, had some valor. The abrupt epochs and chasms are smoothed down in history as the inequalities of the plain are concealed by distance. But unless we do more than simply learn the trade of our time, we are but apprentices, and not yet masters of the art of life.

Now that we are casting away these melon seeds, how can we help feeling reproach? He who eats the fruit, should at least plant the seed; aye, if possible, a better seed than that whose fruit he has enjoyed. Seeds! there are seeds enough which need only to be stirred in with the soil where they lie, by an inspired voice or pen, to bear fruit of a divine flavor. O thou spendthrift! Defray thy debt to the world; eat not the seed of institutions, as the luxurious do, but plant it rather, while thou devourest the pulp and tuber for thy subsistence; that so, perchance, one variety may at last be found worthy of preservation.

There are moments when all anxiety and stated toil are becalmed in the infinite leisure and repose of nature. All laborers must have their nooning, and at this season of the day, we are all, more or less, Asiatics, and give over all work and reform. While lying thus on our oars by the side of the stream, in the heat of the day, our boat held by an osier put through the staple in its prow, and slicing the melons, which are a fruit of the East, our thoughts reverted to Arabia, Persia, and Hindostan, the lands of contemplation and dwelling-places of the ruminant nations. In the experience of this noontide we could find some apology even for the instinct of the opium, betel, and tobacco chewers. Mount Saber, according to the French traveller and naturalist, Botta, is celebrated for producing the Kat-tree, of which "the soft tops of the twigs and tender leaves are eaten," says his reviewer, "and produce an agreeable soothing excitement, restoring from fatigue, banishing sleep, and disposing to the enjoyment of conversation." We thought that we might lead a dignified Oriental

life along this stream as well, and the maple and alders would be our Kat-trees.

It is a great pleasure to escape sometimes from the restless class of Reformers. What if these grievances exist? So do you and I. Think you that sitting hens are troubled with ennui these long summer days, sitting on and on in the crevice of a hay-loft, without active employment? By the faint cackling in distant barns, I judge that dame Nature is interested still to know how many eggs her hens lay. The Universal Soul, as it is called, has an interest in the stacking of hay, the foddering of cattle, and the draining of peat-meadows. Away in Scythia, away in India, it makes butter and cheese. Suppose that all farms *are* run out, and we youths must buy old land and bring it to, still everywhere the relentless opponents of reform bear a strange resemblance to ourselves; or, perchance, they are a few old maids and bachelors, who sit round the kitchen hearth and listen to the singing of the kettle. "The oracles often give victory to our choice, and not to the order alone of the mundane periods. As, for instance, when they say that our voluntary sorrows germinate in us as the growth of the particular life we lead." The reform which you talk about can be undertaken any morning before unbarring our doors. We need not call any convention. When two neighbors begin to eat corn bread, who before ate wheat, then the gods smile from ear to ear, for it is very pleasant to them. Why do you not try it? Don't let me hinder you.

There are theoretical reformers at all times, and all the world over, living on anticipation. Wolff, travelling in the deserts of Bokhara, says, "Another party of derveeshes came to me and observed, `The time will come when there shall be no difference between rich and poor, between high and low, when property will be in common, even wives and children.'" But forever I ask of such, What then? The derveeshes in the deserts of Bokhara and the reformers in Marlboro' Chapel sing the same song. "There's a good time coming, boys," but, asked one of the audience, in good faith, "Can you fix the date?" Said I, "Will you help it along?"

The nonchalance and *dolce-far-niente* air of nature and society hint at infinite periods in the progress of mankind. The States have leisure to laugh from Maine to Texas at some newspaper joke, and

New England shakes at the double-entendres of Australian circles, while the poor reformer cannot get a hearing.

Men do not fail commonly for want of knowledge, but for want of prudence to give wisdom the preference. What we need to know in any case is very simple. It is but too easy to establish another durable and harmonious routine. Immediately all parts of nature consent to it. Only make something to take the place of something, and men will behave as if it was the very thing they wanted. They *must* behave, at any rate, and will work up any material. There is always a present and extant life, be it better or worse, which all combine to uphold. We should be slow to mend, my friends, as slow to require mending, "Not hurling, according to the oracle, a transcendent foot towards piety." The language of excitement is at best picturesque merely. You must be calm before you can utter oracles. What was the excitement of the Delphic priestess compared with the calm wisdom of Socrates? — or whoever it was that was wise. — Enthusiasm is a supernatural serenity.

"Men find that action is another thing
Than what they in discoursing papers read;
The world's affairs require in managing
More arts than those wherein you clerks proceed."

As in geology, so in social institutions, we may discover the causes of all past change in the present invariable order of society. The greatest appreciable physical revolutions are the work of the light-footed air, the stealthy-paced water, and the subterranean fire. Aristotle said, "As time never fails, and the universe is eternal, neither the Tanais nor the Nile can have flowed forever." We are independent of the change we detect. The longer the lever the less perceptible its motion. It is the slowest pulsation which is the most vital. The hero then will know how to wait, as well as to make haste. All good abides with him who waiteth *wisely*; we shall sooner overtake the dawn by remaining here than by hurrying over the hills of the west. Be assured that every man's success is in proportion to his *average* ability. The meadow flowers spring and bloom where the waters annually deposit their slime, not where they reach in some

freshet only. A man is not his hope, nor his despair, nor yet his past deed. We know not yet what we have done, still less what we are doing. Wait till evening, and other parts of our day's work will shine than we had thought at noon, and we shall discover the real purport of our toil. As when the farmer has reached the end of the furrow and looks back, he can tell best where the pressed earth shines most.

To one who habitually endeavors to contemplate the true state of things, the political state can hardly be said to have any existence whatever. It is unreal, incredible, and insignificant to him, and for him to endeavor to extract the truth from such lean material is like making sugar from linen rags, when sugar-cane may be had. Generally speaking, the political news, whether domestic or foreign, might be written to-day for the next ten years, with sufficient accuracy. Most revolutions in society have not power to interest, still less alarm us; but tell me that our rivers are drying up, or the genus pine dying out in the country, and I might attend. Most events recorded in history are more remarkable than important, like eclipses of the sun and moon, by which all are attracted, but whose effects no one takes the trouble to calculate.

But will the government never be so well administered, inquired one, that we private men shall hear nothing about it? "The king answered: At all events, I require a prudent and able man, who is capable of managing the state affairs of my kingdom. The ex-minister said: The criterion, O Sire! of a wise and competent man is, that he will not meddle with such like matters." Alas that the ex-minister should have been so nearly right!

In my short experience of human life, the *outward* obstacles, if there were any such, have not been living men, but the institutions of the dead. It is grateful to make one's way through this latest generation as through dewy grass. Men are as innocent as the morning to the unsuspicious.

"And round about good morrows fly,
As if day taught humanity."

Not being Reve of this Shire,

”The early pilgrim blithe he hailed,
That o’er the hills did stray,
And many an early husbandman,
That he met on the way”; —

thieves and robbers all, nevertheless. I have not so surely foreseen that any Cossack or Chippeway would come to disturb the honest and simple commonwealth, as that some monster institution would at length embrace and crush its free members in its scaly folds; for it is not to be forgotten, that while the law holds fast the thief and murderer, it lets itself go loose. When I have not paid the tax which the State demanded for that protection which I did not want, itself has robbed me; when I have asserted the liberty it presumed to declare, itself has imprisoned me. Poor creature! if it knows no better I will not blame it. If it cannot live but by these means, I can. I do not wish, it happens, to be associated with Massachusetts, either in holding slaves or in conquering Mexico. I am a little better than herself in these respects. — As for Massachusetts, that huge she Briareus, Argus and Colchian Dragon conjoined, set to watch the Heifer of the Constitution and the Golden Fleece, we would not warrant our respect for her, like some compositions, to preserve its qualities through all weathers. — Thus it has happened, that not the Arch Fiend himself has been in my way, but these toils which tradition says were originally spun to obstruct him. They are cobwebs and trifling obstacles in an earnest man’s path, it is true, and at length one even becomes attached to his unswept and undusted garret. I love man — kind, but I hate the institutions of the dead un-kind. Men execute nothing so faithfully as the wills of the dead, to the last codicil and letter. *They* rule this world, and the living are but their executors. Such foundation too have our lectures and our sermons, commonly. They are all *Dudleian;* and piety derives its origin still from that exploit of *pius Aeneas*, who bore his father, Anchises, on his shoulders from the ruins of Troy. Or rather, like some Indian tribes, we bear about with us the mouldering relics of our ancestors on our shoulders. If, for instance, a man asserts the value of individual liberty over the merely political commonweal, his neighbor still tolerates him, that he who is *living near* him,

sometimes even sustains him, but never the State. Its officer, as a living man, may have human virtues and a thought in his brain, but as the tool of an institution, a jailer or constable it may be, he is not a whit superior to his prison key or his staff. Herein is the tragedy; that men doing outrage to their proper natures, even those called wise and good, lend themselves to perform the office of inferior and brutal ones. Hence come war and slavery in; and what else may not come in by this opening? But certainly there are modes by which a man may put bread into his mouth which will not prejudice him as a companion and neighbor.

”Now turn again, turn again, said the pinder,
For a wrong way you have gone,
For you have forsaken the king’s highway,
And made a path over the corn.”

Undoubtedly, countless reforms are called for, because society is not animated, or instinct enough with life, but in the condition of some snakes which I have seen in early spring, with alternate portions of their bodies torpid and flexible, so that they could wriggle neither way. All men are partially buried in the grave of custom, and of some we see only the crown of the head above ground. Better are the physically dead, for they more lively rot. Even virtue is no longer such if it be stagnant. A man’s life should be constantly as fresh as this river. It should be the same channel, but a new water every instant.

”Virtues as rivers pass,
But still remains that virtuous man there was.”

Most men have no inclination, no rapids, no cascades, but marshes, and alligators, and miasma instead. We read that when in the expedition of Alexander, Onesicritus was sent forward to meet certain of the Indian sect of Gymnosophists, and he had told them of those new philosophers of the West, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Diogenes, and their doctrines, one of them named Dandamis answered, that “They appeared to him to have been men of genius,

but to have lived with too passive a regard for the laws." The philosophers of the West are liable to this rebuke still. "They say that Lieou-hia-hoei, and Chao-lien did not sustain to the end their resolutions, and that they dishonored their character. Their language was in harmony with reason and justice; while their acts were in harmony with the sentiments of men."

Chateaubriand said: "There are two things which grow stronger in the breast of man, in proportion as he advances in years: the love of country and religion. Let them be never so much forgotten in youth, they sooner or later present themselves to us arrayed in all their charms, and excite in the recesses of our hearts an attachment justly due to their beauty." It may be so. But even this infirmity of noble minds marks the gradual decay of youthful hope and faith. It is the allowed infidelity of age. There is a saying of the Yoloffs, "He who was born first has the greatest number of old clothes," consequently M. Chateaubriand has more old clothes than I have. It is comparatively a faint and reflected beauty that is admired, not an essential and intrinsic one. It is because the old are weak, feel their mortality, and think that they have measured the strength of man. They will not boast; they will be frank and humble. Well, let them have the few poor comforts they can keep. Humility is still a very human virtue. They look back on life, and so see not into the future. The prospect of the young is forward and unbounded, mingling the future with the present. In the declining day the thoughts make haste to rest in darkness, and hardly look forward to the ensuing morning. The thoughts of the old prepare for night and slumber. The same hopes and prospects are not for him who stands upon the rosy mountain-tops of life, and him who expects the setting of his earthly day.

I must conclude that Conscience, if that be the name of it, was not given us for no purpose, or for a hinderance. However flattering order and expediency may look, it is but the repose of a lethargy, and we will choose rather to be awake, though it be stormy, and maintain ourselves on this earth and in this life, as we may, without signing our death-warrant. Let us see if we cannot stay here, where He has put us, on his own conditions. Does not his law reach as far as his light? The expedients of the nations clash with one another, only the

absolutely right is expedient for all.

There are some passages in the Antigone of Sophocles, well known to scholars, of which I am reminded in this connection. Antigone has resolved to sprinkle sand on the dead body of her brother Polynices, notwithstanding the edict of King Creon condemning to death that one who should perform this service, which the Greeks deemed so important, for the enemy of his country; but Ismene, who is of a less resolute and noble spirit, declines taking part with her sister in this work, and says, —

"I, therefore, asking those under the earth to consider me, that I am compelled to do thus, will obey those who are placed in office; for to do extreme things is not wise."

ANTIGONE

"I would not ask you, nor would you, if you still wished, do it joyfully with me. Be such as seems good to you. But I will bury him. It is glorious for me doing this to die. I beloved will lie with him beloved, having, like a criminal, done what is holy; since the time is longer which it is necessary for me to please those below, than those here, for there I shall always lie. But if it seems good to you, hold in dishonor things which are honored by the gods."

ISMENE

"I indeed do not hold them in dishonor; but to act in opposition to the citizens I am by nature unable."

Antigone being at length brought before King Creon, he asks, —

"Did you then dare to transgress these laws?"

ANTIGONE

"For it was not Zeus who proclaimed these to me, nor Justice who dwells with the gods below; it was not they who established these laws among men. Nor did I think that your proclamations were so strong, as, being a mortal, to be able to transcend the unwritten and immovable laws of the gods. For not something now and yesterday, but forever these live, and no one knows from what time they

appeared. I was not about to pay the penalty of violating these to the gods, fearing the presumption of any man. For I well knew that I should die, and why not? even if you had not proclaimed it."

This was concerning the burial of a dead body.

The wisest conservatism is that of the Hindoos. "Immemorial custom is transcendent law," says Menu. That is, it was the custom of the gods before men used it. The fault of our New England custom is that it is memorial. What is morality but immemorial custom? Conscience is the chief of conservatives. "Perform the settled functions," says Kreeshna in the Bhagvat-Geeta; "action is preferable to inaction. The journey of thy mortal frame may not succeed from inaction."— "A man's own calling with all its faults, ought not to be forsaken. Every undertaking is involved in its faults as the fire in its smoke."— "The man who is acquainted with the whole, should not drive those from their works who are slow of comprehension, and less experienced than himself."— "Wherefore, O Arjoon, resolve to fight," is the advice of the God to the irresolute soldier who fears to slay his best friends. It is a sublime conservatism; as wide as the world, and as unwearied as time; preserving the universe with Asiatic anxiety, in that state in which it appeared to their minds. These philosophers dwell on the inevitability and unchangeableness of laws, on the power of temperament and constitution, the three goon or qualities, and the circumstances of birth and affinity. The end is an immense consolation; eternal absorption in Brahma. Their speculations never venture beyond their own table-lands, though they are high and vast as they. Buoyancy, freedom, flexibility, variety, possibility, which also are qualities of the Unnamed, they deal not with. The undeserved reward is to be earned by an everlasting moral drudgery; the incalculable promise of the morrow is, as it were, weighed. And who will say that their conservatism has not been effectual? "Assuredly," says a French translator, speaking of the antiquity and durability of the Chinese and Indian nations, and of the wisdom of their legislators, "there are there some vestiges of the eternal laws which govern the world."

Christianity, on the other hand, is humane, practical, and, in a large sense, radical. So many years and ages of the gods those Eastern sages sat contemplating Brahm, uttering in silence the mystic

"Om," being absorbed into the essence of the Supreme Being, never going out of themselves, but subsiding farther and deeper within; so infinitely wise, yet infinitely stagnant; until, at last, in that same Asia, but in the western part of it, appeared a youth, wholly unforetold by them, — not being absorbed into Brahm, but bringing Brahm down to earth and to mankind; in whom Brahm had awaked from his long sleep, and exerted himself, and the day began, — a new avatar. The Brahman had never thought to be a brother of mankind as well as a child of God. Christ is the prince of Reformers and Radicals. Many expressions in the New Testament come naturally to the lips of all Protestants, and it furnishes the most pregnant and practical texts. There is no harmless dreaming, no wise speculation in it, but everywhere a substratum of good sense. It never *reflects*, but it *repents*. There is no poetry in it, we may say nothing regarded in the light of beauty merely, but moral truth is its object. All mortals are convicted by its conscience.

The New Testament is remarkable for its pure morality; the best of the Hindo Scripture, for its pure intellectuality. The reader is nowhere raised into and sustained in a higher, purer, or *rarer* region of thought than in the Bhagvat-Geeta. Warren Hastings, in his sensible letter recommending the translation of this book to the Chairman of the East India Company, declares the original to be "of a sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction almost unequalled," and that the writings of the Indian philosophers "will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance." It is unquestionably one of the noblest and most sacred scriptures which have come down to us. Books are to be distinguished by the grandeur of their topics, even more than by the manner in which they are treated. The Oriental philosophy approaches, easily, loftier themes than the modern aspires to; and no wonder if it sometimes prattle about them. *It* only assigns their due rank respectively to Action and Contemplation, or rather does full justice to the latter. Western philosophers have not conceived of the significance of Contemplation in their sense. Speaking of the spiritual discipline to which the Brahmans subjected themselves, and the wonderful power of abstraction to which they attained, instances

of which had come under his notice, Hastings says: —

"To those who have never been accustomed to the separation of the mind from the notices of the senses, it may not be easy to conceive by what means such a power is to be attained; since even the most studious men of our hemisphere will find it difficult so to restrain their attention, but that it will wander to some object of present sense or recollection; and even the buzzing of a fly will sometimes have the power to disturb it. But if we are told that there have been men who were successively, for ages past, in the daily habit of abstracted contemplation, begun in the earliest period of youth, and continued in many to the maturity of age, each adding some portion of knowledge to the store accumulated by his predecessors; it is not assuming too much to conclude, that as the mind ever gathers strength, like the body, by exercise, so in such an exercise it may in each have acquired the faculty to which they aspired, and that their collective studies may have led them to the discovery of new tracts and combinations of sentiment, totally different from the doctrines with which the learned of other nations are acquainted; doctrines which, however speculative and subtle, still as they possess the advantage of being derived from a source so free from every adventitious mixture, may be equally founded in truth with the most simple of our own."

"The forsaking of works" was taught by Kreeshna to the most ancient of men, and handed down from age to age,

"until at length, in the course of time, the mighty art was lost.

"In wisdom is to be found every work without exception," says Kreeshna.

"Although thou wert the greatest of all offenders, thou shalt be able to cross the gulf of sin with the bark of wisdom."

"There is not anything in this world to be compared with wisdom for purity."

"The action stands at a distance inferior to the application of wisdom."

The wisdom of a Moonee "is confirmed, when, like the tortoise, he can draw in all his members, and restrain them from their wonted purposes."

"Children only, and not the learned, speak of the speculative and the practical doctrines as two. They are but one. For both obtain the selfsame end, and the place which is gained by the followers of the one is gained by the followers of the other."

"The man enjoyeth not freedom from action, from the non-commencement of that which he hath to do; nor doth he obtain happiness from a total inactivity. No one ever resteth a moment inactive. Every man is involuntarily urged to act by those principles which are inherent in his nature. The man who restraineth his active faculties, and sitteth down with his mind attentive to the objects of his senses, is called one of an astrayed soul, and the practiser of deceit. So the man is praised, who, having subdued all his passions, performeth with his active faculties all the functions of life, unconcerned about the event."

"Let the motive be in the deed and not in the event. Be not one whose motive for action is the hope of reward. Let not thy life be spent in inaction."

"For the man who doeth that which he hath to do, without affection, obtaineth the Supreme."

"He who may behold, as it were inaction in action, and action in inaction, is wise amongst mankind. He is a perfect performer of all duty."

"Wise men call him a *Pandeet*, whose every undertaking is free from the idea of desire, and whose actions are consumed by the fire of wisdom. He abandoneth the desire of a reward of his actions; he is always contented and independent; and although he may be engaged in a work, he, as it were, doeth nothing."

"He is both a Yogee and a Sannyasee who performeth that which he hath to do independent of the fruit thereof; not he who liveth without the sacrificial fire and without action."

"He who enjoyeth but the Amreeta which is left of his offerings, obtaineth the eternal spirit of Brahm, the Supreme."

What, after all, does the practicalness of life amount to? The things immediate to be done are very trivial. I could postpone them

all to hear this locust sing. The most glorious fact in my experience is not anything that I have done or may hope to do, but a transient thought, or vision, or dream, which I have had. I would give all the wealth of the world, and all the deeds of all the heroes, for one true vision. But how can I communicate with the gods who am a pencil-maker on the earth, and not be insane?

"I am the same to all mankind," says Kreeshna; "there is not one who is worthy of my love or hatred."

This teaching is not practical in the sense in which the New Testament is. It is not always sound sense inpractice. The Brahman never proposes courageously to assault evil, but patiently to starve it out. His active faculties are paralyzed by the idea of cast, of impassable limits, of destiny and the tyranny of time. Kreeshna's argument, it must be allowed, is defective. No sufficient reason is given why Arjoon should fight. Arjoon may be convinced, but the reader is not, for his judgment is *not* "formed upon the speculative doctrines of the *Sankhya Sastra*." "Seek an asylum in wisdom alone"; but what is wisdom to a Western mind? The duty of which he speaks is an arbitrary one. When was it established? The Brahman's virtue consists in doing, not right, but arbitrary things. What is that which a man "hath to do"? What is "action"? What are the "settled functions"? What is "a man's own religion," which is so much better than another's? What is "a man's own particular calling"? What are the duties which are appointed by one's birth? It is a defence of the institution of casts, of what is called the "natural duty" of the Kshetree, or soldier, "to attach himself to the discipline," "not to flee from the field," and the like. But they who are unconcerned about the consequences of their actions are not therefore unconcerned about their actions.

Behold the difference between the Oriental and the Occidental. The former has nothing to do in this world; the latter is full of activity. The one looks in the sun till his eyes are put out; the other follows him prone in his westward course. There is such a thing as caste, even in the West; but it is comparatively faint; it is conservatism here. It says, forsake not your calling, outrage no institution, use no violence, rend no bonds; the State is thy parent. Its virtue or manhood is wholly filial. There is a struggle between the

Oriental and Occidental in every nation; some who would be forever contemplating the sun, and some who are hastening toward the sunset. The former class says to the latter, When you have reached the sunset, you will be no nearer to the sun. To which the latter replies, But we so prolong the day. The former "walketh but in that night, when all things go to rest the night of *time*. The contemplative Moonee sleepeth but in the day of *time*, when all things wake."

To conclude these extracts, I can say, in the words of Sanjay, "As, O mighty Prince! I recollect again and again this holy and wonderful dialogue of Kreeshna and Arjoon, I continue more and more to rejoice; and as I recall to my memory the more than miraculous form of Haree, my astonishment is great, and I marvel and rejoice again and again! Wherever Kreeshna the God of devotion may be, wherever Arjoon the mighty bowman may be, there too, without doubt, are fortune, riches, victory, and good conduct. This is my firm belief."

I would say to the readers of Scriptures, if they wish for a good book, read the Bhagvat-Geeta, an episode to the Mahabharat, said to have been written by Kreeshna Dwypayen Veias, — known to have been written by —— , more than four thousand years ago, — it matters not whether three or four, or when, — translated by Charles Wilkins. It deserves to be read with reverence even by Yankees, as a part of the sacred writings of a devout people; and the intelligent Hebrew will rejoice to find in it a moral grandeur and sublimity akin to those of his own Scriptures.

To an American reader, who, by the advantage of his position, can see over that strip of Atlantic coast to Asia and the Pacific, who, as it were, sees the shore slope upward over the Alps to the Himmaleh Mountains, the comparatively recent literature of Europe often appears partial and clannish, and, notwithstanding the limited range of his own sympathies and studies, the European writer who presumes that he is speaking for the world, is perceived by him to speak only for that corner of it which he inhabits. One of the rarest of England's scholars and critics, in his classification of the worthies of the world, betrays the narrowness of his European culture and the exclusiveness of his reading. None of her children has done justice to the poets and philosophers of Persia or of India. They have even been

better known to her merchant scholars than to her poets and thinkers by profession. You may look in vain through English poetry for a single memorable verse inspired by these themes. Nor is Germany to be excepted, though her philological industry is indirectly serving the cause of philosophy and poetry. Even Goethe wanted that universality of genius which could have appreciated the philosophy of India, if he had more nearly approached it. His genius was more practical, dwelling much more in the regions of the understanding, and was less native to contemplation than the genius of those sages. It is remarkable that Homer and a few Hebrews are the most Oriental names which modern Europe, whose literature has taken its rise since the decline of the Persian, has admitted into her list of Worthies, and perhaps the *worthiest* of mankind, and the fathers of modern thinking, — for the contemplations of those Indian sages have influenced, and still influence, the intellectual development of mankind, — whose works even yet survive in wonderful completeness, are, for the most part, not recognized as ever having existed. If the lions had been the painters it would have been otherwise. In every one's youthful dreams philosophy is still vaguely but inseparably, and with singular truth, associated with the East, nor do after years discover its local habitation in the Western world. In comparison with the philosophers of the East, we may say that modern Europe has yet given birth to none. Beside the vast and cosmogonal philosophy of the Bhagvat-Geeta, even our Shakespeare seems sometimes youthfully green and practical merely. Some of these sublime sentences, as the Chaldaean oracles of Zoroaster, still surviving after a thousand revolutions and translations, alone make us doubt if the poetic form and dress are not transitory, and not essential to the most effective and enduring expression of thought. *Ex oriente lux* may still be the motto of scholars, for the Western world has not yet derived from the East all the light which it is destined to receive thence.

It would be worthy of the age to print together the collected Scriptures or Sacred Writings of the several nations, the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Persians, the Hebrews, and others, as the Scripture of mankind. The New Testament is still, perhaps, too much on the lips and in the hearts of men to be called a Scripture in this sense. Such a

juxtaposition and comparison might help to liberalize the faith of men. This is a work which Time will surely edit, reserved to crown the labors of the printing-press. This would be the Bible, or Book of Books, which let the missionaries carry to the uttermost parts of the earth.

While engaged in these reflections, thinking ourselves the only navigators of these waters, suddenly a canal-boat, with its sail set, glided round a point before us, like some huge river beast, and changed the scene in an instant; and then another and another glided into sight, and we found ourselves in the current of commerce once more. So we threw our rinds in the water for the fishes to nibble, and added our breath to the life of living men. Little did we think, in the distant garden in which we had planted the seed and reared this fruit, where it would be eaten. Our melons lay at home on the sandy bottom of the Merrimack, and our potatoes in the sun and water at the bottom of the boat looked like a fruit of the country. Soon, however, we were delivered from this fleet of junks, and possessed the river in solitude, once more rowing steadily upward through the noon, between the territories of Nashua on the one hand, and Hudson, once Nottingham, on the other. From time to time we scared up a kingfisher or a summer duck, the former flying rather by vigorous impulses than by steady and patient steering with that short rudder of his, sounding his rattle along the fluvial street.

Erelong another scow hove in sight, creeping down the river; and hailing it, we attached ourselves to its side, and floated back in company, chatting with the boatmen, and obtaining a draught of cooler water from their jug. They appeared to be green hands from far among the hills, who had taken this means to get to the seaboard, and see the world; and would possibly visit the Falkland Isles, and the China seas, before they again saw the waters of the Merrimack, or, perchance, they would not return this way forever. They had already embarked the private interests of the landsman in the larger venture of the race, and were ready to mess with mankind, reserving only the till of a chest to themselves. But they too were soon lost behind a point, and we went croaking on our way alone. What grievance has its root among the New Hampshire hills? we asked; what is wanting to human life here, that these men should make such

haste to the antipodes? We prayed that their bright anticipations might not be rudely disappointed.

Though all the fates should prove unkind,
Leave not your native land behind.
The ship, becalmed, at length stands still;
The steed must rest beneath the hill;
But swiftly still our fortunes pace
To find us out in every place.

The vessel, though her masts be firm,
Beneath her copper bears a worm;
Around the cape, across the line,
Till fields of ice her course confine;
It matters not how smooth the breeze,
How shallow or how deep the seas,
Whether she bears Manilla twine,
Or in her hold Madeira wine,
Or China teas, or Spanish hides,
In port or quarantine she rides;
Far from New England's blustering shore,
New England's worm her hulk shall bore,
And sink her in the Indian seas,
Twine, wine, and hides, and China teas.

We passed a small desert here on the east bank, between Tyngsborough and Hudson, which was interesting and even refreshing to our eyes in the midst of the almost universal greenness. This sand was indeed somewhat impressive and beautiful to us. A very old inhabitant, who was at work in a field on the Nashua side, told us that he remembered when corn and grain grew there, and it was a cultivated field. But at length the fishermen, for this was a fishing place, pulled up the bushes on the shore, for greater convenience in hauling their seines, and when the bank was thus broken, the wind began to blow up the sand from the shore, until at length it had covered about fifteen acres several feet deep. We saw near the river, where the sand was blown off down to some ancient

surface, the foundation of an Indian wigwam exposed, a perfect circle of burnt stones, four or five feet in diameter, mingled with fine charcoal, and the bones of small animals which had been preserved in the sand. The surrounding sand was sprinkled with other burnt stones on which their fires had been built, as well as with flakes of arrow-head stone, and we found one perfect arrow-head. In one place we noticed where an Indian had sat to manufacture arrow-heads out of quartz, and the sand was sprinkled with a quart of small glass-like chips about as big as a fourpence, which he had broken off in his work. Here, then, the Indians must have fished before the whites arrived. There was another similar sandy tract about half a mile above this.

Still the noon prevailed, and we turned the prow aside to bathe, and recline ourselves under some buttonwoods, by a ledge of rocks, in a retired pasture sloping to the water's edge, and skirted with pines and hazels, in the town of Hudson. Still had India, and that old noontide philosophy, the better part of our thoughts.

It is always singular, but encouraging, to meet with common sense in very old books, as the Heetopades of Veeshnoo Sarma; a playful wisdom which has eyes behind as well as before, and oversees itself. It asserts their health and independence of the experience of later times. This pledge of sanity cannot be spared in a book, that it sometimes pleasantly reflect upon itself. The story and fabulous portion of this book winds loosely from sentence to sentence as so many oases in a desert, and is as indistinct as a camel's track between Mourzouk and Darfour. It is a comment on the flow and freshet of modern books. The reader leaps from sentence to sentence, as from one stepping-stone to another, while the stream of the story rushes past unregarded. The Bhagvat-Geeta is less sententious and poetic, perhaps, but still more wonderfully sustained and developed. Its sanity and sublimity have impressed the minds even of soldiers and merchants. It is the characteristic of great poems that they will yield of their sense in due proportion to the hasty and the deliberate reader. To the practical they will be common sense, and to the wise wisdom; as either the traveller may wet his lips, or an army may fill its water-casks at a full stream.

One of the most attractive of those ancient books that I have met

with is the Laws of Menu. According to Sir William Jones, "Vyasa, the son of Parasara, has decided that the Veda, with its Angas, or the six compositions deduced from it, the revealed system of medicine, the Puranas or sacred histories, and the code of Menu, were four works of supreme authority, which ought never to be shaken by arguments merely human." The last is believed by the Hindoos "to have been promulged in the beginning of time, by Menu, son or grandson of Brahma," and "first of created beings"; and Brahma is said to have "taught his laws to Menu in a hundred thousand verses, which Menu explained to the primitive world in the very words of the book now translated." Others affirm that they have undergone successive abridgments for the convenience of mortals, "while the gods of the lower heaven and the band of celestial musicians are engaged in studying the primary code."— "A number of glosses or comments on Menu were composed by the Munis, or old philosophers, whose treatises, together with that before us, constitute the Dherma Sastra, in a collective sense, or Body of Law." Culluca Bhatta was one of the more modern of these.

Every sacred book, successively, has been accepted in the faith that it was to be the final resting-place of the sojourning soul; but after all, it was but a caravansary which supplied refreshment to the traveller, and directed him farther on his way to Isphahan or Bagdat. Thank God, no Hindoo tyranny prevailed at the framing of the world, but we are freemen of the universe, and not sentenced to any caste.

I know of no book which has come down to us with grander pretensions than this, and it is so impersonal and sincere that it is never offensive nor ridiculous. Compare the modes in which modern literature is advertised with the prospectus of this book, and think what a reading public it addresses, what criticism it expects. It seems to have been uttered from some eastern summit, with a sober morning prescience in the dawn of time, and you cannot read a sentence without being elevated as upon the table-land of the Ghauts. It has such a rhythm as the winds of the desert, such a tide as the Ganges, and is as superior to criticism as the Himmaleh Mountains. Its tone is of such unrelaxed fibre, that even at this late day, unworn by time, it wears the English and the Sanscrit dress indifferently; and its fixed sentences keep up their distant fires still, like the stars, by

whose dissipated rays this lower world is illumined. The whole book by noble gestures and inclinations renders many words unnecessary. English sense has toiled, but Hindoo wisdom never perspired. Though the sentences open as we read them, unexpensively, and at first almost unmeaningly, as the petals of a flower, they sometimes startle us with that rare kind of wisdom which could only have been learned from the most trivial experience; but it comes to us as refined as the porcelain earth which subsides to the bottom of the ocean. They are clean and dry as fossil truths, which have been exposed to the elements for thousands of years, so impersonally and scientifically true that they are the ornament of the parlor and the cabinet. Any *moral* philosophy is exceedingly rare. This of Menu addresses our privacy more than most. It is a more private and familiar, and, at the same time, a more public and universal word, than is spoken in parlor or pulpit now-a-days. As our domestic fowls are said to have their original in the wild pheasant of India, so our domestic thoughts have their prototypes in the thoughts of her philosophers. We are dabbling in the very elements of our present conventional and actual life; as if it were the primeval conventicle where how to eat, and to drink, and to sleep, and maintain life with adequate dignity and sincerity, were the questions to be decided. It is later and more intimate with us even than the advice of our nearest friends. And yet it is true for the widest horizon, and read out of doors has relation to the dim mountain line, and is native and aboriginal there. Most books belong to the house and street only, and in the fields their leaves feel very thin. They are bare and obvious, and have no halo nor haze about them. Nature lies far and fair behind them all. But this, as it proceeds from, so it addresses, what is deepest and most abiding in man. It belongs to the noontide of the day, the midsummer of the year, and after the snows have melted, and the waters evaporated in the spring, still its truth speaks freshly to our experience. It helps the sun to shine, and his rays fall on its page to illustrate it. It spends the mornings and the evenings, and makes such an impression on us overnight as to awaken us before dawn, and its influence lingers around us like a fragrance late into the day. It conveys a new gloss to the meadows and the depths of the wood, and its spirit, like a more subtile ether, sweeps along with the

prevailing winds of a country. The very locusts and crickets of a summer day are but later or earlier glosses on the Dherma Sastra of the Hindoos, a continuation of the sacred code. As we have said, there is an orientalism in the most restless pioneer, and the farthest west is but the farthest east. While we are reading these sentences, this fair modern world seems only a reprint of the Laws of Menu with the gloss of Culluca. Tried by a New England eye, or the mere practical wisdom of modern times, they are the oracles of a race already in its dotage, but held up to the sky, which is the only impartial and incorruptible ordeal, they are of a piece with its depth and serenity, and I am assured that they will have a place and significance as long as there is a sky to test them by.

Give me a sentence which no intelligence can understand. There must be a kind of life and palpitation to it, and under its words a kind of blood must circulate forever. It is wonderful that this sound should have come down to us from so far, when the voice of man can be heard so little way, and we are not now within ear-shot of any contemporary. The woodcutters have here felled an ancient pine forest, and brought to light to these distant hills a fair lake in the southwest; and now in an instant it is distinctly shown to these woods as if its image had travelled hither from eternity. Perhaps these old stumps upon the knoll remember when anciently this lake gleamed in the horizon. One wonders if the bare earth itself did not experience emotion at beholding again so fair a prospect. That fair water lies there in the sun thus revealed, so much the prouder and fairer because its beauty needed not to be seen. It seems yet lonely, sufficient to itself, and superior to observation. — So are these old sentences like serene lakes in the southwest, at length revealed to us, which have so long been reflecting our own sky in their bosom.

The great plain of India lies as in a cup between the Himmaleh and the ocean on the north and south, and the Brahmapootra and Indus, on the east and west, wherein the primeval race was received. We will not dispute the story. We are pleased to read in the natural history of the country, of the “pine, larch, spruce, and silver fir,” which cover the southern face of the Himmaleh range; of the “gooseberry, raspberry, strawberry,” which from an imminent temperate zone overlook the torrid plains. So did this active modern

life have even then a foothold and lurking-place in the midst of the stateliness and contemplativeness of those Eastern plains. In another era the "lily of the valley, cowslip, dandelion," were to work their way down into the plain, and bloom in a level zone of their own reaching round the earth. Already has the era of the temperate zone arrived, the era of the pine and the oak, for the palm and the banian do not supply the wants of this age. The lichens on the summits of the rocks will perchance find their level erelong.

As for the tenets of the Brahmans, we are not so much concerned to know what doctrines they held, as that they were held by any. We can tolerate all philosophies, Atomists, Pneumatologists, Atheists, Theists, — Plato, Aristotle, Leucippus, Democritus, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, and Confucius. It is the attitude of these men, more than any communication which they make, that attracts us. Between them and their commentators, it is true, there is an endless dispute. But if it comes to this, that you compare notes, then you are all wrong. As it is, each takes us up into the serene heavens, whither the smallest bubble rises as surely as the largest, and paints earth and sky for us. Any sincere thought is irresistible. The very austerity of the Brahmans is tempting to the devotional soul, as a more refined and nobler luxury. Wants so easily and gracefully satisfied seem like a more refined pleasure. Their conception of creation is peaceful as a dream. "When that power awakes, then has this world its full expansion; but when he slumbers with a tranquil spirit, then the whole system fades away." In the very indistinctness of their theogony a sublime truth is implied. It hardly allows the reader to rest in any supreme first cause, but directly it hints at a supremer still which created the last, and the Creator is still behind increate.

Nor will we disturb the antiquity of this Scripture; "From fire, from air, and from the sun," it was "milked out." One might as well investigate the chronology of light and heat. Let the sun shine. Menu understood this matter best, when he said, "Those best know the divisions of days and nights who understand that the day of Brahma, which endures to the end of a thousand such ages, [infinite ages, nevertheless, according to mortal reckoning,] gives rise to virtuous exertions; and that his night endures as long as his day." Indeed, the Mussulman and Tartar dynasties are beyond all dating. Methinks I

have lived under them myself. In every man's brain is the Sanscrit. The Vedas and their Angas are not so ancient as serene contemplation. Why will we be imposed on by antiquity? Is the babe young? When I behold it, it seems more venerable than the oldest man; it is more ancient than Nestor or the Sibyls, and bears the wrinkles of father Saturn himself. And do we live but in the present? How broad a line is that? I sit now on a stump whose rings number centuries of growth. If I look around I see that the soil is composed of the remains of just such stumps, ancestors to this. The earth is covered with mould. I thrust this stick many aeons deep into its surface, and with my heel make a deeper furrow than the elements have ploughed here for a thousand years. If I listen, I hear the peep of frogs which is older than the slime of Egypt, and the distant drumming of a partridge on a log, as if it were the pulse-beat of the summer air. I raise my fairest and freshest flowers in the old mould. Why, what we would fain call new is not skin deep; the earth is not yet stained by it. It is not the fertile ground which we walk on, but the leaves which flutter over our heads. The newest is but the oldest made visible to our senses. When we dig up the soil from a thousand feet below the surface, we call it new, and the plants which spring from it; and when our vision pierces deeper into space, and detects a remoter star, we call that new also. The place where we sit is called Hudson, — once it was Nottingham, — once —

We should read history as little critically as we consider the landscape, and be more interested by the atmospheric tints and various lights and shades which the intervening spaces create, than by its groundwork and composition. It is the morning now turned evening and seen in the west, — the same sun, but a new light and atmosphere. Its beauty is like the sunset; not a fresco painting on a wall, flat and bounded, but atmospheric and roving or free. In reality, history fluctuates as the face of the landscape from morning to evening. What is of moment is its hue and color. Time hides no treasures; we want not its *then*, but its *now*. We do not complain that the mountains in the horizon are blue and indistinct; they are the more like the heavens.

Of what moment are facts that can be lost, — which need to be commemorated? The monument of death will outlast the memory of

the dead. The pyramids do not tell the tale which was confided to them; the living fact commemorates itself. Why look in the dark for light? Strictly speaking, the historical societies have not recovered one fact from oblivion, but are themselves, instead of the fact, that is lost. The researcher is more memorable than the researched. The crowd stood admiring the mist and the dim outlines of the trees seen through it, when one of their number advanced to explore the phenomenon, and with fresh admiration all eyes were turned on his dimly retreating figure. It is astonishing with how little co-operation of the societies the past is remembered. Its story has indeed had another muse than has been assigned it. There is a good instance of the manner in which all history began, in Alwakidis' Arabian Chronicle: "I was informed by *Ahmed Almatin Aljorhami*, who had it from *Rephaa Ebn Kais Alamiri*, who had it from *Saiph Ebn Fabalah Alchatquarmi*, who had it from *Thabet Ebn Alkamah*, who said he was present at the action." These fathers of history were not anxious to preserve, but to learn the fact; and hence it was not forgotten. Critical acumen is exerted in vain to uncover the past; the *past* cannot be *presented*; we cannot know what we are not. But one veil hangs over past, present, and future, and it is the province of the historian to find out, not what was, but what is. Where a battle has been fought, you will find nothing but the bones of men and beasts; where a battle is being fought, there are hearts beating. We will sit on a mound and muse, and not try to make these skeletons stand on their legs again. Does Nature remember, think you, that they *were* men, or not rather that they *are* bones?

Ancient history has an air of antiquity. It should be more modern. It is written as if the spectator should be thinking of the backside of the picture on the wall, or as if the author expected that the dead would be his readers, and wished to detail to them their own experience. Men seem anxious to accomplish an orderly retreat through the centuries, earnestly rebuilding the works behind, as they are battered down by the encroachments of time; but while they loiter, they and their works both fall a prey to the arch enemy. History has neither the venerableness of antiquity, nor the freshness of the modern. It does as if it would go to the beginning of things, which natural history might with reason assume to do; but consider

the Universal History, and then tell us, — when did burdock and plantain sprout first? It has been so written for the most part, that the times it describes are with remarkable propriety called *dark ages*. They are dark, as one has observed, because we are so in the dark about them. The sun rarely shines in history, what with the dust and confusion; and when we meet with any cheering fact which implies the presence of this luminary, we excerpt and modernize it. As when we read in the history of the Saxons that Edwin of Northumbria "caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where he had seen a clear spring," and "brazen dishes were chained to them to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced." This is worth all Arthur's twelve battles.

"Through the shadow of the world we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."
Than fifty years of Europe better one New England ray!

Biography, too, is liable to the same objection; it should be autobiography. Let us not, as the Germans advise, endeavor to go abroad and vex our bowels that we may be somebody else to explain him. If I am not I, who will be?

But it is fit that the Past should be dark; though the darkness is not so much a quality of the past as of tradition. It is not a distance of time, but a distance of relation, which makes thus dusky its memorials. What is near to the heart of this generation is fair and bright still. Greece lies outspread fair and sunshiny in floods of light, for there is the sun and daylight in her literature and art. Homer does not allow us to forget that the sun shone, — nor Phidias, nor the Parthenon. Yet no era has been wholly dark, nor will we too hastily submit to the historian, and congratulate ourselves on a blaze of light. If we could pierce the obscurity of those remote years, we should find it light enough; only *there* is not our day. Some creatures are made to see in the dark. There has always been the same amount of light in the world. The new and missing stars, the comets and eclipses, do not affect the general illumination, for only our glasses appreciate them. The eyes of the oldest fossil remains, they tell us, indicate that the same laws of light prevailed then as now. Always

the laws of light are the same, but the modes and degrees of seeing vary. The gods are partial to no era, but steadily shines their light in the heavens, while the eye of the beholder is turned to stone. There was but the sun and the eye from the first. The ages have not added a new ray to the one, nor altered a fibre of the other.

If we will admit time into our thoughts at all, the mythologies, those vestiges of ancient poems, wrecks of poems, so to speak, the world's inheritance, still reflecting some of their original splendor, like the fragments of clouds tinted by the rays of the departed sun; reaching into the latest summer day, and allying this hour to the morning of creation; as the poet sings: —

"Fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As buoyant on the stormy main
A parted wreck appears."

These are the materials and hints for a history of the rise and progress of the race; how, from the condition of ants, it arrived at the condition of men, and arts were gradually invented. Let a thousand surmises shed some light on this story. We will not be confined by historical, even geological periods which would allow us to doubt of a progress in human affairs. If we rise above this wisdom for the day, we shall expect that this morning of the race, in which it has been supplied with the simplest necessaries, with corn, and wine, and honey, and oil, and fire, and articulate speech, and agricultural and other arts, reared up by degrees from the condition of ants to men, will be succeeded by a day of equally progressive splendor; that, in the lapse of the divine periods, other divine agents and godlike men will assist to elevate the race as much above its present condition.

But we do not know much about it.

Thus did one voyageur waking dream, while his companion slumbered on the bank. Suddenly a boatman's horn was heard echoing from shore to shore, to give notice of his approach to the farmer's wife with whom he was to take his dinner, though in that place only muskrats and kingfishers seemed to hear. The current of our reflections and our slumbers being thus disturbed, we weighed

anchor once more.

As we proceeded on our way in the afternoon, the western bank became lower, or receded farther from the channel in some places, leaving a few trees only to fringe the water's edge; while the eastern rose abruptly here and there into wooded hills fifty or sixty feet high. The bass, *Tilia Americana*, also called the lime or linden, which was a new tree to us, overhung the water with its broad and rounded leaf, interspersed with clusters of small hard berries now nearly ripe, and made an agreeable shade for us sailors. The inner bark of this genus is the bast, the material of the fisherman's matting, and the ropes and peasant's shoes of which the Russians make so much use, and also of nets and a coarse cloth in some places. According to poets, this was once Philyra, one of the Oceanides. The ancients are said to have used its bark for the roofs of cottages, for baskets, and for a kind of paper called Philyra. They also made bucklers of its wood, "on account of its flexibility, lightness, and resiliency." It was once much used for carving, and is still in demand for sounding-boards of pianofortes and panels of carriages, and for various uses for which toughness and flexibility are required. Baskets and cradles are made of the twigs. Its sap affords sugar, and the honey made from its flowers is said to be preferred to any other. Its leaves are in some countries given to cattle, a kind of chocolate has been made of its fruit, a medicine has been prepared from an infusion of its flowers, and finally, the charcoal made of its wood is greatly valued for gunpowder.

The sight of this tree reminded us that we had reached a strange land to us. As we sailed under this canopy of leaves we saw the sky through its chinks, and, as it were, the meaning and idea of the tree stamped in a thousand hieroglyphics on the heavens. The universe is so aptly fitted to our organization that the eye wanders and reposes at the same time. On every side there is something to soothe and refresh this sense. Look up at the tree-tops and see how finely Nature finishes off her work there. See how the pines spire without end higher and higher, and make a graceful fringe to the earth. And who shall count the finer cobwebs that soar and float away from their utmost tops, and the myriad insects that dodge between them. Leaves are of more various forms than the alphabets of all languages put

together; of the oaks alone there are hardly two alike, and each expresses its own character.

In all her products Nature only develops her simplest germs. One would say that it was no great stretch of invention to create birds. The hawk, which now takes his flight over the top of the wood, was at first, perchance, only a leaf which fluttered in its aisles. From rustling leaves she came in the course of ages to the loftier flight and clear carol of the bird.

Salmon Brook comes in from the west under the railroad, a mile and a half below the village of Nashua. We rowed up far enough into the meadows which border it to learn its piscatorial history from a haymaker on its banks. He told us that the silver eel was formerly abundant here, and pointed to some sunken creels at its mouth. This man's memory and imagination were fertile in fishermen's tales of floating isles in bottomless ponds, and of lakes mysteriously stocked with fishes, and would have kept us till nightfall to listen, but we could not afford to loiter in this roadstead, and so stood out to our sea again. Though we never trod in those meadows, but only touched their margin with our hands, we still retain a pleasant memory of them.

Salmon Brook, whose name is said to be a translation from the Indian, was a favorite haunt of the aborigines. Here, too, the first white settlers of Nashua planted, and some dents in the earth where their houses stood and the wrecks of ancient apple-trees are still visible. About one mile up this stream stood the house of old John Lovewell, who was an ensign in the army of Oliver Cromwell, and the father of "famous Captain Lovewell." He settled here before 1690, and died about 1754, at the age of one hundred and twenty years. He is thought to have been engaged in the famous Narragansett swamp fight, which took place in 1675, before he came here. The Indians are said to have spared him in succeeding wars on account of his kindness to them. Even in 1700 he was so old and gray-headed that his scalp was worth nothing, since the French Governor offered no bounty for such. I have stood in the dent of his cellar on the bank of the brook, and talked there with one whose grandfather had, whose father might have, talked with Lovewell. Here also he had a mill in his old age, and kept a small store. He was

remembered by some who were recently living, as a hale old man who drove the boys out of his orchard with his cane. Consider the triumphs of the mortal man, and what poor trophies it would have to show, to wit: — He cobbled shoes without glasses at a hundred, and cut a handsome swath at a hundred and five! Lovewell's house is said to have been the first which Mrs. Dustan reached on her escape from the Indians. Here probably the hero of Pequawket was born and bred. Close by may be seen the cellar and the gravestone of Joseph Hassell, who, as is elsewhere recorded, with his wife Anna, and son Benjamin, and Mary Marks, "were slain by our Indian enemies on September 2d, [1691,] in the evening." As Gookin observed on a previous occasion, "The Indian rod upon the English backs had not yet done God's errand." Salmon Brook near its mouth is still a solitary stream, meandering through woods and meadows, while the then uninhabited mouth of the Nashua now resounds with the din of a manufacturing town.

A stream from Otternic Pond in Hudson comes in just above Salmon Brook, on the opposite side. There was a good view of Uncannunuc, the most conspicuous mountain in these parts, from the bank here, seen rising over the west end of the bridge above. We soon after passed the village of Nashua, on the river of the same name, where there is a covered bridge over the Merrimack. The Nashua, which is one of the largest tributaries, flows from Wachusett Mountain, through Lancaster, Groton, and other towns, where it has formed well-known elm-shaded meadows, but near its mouth it is obstructed by falls and factories, and did not tempt us to explore it.

Far away from here, in Lancaster, with another companion, I have crossed the broad valley of the Nashua, over which we had so long looked westward from the Concord hills without seeing it to the blue mountains in the horizon. So many streams, so many meadows and woods and quiet dwellings of men had lain concealed between us and those Delectable Mountains; — from yonder hill on the road to Tyngsborough you may get a good view of them. There where it seemed uninterrupted forest to our youthful eyes, between two neighboring pines in the horizon, lay the valley of the Nashua, and this very stream was even then winding at its bottom, and then, as now, it was here silently mingling its waters with the Merrimack.

The clouds which floated over its meadows and were born there, seen far in the west, gilded by the rays of the setting sun, had adorned a thousand evening skies for us. But as it were, by a turf wall this valley was concealed, and in our journey to those hills it was first gradually revealed to us. Summer and winter our eyes had rested on the dim outline of the mountains, to which distance and indistinctness lent a grandeur not their own, so that they served to interpret all the allusions of poets and travellers. Standing on the Concord Cliffs we thus spoke our mind to them: —

With frontier strength ye stand your ground,
With grand content ye circle round,
Tumultuous silence for all sound,
Ye distant nursery of rills,
Monadnock and the Peterborough Hills; —
Firm argument that never stirs,
Outcircling the philosophers, —
Like some vast fleet,
Sailing through rain and sleet,
Through winter's cold and summer's heat;
Still holding on upon your high emprise,
Until ye find a shore amid the skies;
Not skulking close to land,
With cargo contraband,
For they who sent a venture out by ye
Have set the Sun to see
Their honesty.
Ships of the line, each one,
Ye westward run,
Convoying clouds,
Which cluster in your shrouds,
Always before the gale,
Under a press of sail,
With weight of metal all untold, —
I seem to feel ye in my firm seat here,
Immeasurable depth of hold,
And breadth of beam, and length of running gear

Methinks ye take luxurious pleasure
In your novel western leisure;
So cool your brows and freshly blue,
As Time had naught for ye to do;
For ye lie at your length,
An unappropriated strength,
Unhewn primeval timber,
For knees so stiff, for masts so limber;
The stock of which new earths are made,
One day to be our *western* trade,
Fit for the stanchions of a world
Which through the seas of space is hurled.

While we enjoy a lingering ray,
Ye still o'ertop the western day,
Reposing yonder on God's croft
Like solid stacks of hay;
So bold a line as ne'er was writ
On any page by human wit;
The forest glows as if
An enemy's camp-fires shone
Along the horizon,
Or the day's funeral pyre
Were lighted there;
Edged with silver and with gold,
The clouds hang o'er in damask fold,
And with such depth of amber light
The west is dight,
Where still a few rays slant,
That even Heaven seems extravagant.
Watatic Hill
Lies on the horizon's sill
Like a child's toy left overnight,
And other duds to left and right,
On the earth's edge, mountains and trees
Stand as they were on air graven,
Or as the vessels in a haven

Await the morning breeze.
I fancy even
Through your defiles windeth the way to heaven;
And yonder still, in spite of history's page,
Linger the golden and the silver age;
Upon the laboring gale
The news of future centuries is brought,
And of new dynasties of thought,
From your remotest vale.

But special I remember thee,
Wachusett, who like me
Standest alone without society.
Thy far blue eye,
A remnant of the sky,
Seen through the clearing or the gorge,
Or from the windows of the forge,
Doth leaven all it passes by.
Nothing is true
But stands 'tween me and you,
Thou western pioneer,
Who know'st not shame nor fear,
By venturous spirit driven
Under the eaves of heaven;
And canst expand thee there,
And breathe enough of air?
Even beyond the West
Thou migratest,
Into unclouded tracts,
Without a pilgrim's axe,
Cleaving thy road on high
With thy well-tempered brow,
And mak'st thyself a clearing in the sky.
Upholding heaven, holding down earth,
Thy pastime from thy birth;
Not steadied by the one, nor leaning on the other,
May I approve myself thy worthy brother!

At length, like Rasselas and other inhabitants of happy valleys, we had resolved to scale the blue wall which bounded the western horizon, though not without misgivings that thereafter no visible fairy-land would exist for us. But it would be long to tell of our adventures, and we have no time this afternoon, transporting ourselves in imagination up this hazy Nashua valley, to go over again that pilgrimage. We have since made many similar excursions to the principal mountains of New England and New York, and even far in the wilderness, and have passed a night on the summit of many of them. And now, when we look again westward from our native hills, Wachusett and Monadnock have retreated once more among the blue and fabulous mountains in the horizon, though our eyes rest on the very rocks on both of them, where we have pitched our tent for a night, and boiled our hasty-pudding amid the clouds.

As late as 1724 there was no house on the north side of the Nashua, but only scattered wigwams and grisly forests between this frontier and Canada. In September of that year, two men who were engaged in making turpentine on that side, for such were the first enterprises in the wilderness, were taken captive and carried to Canada by a party of thirty Indians. Ten of the inhabitants of Dunstable, going to look for them, found the hoops of their barrel cut, and the turpentine spread on the ground. I have been told by an inhabitant of Tyngsborough, who had the story from his ancestors, that one of these captives, when the Indians were about to upset his barrel of turpentine, seized a pine knot and flourishing it, swore so resolutely that he would kill the first who touched it, that they refrained, and when at length he returned from Canada he found it still standing. Perhaps there was more than one barrel. However this may have been, the scouts knew by marks on the trees, made with coal mixed with grease, that the men were not killed, but taken prisoners. One of the company, named Farwell, perceiving that the turpentine had not done spreading, concluded that the Indians had been gone but a short time, and they accordingly went in instant pursuit. Contrary to the advice of Farwell, following directly on their trail up the Merrimack, they fell into an ambuscade near Thornton's Ferry, in the present town of Merrimack, and nine were killed, only one, Farwell, escaping after a vigorous pursuit. The men of

Dunstable went out and picked up their bodies, and carried them all down to Dunstable and buried them. It is almost word for word as in the Robin Hood ballad: —

”They carried these foresters into fair Nottingham,
As many there did know,
They digged them graves in their churchyard,
And they buried them all a-row.”

Nottingham is only the other side of the river, and they were not exactly all a-row. You may read in the churchyard at Dunstable, under the “Memento Mori,” and the name of one of them, how they “departed this life,” and

”This man with seven more that lies in
this grave was slew all in a day by
the Indians.”

The stones of some others of the company stand around the common grave with their separate inscriptions. Eight were buried here, but nine were killed, according to the best authorities.

”Gentle river, gentle river,
Lo, thy streams are stained with gore,
Many a brave and noble captain
Floats along thy willowed shore.

”All beside thy limpid waters,
All beside thy sands so bright,
Indian Chiefs and Christian warriors
Joined in fierce and mortal fight.”

It is related in the History of Dunstable, that on the return of Farwell the Indians were engaged by a fresh party which they compelled to retreat, and pursued as far as the Nashua, where they fought across the stream at its mouth. After the departure of the Indians, the figure of an Indian’s head was found carved by them on a large tree by the shore, which circumstance has given its name to

this part of the village of Nashville, — the "Indian Head." "It was observed by some judicious," says Gookin, referring to Philip's war, "that at the beginning of the war the English soldiers made a nothing of the Indians, and many spake words to this effect: that one Englishman was sufficient to chase ten Indians; many reckoned it was no other but *Veni, vidi, vici.*" But we may conclude that the judicious would by this time have made a different observation.

Farwell appears to have been the only one who had studied his profession, and understood the business of hunting Indians. He lived to fight another day, for the next year he was Lovewell's lieutenant at Pequawket, but that time, as we have related, he left his bones in the wilderness. His name still reminds us of twilight days and forest scouts on Indian trails, with an uneasy scalp; — an indispensable hero to New England. As the more recent poet of Lovewell's fight has sung, halting a little but bravely still: —

"Then did the crimson streams that flowed
Seem like the waters of the brook,
That brightly shine, that loudly dash,
Far down the cliffs of Agiochook."

These battles sound incredible to us. I think that posterity will doubt if such things ever were; if our bold ancestors who settled this land were not struggling rather with the forest shadows, and not with a copper-colored race of men. They were vapors, fever and ague of the unsettled woods. Now, only a few arrow-heads are turned up by the plough. In the Pelasgic, the Etruscan, or the British story, there is nothing so shadowy and unreal.

It is a wild and antiquated looking graveyard, overgrown with bushes, on the high-road, about a quarter of a mile from and overlooking the Merrimack, with a deserted mill-stream bounding it on one side, where lie the earthly remains of the ancient inhabitants of Dunstable. We passed it three or four miles below here. You may read there the names of Lovewell, Farwell, and many others whose families were distinguished in Indian warfare. We noticed there two large masses of granite more than a foot thick and rudely squared, lying flat on the ground over the remains of the first pastor and his

wife.

It is remarkable that the dead lie everywhere under stones, —

"Strata jacent passim *suo* quseque sub" *lapide* —

corpora, we might say, if the measure allowed. When the stone is a slight one, it does not oppress the spirits of the traveller to meditate by it; but these did seem a little heathenish to us; and so are all large monuments over men's bodies, from the pyramids down. A monument should at least be "star-y-pointing," to indicate whither the spirit is gone, and not prostrate, like the body it has deserted. There have been some nations who could do nothing but construct tombs, and these are the only traces which they have left. They are the heathen. But why these stones, so upright and emphatic, like exclamation-points? What was there so remarkable that lived? Why should the monument be so much more enduring than the fame which it is designed to perpetuate, — a stone to a bone? "Here lies,"— "Here lies"; — why do they not sometimes write, There rises? Is it a monument to the body only that is intended? "Having reached the term of his *natural* life"; — would it not be truer to say, Having reached the term of his *unnatural* life? The rarest quality in an epitaph is truth. If any character is given, it should be as severely true as the decision of the three judges below, and not the partial testimony of friends. Friends and contemporaries should supply only the name and date, and leave it to posterity to write the epitaph.

Here lies an honest man,
Rear-Admiral Van.

—— —

Faith, then ye have
Two in one grave,
For in his favor,
Here too lies the Engraver.

Fame itself is but an epitaph; as late, as false, as true. But they only are the true epitaphs which Old Mortality retouches.

A man might well pray that he may not taboo or curse any portion

of nature by being buried in it. For the most part, the best man's spirit makes a fearful sprite to haunt his grave, and it is therefore much to the credit of Little John, the famous follower of Robin Hood, and reflecting favorably on his character, that his grave was "long celebrous for the yielding of excellent whetstones." I confess that I have but little love for such collections as they have at the Catacombs, Pere la Chaise, Mount Auburn, and even this Dunstable graveyard. At any rate, nothing but great antiquity can make graveyards interesting to me. I have no friends there. It may be that I am not competent to write the poetry of the grave. The farmer who has skimmed his farm might perchance leave his body to Nature to be ploughed in, and in some measure restore its fertility. We should not retard but forward her economies.

Soon the village of Nashua was out of sight, and the woods were gained again, and we rowed slowly on before sunset, looking for a solitary place in which to spend the night. A few evening clouds began to be reflected in the water and the surface was dimpled only here and there by a muskrat crossing the stream. We camped at length near Penichook Brook, on the confines of what is now Nashville, by a deep ravine, under the skirts of a pine wood, where the dead pine-leaves were our carpet, and their tawny boughs stretched overhead. But fire and smoke soon tamed the scene; the rocks consented to be our walls, and the pines our roof. A woodside was already the fittest locality for us.

The wilderness is near as well as dear to every man. Even the oldest villages are indebted to the border of wild wood which surrounds them, more than to the gardens of men. There is something indescribably inspiriting and beautiful in the aspect of the forest skirting and occasionally jutting into the midst of new towns, which, like the sand-heaps of fresh fox-burrows, have sprung up in their midst. The very uprightness of the pines and maples asserts the ancient rectitude and vigor of nature. Our lives need the relief of such a background, where the pine flourishes and the jay still screams.

We had found a safe harbor for our boat, and as the sun was setting carried up our furniture, and soon arranged our house upon the bank, and while the kettle steamed at the tent door, we chatted of distant friends and of the sights which we were to behold, and

wondered which way the towns lay from us. Our cocoa was soon boiled, and supper set upon our chest, and we lengthened out this meal, like old voyageurs, with our talk. Meanwhile we spread the map on the ground, and read in the Gazetteer when the first settlers came here and got a township granted. Then, when supper was done and we had written the journal of our voyage, we wrapped our buffaloes about us and lay down with our heads pillowed on our arms listening awhile to the distant baying of a dog, or the murmurs of the river, or to the wind, which had not gone to rest: —

The western wind came lumbering in,
Bearing a faint Pacific din,
Our evening mail, swift at the call
Of its Postmaster General;
Laden with news from Californ',
Whate'er transpired hath since morn,
How wags the world by brier and brake
From hence to Athabasca Lake; —

or half awake and half asleep, dreaming of a star which glimmered through our cotton roof. Perhaps at midnight one was awakened by a cricket shrilly singing on his shoulder, or by a hunting spider in his eye, and was lulled asleep again by some streamlet purling its way along at the bottom of a wooded and rocky ravine in our neighborhood. It was pleasant to lie with our heads so low in the grass, and hear what a tinkling ever-busy laboratory it was. A thousand little artisans beat on their anvils all night long.

Far in the night as we were falling asleep on the bank of the Merrimack, we heard some tyro beating a drum incessantly, in preparation for a country muster, as we learned, and we thought of the line, —

"When the drum beat at dead of night."

We could have assured him that his beat would be answered, and the forces be mustered. Fear not, thou drummer of the night, we too will be there. And still he drummed on in the silence and the dark. This stray sound from a far-off sphere came to our ears from time to time, far, sweet, and significant, and we listened with such an

unprejudiced sense as if for the first time we heard at all. No doubt he was an insignificant drummer enough, but his music afforded us a prime and leisure hour, and we felt that we were in season wholly. These simple sounds related us to the stars. Ay, there was a logic in them so convincing that the combined sense of mankind could never make me doubt their conclusions. I stop my habitual thinking, as if the plough had suddenly run deeper in its furrow through the crust of the world. How can I go on, who have just stepped over such a bottomless skylight in the bog of my life. Suddenly old Time winked at me, — Ah, you know me, you rogue, — and news had come that IT was well. That ancient universe is in such capital health, I think undoubtedly it will never die. Heal yourselves, doctors; by God, I live.

Then idle Time ran gadding by
And left me with Eternity alone;
I hear beyond the range of sound,
I see beyond the verge of sight, —

I see, smell, taste, hear, feel, that everlasting Something to which we are allied, at once our maker, our abode, our destiny, our very Selves; the one historic truth, the most remarkable fact which can become the distinct and uninvited subject of our thought, the actual glory of the universe; the only fact which a human being cannot avoid recognizing, or in some way forget or dispense with.

It doth expand my privacies
To all, and leave me single in the crowd.

I have seen how the foundations of the world are laid, and I have not the least doubt that it will stand a good while.

Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life.
I will not doubt the love untold,
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,
Which wooed me young and wooes me old,

And to this evening hath me brought.

What are ears? what is Time? that this particular series of sounds called a strain of music, an invisible and fairy troop which never brushed the dew from any mead, can be wafted down through the centuries from Homer to me, and he have been conversant with that same aerial and mysterious charm which now so tingles my ears? What a fine communication from age to age, of the fairest and noblest thoughts, the aspirations of ancient men, even such as were never communicated by speech, is music! It is the flower of language, thought colored and curved, fluent and flexible, its crystal fountain tinged with the sun's rays, and its purling ripples reflecting the grass and the clouds. A strain of music reminds me of a passage of the Vedas, and I associate with it the idea of infinite remoteness, as well as of beauty and serenity, for to the senses that is farthest from us which addresses the greatest depth within us. It teaches us again and again to trust the remotest and finest as the divinest instinct, and makes a dream our only real experience. We feel a sad cheer when we hear it, perchance because we that hear are not one with that which is heard.

Therefore a torrent of sadness deep,
Through the strains of thy triumph is heard to sweep.

The sadness is ours. The Indian poet Calidas says in the Sacontala: "Perhaps the sadness of men on seeing beautiful forms and hearing sweet music arises from some faint remembrance of past joys, and the traces of connections in a former state of existence." As polishing expresses the vein in marble, and grain in wood, so music brings out what of heroic lurks anywhere. The hero is the sole patron of music. That harmony which exists naturally between the hero's moods and the universe the soldier would fain imitate with drum and trumpet. When we are in health all sounds fife and drum for us; we hear the notes of music in the air, or catch its echoes dying away when we awake in the dawn. Marching is when the pulse of the hero beats in unison with the pulse of Nature, and he steps to the measure of the universe; then there is true courage and invincible strength.

Plutarch says that "Plato thinks the gods never gave men music, the science of melody and harmony, for mere delectation or to tickle the ear; but that the discordant parts of the circulations and beauteous fabric of the soul, and that of it that roves about the body, and many times, for want of tune and air, breaks forth into many extravagances and excesses, might be sweetly recalled and artfully wound up to their former consent and agreement."

Music is the sound of the universal laws promulgated. It is the only assured tone. There are in it such strains as far surpass any man's faith in the loftiness of his destiny. Things are to be learned which it will be worth the while to learn. Formerly I heard these

Rumors from an Aeolian Harp.

There is a vale which none hath seen,
Where foot of man has never been,
Such as here lives with toil and strife,
An anxious and a sinful life.

There every virtue has its birth,
Ere it descends upon the earth,
And thither every deed returns,
Which in the generous bosom burns.

There love is warm, and youth is young,
And poetry is yet unsung,
For Virtue still adventures there,
And freely breathes her native air.

And ever, if you hearken well,
You still may hear its vesper bell,
And tread of high-souled men go by,
Their thoughts conversing with the sky.

According to Jamblichus, "Pythagoras did not procure for himself a thing of this kind through instruments or the voice, but employing a certain ineffable divinity, and which it is difficult to apprehend, he extended his ears and fixed his intellect in the sublime symphonies of

the world, he alone hearing and understanding, as it appears, the universal harmony and consonance of the spheres, and the stars that are moved through them, and which produce a fuller and more intense melody than anything effected by mortal sounds."

Travelling on foot very early one morning due east from here about twenty miles, from Caleb Harriman's tavern in Hampstead toward Haverhill, when I reached the railroad in Plaistow, I heard at some distance a faint music in the air like an Aeolian harp, which I immediately suspected to proceed from the cord of the telegraph vibrating in the just awakening morning wind, and applying my ear to one of the posts I was convinced that it was so. It was the telegraph harp singing its message through the country, its message sent not by men, but by gods. Perchance, like the statue of Memnon, it resounds only in the morning, when the first rays of the sun fall on it. It was like the first lyre or shell heard on the sea-shore, — that vibrating cord high in the air over the shores of earth. So have all things their higher and their lower uses. I heard a fairer news than the journals ever print. It told of things worthy to hear, and worthy of the electric fluid to carry the news of, not of the price of cotton and flour, but it hinted at the price of the world itself and of things which are priceless, of absolute truth and beauty.

Still the drum rolled on, and stirred our blood to fresh extravagance that night. The clarion sound and clang of corselet and buckler were heard from many a hamlet of the soul, and many a knight was arming for the fight behind the encamped stars.

> "Before each van
> Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears
> Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
> From either end of Heaven the welkin burns."

——— ——— ——— —

> Away! away! away! away!
> Ye have not kept your secret well,
> I will abide that other day,
> Those other lands ye tell.

Has time no leisure left for these,
The acts that ye rehearse?
Is not eternity a lease
For better deeds than verse?

'T is sweet to hear of heroes dead,
To know them still alive,
But sweeter if we earn their bread,
And in us they survive.

Our life should feed the springs of fame
With a perennial wave.
As ocean feeds the babbling founts
Which find in it their grave.

Ye skies drop gently round my breast,
And be my corselet blue,
Ye earth receive my lance in rest,
My faithful charger you;

Ye stars my spear-heads in the sky,
My arrow-tips ye are;
I see the routed foemen fly,
My bright spears fixed are.

Give me an angel for a foe,
Fix now the place and time,
And straight to meet him I will go
Above the starry chime.

And with our clashing bucklers' clang
The heavenly spheres shall ring,
While bright the northern lights shall hang
Beside our tourneying.

And if she lose her champion true,
Tell Heaven not despair,
For I will be her champion new,

Her fame I will repair.

There was a high wind this night, which we afterwards learned had been still more violent elsewhere, and had done much injury to the cornfields far and near; but we only heard it sigh from time to time, as if it had no license to shake the foundations of our tent; the pines murmured, the water rippled, and the tent rocked a little, but we only laid our ears closer to the ground, while the blast swept on to alarm other men, and long before sunrise we were ready to pursue our voyage as usual.

TUESDAY.

”On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the fields the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot.”

Tennyson.

TUESDAY.

— * —

Long before daylight we ranged abroad, hatchet in hand, in search of fuel, and made the yet slumbering and dreaming wood resound with our blows. Then with our fire we burned up a portion of the loitering night, while the kettle sang its homely strain to the morning star. We tramped about the shore, waked all the muskrats, and scared up the bittern and birds that were asleep upon their roosts; we hauled up and upset our boat and washed it and rinsed out the clay, talking aloud as if it were broad day, until at length, by three o'clock, we had completed our preparations and were ready to pursue our voyage as usual; so, shaking the clay from our feet, we pushed into the fog.

Though we were enveloped in mist as usual, we trusted that there was a bright day behind it.

Ply the oars! away! away!
In each dew-drop of the morning
Lies the promise of a day.

Rivers from the sunrise flow,
Springing with the dewy morn;
Voyageurs 'gainst time do row,
Idle noon nor sunset know,
Ever even with the dawn.

Belknap, the historian of this State, says that, "In the neighborhood of fresh rivers and ponds, a whitish fog in the morning lying over the water is a sure indication of fair weather for that day; and when no fog is seen, rain is expected before night." That which seemed to us to invest the world was only a narrow and shallow wreath of vapor stretched over the channel of the Merrimack from the seaboard to the mountains. More extensive fogs, however, have their own limits. I once saw the day break from the top of Saddleback Mountain in Massachusetts, above the clouds. As we cannot distinguish objects through this dense fog, let me tell this story more

at length.

I had come over the hills on foot and alone in serene summer days, plucking the raspberries by the wayside, and occasionally buying a loaf of bread at a farmer's house, with a knapsack on my back which held a few traveller's books and a change of clothing, and a staff in my hand. I had that morning looked down from the Hoosack Mountain, where the road crosses it, on the village of North Adams in the valley three miles away under my feet, showing how uneven the earth may sometimes be, and making it seem an accident that it should ever be level and convenient for the feet of man. Putting a little rice and sugar and a tin cup into my knapsack at this village, I began in the afternoon to ascend the mountain, whose summit is three thousand six hundred feet above the level of the sea, and was seven or eight miles distant by the path. My route lay up a long and spacious valley called the Bellows, because the winds rush up or down it with violence in storms, sloping up to the very clouds between the principal range and a lower mountain. There were a few farms scattered along at different elevations, each commanding a fine prospect of the mountains to the north, and a stream ran down the middle of the valley on which near the head there was a mill. It seemed a road for the pilgrim to enter upon who would climb to the gates of heaven. Now I crossed a hay-field, and now over the brook on a slight bridge, still gradually ascending all the while with a sort of awe, and filled with indefinite expectations as to what kind of inhabitants and what kind of nature I should come to at last. It now seemed some advantage that the earth was uneven, for one could not imagine a more noble position for a farm-house than this vale afforded, farther from or nearer to its head, from a glen-like seclusion overlooking the country at a great elevation between these two mountain walls.

It reminded me of the homesteads of the Huguenots, on Staten Island, off the coast of New Jersey. The hills in the interior of this island, though comparatively low, are penetrated in various directions by similar sloping valleys on a humble scale, gradually narrowing and rising to the centre, and at the head of these the Huguenots, who were the first settlers, placed their houses quite within the land, in rural and sheltered places, in leafy recesses where

the breeze played with the poplar and the gum-tree, from which, with equal security in calm and storm, they looked out through a widening vista, over miles of forest and stretching salt marsh, to the Huguenot's Tree, an old elm on the shore at whose root they had landed, and across the spacious outer bay of New York to Sandy Hook and the Highlands of Neversink, and thence over leagues of the Atlantic, perchance to some faint vessel in the horizon, almost a day's sail on her voyage to that Europe whence they had come. When walking in the interior there, in the midst of rural scenery, where there was as little to remind me of the ocean as amid the New Hampshire hills, I have suddenly, through a gap, a cleft or "clove road," as the Dutch settlers called it, caught sight of a ship under full sail, over a field of corn, twenty or thirty miles at sea. The effect was similar, since I had no means of measuring distances, to seeing a painted ship passed backwards and forwards through a magic-lantern.

But to return to the mountain. It seemed as if he must be the most singular and heavenly minded man whose dwelling stood highest up the valley. The thunder had rumbled at my heels all the way, but the shower passed off in another direction, though if it had not, I half believed that I should get above it. I at length reached the last house but one, where the path to the summit diverged to the right, while the summit itself rose directly in front. But I determined to follow up the valley to its head, and then find my own route up the steep as the shorter and more adventurous way. I had thoughts of returning to this house, which was well kept and so nobly placed, the next day, and perhaps remaining a week there, if I could have entertainment. Its mistress was a frank and hospitable young woman, who stood before me in a dishabille, busily and unconcernedly combing her long black hair while she talked, giving her head the necessary toss with each sweep of the comb, with lively, sparkling eyes, and full of interest in that lower world from which I had come, talking all the while as familiarly as if she had known me for years, and reminding me of a cousin of mine. She at first had taken me for a student from Williamstown, for they went by in parties, she said, either riding or walking, almost every pleasant day, and were a pretty wild set of fellows; but they never went by the way I was going. As I passed the

last house, a man called out to know what I had to sell, for seeing my knapsack, he thought that I might be a pedler who was taking this unusual route over the ridge of the valley into South Adams. He told me that it was still four or five miles to the summit by the path which I had left, though not more than two in a straight line from where I was, but that nobody ever went this way; there was no path, and I should find it as steep as the roof of a house. But I knew that I was more used to woods and mountains than he, and went along through his cow-yard, while he, looking at the sun, shouted after me that I should not get to the top that night. I soon reached the head of the valley, but as I could not see the summit from this point, I ascended a low mountain on the opposite side, and took its bearing with my compass. I at once entered the woods, and began to climb the steep side of the mountain in a diagonal direction, taking the bearing of a tree every dozen rods. The ascent was by no means difficult or unpleasant, and occupied much less time than it would have taken to follow the path. Even country people, I have observed, magnify the difficulty of travelling in the forest, and especially among mountains. They seem to lack their usual common sense in this. I have climbed several higher mountains without guide or path, and have found, as might be expected, that it takes only more time and patience commonly than to travel the smoothest highway. It is very rare that you meet with obstacles in this world which the humblest man has not faculties to surmount. It is true we may come to a perpendicular precipice, but we need not jump off nor run our heads against it. A man may jump down his own cellar stairs or dash his brains out against his chimney, if he is mad. So far as my experience goes, travellers generally exaggerate the difficulties of the way. Like most evil, the difficulty is imaginary; for what's the hurry? If a person lost would conclude that after all he is not lost, he is not beside himself, but standing in his own old shoes on the very spot where he is, and that for the time being he will live there; but the places that have known him, *they* are lost, — how much anxiety and danger would vanish. I am not alone if I stand by myself. Who knows where in space this globe is rolling? Yet we will not give ourselves up for lost, let it go where it will.

I made my way steadily upward in a straight line through a dense

undergrowth of mountain laurel, until the trees began to have a scraggy and infernal look, as if contending with frost goblins, and at length I reached the summit, just as the sun was setting. Several acres here had been cleared, and were covered with rocks and stumps, and there was a rude observatory in the middle which overlooked the woods. I had one fair view of the country before the sun went down, but I was too thirsty to waste any light in viewing the prospect, and set out directly to find water. First, going down a well-beaten path for half a mile through the low scrubby wood, till I came to where the water stood in the tracks of the horses which had carried travellers up, I lay down flat, and drank these dry, one after another, a pure, cold, spring-like water, but yet I could not fill my dipper, though I contrived little siphons of grass-stems, and ingenious aqueducts on a small scale; it was too slow a process. Then remembering that I had passed a moist place near the top, on my way up, I returned to find it again, and here, with sharp stones and my hands, in the twilight, I made a well about two feet deep, which was soon filled with pure cold water, and the birds too came and drank at it. So I filled my dipper, and, making my way back to the observatory, collected some dry sticks, and made a fire on some flat stones which had been placed on the floor for that purpose, and so I soon cooked my supper of rice, having already whittled a wooden spoon to eat it with.

I sat up during the evening, reading by the light of the fire the scraps of newspapers in which some party had wrapped their luncheon; the prices current in New York and Boston, the advertisements, and the singular editorials which some had seen fit to publish, not foreseeing under what critical circumstances they would be read. I read these things at a vast advantage there, and it seemed to me that the advertisements, or what is called the business part of a paper, were greatly the best, the most useful, natural, and respectable. Almost all the opinions and sentiments expressed were so little considered, so shallow and flimsy, that I thought the very texture of the paper must be weaker in that part and tear the more easily. The advertisements and the prices current were more closely allied to nature, and were respectable in some measure as tide and meteorological tables are; but the reading-matter, which I remembered was most prized down below, unless it was some

humble record of science, or an extract from some old classic, struck me as strangely whimsical, and crude, and one-idea'd, like a school-boy's theme, such as youths write and after burn. The opinions were of that kind that are doomed to wear a different aspect to-morrow, like last year's fashions; as if mankind were very green indeed, and would be ashamed of themselves in a few years, when they had outgrown this verdant period. There was, moreover, a singular disposition to wit and humor, but rarely the slightest real success; and the apparent success was a terrible satire on the attempt; the Evil Genius of man laughed the loudest at his best jokes. The advertisements, as I have said, such as were serious, and not of the modern quack kind, suggested pleasing and poetic thoughts; for commerce is really as interesting as nature. The very names of the commodities were poetic, and as suggestive as if they had been inserted in a pleasing poem, — Lumber, Cotton, Sugar, Hides, Guano, Logwood. Some sober, private, and original thought would have been grateful to read there, and as much in harmony with the circumstances as if it had been written on a mountain-top; for it is of a fashion which never changes, and as respectable as hides and logwood, or any natural product. What an inestimable companion such a scrap of paper would have been, containing some fruit of a mature life. What a relic! What a recipe! It seemed a divine invention, by which not mere shining coin, but shining and current thoughts, could be brought up and left there.

As it was cold, I collected quite a pile of wood and lay down on a board against the side of the building, not having any blanket to cover me, with my head to the fire, that I might look after it, which is not the Indian rule. But as it grew colder towards midnight, I at length encased myself completely in boards, managing even to put a board on top of me, with a large stone on it, to keep it down, and so slept comfortably. I was reminded, it is true, of the Irish children, who inquired what their neighbors did who had no door to put over them in winter nights as they had; but I am convinced that there was nothing very strange in the inquiry. Those who have never tried it can have no idea how far a door, which keeps the single blanket down, may go toward making one comfortable. We are constituted a good deal like chickens, which taken from the hen, and put in a

basket of cotton in the chimney-corner, will often peep till they die, nevertheless, but if you put in a book, or anything heavy, which will press down the cotton, and feel like the hen, they go to sleep directly. My only companions were the mice, which came to pick up the crumbs that had been left in those scraps of paper; still, as everywhere, pensioners on man, and not unwisely improving this elevated tract for their habitation. They nibbled what was for them; I nibbled what was for me. Once or twice in the night, when I looked up, I saw a white cloud drifting through the windows, and filling the whole upper story.

This observatory was a building of considerable size, erected by the students of Williamstown College, whose buildings might be seen by daylight gleaming far down in the valley. It would be no small advantage if every college were thus located at the base of a mountain, as good at least as one well-endowed professorship. It were as well to be educated in the shadow of a mountain as in more classical shades. Some will remember, no doubt, not only that they went to the college, but that they went to the mountain. Every visit to its summit would, as it were, generalize the particular information gained below, and subject it to more catholic tests.

I was up early and perched upon the top of this tower to see the daybreak, for some time reading the names that had been engraved there, before I could distinguish more distant objects. An "untamable fly" buzzed at my elbow with the same nonchalance as on a molasses hogshead at the end of Long Wharf. Even there I must attend to his stale humdrum. But now I come to the pith of this long digression. — As the light increased I discovered around me an ocean of mist, which by chance reached up exactly to the base of the tower, and shut out every vestige of the earth, while I was left floating on this fragment of the wreck of a world, on my carved plank, in cloudland; a situation which required no aid from the imagination to render it impressive. As the light in the east steadily increased, it revealed to me more clearly the new world into which I had risen in the night, the new *terra firma* perchance of my future life. There was not a crevice left through which the trivial places we name Massachusetts or Vermont or New York could be seen, while I still inhaled the clear atmosphere of a July morning, — if it were July there. All around

beneath me was spread for a hundred miles on every side, as far as the eye could reach, an undulating country of clouds, answering in the varied swell of its surface to the terrestrial world it veiled. It was such a country as we might see in dreams, with all the delights of paradise. There were immense snowy pastures, apparently smooth-shaven and firm, and shady vales between the vaporous mountains; and far in the horizon I could see where some luxurious misty timber jutted into the prairie, and trace the windings of a water-course, some unimagined Amazon or Orinoko, by the misty trees on its brink. As there was wanting the symbol, so there was not the substance of impurity, no spot nor stain. It was a favor for which to be forever silent to be shown this vision. The earth beneath had become such a flitting thing of lights and shadows as the clouds had been before. It was not merely veiled to me, but it had passed away like the phantom of a shadow, <skia's o'nar>, and this new platform was gained. As I had climbed above storm and cloud, so by successive days' journeys I might reach the region of eternal day, beyond the tapering shadow of the earth; ay,

> "Heaven itself shall slide,
> And roll away, like melting stars that glide
> Along their oily threads."

But when its own sun began to rise on this pure world, I found myself a dweller in the dazzling halls of Aurora, into which poets have had but a partial glance over the eastern hills, drifting amid the saffron-colored clouds, and playing with the rosy fingers of the Dawn, in the very path of the Sun's chariot, and sprinkled with its dewy dust, enjoying the benignant smile, and near at hand the far-darting glances of the god. The inhabitants of earth behold commonly but the dark and shadowy under-side of heaven's pavement; it is only when seen at a favorable angle in the horizon, morning or evening, that some faint streaks of the rich lining of the clouds are revealed. But my muse would fail to convey an impression of the gorgeous tapestry by which I was surrounded, such as men see faintly reflected afar off in the chambers of the east. Here, as on earth, I saw the gracious god

”Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
. . . . . .
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy.”

But never here did “Heaven’s sun” stain himself.

But, alas, owing, as I think, to some unworthiness in myself, my private sun did stain himself, and

”Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly wrack on his celestial face,” —

for before the god had reached the zenith the heavenly pavement rose and embraced my wavering virtue, or rather I sank down again into that “forlorn world,” from which the celestial sun had hid his visage, —

”How may a worm that crawls along the dust,
Clamber the azure mountains, thrown so high,
And fetch from thence thy fair idea just,
That in those sunny courts doth hidden lie,
Clothed with such light as blinds the angel’s eye?
How may weak mortal ever hope to file
His unsmooth tongue, and his deprostrate style?
O, raise thou from his corse thy now entombed exile!”

In the preceding evening I had seen the summits of new and yet higher mountains, the Catskills, by which I might hope to climb to heaven again, and had set my compass for a fair lake in the southwest, which lay in my way, for which I now steered, descending the mountain by my own route, on the side opposite to that by which I had ascended, and soon found myself in the region of cloud and drizzling rain, and the inhabitants affirmed that it had been a cloudy and drizzling day wholly.

But now we must make haste back before the fog disperses to the blithe Merrimack water.

Since that first “Away! away!”
Many a lengthy reach we’ve rowed,

Still the sparrow on the spray
Hastes to usher in the day
With her simple stanza'd ode.

We passed a canal-boat before sunrise, groping its way to the seaboard, and, though we could not see it on account of the fog, the few dull, thumping, stertorous sounds which we heard, impressed us with a sense of weight and irresistible motion. One little rill of commerce already awake on this distant New Hampshire river. The fog, as it required more skill in the steering, enhanced the interest of our early voyage, and made the river seem indefinitely broad. A slight mist, through which objects are faintly visible, has the effect of expanding even ordinary streams, by a singular mirage, into arms of the sea or inland lakes. In the present instance it was even fragrant and invigorating, and we enjoyed it as a sort of earlier sunshine, or dewy and embryo light.

Low-anchored cloud,
Newfoundland air,
Fountain-head and source of rivers,
Dew-cloth, dream drapery,
And napkin spread by fays;
Drifting meadow of the air,
Where bloom the daisied banks and violets,
And in whose fenny labyrinth
The bittern booms and heron wades;
Spirit of lakes and seas and rivers,
Bear only perfumes and the scent
Of healing herbs to just men's fields!

The same pleasant and observant historian whom we quoted above says, that, "In the mountainous parts of the country, the ascent of vapors, and their formation into clouds, is a curious and entertaining object. The vapors are seen rising in small columns like smoke from many chimneys. When risen to a certain height, they spread, meet, condense, and are attracted to the mountains, where they either distil in gentle dews, and replenish the springs, or descend

in showers, accompanied with thunder. After short intermissions, the process is repeated many times in the course of a summer day, affording to travellers a lively illustration of what is observed in the Book of Job, `They are wet with the showers of the mountains.'"

Fogs and clouds which conceal the overshadowing mountains lend the breadth of the plains to mountain vales. Even a small-featured country acquires some grandeur in stormy weather when clouds are seen drifting between the beholder and the neighboring hills. When, in travelling toward Haverhill through Hampstead in this State, on the height of land between the Merrimack and the Piscataqua or the sea, you commence the descent eastward, the view toward the coast is so distant and unexpected, though the sea is invisible, that you at first suppose the unobstructed atmosphere to be a fog in the lowlands concealing hills of corresponding elevation to that you are upon; but it is the mist of prejudice alone, which the winds will not disperse. The most stupendous scenery ceases to be sublime when it becomes distinct, or in other words limited, and the imagination is no longer encouraged to exaggerate it. The actual height and breadth of a mountain or a waterfall are always ridiculously small; they are the imagined only that content us. Nature is not made after such a fashion as we would have her. We piously exaggerate her wonders, as the scenery around our home.

Such was the heaviness of the dews along this river that we were generally obliged to leave our tent spread over the bows of the boat till the sun had dried it, to avoid mildew. We passed the mouth of Penichook Brook, a wild salmon-stream, in the fog, without seeing it. At length the sun's rays struggled through the mist and showed us the pines on shore dripping with dew, and springs trickling from the moist banks, —

"And now the taller sons, whom Titan warms,
Of unshorn mountains blown with easy winds,
Dandle the morning's childhood in their arms,
And, if they chanced to slip the prouder pines,
The under corylets did catch their shines,
To gild their leaves."

We rowed for some hours between glistening banks before the sun had dried the grass and leaves, or the day had established its character. Its serenity at last seemed the more profound and secure for the denseness of the morning's fog. The river became swifter, and the scenery more pleasing than before. The banks were steep and clayey for the most part, and trickling with water, and where a spring oozed out a few feet above the river the boatmen had cut a trough out of a slab with their axes, and placed it so as to receive the water and fill their jugs conveniently. Sometimes this purer and cooler water, bursting out from under a pine or a rock, was collected into a basin close to the edge of and level with the river, a fountain-head of the Merrimack. So near along life's stream are the fountains of innocence and youth making fertile its sandy margin; and the voyageur will do well to replenish his vessels often at these uncontaminated sources. Some youthful spring, perchance, still empties with tinkling music into the oldest river, even when it is falling into the sea, and we imagine that its music is distinguished by the river-gods from the general lapse of the stream, and falls sweeter on their ears in proportion as it is nearer to the ocean. As the evaporations of the river feed thus these unsuspected springs which filter through its banks, so, perchance, our aspirations fall back again in springs on the margin of life's stream to refresh and purify it. The yellow and tepid river may float his scow, and cheer his eye with its reflections and its ripples, but the boatman quenches his thirst at this small rill alone. It is this purer and cooler element that chiefly sustains his life. The race will long survive that is thus discreet.

Our course this morning lay between the territories of Merrimack, on the west, and Litchfield, once called Brenton's Farm, on the east, which townships were anciently the Indian Naticook. Brenton was a fur-trader among the Indians, and these lands were granted to him in 1656. The latter township contains about five hundred inhabitants, of whom, however, we saw none, and but few of their dwellings. Being on the river, whose banks are always high and generally conceal the few houses, the country appeared much more wild and primitive than to the traveller on the neighboring roads. The river is by far the most attractive highway, and those boatmen who have spent twenty or twenty-five years on it must have had a much fairer, more wild, and

memorable experience than the dusty and jarring one of the teamster who has driven, during the same time, on the roads which run parallel with the stream. As one ascends the Merrimack he rarely sees a village, but for the most part alternate wood and pasture lands, and sometimes a field of corn or potatoes, of rye or oats or English grass, with a few straggling apple-trees, and, at still longer intervals, a farmer's house. The soil, excepting the best of the interval, is commonly as light and sandy as a patriot could desire. Sometimes this forenoon the country appeared in its primitive state, and as if the Indian still inhabited it, and, again, as if many free, new settlers occupied it, their slight fences straggling down to the water's edge; and the barking of dogs, and even the prattle of children, were heard, and smoke was seen to go up from some hearthstone, and the banks were divided into patches of pasture, mowing, tillage, and woodland. But when the river spread out broader, with an uninhabited islet, or a long, low sandy shore which ran on single and devious, not answering to its opposite, but far off as if it were sea-shore or single coast, and the land no longer nursed the river in its bosom, but they conversed as equals, the rustling leaves with rippling waves, and few fences were seen, but high oak woods on one side, and large herds of cattle, and all tracks seemed a point to one centre behind some statelier grove, — we imagined that the river flowed through an extensive manor, and that the few inhabitants were retainers to a lord, and a feudal state of things prevailed.

When there was a suitable reach, we caught sight of the Goffstown mountain, the Indian Uncannunuc, rising before us on the west side. It was a calm and beautiful day, with only a slight zephyr to ripple the surface of the water, and rustle the woods on shore, and just warmth enough to prove the kindly disposition of Nature to her children. With buoyant spirits and vigorous impulses we tossed our boat rapidly along into the very middle of this forenoon. The fish-hawk sailed and screamed overhead. The chipping or striped squirrel, *Sciurus striatus* (*Tamias Lysteri*, Aud.), sat upon the end of some Virginia fence or rider reaching over the stream, twirling a green nut with one paw, as in a lathe, while the other held it fast against its incisors as chisels. Like an independent russet leaf, with a will of its own, rustling whither it could; now under the fence, now over it, now

peeping at the voyageurs through a crack with only its tail visible, now at its lunch deep in the toothsome kernel, and now a rod off playing at hide-and-seek, with the nut stowed away in its chops, where were half a dozen more besides, extending its cheeks to a ludicrous breadth, — as if it were devising through what safe valve of frisk or somerset to let its superfluous life escape; the stream passing harmlessly off, even while it sits, in constant electric flashes through its tail. And now with a chuckling squeak it dives into the root of a hazel, and we see no more of it. Or the larger red squirrel or chickaree, sometimes called the Hudson Bay squirrel (*Scriurus Hudsonius*), gave warning of our approach by that peculiar alarum of his, like the winding up of some strong clock, in the top of a pine-tree, and dodged behind its stem, or leaped from tree to tree with such caution and adroitness, as if much depended on the fidelity of his scout, running along the white-pine boughs sometimes twenty rods by our side, with such speed, and by such unerring routes, as if it were some well-worn familiar path to him; and presently, when we have passed, he returns to his work of cutting off the pine-cones, and letting them fall to the ground.

We passed Cromwell's Falls, the first we met with on this river, this forenoon, by means of locks, without using our wheels. These falls are the Nesenkeag of the Indians. Great Nesenkeag Stream comes in on the right just above, and Little Nesenkeag some distance below, both in Litchfield. We read in the Gazetteer, under the head of Merrimack, that "The first house in this town was erected on the margin of the river [soon after 1665] for a house of traffic with the Indians. For some time one Cromwell carried on a lucrative trade with them, weighing their furs with his foot, till, enraged at his supposed or real deception, they formed the resolution to murder him. This intention being communicated to Cromwell, he buried his wealth and made his escape. Within a few hours after his flight, a party of the Penacook tribe arrived, and, not finding the object of their resentment, burnt his habitation." Upon the top of the high bank here, close to the river, was still to be seen his cellar, now overgrown with trees. It was a convenient spot for such a traffic, at the foot of the first falls above the settlements, and commanding a pleasant view up the river, where he could see the Indians coming down with their

furs. The lock-man told us that his shovel and tongs had been ploughed up here, and also a stone with his name on it. But we will not vouch for the truth of this story. In the New Hampshire Historical Collections for 1815 it says, “Some time after pewter was found in the well, and an iron pot and trammel in the sand; the latter are preserved.” These were the traces of the white trader. On the opposite bank, where it jutted over the stream cape-wise, we picked up four arrow-heads and a small Indian tool made of stone, as soon as we had climbed it, where plainly there had once stood a wigwam of the Indians with whom Cromwell traded, and who fished and hunted here before he came.

As usual the gossips have not been silent respecting Cromwell’s buried wealth, and it is said that some years ago a farmer’s plough, not far from here, slid over a flat stone which emitted a hollow sound, and, on its being raised, a small hole six inches in diameter was discovered, stoned about, from which a sum of money was taken. The lock-man told us another similar story about a farmer in a neighboring town, who had been a poor man, but who suddenly bought a good farm, and was well to do in the world, and, when he was questioned, did not give a satisfactory account of the matter; how few, alas, could! This caused his hired man to remember that one day, as they were ploughing together, the plough struck something, and his employer, going back to look, concluded not to go round again, saying that the sky looked rather lowering, and so put up his team. The like urgency has caused many things to be remembered which never transpired. The truth is, there is money buried everywhere, and you have only to go to work to find it.

Not far from these falls stands an oak-tree, on the interval, about a quarter of a mile from the river, on the farm of a Mr. Lund, which was pointed out to us as the spot where French, the leader of the party which went in pursuit of the Indians from Dunstable, was killed. Farwell dodged them in the thick woods near. It did not look as if men had ever had to run for their lives on this now open and peaceful interval.

Here too was another extensive desert by the side of the road in Litchfield, visible from the bank of the river. The sand was blown off in some places to the depth of ten or twelve feet, leaving small

grotesque hillocks of that height, where there was a clump of bushes firmly rooted. Thirty or forty years ago, as we were told, it was a sheep-pasture, but the sheep, being worried by the fleas, began to paw the ground, till they broke the sod, and so the sand began to blow, till now it had extended over forty or fifty acres. This evil might easily have been remedied, at first, by spreading birches with their leaves on over the sand, and fastening them down with stakes, to break the wind. The fleas bit the sheep, and the sheep bit the ground, and the sore had spread to this extent. It is astonishing what a great sore a little scratch breedeth. Who knows but Sahara, where caravans and cities are buried, began with the bite of an African flea? This poor globe, how it must itch in many places! Will no god be kind enough to spread a salve of birches over its sores? Here too we noticed where the Indians had gathered a heap of stones, perhaps for their council-fire, which, by their weight having prevented the sand under them from blowing away, were left on the summit of a mound. They told us that arrow-heads, and also bullets of lead and iron, had been found here. We noticed several other sandy tracts in our voyage; and the course of the Merrimack can be traced from the nearest mountain by its yellow sandbanks, though the river itself is for the most part invisible. Lawsuits, as we hear, have in some cases grown out of these causes. Railroads have been made through certain irritable districts, breaking their sod, and so have set the sand to blowing, till it has converted fertile farms into deserts, and the company has had to pay the damages.

This sand seemed to us the connecting link between land and water. It was a kind of water on which you could walk, and you could see the ripple-marks on its surface, produced by the winds, precisely like those at the bottom of a brook or lake. We had read that Mussulmen are permitted by the Koran to perform their ablutions in sand when they cannot get water, a necessary indulgence in Arabia, and we now understood the propriety of this provision.

Plum Island, at the mouth of this river, to whose formation, perhaps, these very banks have sent their contribution, is a similar desert of drifting sand, of various colors, blown into graceful curves by the wind. It is a mere sand-bar exposed, stretching nine miles parallel to the coast, and, exclusive of the marsh on the inside, rarely

more than half a mile wide. There are but half a dozen houses on it, and it is almost without a tree, or a sod, or any green thing with which a countryman is familiar. The thin vegetation stands half buried in sand, as in drifting snow. The only shrub, the beach-plum, which gives the island its name, grows but a few feet high; but this is so abundant that parties of a hundred at once come from the main-land and down the Merrimack, in September, pitch their tents, and gather the plums, which are good to eat raw and to preserve. The graceful and delicate beach-pea, too, grows abundantly amid the sand, and several strange, moss-like and succulent plants. The island for its whole length is scalloped into low hills, not more than twenty feet high, by the wind, and, excepting a faint trail on the edge of the marsh, is as trackless as Sahara. There are dreary bluffs of sand and valleys ploughed by the wind, where you might expect to discover the bones of a caravan. Schooners come from Boston to load with the sand for masons' uses, and in a few hours the wind obliterates all traces of their work. Yet you have only to dig a foot or two anywhere to come to fresh water; and you are surprised to learn that woodchucks abound here, and foxes are found, though you see not where they can burrow or hide themselves. I have walked down the whole length of its broad beach at low tide, at which time alone you can find a firm ground to walk on, and probably Massachusetts does not furnish a more grand and dreary walk. On the seaside there are only a distant sail and a few coots to break the grand monotony. A solitary stake stuck up, or a sharper sand-hill than usual, is remarkable as a landmark for miles; while for music you hear only the ceaseless sound of the surf, and the dreary peep of the beach-birds.

There were several canal-boats at Cromwell's Falls passing through the locks, for which we waited. In the forward part of one stood a brawny New Hampshire man, leaning on his pole, bareheaded and in shirt and trousers only, a rude Apollo of a man, coming down from that "vast uplandish country" to the main; of nameless age, with flaxen hair, and vigorous, weather-bleached countenance, in whose wrinkles the sun still lodged, as little touched by the heats and frosts and withering cares of life as a maple of the mountain; an undressed, unkempt, uncivil man, with whom we

parleyed awhile, and parted not without a sincere interest in one another. His humanity was genuine and instinctive, and his rudeness only a manner. He inquired, just as we were passing out of earshot, if we had killed anything, and we shouted after him that we had shot a *buoy*, and could see him for a long while scratching his head in vain to know if he had heard aright.

There is reason in the distinction of civil and uncivil. The manners are sometimes so rough a rind that we doubt whether they cover any core or sap-wood at all. We sometimes meet uncivil men, children of Amazons, who dwell by mountain paths, and are said to be inhospitable to strangers; whose salutation is as rude as the grasp of their brawny hands, and who deal with men as unceremoniously as they are wont to deal with the elements. They need only to extend their clearings, and let in more sunlight, to seek out the southern slopes of the hills, from which they may look down on the civil plain or ocean, and temper their diet duly with the cereal fruits, consuming less wild meat and acorns, to become like the inhabitants of cities. A true politeness does not result from any hasty and artificial polishing, it is true, but grows naturally in characters of the right grain and quality, through a long fronting of men and events, and rubbing on good and bad fortune. Perhaps I can tell a tale to the purpose while the lock is filling, — for our voyage this forenoon furnishes but few incidents of importance.

Early one summer morning I had left the shores of the Connecticut, and for the livelong day travelled up the bank of a river, which came in from the west; now looking down on the stream, foaming and rippling through the forest a mile off, from the hills over which the road led, and now sitting on its rocky brink and dipping my feet in its rapids, or bathing adventurously in mid-channel. The hills grew more and more frequent, and gradually swelled into mountains as I advanced, hemming in the course of the river, so that at last I could not see where it came from, and was at liberty to imagine the most wonderful meanderings and descents. At noon I slept on the grass in the shade of a maple, where the river had found a broader channel than usual, and was spread out shallow, with frequent sand-bars exposed. In the names of the towns I recognized some which I had long ago read on teamsters' wagons, that had come

from far up country; quiet, uplandish towns, of mountainous fame. I walked along, musing and enchanted, by rows of sugar-maples, through the small and uninquisitive villages, and sometimes was pleased with the sight of a boat drawn up on a sand-bar, where there appeared no inhabitants to use it. It seemed, however, as essential to the river as a fish, and to lend a certain dignity to it. It was like the trout of mountain streams to the fishes of the sea, or like the young of the land-crab born far in the interior, who have never yet heard the sound of the ocean's surf. The hills approached nearer and nearer to the stream, until at last they closed behind me, and I found myself just before nightfall in a romantic and retired valley, about half a mile in length, and barely wide enough for the stream at its bottom. I thought that there could be no finer site for a cottage among mountains. You could anywhere run across the stream on the rocks, and its constant murmuring would quiet the passions of mankind forever. Suddenly the road, which seemed aiming for the mountain-side, turned short to the left, and another valley opened, concealing the former, and of the same character with it. It was the most remarkable and pleasing scenery I had ever seen. I found here a few mild and hospitable inhabitants, who, as the day was not quite spent, and I was anxious to improve the light, directed me four or five miles farther on my way to the dwelling of a man whose name was Rice, who occupied the last and highest of the valleys that lay in my path, and who, they said, was a rather rude and uncivil man. But "what is a foreign country to those who have science? Who is a stranger to those who have the habit of speaking kindly?"

At length, as the sun was setting behind the mountains in a still darker and more solitary vale, I reached the dwelling of this man. Except for the narrowness of the plain, and that the stones were solid granite, it was the counterpart of that retreat to which Belphoebe bore the wounded Timias, —

> "In a pleasant glade,
> With mountains round about environed,
> And mighty woods, which did the valley shade,
> And like a stately theatre it made,
> Spreading itself into a spacious plain;

And in the midst a little river played
Amongst the pumy stones which seemed to plain,
With gentle murmur, that his course they did restrain."

I observed, as I drew near, that he was not so rude as I had anticipated, for he kept many cattle, and dogs to watch them, and I saw where he had made maple-sugar on the sides of the mountains, and above all distinguished the voices of children mingling with the murmur of the torrent before the door. As I passed his stable I met one whom I supposed to be a hired man, attending to his cattle, and I inquired if they entertained travellers at that house. "Sometimes we do," he answered, gruffly, and immediately went to the farthest stall from me, and I perceived that it was Rice himself whom I had addressed. But pardoning this incivility to the wildness of the scenery, I bent my steps to the house. There was no sign-post before it, nor any of the usual invitations to the traveller, though I saw by the road that many went and came there, but the owner's name only was fastened to the outside; a sort of implied and sullen invitation, as I thought. I passed from room to room without meeting any one, till I came to what seemed the guests' apartment, which was neat, and even had an air of refinement about it, and I was glad to find a map against the wall which would direct me on my journey on the morrow. At length I heard a step in a distant apartment, which was the first I had entered, and went to see if the landlord had come in; but it proved to be only a child, one of those whose voices I had heard, probably his son, and between him and me stood in the doorway a large watch-dog, which growled at me, and looked as if he would presently spring, but the boy did not speak to him; and when I asked for a glass of water, he briefly said, "It runs in the corner." So I took a mug from the counter and went out of doors, and searched round the corner of the house, but could find neither well nor spring, nor any water but the stream which ran all along the front. I came back, therefore, and, setting down the mug, asked the child if the stream was good to drink; whereupon he seized the mug, and, going to the corner of the room, where a cool spring which issued from the mountain behind trickled through a pipe into the apartment, filled it, and drank, and gave it to me empty again, and, calling to the

dog, rushed out of doors. Erelong some of the hired men made their appearance, and drank at the spring, and lazily washed themselves and combed their hair in silence, and some sat down as if weary, and fell asleep in their seats. But all the while I saw no women, though I sometimes heard a bustle in that part of the house from which the spring came.

At length Rice himself came in, for it was now dark, with an ox-whip in his hand, breathing hard, and he too soon settled down into his seat not far from me, as if, now that his day's work was done, he had no farther to travel, but only to digest his supper at his leisure. When I asked him if he could give me a bed, he said there was one ready, in such a tone as implied that I ought to have known it, and the less said about that the better. So far so good. And yet he continued to look at me as if he would fain have me say something further like a traveller. I remarked, that it was a wild and rugged country he inhabited, and worth coming many miles to see. "Not so very rough neither," said he, and appealed to his men to bear witness to the breadth and smoothness of his fields, which consisted in all of one small interval, and to the size of his crops; "and if we have some hills," added he, "there's no better pasturage anywhere." I then asked if this place was the one I had heard of, calling it by a name I had seen on the map, or if it was a certain other; and he answered, gruffly, that it was neither the one nor the other; that he had settled it and cultivated it, and made it what it was, and I could know nothing about it. Observing some guns and other implements of hunting hanging on brackets around the room, and his hounds now sleeping on the floor, I took occasion to change the discourse, and inquired if there was much game in that country, and he answered this question more graciously, having some glimmering of my drift; but when I inquired if there were any bears, he answered impatiently that he was no more in danger of losing his sheep than his neighbors; he had tamed and civilized that region. After a pause, thinking of my journey on the morrow, and the few hours of daylight in that hollow and mountainous country, which would require me to be on my way betimes, I remarked that the day must be shorter by an hour there than on the neighboring plains; at which he gruffly asked what I knew about it, and affirmed that he had as much daylight as his

neighbors; he ventured to say, the days were longer there than where I lived, as I should find if I stayed; that in some way, I could not be expected to understand how, the sun came over the mountains half an hour earlier, and stayed half an hour later there than on the neighboring plains. And more of like sort he said. He was, indeed, as rude as a fabled satyr. But I suffered him to pass for what he was, — for why should I quarrel with nature? — and was even pleased at the discovery of such a singular natural phenomenon. I dealt with him as if to me all manners were indifferent, and he had a sweet, wild way with him. I would not question nature, and I would rather have him as he was than as I would have him. For I had come up here not for sympathy, or kindness, or society, but for novelty and adventure, and to see what nature had produced here. I therefore did not repel his rudeness, but quite innocently welcomed it all, and knew how to appreciate it, as if I were reading in an old drama a part well sustained. He was indeed a coarse and sensual man, and, as I have said, uncivil, but he had his just quarrel with nature and mankind, I have no doubt, only he had no artificial covering to his ill-humors. He was earthy enough, but yet there was good soil in him, and even a long-suffering Saxon probity at bottom. If you could represent the case to him, he would not let the race die out in him, like a red Indian.

At length I told him that he was a fortunate man, and I trusted that he was grateful for so much light; and, rising, said I would take a lamp, and that I would pay him then for my lodging, for I expected to recommence my journey even as early as the sun rose in his country; but he answered in haste, and this time civilly, that I should not fail to find some of his household stirring, however early, for they were no sluggards, and I could take my breakfast with them before I started, if I chose; and as he lighted the lamp I detected a gleam of true hospitality and ancient civility, a beam of pure and even gentle humanity, from his bleared and moist eyes. It was a look more intimate with me, and more explanatory, than any words of his could have been if he had tried to his dying day. It was more significant than any Rice of those parts could even comprehend, and long anticipated this man's culture, — a glance of his pure genius, which did not much enlighten him, but did impress and rule him for the

moment, and faintly constrain his voice and manner. He cheerfully led the way to my apartment, stepping over the limbs of his men, who were asleep on the floor in an intervening chamber, and showed me a clean and comfortable bed. For many pleasant hours after the household was asleep I sat at the open window, for it was a sultry night, and heard the little river

”Amongst the pumy stones, which seemed to plain,
With gentle murmur, that his course they did restrain.”

But I arose as usual by starlight the next morning, before my host, or his men, or even his dogs, were awake; and, having left a ninepence on the counter, was already half-way over the mountain with the sun before they had broken their fast.

Before I had left the country of my host, while the first rays of the sun slanted over the mountains, as I stopped by the wayside to gather some raspberries, a very old man, not far from a hundred, came along with a milking-pail in his hand, and turning aside began to pluck the berries near me: —

”His reverend locks
In comelye curles did wave;
And on his aged temples grew
The blossoms of the grave.”

But when I inquired the way, he answered in a low, rough voice, without looking up or seeming to regard my presence, which I imputed to his years; and presently, muttering to himself, he proceeded to collect his cows in a neighboring pasture; and when he had again returned near to the wayside, he suddenly stopped, while his cows went on before, and, uncovering his head, prayed aloud in the cool morning air, as if he had forgotten this exercise before, for his daily bread, and also that He who letteth his rain fall on the just and on the unjust, and without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, would not neglect the stranger (meaning me), and with even more direct and personal applications, though mainly according to the long-established formula common to lowlanders and the

inhabitants of mountains. When he had done praying, I made bold to ask him if he had any cheese in his hut which he would sell me, but he answered without looking up, and in the same low and repulsive voice as before, that they did not make any, and went to milking. It is written, "The stranger who turneth away from a house with disappointed hopes, leaveth there his own offences, and departeth, taking with him all the good actions of the owner."

Being now fairly in the stream of this week's commerce, we began to meet with boats more frequently, and hailed them from time to time with the freedom of sailors. The boatmen appeared to lead an easy and contented life, and we thought that we should prefer their employment ourselves to many professions which are much more sought after. They suggested how few circumstances are necessary to the well-being and serenity of man, how indifferent all employments are, and that any may seem noble and poetic to the eyes of men, if pursued with sufficient buoyancy and freedom. With liberty and pleasant weather, the simplest occupation, any unquestioned country mode of life which detains us in the open air, is alluring. The man who picks peas steadily for a living is more than respectable, he is even envied by his shop-worn neighbors. We are as happy as the birds when our Good Genius permits us to pursue any out-door work, without a sense of dissipation. Our penknife glitters in the sun; our voice is echoed by yonder wood; if an oar drops, we are fain to let it drop again.

The canal-boat is of very simple construction, requiring but little ship-timber, and, as we were told, costs about two hundred dollars. They are managed by two men. In ascending the stream they use poles fourteen or fifteen feet long, pointed with iron, walking about one third the length of the boat from the forward end. Going down, they commonly keep in the middle of the stream, using an oar at each end; or if the wind is favorable they raise their broad sail, and have only to steer. They commonly carry down wood or bricks, — fifteen or sixteen cords of wood, and as many thousand bricks, at a time, — and bring back stores for the country, consuming two or three days each way between Concord and Charlestown. They sometimes pile the wood so as to leave a shelter in one part where they may retire from the rain. One can hardly imagine a more healthful employment,

or one more favorable to contemplation and the observation of nature. Unlike the mariner, they have the constantly varying panorama of the shore to relieve the monotony of their labor, and it seemed to us that as they thus glided noiselessly from town to town, with all their furniture about them, for their very homestead is a movable, they could comment on the character of the inhabitants with greater advantage and security to themselves than the traveller in a coach, who would be unable to indulge in such broadsides of wit and humor in so small a vessel for fear of the recoil. They are not subject to great exposure, like the lumberers of Maine, in any weather, but inhale the healthfullest breezes, being slightly encumbered with clothing, frequently with the head and feet bare. When we met them at noon as they were leisurely descending the stream, their busy commerce did not look like toil, but rather like some ancient Oriental game still played on a large scale, as the game of chess, for instance, handed down to this generation. From morning till night, unless the wind is so fair that his single sail will suffice without other labor than steering, the boatman walks backwards and forwards on the side of his boat, now stooping with his shoulder to the pole, then drawing it back slowly to set it again, meanwhile moving steadily forward through an endless valley and an everchanging scenery, now distinguishing his course for a mile or two, and now shut in by a sudden turn of the river in a small woodland lake. All the phenomena which surround him are simple and grand, and there is something impressive, even majestic, in the very motion he causes, which will naturally be communicated to his own character, and he feels the slow, irresistible movement under him with pride, as if it were his own energy.

The news spread like wildfire among us youths, when formerly, once in a year or two, one of these boats came up the Concord River, and was seen stealing mysteriously through the meadows and past the village. It came and departed as silently as a cloud, without noise or dust, and was witnessed by few. One summer day this huge traveller might be seen moored at some meadow's wharf, and another summer day it was not there. Where precisely it came from, or who these men were who knew the rocks and soundings better than we who bathed there, we could never tell. We knew some

river's bay only, but they took rivers from end to end. They were a sort of fabulous river-men to us. It was inconceivable by what sort of mediation any mere landsman could hold communication with them. Would they heave to, to gratify his wishes? No, it was favor enough to know faintly of their destination, or the time of their possible return. I have seen them in the summer when the stream ran low, mowing the weeds in mid-channel, and with hayers' jests cutting broad swaths in three feet of water, that they might make a passage for their scow, while the grass in long windrows was carried down the stream, undried by the rarest hay-weather. We admired unweariedly how their vessel would float, like a huge chip, sustaining so many casks of lime, and thousands of bricks, and such heaps of iron ore, with wheelbarrows aboard, and that, when we stepped on it, it did not yield to the pressure of our feet. It gave us confidence in the prevalence of the law of buoyancy, and we imagined to what infinite uses it might be put. The men appeared to lead a kind of life on it, and it was whispered that they slept aboard. Some affirmed that it carried sail, and that such winds blew here as filled the sails of vessels on the ocean; which again others much doubted. They had been seen to sail across our Fair Haven bay by lucky fishers who were out, but unfortunately others were not there to see. We might then say that our river was navigable, — why not? In after-years I read in print, with no little satisfaction, that it was thought by some that, with a little expense in removing rocks and deepening the channel, "there might be a profitable inland navigation." *I* then lived some-where to tell of.

Such is Commerce, which shakes the cocoa-nut and bread-fruit tree in the remotest isle, and sooner or later dawns on the duskiest and most simple-minded savage. If we may be pardoned the digression, who can help being affected at the thought of the very fine and slight, but positive relation, in which the savage inhabitants of some remote isle stand to the mysterious white mariner, the child of the sun? — as if *we* were to have dealings with an animal higher in the scale of being than ourselves. It is a barely recognized fact to the natives that he exists, and has his home far away somewhere, and is glad to buy their fresh fruits with his superfluous commodities. Under the same catholic sun glances his white ship over Pacific

waves into their smooth bays, and the poor savage's paddle gleams in the air.

Man's little acts are grand,
Beheld from land to land,
There as they lie in time,
Within their native clime
Ships with the noontide weigh,
And glide before its ray
To some retired bay,
Their haunt,
Whence, under tropic sun,
Again they run,
Bearing gum Senegal and Tragicant.
For this was ocean meant,
For this the sun was sent,
And moon was lent,
And winds in distant caverns pent.

Since our voyage the railroad on the bank has been extended, and there is now but little boating on the Merrimack. All kinds of produce and stores were formerly conveyed by water, but now nothing is carried up the stream, and almost wood and bricks alone are carried down, and these are also carried on the railroad. The locks are fast wearing out, and will soon be impassable, since the tolls will not pay the expense of repairing them, and so in a few years there will be an end of boating on this river. The boating at present is principally between Merrimack and Lowell, or Hooksett and Manchester. They make two or three trips in a week, according to wind and weather, from Merrimack to Lowell and back, about twenty-five miles each way. The boatman comes singing in to shore late at night, and moors his empty boat, and gets his supper and lodging in some house near at hand, and again early in the morning, by starlight perhaps, he pushes away up stream, and, by a shout, or the fragment of a song, gives notice of his approach to the lock-man, with whom he is to take his breakfast. If he gets up to his wood-pile before noon he proceeds to load his boat, with the help of his single

"hand," and is on his way down again before night. When he gets to Lowell he unloads his boat, and gets his receipt for his cargo, and, having heard the news at the public house at Middlesex or elsewhere, goes back with his empty boat and his receipt in his pocket to the owner, and to get a new load. We were frequently advertised of their approach by some faint sound behind us, and looking round saw them a mile off, creeping stealthily up the side of the stream like alligators. It was pleasant to hail these sailors of the Merrimack from time to time, and learn the news which circulated with them. We imagined that the sun shining on their bare heads had stamped a liberal and public character on their most private thoughts.

The open and sunny interval still stretched away from the river sometimes by two or more terraces, to the distant hill-country, and when we climbed the bank we commonly found an irregular copse-wood skirting the river, the primitive having floated down-stream long ago to —— the "King's navy." Sometimes we saw the river-road a quarter or half a mile distant, and the particolored Concord stage, with its cloud of dust, its van of earnest travelling faces, and its rear of dusty trunks, reminding us that the country had its places of rendezvous for restless Yankee men. There dwelt along at considerable distances on this interval a quiet agricultural and pastoral people, with every house its well, as we sometimes proved, and every household, though never so still and remote it appeared in the noontide, its dinner about these times. There they lived on, those New England people, farmer lives, father and grandfather and great-grandfather, on and on without noise, keeping up tradition, and expecting, beside fair weather and abundant harvests, we did not learn what. They were contented to live, since it was so contrived for them, and where their lines had fallen.

Our uninquiring corpses lie more low
Than our life's curiosity doth go.

Yet these men had no need to travel to be as wise as Solomon in all his glory, so similar are the lives of men in all countries, and fraught with the same homely experiences. One half the world *knows* how the other half lives.

About noon we passed a small village in Merrimack at Thornton's Ferry, and tasted of the waters of Naticook Brook on the same side, where French and his companions, whose grave we saw in Dunstable, were ambuscaded by the Indians. The humble village of Litchfield, with its steepleless meeting-house, stood on the opposite or east bank, near where a dense grove of willows backed by maples skirted the shore. There also we noticed some shagbark-trees, which, as they do not grow in Concord, were as strange a sight to us as the palm would be, whose fruit only we have seen. Our course now curved gracefully to the north, leaving a low, flat shore on the Merrimack side, which forms a sort of harbor for canal-boats. We observed some fair elms and particularly large and handsome white-maples standing conspicuously on this interval; and the opposite shore, a quarter of a mile below, was covered with young elms and maples six inches high, which had probably sprung from the seeds which had been washed across.

Some carpenters were at work here mending a scow on the green and sloping bank. The strokes of their mallets echoed from shore to shore, and up and down the river, and their tools gleamed in the sun a quarter of a mile from us, and we realized that boat-building was as ancient and honorable an art as agriculture, and that there might be a naval as well as a pastoral life. The whole history of commerce was made manifest in that scow turned bottom upward on the shore. Thus did men begin to go down upon the sea in ships; *quaeque diu steterant in montibus altis, Fluctibus ignotis insultavere carinae;* "and keels which had long stood on high mountains careered insultingly (*insultavere*) over unknown waves." (Ovid, Met. I. 133.) We thought that it would be well for the traveller to build his boat on the bank of a stream, instead of finding a ferry or a bridge. In the Adventures of Henry the fur-trader, it is pleasant to read that when with his Indians he reached the shore of Ontario, they consumed two days in making two canoes of the bark of the elm-tree, in which to transport themselves to Fort Niagara. It is a worthy incident in a journey, a delay as good as much rapid travelling. A good share of our interest in Xenophon's story of his retreat is in the manoeuvres to get the army safely over the rivers, whether on rafts of logs or fagots, or sheep-skins blown up. And where could they better afford to tarry

meanwhile than on the banks of a river?

As we glided past at a distance, these out-door workmen appeared to have added some dignity to their labor by its very publicness. It was a part of the industry of nature, like the work of hornets and mud-wasps.

The waves slowly beat,
Just to keep the noon sweet,
And no sound is floated o'er,
Save the mallet on shore,
Which echoing on high
Seems a-calking the sky.

The haze, the sun's dust of travel, had a Lethean influence on the land and its inhabitants, and all creatures resigned themselves to float upon the inappreciable tides of nature.

Woof of the sun, ethereal gauze,
Woven of Nature's richest stuffs,
Visible heat, air-water, and dry sea,
Last conquest of the eye;
Toil of the day displayed sun-dust,
Aerial surf upon the shores of earth.
Ethereal estuary, frith of light,
Breakers of air, billows of heat
Fine summer spray on inland seas;
Bird of the sun, transparent-winged
Owlet of noon, soft-pinioned,
From heath or stubble rising without song;
Establish thy serenity o'er the fields

The routine which is in the sunshine and the finest days, as that which has conquered and prevailed, commends itself to us by its very antiquity and apparent solidity and necessity. Our weakness needs it, and our strength uses it. We cannot draw on our boots without bracing ourselves against it. If there were but one erect and solid standing tree in the woods, all creatures would go to rub against it

and make sure of their footing. During the many hours which we spend in this waking sleep, the hand stands still on the face of the clock, and we grow like corn in the night. Men are as busy as the brooks or bees, and postpone everything to their business; as carpenters discuss politics between the strokes of the hammer while they are shingling a roof.

This noontide was a fit occasion to make some pleasant harbor, and there read the journal of some voyageur like ourselves, not too moral nor inquisitive, and which would not disturb the noon; or else some old classic, the very flower of all reading, which we had postponed to such a season

"Of Syrian peace, immortal leisure."

But, alas, our chest, like the cabin of a coaster, contained only its well-thumbed "Navigator" for all literature, and we were obliged to draw on our memory for these things.

We naturally remembered Alexander Henry's Adventures here, as a sort of classic among books of American travel. It contains scenery and rough sketching of men and incidents enough to inspire poets for many years, and to my fancy is as full of sounding names as any page of history, — Lake Winnipeg, Hudson Bay, Ottaway, and portages innumerable; Chipeways, Gens de Terres, Les Pilleurs, The Weepers; with reminiscences of Hearne's journey, and the like; an immense and shaggy but sincere country, summer and winter, adorned with chains of lakes and rivers, covered with snows, with hemlocks, and fir-trees. There is a naturalness, an unpretending and cold life in this traveller, as in a Canadian winter, what life was preserved through low temperatures and frontier dangers by furs within a stout heart. He has truth and moderation worthy of the father of history, which belong only to an intimate experience, and he does not defer too much to literature. The unlearned traveller may quote his single line from the poets with as good right as the scholar. He too may speak of the stars, for he sees them shoot perhaps when the astronomer does not. The good sense of this author is very conspicuous. He is a traveller who does not exaggerate, but writes for the information of his readers, for science, and for history. His story is told with as much good faith and directness as if it were a report to his brother traders, or the Directors of the Hudson Bay Company,

and is fitly dedicated to Sir Joseph Banks. It reads like the argument to a great poem on the primitive state of the country and its inhabitants, and the reader imagines what in each case, with the invocation of the Muse, might be sung, and leaves off with suspended interest, as if the full account were to follow. In what school was this fur-trader educated? He seems to travel the immense snowy country with such purpose only as the reader who accompanies him, and to the latter's imagination, it is, as it were, momentarily created to be the scene of his adventures. What is most interesting and valuable in it, however, is not the materials for the history of Pontiac, or Braddock, or the Northwest, which it furnishes; not the *annals* of the country, but the natural facts, or *perennials*, which are ever without date. When out of history the truth shall be extracted, it will have shed its dates like withered leaves.

The Souhegan, or *Crooked* River, as some translate it, comes in from the west about a mile and a half above Thornton's Ferry. Babboosuck Brook empties into it near its mouth. There are said to be some of the finest water privileges in the country still unimproved on the former stream, at a short distance from the Merrimack. One spring morning, March 22, in the year 1677, an incident occurred on the banks of the river here, which is interesting to us as a slight memorial of an interview between two ancient tribes of men, one of which is now extinct, while the other, though it is still represented by a miserable remnant, has long since disappeared from its ancient hunting-grounds. A Mr. James Parker, at "Mr. Hinchmanne's farme ner Meremack," wrote thus "to the Honred Governer and Council at Bostown, *Hast, Post Hast": —*

"Sagamore Wanalancet come this morning to informe me, and then went to Mr. Tyng's to informe him, that his son being on ye other sid of Meremack river over against Souhegan upon the 22 day of this instant, about tene of the clock in the morning, he discovered 15 Indians on this sid the river, which he soposed to be Mohokes by ther spech. He called to them; they answered, but he could not understand ther spech; and he having a conow ther in the river, he went to breck his conow that they might not have ani ues of it. In the mean time they shot about thirty guns at him, and he being much frighted fled, and come home forthwith to Nahamcock [Pawtucket

Falls or Lowell], wher ther wigowames now stand."

Penacooks and Mohawks! *ubique gentium sunt?* In the year 1670, a Mohawk warrior scalped a Naamkeak or else a Wamesit Indian maiden near where Lowell now stands. She, however, recovered. Even as late as 1685, John Hogkins, a Penacook Indian, who describes his grandfather as having lived "at place called Malamake rever, other name chef Natukkog and Panukkog, that one rever great many names," wrote thus to the governor: —

"May 15th, 1685.

"Honor governor my friend, —

"You my friend I desire your worship and your power, because I hope you can do som great matters this one. I am poor and naked and I have no men at my place because I afraid allwayes Mohogs he will kill me every day and night. If your worship when please pray help me you no let Mohogs kill me at my place at Malamake river called Pannukkog and Natukkog, I will submit your worship and your power. And now I want pouder and such alminishon shatt and guns, because I have forth at my hom and I plant theare.

"This all Indian hand, but pray you do consider your humble servant,

John Hogkins."

Signed also by Simon Detogkom, King Hary, Sam Linis, Mr. Jorge Rodunnonukgus, John Owamosimmin, and nine other Indians, with their marks against their names.

But now, one hundred and fifty-four years having elapsed since the date of this letter, we went unalarmed on our way without "brecking" our "conow," reading the New England Gazetteer, and seeing no traces of "Mohogs" on the banks.

The Souhegan, though a rapid river, seemed to-day to have borrowed its character from the noon.

Where gleaming fields of haze
Meet the voyageur's gaze,
And above, the heated air
Seems to make a river there,
The pines stand up with pride
By the Souhegan's side,

And the hemlock and the larch
With their triumphal arch
Are waving o'er its march
  To the sea.
No wind stirs its waves,
But the spirits of the braves
  Hov'ring o'er,
Whose antiquated graves
Its still water laves
  On the shore.
With an Indian's stealthy tread
It goes sleeping in its bed,
Without joy or grief,
Or the rustle of a leaf,
Without a ripple or a billow,
Or the sigh of a willow,
From the Lyndeboro' hills
To the Merrimack mills.
With a louder din
Did its current begin,
When melted the snow
On the far mountain's brow,
And the drops came together
In that rainy weather.
Experienced river,
Hast thou flowed forever?
Souhegan soundeth old,
But the half is not told,
What names hast thou borne,
In the ages far gone,
When the Xanthus and Meander
Commenced to wander,
Ere the black bear haunted
  Thy red forest-floor,
Or Nature had planted
  The pines by thy shore?

During the heat of the day, we rested on a large island a mile above the mouth of this river, pastured by a herd of cattle, with steep banks and scattered elms and oaks, and a sufficient channel for canal-boats on each side. When we made a fire to boil some rice for our dinner, the flames spreading amid the dry grass, and the smoke curling silently upward and casting grotesque shadows on the ground, seemed phenomena of the noon, and we fancied that we progressed up the stream without effort, and as naturally as the wind and tide went down, not outraging the calm days by unworthy bustle or impatience. The woods on the neighboring shore were alive with pigeons, which were moving south, looking for mast, but now, like ourselves, spending their noon in the shade. We could hear the slight, wiry, winnowing sound of their wings as they changed their roosts from time to time, and their gentle and tremulous cooing. They sojourned with us during the noontide, greater travellers far than we. You may frequently discover a single pair sitting upon the lower branches of the white-pine in the depths of the wood, at this hour of the day, so silent and solitary, and with such a hermit-like appearance, as if they had never strayed beyond its skirts, while the acorn which was gathered in the forests of Maine is still undigested in their crops. We obtained one of these handsome birds, which lingered too long upon its perch, and plucked and broiled it here with some other game, to be carried along for our supper; for, beside the provisions which we carried with us, we depended mainly on the river and forest for our supply. It is true, it did not seem to be putting this bird to its right use to pluck off its feathers, and extract its entrails, and broil its carcass on the coals; but we heroically persevered, nevertheless, waiting for further information. The same regard for Nature which excited our sympathy for her creatures nerved our hands to carry through what we had begun. For we would be honorable to the party we deserted; we would fulfil fate, and so at length, perhaps, detect the secret innocence of these incessant tragedies which Heaven allows.

”Too quick resolves do resolution wrong,
What, part so soon to be divorced so long?
Things to be done are long to be debated;

Heaven is not day'd, Repentance is not dated."

We are double-edged blades, and every time we whet our virtue the return stroke straps our vice. Where is the skilful swordsman who can give clean wounds, and not rip up his work with the other edge?

Nature herself has not provided the most graceful end for her creatures. What becomes of all these birds that people the air and forest for our solacement? The sparrows seem always *chipper*, never infirm. We do not see their bodies lie about. Yet there is a tragedy at the end of each one of their lives. They must perish miserably; not one of them is translated. True, "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our Heavenly Father's knowledge," but they do fall, nevertheless.

The carcasses of some poor squirrels, however, the same that frisked so merrily in the morning, which we had skinned and embowelled for our dinner, we abandoned in disgust, with tardy humanity, as too wretched a resource for any but starving men. It was to perpetuate the practice of a barbarous era. If they had been larger, our crime had been less. Their small red bodies, little bundles of red tissue, mere gobbets of venison, would not have "fattened fire." With a sudden impulse we threw them away, and washed our hands, and boiled some rice for our dinner. "Behold the difference between the one who eateth flesh, and him to whom it belonged! The first hath a momentary enjoyment, whilst the latter is deprived of existence!" "Who would commit so great a crime against a poor animal, who is fed only by the herbs which grow wild in the woods, and whose belly is burnt up with hunger?" We remembered a picture of mankind in the hunter age, chasing hares down the mountains; O me miserable! Yet sheep and oxen are but larger squirrels, whose hides are saved and meat is salted, whose souls perchance are not so large in proportion to their bodies.

There should always be some flowering and maturing of the fruits of nature in the cooking process. Some simple dishes recommend themselves to our imaginations as well as palates. In parched corn, for instance, there is a manifest sympathy between the bursting seed and the more perfect developments of vegetable life. It is a perfect flower with its petals, like the houstonia or anemone. On my warm

hearth these cerealian blossoms expanded; here is the bank whereon they grew. Perhaps some such visible blessing would always attend the simple and wholesome repast.

Here was that "pleasant harbor" which we had sighed for, where the weary voyageur could read the journal of some other sailor, whose bark had ploughed, perchance, more famous and classic seas. At the tables of the gods, after feasting follow music and song; we will recline now under these island trees, and for our minstrel call on

ANACREON.

"Nor has he ceased his charming song, for still that lyre,
Though he is dead, sleeps not in Hades."
Simonides' Epigram on Anacreon.

I lately met with an old volume from a London bookshop, containing the Greek Minor Poets, and it was a pleasure to read once more only the words, Orpheus, Linus, Musaeus, — those faint poetic sounds and echoes of a name, dying away on the ears of us modern men; and those hardly more substantial sounds, Mimnermus, Ibycus, Alcaeus, Stesichorus, Menander. They lived not in vain. We can converse with these bodiless fames without reserve or personality.

I know of no studies so composing as those of the classical scholar. When we have sat down to them, life seems as still and serene as if it were very far off, and I believe it is not habitually seen from any common platform so truly and unexaggerated as in the light of literature. In serene hours we contemplate the tour of the Greek and Latin authors with more pleasure than the traveller does the fairest scenery of Greece or Italy. Where shall we find a more refined society? That highway down from Homer and Hesiod to Horace and Juvenal is more attractive than the Appian. Reading the classics, or conversing with those old Greeks and Latins in their surviving works, is like walking amid the stars and constellations, a high and by way serene to travel. Indeed, the true scholar will be not a little of an astronomer in his habits. Distracting cares will not be allowed to obstruct the field of his vision, for the higher regions of literature, like astronomy, are above storm and darkness.

But passing by these rumors of bards, let us pause for a moment at the Teian poet.

There is something strangely modern about him. He is very easily turned into English. Is it that our lyric poets have resounded but that lyre, which would sound only light subjects, and which Simonides tells us does not sleep in Hades? His odes are like gems of pure ivory. They possess an ethereal and evanescent beauty like summer evenings, <ho chre' se noei~n no'ou a'nthei,> — *which you must perceive with the flower of the mind*, — and show how slight a beauty could be expressed. You have to consider them, as the stars of lesser magnitude, with the side of the eye, and look aside from them to behold them. They charm us by their serenity and freedom from exaggeration and passion, and by a certain flower-like beauty, which does not propose itself, but must be approached and studied like a natural object. But perhaps their chief merit consists in the lightness and yet security of their tread;

"The young and tender stalk
Ne'er bends when *they* do walk."

True, our nerves are never strung by them; it is too constantly the sound of the lyre, and never the note of the trumpet; but they are not gross, as has been presumed, but always elevated above the sensual.

These are some of the best that have come down to us.

ON HIS LYRE.

I wish to sing the Atridae,
And Cadmus I wish to sing;
But my lyre sounds
Only love with its chords.
Lately I changed the strings
And all the lyre;
And I began to sing the labors
Of Hercules; but my lyre
Resounded loves.
Farewell, henceforth, for me,

Heroes! for my lyre
Sings only loves.

TO A SWALLOW.

Thou indeed, dear swallow,
Yearly going and coming,
In summer weavest thy nest,
And in winter go'st disappearing
Either to Nile or to Memphis.
But Love always weaveth
His nest in my heart….

ON A SILVER CUP.

Turning the silver,
Vulcan, make for me,
Not indeed a panoply,
For what are battles to me?
But a hollow cup,
As deep as thou canst
And make for me in it
Neither stars, nor wagons,
Nor sad Orion;
What are the Pleiades to me?
What the shining Bootes?
Make vines for me,
And clusters of grapes in it,
And of gold Love and Bathyllus
Treading the grapes
With the fair Lyaeus

ON HIMSELF.

Thou sing'st the affairs of Thebes,
And he the battles of Troy,
But I of my own defeats.
No horse have wasted me,

Nor foot, nor ships;
But a new and different host,
From eyes smiting me.

TO A DOVE

Lovely dove,
Whence, whence dost thou fly?
Whence, running on air,
Dost thou waft and diffuse
So many sweet ointments?
Who art? What thy errand? —
Anacreon sent me
To a boy, to Bathyllus,
Who lately is ruler and tyrant of all.
Cythere has sold me
For one little song,
And I'm doing this service
For Anacreon.
And now, as you see,
I bear letters from him.
And he says that directly
He'll make me free,
But though he release me,
His slave I will tarry with him.
For why should I fly
Over mountains and fields,
And perch upon trees,
Eating some wild thing?
Now indeed I eat bread,
Plucking it from the hands
Of Anacreon himself;
And he gives me to drink
The wine which he tastes,
And drinking, I dance,
And shadow my master's
Face with my wings;

And, going to rest,
On the lyre itself I sleep.
That is all; get thee gone.
Thou hast made me more talkative,
Man, than a crow.

ON LOVE.

Love walking swiftly,
With hyacinthine staff,
Bade me to take a run with him;
And hastening through swift torrents,
And woody places, and over precipices,
A water-snake stung me.
And my heart leaped up to
My mouth, and I should have fainted;
But Love fanning my brows
With his soft wings, said,
Surely, thou art not able to love.

ON WOMEN.

Nature has given horns
To bulls, and hoofs to horses,
Swiftness to hares,
To lions yawning teeth,
To fishes swimming,
To birds flight,
To men wisdom.
For woman she had nothing beside;
What then does she give? Beauty, —
Instead of all sheilds,
Instead of all spears;
And she conquers even iron
And fire, who is beautiful.

ON LOVERS.

Horses have the mark
Of fire on their sides,
And some have distinguished
The Parthian men by their crests;
So I, seeing lovers,
Know them at once,
For they have a certain slight
Brand on their hearts.

TO A SWALLOW.

What dost thou wish me to do to thee, —
What, thou loquacious swallow?
Dost thou wish me taking thee
Thy light pinions to clip?
Or rather to pluck out
Thy tongue from within,
As that Tereus did?
Why with thy notes in the dawn
Hast thou plundered Bathyllus
From my beautiful dreams?

TO A COLT.

Thracian colt, why at me
Looking aslant with thy eyes,
Dost thou cruelly flee,
And think that I know nothing wise?
Know I could well
Put the bridle on thee,
And holding the reins, turn
Round the bounds of the course.
But now thou browsest the meads,
And gambolling lightly dost play,
For thou hast no skilful horseman
Mounted upon thy back.

CUPID WOUNDED.

Love once among roses
Saw not
A sleeping bee, but was stung;
And being wounded in the finger
Of his hand, cried for pain.
Running as well as flying
To the beautiful Venus,
I am killed, mother, said he,
I am killed, and I die.
A little serpent has stung me,
Winged, which they call
A bee, — the husbandmen.
And she said, If the sting
Of a bee afflicts you,
How, think you, are they afflicted,
Love, whom you smite?

——— ——— —

Late in the afternoon, for we had lingered long on the island, we raised our sail for the first time, and for a short hour the southwest wind was our ally; but it did not please Heaven to abet us along. With one sail raised we swept slowly up the eastern side of the stream, steering clear of the rocks, while, from the top of a hill which formed the opposite bank, some lumberers were rolling down timber to be rafted down the stream. We could see their axes and levers gleaming in the sun, and the logs came down with a dust and a rumbling sound, which was reverberated through the woods beyond us on our side, like the roar of artillery. But Zephyr soon took us out of sight and hearing of this commerce. Having passed Read's Ferry, and another island called McGaw's Island, we reached some rapids called Moore's Falls, and entered on "that section of the river, nine miles in extent, converted, by law, into the Union Canal, comprehending in that space six distinct falls; at each of which, and at several intermediate places, work has been done." After passing Moore's Falls by means of locks, we again had recourse to our oars,

and went merrily on our way, driving the small sandpiper from rock to rock before us, and sometimes rowing near enough to a cottage on the bank, though they were few and far between, to see the sunflowers, and the seed vessels of the poppy, like small goblets filled with the water of Lethe, before the door, but without disturbing the sluggish household behind. Thus we held on, sailing or dipping our way along with the paddle up this broad river, smooth and placid, flowing over concealed rocks, where we could see the pickerel lying low in the transparent water, eager to double some distant cape, to make some great bend as in the life of man, and see what new perspective would open; looking far into a new country, broad and serene, the cottages of settlers seen afar for the first time, yet with the moss of a century on their roofs, and the third or fourth generation in their shadows. Strange was it to consider how the sun and the summer, the buds of spring and the seared leaves of autumn, were related to these cabins along the shore; how all the rays which paint the landscape radiate from them, and the flight of the crow and the gyrations of the hawk have reference to their roofs. Still the ever rich and fertile shores accompanied us, fringed with vines and alive with small birds and frisking squirrels, the edge of some farmer's field or widow's wood-lot, or wilder, perchance, where the muskrat, the little medicine of the river, drags itself along stealthily over the alder-leaves and muscle-shells, and man and the memory of man are banished far.

At length the unwearied, never-sinking shore, still holding on without break, with its cool copses and serene pasture-grounds, tempted us to disembark; and we adventurously landed on this remote coast, to survey it, without the knowledge of any human inhabitant probably to this day. But we still remember the gnarled and hospitable oaks which grew even there for our entertainment, and were no strangers to us, the lonely horse in his pasture, and the patient cows, whose path to the river, so judiciously chosen to overcome the difficulties of the way, we followed, and disturbed their ruminations in the shade; and, above all, the cool, free aspect of the wild apple-trees, generously proffering their fruit to us, though still green and crude, — the hard, round, glossy fruit, which, if not ripe, still was not poison, but New-English too, brought hither its

ancestors by ours once. These gentler trees imparted a half-civilized and twilight aspect to the otherwise barbarian land. Still farther on we scrambled up the rocky channel of a brook, which had long served nature for a sluice there, leaping like it from rock to rock through tangled woods, at the bottom of a ravine, which grew darker and darker, and more and more hoarse the murmurs of the stream, until we reached the ruins of a mill, where now the ivy grew, and the trout glanced through the crumbling flume; and there we imagined what had been the dreams and speculations of some early settler. But the waning day compelled us to embark once more, and redeem this wasted time with long and vigorous sweeps over the rippling stream.

It was still wild and solitary, except that at intervals of a mile or two the roof of a cottage might be seen over the bank. This region, as we read, was once famous for the manufacture of straw bonnets of the Leghorn kind, of which it claims the invention in these parts; and occasionally some industrious damsel tripped down to the water's edge, to put her straw a-soak, as it appeared, and stood awhile to watch the retreating voyageurs, and catch the fragment of a boat-song which we had made, wafted over the water.

Thus, perchance, the Indian hunter,
Many a lagging year agone,
Gliding o'er thy rippling waters,
Lowly hummed a natural song.

Now the sun's behind the willows,
Now he gleams along the waves,
Faintly o'er the wearied billows
Come the spirits of the braves.

Just before sundown we reached some more falls in the town of Bedford, where some stone-masons were employed repairing the locks in a solitary part of the river. They were interested in our adventure, especially one young man of our own age, who inquired at first if we were bound up to "'Skeag"; and when he had heard our story, and examined our outfit, asked us other questions, but temperately still, and always turning to his work again, though as if it

were become his duty. It was plain that he would like to go with us, and, as he looked up the river, many a distant cape and wooded shore were reflected in his eye, as well as in his thoughts. When we were ready he left his work, and helped us through the locks with a sort of quiet enthusiasm, telling us that we were at Coos Falls, and we could still distinguish the strokes of his chisel for many sweeps after we had left him.

We wished to camp this night on a large rock in the middle of the stream, just above these falls, but the want of fuel, and the difficulty of fixing our tent firmly, prevented us; so we made our bed on the main-land opposite, on the west bank, in the town of Bedford, in a retired place, as we supposed, there being no house in sight.

WEDNESDAY

"Man is man's foe and destiny." Cotton.

WEDNESDAY.

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Early this morning, as we were rolling up our buffaloes and loading our boat amid the dew, while our embers were still smoking, the masons who worked at the locks, and whom we had seen crossing the river in their boat the evening before while we were examining the rock, came upon us as they were going to their work, and we found that we had pitched our tent directly in the path to their boat. This was the only time that we were observed on our camping-ground. Thus, far from the beaten highways and the dust and din of travel, we beheld the country privately, yet freely, and at our leisure. Other roads do some violence to Nature, and bring the traveller to stare at her, but the river steals into the scenery it traverses without intrusion, silently creating and adorning it, and is as free to come and go as the zephyr.

As we shoved away from this rocky coast, before sunrise, the smaller bittern, the genius of the shore, was moping along its edge, or stood probing the mud for its food, with ever an eye on us, though so demurely at work, or else he ran along over the wet stones like a wrecker in his storm-coat, looking out for wrecks of snails and cockles. Now away he goes, with a limping flight, uncertain where he will alight, until a rod of clear sand amid the alders invites his feet; and now our steady approach compels him to seek a new retreat. It is a bird of the oldest Thalesian school, and no doubt believes in the priority of water to the other elements; the relic of a twilight antediluvian age which yet inhabits these bright American rivers with us Yankees. There is something venerable in this melancholy and contemplative race of birds, which may have trodden the earth while it was yet in a slimy and imperfect state. Perchance their tracks too are still visible on the stones. It still lingers into our glaring summers, bravely supporting its fate without sympathy from man, as if it looked forward to some second advent of which *he* has no assurance. One wonders if, by its patient study by rocks and sandy capes, it has wrested the whole of her secret from Nature yet. What a rich experience it must have gained, standing on one leg and looking

out from its dull eye so long on sunshine and rain, moon and stars! What could it tell of stagnant pools and reeds and dank night-fogs! It would be worth the while to look closely into the eye which has been open and seeing at such hours, and in such solitudes, its dull, yellowish, greenish eye. Methinks my own soul must be a bright invisible green. I have seen these birds stand by the half-dozen together in the shallower water along the shore, with their bills thrust into the mud at the bottom, probing for food, the whole head being concealed, while the neck and body formed an arch above the water.

Cohass Brook, the outlet of Massabesic Pond, — which last is five or six miles distant, and contains fifteen hundred acres, being the largest body of fresh water in Rockingham County, — comes in near here from the east. Rowing between Manchester and Bedford, we passed, at an early hour, a ferry and some falls, called Goff's Falls, the Indian Cohasset, where there is a small village, and a handsome green islet in the middle of the stream. From Bedford and Merrimack have been boated the bricks of which Lowell is made. About twenty years before, as they told us, one Moore, of Bedford, having clay on his farm, contracted to furnish eight millions of bricks to the founders of that city within two years. He fulfilled his contract in one year, and since then bricks have been the principal export from these towns. The farmers found thus a market for their wood, and when they had brought a load to the kilns, they could cart a load of bricks to the shore, and so make a profitable day's work of it. Thus all parties were benefited. It was worth the while to see the place where Lowell was "dug out." So likewise Manchester is being built of bricks made still higher up the river at Hooksett.

There might be seen here on the bank of the Merrimack, near Goff's Falls, in what is now the town of Bedford, famous "for hops and for its fine domestic manufactures," some graves of the aborigines. The land still bears this scar here, and time is slowly crumbling the bones of a race. Yet, without fail, every spring, since they first fished and hunted here, the brown thrasher has heralded the morning from a birch or alder spray, and the undying race of reed-birds still rustles through the withering grass. But these bones rustle not. These mouldering elements are slowly preparing for another metamorphosis, to serve new masters, and what was the Indian's will

erelong be the white man's sinew.

We learned that Bedford was not so famous for hops as formerly, since the price is fluctuating, and poles are now scarce. Yet if the traveller goes back a few miles from the river, the hop-kilns will still excite his curiosity.

There were few incidents in our voyage this forenoon, though the river was now more rocky and the falls more frequent than before. It was a pleasant change, after rowing incessantly for many hours, to lock ourselves through in some retired place, — for commonly there was no lock-man at hand, — one sitting in the boat, while the other, sometimes with no little labor and heave-yo-ing, opened and shut the gates, waiting patiently to see the locks fill. We did not once use the wheels which we had provided. Taking advantage of the eddy, we were sometimes floated up to the locks almost in the face of the falls; and, by the same cause, any floating timber was carried round in a circle and repeatedly drawn into the rapids before it finally went down the stream. These old gray structures, with their quiet arms stretched over the river in the sun, appeared like natural objects in the scenery, and the kingfisher and sandpiper alighted on them as readily as on stakes or rocks.

We rowed leisurely up the stream for several hours, until the sun had got high in the sky, our thoughts monotonously beating time to our oars. For outward variety there was only the river and the receding shores, a vista continually opening behind and closing before us, as we sat with our backs up-stream; and, for inward, such thoughts as the muses grudgingly lent us. We were always passing some low, inviting shore, or some overhanging bank, on which, however, we never landed.

Such near aspects had we
Of our life's scenery.

It might be seen by what tenure men held the earth. The smallest stream is *mediterranean* sea, a smaller ocean creek within the land, where men may steer by their farm-bounds and cottage-lights. For my own part, but for the geographers, I should hardly have known how large a portion of our globe is water, my life has chiefly passed

within so deep a cove. Yet I have sometimes ventured as far as to the mouth of my Snug Harbor. From an old ruined fort on Staten Island, I have loved to watch all day some vessel whose name I had read in the morning through the telegraph-glass, when she first came upon the coast, and her hull heaved up and glistened in the sun, from the moment when the pilot and most adventurous news-boats met her, past the Hook, and up the narrow channel of the wide outer bay, till she was boarded by the health-officer, and took her station at Quarantine, or held on her unquestioned course to the wharves of New York. It was interesting, too, to watch the less adventurous newsman, who made his assault as the vessel swept through the Narrows, defying plague and quarantine law, and, fastening his little cockboat to her huge side, clambered up and disappeared in the cabin. And then I could imagine what momentous news was being imparted by the captain, which no American ear had ever heard, that Asia, Africa, Europe — were all sunk; for which at length he pays the price, and is seen descending the ship's side with his bundle of newspapers, but not where he first got up, for these arrivers do not stand still to gossip; and he hastes away with steady sweeps to dispose of his wares to the highest bidder, and we shall erelong read something startling,— "By the latest arrival,"— "by the good ship —— ." On Sunday I beheld, from some interior hill, the long procession of vessels getting to sea, reaching from the city wharves through the Narrows, and past the Hook, quite to the ocean stream, far as the eye could reach, with stately march and silken sails, all counting on lucky voyages, but each time some of the number, no doubt, destined to go to Davy's locker, and never come on this coast again. And, again, in the evening of a pleasant day, it was my amusement to count the sails in sight. But as the setting sun continually brought more and more to light, still farther in the horizon, the last count always had the advantage, till, by the time the last rays streamed over the sea, I had doubled and trebled my first number; though I could no longer class them all under the several heads of ships, barks, brigs, schooners, and sloops, but most were faint generic *vessels* only. And then the temperate twilight light, perchance, revealed the floating home of some sailor whose thoughts were already alienated from this American coast, and directed

towards the Europe of our dreams. I have stood upon the same hill-top when a thunder-shower, rolling down from the Catskills and Highlands, passed over the island, deluging the land; and, when it had suddenly left us in sunshine, have seen it overtake successively, with its huge shadow and dark, descending wall of rain, the vessels in the bay. Their bright sails were suddenly drooping and dark, like the sides of barns, and they seemed to shrink before the storm; while still far beyond them on the sea, through this dark veil, gleamed the sunny sails of those vessels which the storm had not yet reached. And at midnight, when all around and overhead was darkness, I have seen a field of trembling, silvery light far out on the sea, the reflection of the moonlight from the ocean, as if beyond the precincts of our night, where the moon traversed a cloudless heaven, — and sometimes a dark speck in its midst, where some fortunate vessel was pursuing its happy voyage by night.

But to us river sailors the sun never rose out of ocean waves, but from some green coppice, and went down behind some dark mountain line. We, too, were but dwellers on the shore, like the bittern of the morning; and our pursuit, the wrecks of snails and cockles. Nevertheless, we were contented to know the better one fair particular shore.

My life is like a stroll upon the beach,
As near the ocean's edge as I can go,
My tardy steps its waves sometimes o'erreach,
Sometimes I stay to let them overflow.

My sole employment 't is, and scrupulous care,
To place my gains beyond the reach of tides,
Each smoother pebble, and each shell more rare,
Which ocean kindly to my hand confides.

I have but few companions on the shore,
They scorn the strand who sail upon the sea,
Yet oft I think the ocean they've sailed o'er
Is deeper known upon the strand to me.

The middle sea contains no crimson dulse,
Its deeper waves cast up no pearls to view,
Along the shore my hand is on its pulse,
And I converse with many a shipwrecked crew.

The small houses which were scattered along the river at intervals of a mile or more were commonly out of sight to us, but sometimes, when we rowed near the shore, we heard the peevish note of a hen, or some slight domestic sound, which betrayed them. The lockmen's houses were particularly well placed, retired, and high, always at falls or rapids, and commanding the pleasantest reaches of the river, — for it is generally wider and more lake-like just above a fall, — and there they wait for boats. These humble dwellings, homely and sincere, in which a hearth was still the essential part, were more pleasing to our eyes than palaces or castles would have been. In the noon of these days, as we have said, we occasionally climbed the banks and approached these houses, to get a glass of water and make acquaintance with their inhabitants. High in the leafy bank, surrounded commonly by a small patch of corn and beans, squashes and melons, with sometimes a graceful hop-yard on one side, and some running vine over the windows, they appeared like beehives set to gather honey for a summer. I have not read of any Arcadian life which surpasses the actual luxury and serenity of these New England dwellings. For the outward gilding, at least, the age is golden enough. As you approach the sunny doorway, awakening the echoes by your steps, still no sound from these barracks of repose, and you fear that the gentlest knock may seem rude to the Oriental dreamers. The door is opened, perchance, by some Yankee-Hindoo woman, whose small-voiced but sincere hospitality, out of the bottomless depths of a quiet nature, has travelled quite round to the opposite side, and fears only to obtrude its kindness. You step over the white-scoured floor to the bright "dresser" lightly, as if afraid to disturb the devotions of the household, — for Oriental dynasties appear to have passed away since the dinner-table was last spread here, — and thence to the frequented curb, where you see your long-forgotten, unshaven face at the bottom, in juxtaposition with new-made butter and the trout in the well. "Perhaps you would like some molasses and

ginger," suggests the faint noon voice. Sometimes there sits the brother who follows the sea, their representative man; who knows only how far it is to the nearest port, no more distances, all the rest is sea and distant capes, — patting the dog, or dandling the kitten in arms that were stretched by the cable and the oar, pulling against Boreas or the trade-winds. He looks up at the stranger, half pleased, half astonished, with a mariner's eye, as if he were a dolphin within cast. If men will believe it, *sua si bona norint*, there are no more quiet Tempes, nor more poetic and Arcadian lives, than may be lived in these New England dwellings. We thought that the employment of their inhabitants by day would be to tend the flowers and herds, and at night, like the shepherds of old, to cluster and give names to the stars from the river banks.

We passed a large and densely wooded island this forenoon, between Short's and Griffith's Falls, the fairest which we had met with, with a handsome grove of elms at its head. If it had been evening we should have been glad to camp there. Not long after, one or two more were passed. The boatmen told us that the current had recently made important changes here. An island always pleases my imagination, even the smallest, as a small continent and integral portion of the globe. I have a fancy for building my hut on one. Even a bare, grassy isle, which I can see entirely over at a glance, has some undefined and mysterious charm for me. There is commonly such a one at the junction of two rivers, whose currents bring down and deposit their respective sands in the eddy at their confluence, as it were the womb of a continent. By what a delicate and far-stretched contribution every island is made! What an enterprise of Nature thus to lay the foundations of and to build up the future continent, of golden and silver sands and the ruins of forests, with ant-like industry! Pindar gives the following account of the origin of Thera, whence, in after times, Libyan Cyrene was settled by Battus. Triton, in the form of Eurypylus, presents a clod to Euphemus, one of the Argonauts, as they are about to return home.

> "He knew of our haste,
> And immediately seizing a clod
> With his right hand, strove to give it

As a chance stranger's gift.
Nor did the hero disregard him, but leaping on the shore,
Stretching hand to hand,
Received the mystic clod.
But I hear it sinking from the deck,
Go with the sea brine
At evening, accompanying the watery sea.
Often indeed I urged the careless
Menials to guard it, but their minds forgot.
And now in this island the imperishable seed of spacious Libya
Is spilled before its hour."

It is a beautiful fable, also related by Pindar, how Helius, or the Sun, looked down into the sea one day, — when perchance his rays were first reflected from some increasing glittering sandbar, — and saw the fair and fruitful island of Rhodes

"springing up from the bottom, Capable of feeding many men, and suitable for flocks;
and at the nod of Zeus,

"The island sprang from the watery
Sea; and the genial Father of penetrating beams,
Ruler of fire-breathing horses, has it."

The shifting islands! who would not be willing that his house should be undermined by such a foe! The inhabitant of an island can tell what currents formed the land which he cultivates; and his earth is still being created or destroyed. There before his door, perchance, still empties the stream which brought down the material of his farm ages before, and is still bringing it down or washing it away, — the graceful, gentle robber!

Not long after this we saw the Piscataquoag, or Sparkling Water, emptying in on our left, and heard the Falls of Amoskeag above. Large quantities of lumber, as we read in the Gazetteer, were still annually floated down the Piscataquoag to the Merrimack, and there are many fine mill privileges on it. Just above the mouth of this river we passed the artificial falls where the canals of the Manchester

Manufacturing Company discharge themselves into the Merrimack. They are striking enough to have a name, and, with the scenery of a Bashpish, would be visited from far and near. The water falls thirty or forty feet over seven or eight steep and narrow terraces of stone, probably to break its force, and is converted into one mass of foam. This canal-water did not seem to be the worse for the wear, but foamed and fumed as purely, and boomed as savagely and impressively, as a mountain torrent, and, though it came from under a factory, we saw a rainbow here. These are now the Amoskeag Falls, removed a mile down-stream. But we did not tarry to examine them minutely, making haste to get past the village here collected, and out of hearing of the hammer which was laying the foundation of another Lowell on the banks. At the time of our voyage Manchester was a village of about two thousand inhabitants, where we landed for a moment to get some cool water, and where an inhabitant told us that he was accustomed to go across the river into Goffstown for his water. But now, as I have been told, and indeed have witnessed, it contains fourteen thousand inhabitants. From a hill on the road between Goffstown and Hooksett, four miles distant, I have seen a thunder-shower pass over, and the sun break out and shine on a city there, where I had landed nine years before in the fields; and there was waving the flag of its Museum, where "the only perfect skeleton of a Greenland or river whale in the United States" was to be seen, and I also read in its directory of a "Manchester Athenaeum and Gallery of the Fine Arts."

According to the Gazetteer, the descent of Amoskeag Falls, which are the most considerable in the Merrimack, is fifty-four feet in half a mile. We locked ourselves through here with much ado, surmounting the successive watery steps of this river's staircase in the midst of a crowd of villagers, jumping into the canal to their amusement, to save our boat from upsetting, and consuming much river-water in our service. Amoskeag, or Namaskeak, is said to mean "great fishing-place." It was hereabouts that the Sachem Wannalancet resided. Tradition says that his tribe, when at war with the Mohawks, concealed their provisions in the cavities of the rocks in the upper part of these falls. The Indians, who hid their provisions in these holes, and affirmed "that God had cut them out for that purpose,"

understood their origin and use better than the Royal Society, who in their Transactions, in the last century, speaking of these very holes, declare that "they seem plainly to be artificial." Similar "pot-holes" may be seen at the Stone Flume on this river, on the Ottaway, at Bellows' Falls on the Connecticut, and in the limestone rock at Shelburne Falls on Deerfield River in Massachusetts, and more or less generally about all falls. Perhaps the most remarkable curiosity of this kind in New England is the well-known Basin on the Pemigewasset, one of the head-waters of this river, twenty by thirty feet in extent and proportionably deep, with a smooth and rounded brim, and filled with a cold, pellucid, and greenish water. At Amoskeag the river is divided into many separate torrents and trickling rills by the rocks, and its volume is so much reduced by the drain of the canals that it does not fill its bed. There are many pot-holes here on a rocky island which the river washes over in high freshets. As at Shelburne Falls, where I first observed them, they are from one foot to four or five in diameter, and as many in depth, perfectly round and regular, with smooth and gracefully curved brims, like goblets. Their origin is apparent to the most careless observer. A stone which the current has washed down, meeting with obstacles, revolves as on a pivot where it lies, gradually sinking in the course of centuries deeper and deeper into the rock, and in new freshets receiving the aid of fresh stones, which are drawn into this trap and doomed to revolve there for an indefinite period, doing Sisyphus-like penance for stony sins, until they either wear out, or wear through the bottom of their prison, or else are released by some revolution of nature. There lie the stones of various sizes, from a pebble to a foot or two in diameter, some of which have rested from their labor only since the spring, and some higher up which have lain still and dry for ages, — we noticed some here at least sixteen feet above the present level of the water, — while others are still revolving, and enjoy no respite at any season. In one instance, at Shelburne Falls, they have worn quite through the rock, so that a portion of the river leaks through in anticipation of the fall. Some of these pot-holes at Amoskeag, in a very hard brown-stone, had an oblong, cylindrical stone of the same material loosely fitting them. One, as much as fifteen feet deep and seven or eight in diameter,

which was worn quite through to the water, had a huge rock of the same material, smooth but of irregular form, lodged in it. Everywhere there were the rudiments or the wrecks of a dimple in the rock; the rocky shells of whirlpools. As if by force of example and sympathy after so many lessons, the rocks, the hardest material, had been endeavoring to whirl or flow into the forms of the most fluid. The finest workers in stone are not copper or steel tools, but the gentle touches of air and water working at their leisure with a liberal allowance of time.

Not only have some of these basins been forming for countless ages, but others exist which must have been completed in a former geological period. In deepening the Pawtucket Canal, in 1822, the workmen came to ledges with pot-holes in them, where probably was once the bed of the river, and there are some, we are told, in the town of Canaan in this State, with the stones still in them, on the height of land between the Merrimack and Connecticut, and nearly a thousand feet above these rivers, proving that the mountains and the rivers have changed places. There lie the stones which completed their revolutions perhaps before thoughts began to revolve in the brain of man. The periods of Hindoo and Chinese history, though they reach back to the time when the race of mortals is confounded with the race of gods, are as nothing compared with the periods which these stones have inscribed. That which commenced a rock when time was young, shall conclude a pebble in the unequal contest. With such expense of time and natural forces are our very paving-stones produced. They teach us lessons, these dumb workers; verily there are "sermons in stones, and books in the running streams." In these very holes the Indians hid their provisions; but now there is no bread, but only its old neighbor stones at the bottom. Who knows how many races they have served thus? By as simple a law, some accidental by-law, perchance, our system itself was made ready for its inhabitants.

These, and such as these, must be our antiquities, for lack of human vestiges. The monuments of heroes and the temples of the gods which may once have stood on the banks of this river are now, at any rate, returned to dust and primitive soil. The murmur of unchronicled nations has died away along these shores, and once

more Lowell and Manchester are on the trail of the Indian.

The fact that Romans once inhabited her reflects no little dignity on Nature herself; that from some particular hill the Roman once looked out on the sea. She need not be ashamed of the vestiges of her children. How gladly the antiquary informs us that their vessels penetrated into this frith, or up that river of some remote isle! Their military monuments still remain on the hills and under the sod of the valleys. The oft-repeated Roman story is written in still legible characters in every quarter of the Old World, and but to-day, perchance, a new coin is dug up whose inscription repeats and confirms their fame. Some "*Judaea Capta*" with a woman mourning under a palm-tree, with silent argument and demonstration confirms the pages of history.

"Rome living was the world's sole ornament;
And dead is now the world's sole monument.
. . . . .
With her own weight down pressed now she lies,
And by her heaps her hugeness testifies."

If one doubts whether Grecian valor and patriotism are not a fiction of the poets, he may go to Athens and see still upon the walls of the temple of Minerva the circular marks made by the shields taken from the enemy in the Persian war, which were suspended there. We have not far to seek for living and unquestionable evidence. The very dust takes shape and confirms some story which we had read. As Fuller said, commenting on the zeal of Camden, "A broken urn is a whole evidence; or an old gate still surviving out of which the city is run out." When Solon endeavored to prove that Salamis had formerly belonged to the Athenians, and not to the Megareans, he caused the tombs to be opened, and showed that the inhabitants of Salamis turned the faces of their dead to the same side with the Athenians, but the Megareans to the opposite side. There they were to be interrogated.

Some minds are as little logical or argumentative as nature; they can offer no reason or "guess," but they exhibit the solemn and incontrovertible fact. If a historical question arises, they cause the

tombs to be opened. Their silent and practical logic convinces the reason and the understanding at the same time. Of such sort is always the only pertinent question and the only satisfactory reply.

Our own country furnishes antiquities as ancient and durable, and as useful, as any; rocks at least as well covered with lichens, and a soil which, if it is virgin, is but virgin mould, the very dust of nature. What if we cannot read Rome, or Greece, Etruria, or Carthage, or Egypt, or Babylon, on these; are our cliffs bare? The lichen on the rocks is a rude and simple shield which beginning and imperfect Nature suspended there. Still hangs her wrinkled trophy. And here too the poet's eye may still detect the brazen nails which fastened Time's inscriptions, and if he has the gift, decipher them by this clew. The walls that fence our fields, as well as modern Rome, and not less the Parthenon itself, are all built of *ruins*. Here may be heard the din of rivers, and ancient winds which have long since lost their names sough through our woods; — the first faint sounds of spring, older than the summer of Athenian glory, the titmouse lisping in the wood, the jay's scream, and blue-bird's warble, and the hum of

"bees that fly About the laughing blossoms of sallowy."

Here is the gray dawn for antiquity, and our to-morrow's future should be at least paulo-post to theirs which we have put behind us. There are the red-maple and birchen leaves, old runes which are not yet deciphered; catkins, pine-cones, vines, oak-leaves, and acorns; the very things themselves, and not their forms in stone, — so much the more ancient and venerable. And even to the current summer there has come down tradition of a hoary-headed master of all art, who once filled every field and grove with statues and god-like architecture, of every design which Greece has lately copied; whose ruins are now mingled with the dust, and not one block remains upon another. The century sun and unwearied rain have wasted them, till not one fragment from that quarry now exists; and poets perchance will feign that gods sent down the material from heaven.

What though the traveller tell us of the ruins of Egypt, are we so sick or idle, that we must sacrifice our America and to-day to some man's ill-remembered and indolent story? Carnac and Luxor are but names, or if their skeletons remain, still more desert sand, and at length a wave of the Mediterranean Sea are needed to wash away the

filth that attaches to their grandeur. Carnac! Carnac! here is Carnac for me. I behold the columns of a larger and purer temple.

This is my Carnac, whose unmeasured dome
Shelters the measuring art and measurer's home.
Behold these flowers, let us be up with time,
Not dreaming of three thousand years ago,
Erect ourselves and let those columns lie,
Not stoop to raise a foil against the sky.
Where is the spirit of that time but in
This present day, perchance the present line?
Three thousand years ago are not agone,
They are still lingering in this summer morn,
And Memnon's Mother sprightly greets us now,
Wearing her youthful radiance on her brow.
If Carnac's columns still stand on the plain,
To enjoy our opportunities they remain.

In these parts dwelt the famous Sachem Pasaconaway, who was seen by Gookin "at Pawtucket, when he was about one hundred and twenty years old." He was reputed a wise man and a powwow, and restrained his people from going to war with the English. They believed "that he could make water burn, rocks move, and trees dance, and metamorphose himself into a flaming man; that in winter he could raise a green leaf out of the ashes of a dry one, and produce a living snake from the skin of a dead one, and many similar miracles." In 1660, according to Gookin, at a great feast and dance, he made his farewell speech to his people, in which he said, that as he was not likely to see them met together again, he would leave them this word of advice, to take heed how they quarrelled with their English neighbors, for though they might do them much mischief at first, it would prove the means of their own destruction. He himself, he said, had been as much an enemy to the English at their first coming as any, and had used all his arts to destroy them, or at least to prevent their settlement, but could by no means effect it. Gookin thought that he "possibly might have such a kind of spirit upon him as was upon Balaam, who in xxiii. Numbers, 23, said `Surely, there

is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.'" His son Wannalancet carefully followed his advice, and when Philip's War broke out, he withdrew his followers to Penacook, now Concord in New Hampshire, from the scene of the war. On his return afterwards, he visited the minister of Chelmsford, and, as is stated in the history of that town, "wished to know whether Chelmsford had suffered much during the war; and being informed that it had not, and that God should be thanked for it, Wannalancet replied, `Me next.'"

Manchester was the residence of John Stark, a hero of two wars, and survivor of a third, and at his death the last but one of the American generals of the Revolution. He was born in the adjoining town of Londonderry, then Nutfield, in 1728. As early as 1752, he was taken prisoner by the Indians while hunting in the wilderness near Baker's River; he performed notable service as a captain of rangers in the French war; commanded a regiment of the New Hampshire militia at the battle of Bunker Hill; and fought and won the battle of Bennington in 1777. He was past service in the last war, and died here in 1822, at the age of 94. His monument stands upon the second bank of the river, about a mile and a half above the falls, and commands a prospect several miles up and down the Merrimack. It suggested how much more impressive in the landscape is the tomb of a hero than the dwellings of the inglorious living. Who is most dead, — a hero by whose monument you stand, or his descendants of whom you have never heard?

The graves of Pasaconaway and Wannalancet are marked by no monument on the bank of their native river.

Every town which we passed, if we may believe the Gazetteer, had been the residence of some great man. But though we knocked at many doors, and even made particular inquiries, we could not find that there were any now living. Under the head of Litchfield we read: —

"The Hon. Wyseman Clagett closed his life in this town." According to another, "He was a classical scholar, a good lawyer, a wit, and a poet." We saw his old gray house just below Great Nesenkeag Brook. — Under the head of Merrimack: "Hon. Mathew Thornton, one of the signers of the Declaration of American

Independence, resided many years in this town." His house too we saw from the river.— "Dr. Jonathan Gove, a man distinguished for his urbanity, his talents and professional skill, resided in this town [Goffstown]. He was one of the oldest practitioners of medicine in the county. He was many years an active member of the legislature."— "Hon. Robert Means, who died Jan. 24, 1823, at the age of 80, was for a long period a resident in Amherst. He was a native of Ireland. In 1764 he came to this country, where, by his industry and application to business, he acquired a large property, and great respect."— "William Stinson [one of the first settlers of Dunbarton], born in Ireland, came to Londonderry with his father. He was much respected and was a useful man. James Rogers was from Ireland, and father to Major Robert Rogers. He was shot in the woods, being mistaken for a bear."— "Rev. Matthew Clark, second minister of Londonderry, was a native of Ireland, who had in early life been an officer in the army, and distinguished himself in the defence of the city of Londonderry, when besieged by the army of King James II. A. D. 1688-9. He afterwards relinquished a military life for the clerical profession. He possessed a strong mind, marked by a considerable degree of eccentricity. He died Jan. 25, 1735, and was borne to the grave, at his particular request, by his former companions in arms, of whom there were a considerable number among the early settlers of this town; several of them had been made free from taxes throughout the British dominions by King William, for their bravery in that memorable siege." — Col. George Reid and Capt. David M'Clary, also citizens of Londonderry, were "distinguished and brave" officers.— "Major Andrew M'Clary, a native of this town [Epsom], fell at the battle of Breed's Hill ." — Many of these heroes, like the illustrious Roman, were ploughing when the news of the massacre at Lexington arrived, and straightway left their ploughs in the furrow, and repaired to the scene of action. Some miles from where we now were, there once stood a guide-post on which were the words, "3 miles to Squire MacGaw's."

But generally speaking, the land is now, at any rate, very barren of men, and we doubt if there are as many hundreds as we read of. It may be that we stood too near.

Uncannunuc Mountain in Goffstown was visible from Amoskeag,

five or six miles westward. It is the north-easternmost in the horizon, which we see from our native town, but seen from there is too ethereally blue to be the same which the like of us have ever climbed. Its name is said to mean "The Two Breasts," there being two eminences some distance apart. The highest, which is about fourteen hundred feet above the sea, probably affords a more extensive view of the Merrimack valley and the adjacent country than any other hill, though it is somewhat obstructed by woods. Only a few short reaches of the river are visible, but you can trace its course far down stream by the sandy tracts on its banks.

A little south of Uncannunuc, about sixty years ago, as the story goes, an old woman who went out to gather pennyroyal, tript her foot in the bail of a small brass kettle in the dead grass and bushes. Some say that flints and charcoal and some traces of a camp were also found. This kettle, holding about four quarts, is still preserved and used to dye thread in. It is supposed to have belonged to some old French or Indian hunter, who was killed in one of his hunting or scouting excursions, and so never returned to look after his kettle.

But we were most interested to hear of the pennyroyal, it is soothing to be reminded that wild nature produces anything ready for the use of man. Men know that *something* is good. One says that it is yellow-dock, another that it is bitter-sweet, another that it is slippery-elm bark, burdock, catnip, calamint, elicampane, thoroughwort, or pennyroyal. A man may esteem himself happy when that which is his food is also his medicine. There is no kind of herb, but somebody or other says that it is good. I am very glad to hear it. It reminds me of the first chapter of Genesis. But how should they know that it is good? That is the mystery to me. I am always agreeably disappointed; it is incredible that they should have found it out. Since all things are good, men fail at last to distinguish which is the bane, and which the antidote. There are sure to be two prescriptions diametrically opposite. Stuff a cold and starve a cold are but two ways. They are the two practices both always in full blast. Yet you must take advice of the one school as if there was no other. In respect to religion and the healing art, all nations are still in a state of barbarism. In the most civilized countries the priest is still but a Powwow, and the physician a Great Medicine. Consider the

deference which is everywhere paid to a doctor's opinion. Nothing more strikingly betrays the credulity of mankind than medicine. Quackery is a thing universal, and universally successful. In this case it becomes literally true that no imposition is too great for the credulity of men. Priests and physicians should never look one another in the face. They have no common ground, nor is there any to mediate between them. When the one comes, the other goes. They could not come together without laughter, or a significant silence, for the one's profession is a satire on the other's, and either's success would be the other's failure. It is wonderful that the physician should ever die, and that the priest should ever live. Why is it that the priest is never called to consult with the physician? Is it because men believe practically that matter is independent of spirit. But what is quackery? It is commonly an attempt to cure the diseases of a man by addressing his body alone. There is need of a physician who shall minister to both soul and body at once, that is, to man. Now he falls between two souls.

After passing through the locks, we had poled ourselves through the canal here, about half a mile in length, to the boatable part of the river. Above Amoskeag the river spreads out into a lake reaching a mile or two without a bend. There were many canal-boats here bound up to Hooksett, about eight miles, and as they were going up empty with a fair wind, one boatman offered to take us in tow if we would wait. But when we came alongside, we found that they meant to take us on board, since otherwise we should clog their motions too much; but as our boat was too heavy to be lifted aboard, we pursued our way up the stream, as before, while the boatmen were at their dinner, and came to anchor at length under some alders on the opposite shore, where we could take our lunch. Though far on one side, every sound was wafted over to us from the opposite bank, and from the harbor of the canal, and we could see everything that passed. By and by came several canal-boats, at intervals of a quarter of a mile, standing up to Hooksett with a light breeze, and one by one disappeared round a point above. With their broad sails set, they moved slowly up the stream in the sluggish and fitful breeze, like one-winged antediluvian birds, and as if impelled by some mysterious counter-current. It was a grand motion, so slow and

stately, this "standing out," as the phrase is, expressing the gradual and steady progress of a vessel, as if it were by mere rectitude and disposition, without shuffling. Their sails, which stood so still, were like chips cast into the current of the air to show which way it set. At length the boat which we had spoken came along, keeping the middle of the stream, and when within speaking distance the steersman called out ironically to say, that if we would come alongside now he would take us in tow; but not heeding his taunt, we still loitered in the shade till we had finished our lunch, and when the last boat had disappeared round the point with flapping sail, for the breeze had now sunk to a zephyr, with our own sails set, and plying our oars, we shot rapidly up the stream in pursuit, and as we glided close alongside, while they were vainly invoking Aeolus to their aid, we returned their compliment by proposing, if they would throw us a rope, to "take them in tow," to which these Merrimack sailors had no suitable answer ready. Thus we gradually overtook and passed each boat in succession until we had the river to ourselves again.

Our course this afternoon was between Manchester and Goffstown.

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While we float here, far from that tributary stream on whose banks our Friends and kindred dwell, our thoughts, like the stars, come out of their horizon still; for there circulates a finer blood than Lavoisier has discovered the laws of, — the blood, not of kindred merely, but of kindness, whose pulse still beats at any distance and forever.

True kindness is a pure divine affinity,
Not founded upon human consanguinity.
It is a spirit, not a blood relation,
Superior to family and station.

After years of vain familiarity, some distant gesture or unconscious behavior, which we remember, speaks to us with more emphasis than the wisest or kindest words. We are sometimes made aware of a kindness long passed, and realize that there have been times when our Friends' thoughts of us were of so pure and lofty a

character that they passed over us like the winds of heaven unnoticed; when they treated us not as what we were, but as what we aspired to be. There has just reached us, it may be, the nobleness of some such silent behavior, not to be forgotten, not to be remembered, and we shudder to think how it fell on us cold, though in some true but tardy hour we endeavor to wipe off these scores.

In my experience, persons, when they are made the subject of conversation, though with a Friend, are commonly the most prosaic and trivial of facts. The universe seems bankrupt as soon as we begin to discuss the character of individuals. Our discourse all runs to slander, and our limits grow narrower as we advance. How is it that we are impelled to treat our old Friends so ill when we obtain new ones? The housekeeper says, I never had any new crockery in my life but I began to break the old. I say, let us speak of mushrooms and forest trees rather. Yet we can sometimes afford to remember them in private.

Lately, alas, I knew a gentle boy,
Whose features all were cast in Virtue's mould,
As one she had designed for Beauty's toy,
But after manned him for her own strong-hold.

On every side he open was as day,
That you might see no lack of strength within,
For walls and ports do only serve alway
For a pretence to feebleness and sin.

Say not that Caesar was victorious,
With toil and strife who stormed the House of Fame,
In other sense this youth was glorious,
Himself a kingdom wheresoe'er he came.

No strength went out to get him victory,
When all was income of its own accord;
For where he went none other was to see,
But all were parcel of their noble lord.

He forayed like the subtile haze of summer,
That stilly shows fresh landscapes to our eyes,
And revolutions works without a murmur,
Or rustling of a leaf beneath the skies.

So was I taken unawares by this,
I quite forgot my homage to confess;
Yet now am forced to know, though hard it is,
I might have loved him had I loved him less.

Each moment as we nearer drew to each,
A stern respect withheld us farther yet,
So that we seemed beyond each other's reach,
And less acquainted than when first we met.

We two were one while we did sympathize,
So could we not the simplest bargain drive;
And what avails it now that we are wise,
If absence doth this doubleness contrive?

Eternity may not the chance repeat,
But I must tread my single way alone,
In sad remembrance that we once did meet,
And know that bliss irrevocably gone.

The spheres henceforth my elegy shall sing,
For elegy has other subject none;
Each strain of music in my ears shall ring
Knell of departure from that other one.

Make haste and celebrate my tragedy;
With fitting strain resound ye woods and fields;
Sorrow is dearer in such case to me
Than all the joys other occasion yields.

——— ——— —

Is't then too late the damage to repair?

Distance, forsooth, from my weak grasp hath reft
The empty husk, and clutched the useless tare,
But in my hands the wheat and kernel left.

If I but love that virtue which he is,
Though it be scented in the morning air,
Still shall we be truest acquaintances,
Nor mortals know a sympathy more rare.

Friendship is evanescent in every man's experience, and remembered like heat lightning in past summers. Fair and flitting like a summer cloud; — there is always some vapor in the air, no matter how long the drought; there are even April showers. Surely from time to time, for its vestiges never depart, it floats through our atmosphere. It takes place, like vegetation in so many materials, because there is such a law, but always without permanent form, though ancient and familiar as the sun and moon, and as sure to come again. The heart is forever inexperienced. They silently gather as by magic, these never failing, never quite deceiving visions, like the bright and fleecy clouds in the calmest and clearest days. The Friend is some fair floating isle of palms eluding the mariner in Pacific seas. Many are the dangers to be encountered, equinoctial gales and coral reefs, ere he may sail before the constant trades. But who would not sail through mutiny and storm, even over Atlantic waves, to reach the fabulous retreating shores of some continent man? The imagination still clings to the faintest tradition of

THE ATLANTIDES.

The smothered streams of love, which flow
More bright than Phlegethon, more low,
Island us ever, like the sea,
In an Atlantic mystery.
Our fabled shores none ever reach,
No mariner has found our beach,
Scarcely our mirage now is seen,
And neighboring waves with floating green,

Yet still the oldest charts contain
Some dotted outline of our main;
In ancient times midsummer days
Unto the western islands' gaze,
To Teneriffe and the Azores,
Have shown our faint and cloud-like shores.

But sink not yet, ye desolate isles,
Anon your coast with commerce smiles,
And richer freights ye'll furnish far
Than Africa or Malabar.
Be fair, be fertile evermore,
Ye rumored but untrodden shore,
Princes and monarchs will contend
Who first unto your land shall send,
And pawn the jewels of the crown
To call your distant soil their own.

Columbus has sailed westward of these isles by the mariner's compass, but neither he nor his successors have found them. We are no nearer than Plato was. The earnest seeker and hopeful discoverer of this New World always haunts the outskirts of his time, and walks through the densest crowd uninterrupted, and as it were in a straight line.

Sea and land are but his neighbors,
And companions in his labors,
Who on the ocean's verge and firm land's end
Doth long and truly seek his Friend.
Many men dwell far inland,
But he alone sits on the strand.
Whether he ponders men or books,
Always still he seaward looks,
Marine news he ever reads,
And the slightest glances heeds,
Feels the sea breeze on his cheek,
At each word the landsmen speak,

In every companion's eye
A sailing vessel doth descry;
In the ocean's sullen roar
From some distant port he hears,
Of wrecks upon a distant shore,
And the ventures of past years.

Who does not walk on the plain as amid the columns of Tadmore of the desert? There is on the earth no institution which Friendship has established; it is not taught by any religion; no scripture contains its maxims. It has no temple, nor even a solitary column. There goes a rumor that the earth is inhabited, but the shipwrecked mariner has not seen a footprint on the shore. The hunter has found only fragments of pottery and the monuments of inhabitants.

However, our fates at least are social. Our courses do not diverge; but as the web of destiny is woven it is fulled, and we are cast more and more into the centre. Men naturally, though feebly, seek this alliance, and their actions faintly foretell it. We are inclined to lay the chief stress on likeness and not on difference, and in foreign bodies we admit that there are many degrees of warmth below blood heat, but none of cold above it.

Mencius says: "If one loses a fowl or a dog, he knows well how to seek them again; if one loses the sentiments of his heart, he does not know how to seek them again. . . . The duties of practical philosophy consist only in seeking after those sentiments of the heart which we have lost; that is all."

One or two persons come to my house from time to time, there being proposed to them the faint possibility of intercourse. They are as full as they are silent, and wait for my plectrum to stir the strings of their lyre. If they could ever come to the length of a sentence, or hear one, on that ground they are dreaming of! They speak faintly, and do not obtrude themselves. They have heard some news, which none, not even they themselves, can impart. It is a wealth they can bear about them which can be expended in various ways. What came they out to seek?

No word is oftener on the lips of men than Friendship, and indeed no thought is more familiar to their aspirations. All men are

dreaming of it, and its drama, which is always a tragedy, is enacted daily. It is the secret of the universe. You may thread the town, you may wander the country, and none shall ever speak of it, yet thought is everywhere busy about it, and the idea of what is possible in this respect affects our behavior toward all new men and women, and a great many old ones. Nevertheless, I can remember only two or three essays on this subject in all literature. No wonder that the Mythology, and Arabian Nights, and Shakespeare, and Scott's novels entertain us, — we are poets and fablers and dramatists and novelists ourselves. We are continually acting a part in a more interesting drama than any written. We are dreaming that our Friends are our *Friends* , and that we are our Friends' *Friends*. Our actual Friends are but distant relations of those to whom we are pledged. We never exchange more than three words with a Friend in our lives on that level to which our thoughts and feelings almost habitually rise. One goes forth prepared to say, "Sweet Friends!" and the salutation is, "Damn your eyes!" But never mind; faint heart never won true Friend. O my Friend, may it come to pass once, that when you are my Friend I may be yours.

Of what use the friendliest dispositions even, if there are no hours given to Friendship, if it is forever postponed to unimportant duties and relations? Friendship is first, Friendship last. But it is equally impossible to forget our Friends, and to make them answer to our ideal. When they say farewell, then indeed we begin to keep them company. How often we find ourselves turning our backs on our actual Friends, that we may go and meet their ideal cousins. I would that I were worthy to be any man's Friend.

What is commonly honored with the name of Friendship is no very profound or powerful instinct. Men do not, after all, *love* their Friends greatly. I do not often see the farmers made seers and wise to the verge of insanity by their Friendship for one another. They are not often transfigured and translated by love in each other's presence. I do not observe them purified, refined, and elevated by the love of a man. If one abates a little the price of his wood, or gives a neighbor his vote at town-meeting, or a barrel of apples, or lends him his wagon frequently, it is esteemed a rare instance of Friendship. Nor do the farmers' wives lead lives consecrated to Friendship. I do not

see the pair of farmer Friends of either sex prepared to stand against the world. There are only two or three couples in history. To say that a man is your Friend, means commonly no more than this, that he is not your enemy. Most contemplate only what would be the accidental and trifling advantages of Friendship, as that the Friend can assist in time of need, by his substance, or his influence, or his counsel; but he who foresees such advantages in this relation proves himself blind to its real advantage, or indeed wholly inexperienced in the relation itself. Such services are particular and menial, compared with the perpetual and all-embracing service which it is. Even the utmost good-will and harmony and practical kindness are not sufficient for Friendship, for Friends do not live in harmony merely, as some say, but in melody. We do not wish for Friends to feed and clothe our bodies, — neighbors are kind enough for that, — but to do the like office to our spirits. For this few are rich enough, however well disposed they may be. For the most part we stupidly confound one man with another. The dull distinguish only races or nations, or at most classes, but the wise man, individuals. To his Friend a man's peculiar character appears in every feature and in every action, and it is thus drawn out and improved by him.

Think of the importance of Friendship in the education of men.

"He that hath love and judgment too,
Sees more than any other doe."

It will make a man honest; it will make him a hero; it will make him a saint. It is the state of the just dealing with the just, the magnanimous with the magnanimous, the sincere with the sincere, man with man.

And it is well said by another poet,

"Why love among the virtues is not known,
Is that love is them all contract in one."

All the abuses which are the object of reform with the philanthropist, the statesman, and the housekeeper are unconsciously amended in the intercourse of Friends. A Friend is one who

incessantly pays us the compliment of expecting from us all the virtues, and who can appreciate them in us. It takes two to speak the truth, — one to speak, and another to hear. How can one treat with magnanimity mere wood and stone? If we dealt only with the false and dishonest, we should at last forget how to speak truth. Only lovers know the value and magnanimity of truth, while traders prize a cheap honesty, and neighbors and acquaintance a cheap civility. In our daily intercourse with men, our nobler faculties are dormant and suffered to rust. None will pay us the compliment to expect nobleness from us. Though we have gold to give, they demand only copper. We ask our neighbor to suffer himself to be dealt with truly, sincerely, nobly; but he answers no by his deafness. He does not even hear this prayer. He says practically, I will be content if you treat me as "no better than I should be," as deceitful, mean, dishonest, and selfish. For the most part, we are contented so to deal and to be dealt with, and we do not think that for the mass of men there is any truer and nobler relation possible. A man may have *good* neighbors, so called, and acquaintances, and even companions, wife, parents, brothers, sisters, children, who meet himself and one another on this ground only. The State does not demand justice of its members, but thinks that it succeeds very well with the least degree of it, hardly more than rogues practise; and so do the neighborhood and the family. What is commonly called Friendship even is only a little more honor among rogues.

But sometimes we are said to *love* another, that is, to stand in a true relation to him, so that we give the best to, and receive the best from, him. Between whom there is hearty truth, there is love; and in proportion to our truthfulness and confidence in one another, our lives are divine and miraculous, and answer to our ideal. There are passages of affection in our intercourse with mortal men and women, such as no prophecy had taught us to expect, which transcend our earthly life, and anticipate Heaven for us. What is this Love that may come right into the middle of a prosaic Goffstown day, equal to any of the gods? that discovers a new world, fair and fresh and eternal, occupying the place of the old one, when to the common eye a dust has settled on the universe? which world cannot else be reached, and does not exist. What other words, we may almost ask, are memorable

and worthy to be repeated than those which love has inspired? It is wonderful that they were ever uttered. They are few and rare, indeed, but, like a strain of music, they are incessantly repeated and modulated by the memory. All other words crumble off with the stucco which overlies the heart. We should not dare to repeat these now aloud. We are not competent to hear them at all times.

The books for young people say a great deal about the *selection* of Friends; it is because they really have nothing to say about *Friends*. They mean associates and confidants merely. "Know that the contrariety of foe and Friend proceeds from God." Friendship takes place between those who have an affinity for one another, and is a perfectly natural and inevitable result. No professions nor advances will avail. Even speech, at first, necessarily has nothing to do with it; but it follows after silence, as the buds in the graft do not put forth into leaves till long after the graft has taken. It is a drama in which the parties have no part to act. We are all Mussulmen and fatalists in this respect. Impatient and uncertain lovers think that they must say or do something kind whenever they meet; they must never be cold. But they who are Friends do not do what they *think* they must, but what they *must*. Even their Friendship is to some extent but a sublime phenomenon to them.

The true and not despairing Friend will address his Friend in some such terms as these.

"I never asked thy leave to let me love thee, — I have a right. I love thee not as something private and personal, which is *your own*, but as something universal and worthy of love, *which I have found*. O, how I think of you! You are purely good, — you are infinitely good. I can trust you forever. I did not think that humanity was so rich. Give me an opportunity to live."

"You are the fact in a fiction, — you are the truth more strange and admirable than fiction. Consent only to be what you are. I alone will never stand in your way."

"This is what I would like, — to be as intimate with you as our spirits are intimate, — respecting you as I respect my ideal. Never to profane one another by word or action, even by a thought. Between us, if necessary, let there be no acquaintance."

"I have discovered you; how can you be concealed from me?"

The Friend asks no return but that his Friend will religiously accept and wear and not disgrace his apotheosis of him. They cherish each other's hopes. They are kind to each other's dreams.

Though the poet says, "'Tis the pre-eminence of Friendship to impute excellence," yet we can never praise our Friend, nor esteem him praiseworthy, nor let him think that he can please us by any *behavior*, or ever *treat* us well enough. That kindness which has so good a reputation elsewhere can least of all consist with this relation, and no such affront can be offered to a Friend, as a conscious good-will, a friendliness which is not a necessity of the Friend's nature.

The sexes are naturally most strongly attracted to one another, by constant constitutional differences, and are most commonly and surely the complements of each other. How natural and easy it is for man to secure the attention of woman to what interests himself. Men and women of equal culture, thrown together, are sure to be of a certain value to one another, more than men to men. There exists already a natural disinterestedness and liberality in such society, and I think that any man will more confidently carry his favorite books to read to some circle of intelligent women, than to one of his own sex. The visit of man to man is wont to be an interruption, but the sexes naturally expect one another. Yet Friendship is no respecter of sex; and perhaps it is more rare between the sexes than between two of the same sex.

Friendship is, at any rate, a relation of perfect equality. It cannot well spare any outward sign of equal obligation and advantage. The nobleman can never have a Friend among his retainers, nor the king among his subjects. Not that the parties to it are in all respects equal, but they are equal in all that respects or affects their Friendship. The one's love is exactly balanced and represented by the other's. Persons are only the vessels which contain the nectar, and the hydrostatic paradox is the symbol of love's law. It finds its level and rises to its fountain-head in all breasts, and its slenderest column balances the ocean.

"And love as well the shepherd can
As can the mighty nobleman."

The one sex is not, in this respect, more tender than the other.
A hero's love is as delicate as a maiden's.

Confucius said, "Never contract Friendship with a man who is not better than thyself." It is the merit and preservation of Friendship, that it takes place on a level higher than the actual characters of the parties would seem to warrant. The rays of light come to us in such a curve that every man whom we meet appears to be taller than he actually is. Such foundation has civility. My Friend is that one whom I can associate with my choicest thought. I always assign to him a nobler employment in my absence than I ever find him engaged in; and I imagine that the hours which he devotes to me were snatched from a higher society. The sorest insult which I ever received from a Friend was, when he behaved with the license which only long and cheap acquaintance allows to one's faults, in my presence, without shame, and still addressed me in friendly accents. Beware, lest thy Friend learn at last to tolerate one frailty of thine, and so an obstacle be raised to the progress of thy love. There are times when we have had enough even of our Friends, when we begin inevitably to profane one another, and must withdraw religiously into solitude and silence, the better to prepare ourselves for a loftier intimacy. Silence is the ambrosial night in the intercourse of Friends, in which their sincerity is recruited and takes deeper root.

Friendship is never established as an understood relation. Do you demand that I be less your Friend that you may know it? Yet what right have I to think that another cherishes so rare a sentiment for me? It is a miracle which requires constant proofs. It is an exercise of the purest imagination and the rarest faith. It says by a silent but eloquent behavior,— "I will be so related to thee as thou canst imagine; even so thou mayest believe. I will spend truth, — all my wealth on thee," — and the Friend responds silently through his nature and life, and treats his Friend with the same divine courtesy. He knows us literally through thick and thin. He never asks for a sign of love, but can distinguish it by the features which it naturally wears. We never need to stand upon ceremony with him with regard to his visits. Wait not till I invite thee, but observe that I am glad to see thee when thou comest. It would be paying too dear for thy visit

to ask for it. Where my Friend lives there are all riches and every attraction, and no slight obstacle can keep me from him. Let me never have to tell thee what I have not to tell. Let our intercourse be wholly above ourselves, and draw us up to it.

The language of Friendship is not words, but meanings. It is an intelligence above language. One imagines endless conversations with his Friend, in which the tongue shall be loosed, and thoughts be spoken without hesitancy or end; but the experience is commonly far otherwise. Acquaintances may come and go, and have a word ready for every occasion; but what puny word shall he utter whose very breath is thought and meaning? Suppose you go to bid farewell to your Friend who is setting out on a journey; what other outward sign do you know than to shake his hand? Have you any palaver ready for him then? any box of salve to commit to his pocket? any particular message to send by him? any statement which you had forgotten to make? — as if you could forget anything. — No, it is much that you take his hand and say Farewell; that you could easily omit; so far custom has prevailed. It is even painful, if he is to go, that he should linger so long. If he must go, let him go quickly. Have you any *last* words? Alas, it is only the word of words, which you have so long sought and found not; *you* have not a *first* word yet. There are few even whom I should venture to call earnestly by their most proper names. A name pronounced is the recognition of the individual to whom it belongs. He who can pronounce my name aright, he can call me, and is entitled to my love and service. Yet reserve is the freedom and abandonment of lovers. It is the reserve of what is hostile or indifferent in their natures, to give place to what is kindred and harmonious.

The violence of love is as much to be dreaded as that of hate. When it is durable it is serene and equable. Even its famous pains begin only with the ebb of love, for few are indeed lovers, though all would fain be. It is one proof of a man's fitness for Friendship that he is able to do without that which is cheap and passionate. A true Friendship is as wise as it is tender. The parties to it yield implicitly to the guidance of their love, and know no other law nor kindness. It is not extravagant and insane, but what it says is something established henceforth, and will bear to be stereotyped. It is a truer

truth, it is better and fairer news, and no time will ever shame it, or prove it false. This is a plant which thrives best in a temperate zone, where summer and winter alternate with one another. The Friend is a *necessarius*, and meets his Friend on homely ground; not on carpets and cushions, but on the ground and on rocks they will sit, obeying the natural and primitive laws. They will meet without any outcry, and part without loud sorrow. Their relation implies such qualities as the warrior prizes; for it takes a valor to open the hearts of men as well as the gates of castles. It is not an idle sympathy and mutual consolation merely, but a heroic sympathy of aspiration and endeavor.

”When manhood shall be matched so
That fear can take no place,
Then weary *works* make warriors
Each other to embrace.”

The Friendship which Wawatam testified for Henry the fur-trader, as described in the latter’s “Adventures,” so almost bare and leafless, yet not blossomless nor fruitless, is remembered with satisfaction and security. The stern, imperturbable warrior, after fasting, solitude, and mortification of body, comes to the white man’s lodge, and affirms that he is the white brother whom he saw in his dream, and adopts him henceforth. He buries the hatchet as it regards his friend, and they hunt and feast and make maple-sugar together. “Metals unite from fluxility; birds and beasts from motives of convenience; fools from fear and stupidity; and just men at sight.” If Wawatam would taste the “white man’s milk” with his tribe, or take his bowl of human broth made of the trader’s fellow-countrymen, he first finds a place of safety for his Friend, whom he has rescued from a similar fate. At length, after a long winter of undisturbed and happy intercourse in the family of the chieftain in the wilderness, hunting and fishing, they return in the spring to Michilimackinac to dispose of their furs; and it becomes necessary for Wawatam to take leave of his Friend at the Isle aux Outardes, when the latter, to avoid his enemies, proceeded to the Sault de Sainte Marie, supposing that they were to be separated for a short time only. “We now exchanged

farewells," says Henry, "with an emotion entirely reciprocal. I did not quit the lodge without the most grateful sense of the many acts of goodness which I had experienced in it, nor without the sincerest respect for the virtues which I had witnessed among its members. All the family accompanied me to the beach; and the canoe had no sooner put off than Wawatam commenced an address to the Kichi Manito, beseeching him to take care of me, his brother, till we should next meet. We had proceeded to too great a distance to allow of our hearing his voice, before Wawatam had ceased to offer up his prayers." We never hear of him again.

Friendship is not so kind as is imagined; it has not much human blood in it, but consists with a certain disregard for men and their erections, the Christian duties and humanities, while it purifies the air like electricity. There may be the sternest tragedy in the relation of two more than usually innocent and true to their highest instincts. We may call it an essentially heathenish intercourse, free and irresponsible in its nature, and practising all the virtues gratuitously. It is not the highest sympathy merely, but a pure and lofty society, a fragmentary and godlike intercourse of ancient date, still kept up at intervals, which, remembering itself, does not hesitate to disregard the humbler rights and duties of humanity. It requires immaculate and godlike qualities full-grown, and exists at all only by condescension and anticipation of the remotest future. We love nothing which is merely good and not fair, if such a thing is possible. Nature puts some kind of blossom before every fruit, not simply a calyx behind it. When the Friend comes out of his heathenism and superstition, and breaks his idols, being converted by the precepts of a newer testament; when he forgets his mythology, and treats his Friend like a Christian, or as he can afford; then Friendship ceases to be Friendship, and becomes charity; that principle which established the almshouse is now beginning with its charity at home, and establishing an almshouse and pauper relations there.

As for the number which this society admits, it is at any rate to be begun with one, the noblest and greatest that we know, and whether the world will ever carry it further, whether, as Chaucer affirms,

"There be mo sterres in the skie than a pair,"

remains to be proved;

”And certaine he is well begone
Among a thousand that findeth one.”

We shall not surrender ourselves heartily to any while we are conscious that another is more deserving of our love. Yet Friendship does not stand for numbers; the Friend does not count his Friends on his fingers; they are not numerable. The more there are included by this bond, if they are indeed included, the rarer and diviner the quality of the love that binds them. I am ready to believe that as private and intimate a relation may exist by which three are embraced, as between two. Indeed, we cannot have too many friends; the virtue which we appreciate we to some extent appropriate, so that thus we are made at last more fit for every relation of life. A base Friendship is of a narrowing and exclusive tendency, but a noble one is not exclusive; its very superfluity and dispersed love is the humanity which sweetens society, and sympathizes with foreign nations; for though its foundations are private, it is, in effect, a public affair and a public advantage, and the Friend, more than the father of a family, deserves well of the state.

The only danger in Friendship is that it will end. It is a delicate plant, though a native. The least unworthiness, even if it be unknown to one’s self, vitiates it. Let the Friend know that those faults which he observes in his Friend his own faults attract. There is no rule more invariable than that we are paid for our suspicions by finding what we suspected. By our narrowness and prejudices we say, I will have so much and such of you, my Friend, no more. Perhaps there are none charitable, none disinterested, none wise, noble, and heroic enough, for a true and lasting Friendship.

I sometimes hear my Friends complain finely that I do not appreciate their fineness. I shall not tell them whether I do or not. As if they expected a vote of thanks for every fine thing which they uttered or did. Who knows but it was finely appreciated. It may be that your silence was the finest thing of the two. There are some things which a man never speaks of, which are much finer kept silent about. To the highest communications we only lend a silent ear. Our finest relations are not simply kept silent about, but buried under a positive depth of silence never to be revealed. It may be that we are

not even yet acquainted. In human intercourse the tragedy begins, not when there is misunderstanding about words, but when silence is not understood. Then there can never be an explanation. What avails it that another loves you, if he does not understand you? Such love is a curse. What sort of companions are they who are presuming always that their silence is more expressive than yours? How foolish, and inconsiderate, and unjust, to conduct as if you were the only party aggrieved! Has not your Friend always equal ground of complaint? No doubt my Friends sometimes speak to me in vain, but they do not know what things I hear which they are not aware that they have spoken. I know that I have frequently disappointed them by not giving them words when they expected them, or such as they expected. Whenever I see my Friend I speak to him; but the expecter, the man with the ears, is not he. They will complain too that you are hard. O ye that would have the cocoa-nut wrong side outwards, when next I weep I will let you know. They ask for words and deeds, when a true relation is word and deed. If they know not of these things, how can they be informed? We often forbear to confess our feelings, not from pride, but for fear that we could not continue to love the one who required us to give such proof of our affection.

I know a woman who possesses a restless and intelligent mind, interested in her own culture, and earnest to enjoy the highest possible advantages, and I meet her with pleasure as a natural person who not a little provokes me, and I suppose is stimulated in turn by myself. Yet our acquaintance plainly does not attain to that degree of confidence and sentiment which women, which all, in fact, covet. I am glad to help her, as I am helped by her; I like very well to know her with a sort of stranger's privilege, and hesitate to visit her often, like her other Friends. My nature pauses here, I do not well know why. Perhaps she does not make the highest demand on me, a religious demand. Some, with whose prejudices or peculiar bias I have no sympathy, yet inspire me with confidence, and I trust that they confide in me also as a religious heathen at least, — a good Greek. I, too, have principles as well founded as their own. If this person could conceive that, without wilfulness, I associate with her as far as our destinies are coincident, as far as our Good Geniuses permit, and still value such intercourse, it would be a grateful

assurance to me. I feel as if I appeared careless, indifferent, and without principle to her, not expecting more, and yet not content with less. If she could know that I make an infinite demand on myself, as well as on all others, she would see that this true though incomplete intercourse, is infinitely better than a more unreserved but falsely grounded one, without the principle of growth in it. For a companion, I require one who will make an equal demand on me with my own genius. Such a one will always be rightly tolerant. It is suicide, and corrupts good manners to welcome any less than this. I value and trust those who love and praise my aspiration rather than my performance. If you would not stop to look at me, but look whither I am looking, and farther, then my education could not dispense with your company.

My love must be as free
  As is the eagle's wing,
Hovering o'er land and sea
  And everything.

I must not dim my eye
  In thy saloon,
I must not leave my sky
  And nightly moon.

Be not the fowler's net
  Which stays my flight,
And craftily is set
  T'allure the sight.

But be the favoring gale
  That bears me on,
And still doth fill my sail
  When thou art gone.

I cannot leave my sky
  For thy caprice,
True love would soar as high

As heaven is.

The eagle would not brook
Her mate thus won,
Who trained his eye to look
Beneath the sun.

Few things are more difficult than to help a Friend in matters which do not require the aid of Friendship, but only a cheap and trivial service, if your Friendship wants the basis of a thorough practical acquaintance. I stand in the friendliest relation, on social and spiritual grounds, to one who does not perceive what practical skill I have, but when he seeks my assistance in such matters, is wholly ignorant of that one with whom he deals; does not use my skill, which in such matters is much greater than his, but only my hands. I know another, who, on the contrary, is remarkable for his discrimination in this respect; who knows how to make use of the talents of others when he does not possess the same; knows when not to look after or oversee, and stops short at his man. It is a rare pleasure to serve him, which all laborers know. I am not a little pained by the other kind of treatment. It is as if, after the friendliest and most ennobling intercourse, your Friend should use you as a hammer, and drive a nail with your head, all in good faith; notwithstanding that you are a tolerable carpenter, as well as his good Friend, and would use a hammer cheerfully in his service. This want of perception is a defect which all the virtues of the heart cannot supply: —

The Good how can we trust?
Only the Wise are just.
The Good we use,
The Wise we cannot choose.
These there are none above;
The Good they know and love,
But are not known again
By those of lesser ken.
They do not charm us with their eyes,

But they transfix with their advice;
No partial sympathy they feel,
With private woe or private weal,
But with the universe joy and sigh,
Whose knowledge is their sympathy.

Confucius said: "To contract ties of Friendship with any one, is to contract Friendship with his virtue. There ought not to be any other motive in Friendship." But men wish us to contract Friendship with their vice also. I have a Friend who wishes me to see that to be right which I know to be wrong. But if Friendship is to rob me of my eyes, if it is to darken the day, I will have none of it. It should be expansive and inconceivably liberalizing in its effects. True Friendship can afford true knowledge. It does not depend on darkness and ignorance. A want of discernment cannot be an ingredient in it. If I can see my Friend's virtues more distinctly than another's, his faults too are made more conspicuous by contrast. We have not so good a right to hate any as our Friend. Faults are not the less faults because they are invariably balanced by corresponding virtues, and for a fault there is no excuse, though it may appear greater than it is in many ways. I have never known one who could bear criticism, who could not be flattered, who would not bribe his judge, or was content that the truth should be loved always better than himself.

If two travellers would go their way harmoniously together, the one must take as true and just a view of things as the other, else their path will not be strewn with roses. Yet you can travel profitably and pleasantly even with a blind man, if he practises common courtesy, and when you converse about the scenery will remember that he is blind but that you can see; and you will not forget that his sense of hearing is probably quickened by his want of sight. Otherwise you will not long keep company. A blind man, and a man in whose eyes there was no defect, were walking together, when they came to the edge of a precipice. "Take care! my friend," said the latter, "here is a steep precipice; go no farther this way."— "I know better," said the other, and stepped off.

It is impossible to say all that we think, even to our truest Friend. We may bid him farewell forever sooner than complain, for our

complaint is too well grounded to be uttered. There is not so good an understanding between any two, but the exposure by the one of a serious fault in the other will produce a misunderstanding in proportion to its heinousness. The constitutional differences which always exist, and are obstacles to a perfect Friendship, are forever a forbidden theme to the lips of Friends. They advise by their whole behavior. Nothing can reconcile them but love. They are fatally late when they undertake to explain and treat with one another like foes. Who will take an apology for a Friend? They must apologize like dew and frost, which are off again with the sun, and which all men know in their hearts to be beneficent. The necessity itself for explanation, — what explanation will atone for that?

True love does not quarrel for slight reasons, such mistakes as mutual acquaintances can explain away, but, alas, however slight the apparent cause, only for adequate and fatal and everlasting reasons, which can never be set aside. Its quarrel, if there is any, is ever recurring, notwithstanding the beams of affection which invariably come to gild its tears; as the rainbow, however beautiful and unerring a sign, does not promise fair weather forever, but only for a season. I have known two or three persons pretty well, and yet I have never known advice to be of use but in trivial and transient matters. One may know what another does not, but the utmost kindness cannot impart what is requisite to make the advice useful. We must accept or refuse one another as we are. I could tame a hyena more easily than my Friend. He is a material which no tool of mine will work. A naked savage will fell an oak with a firebrand, and wear a hatchet out of a rock by friction, but I cannot hew the smallest chip out of the character of my Friend, either to beautify or deform it.

The lover learns at last that there is no person quite transparent and trustworthy, but every one has a devil in him that is capable of any crime in the long run. Yet, as an Oriental philosopher has said, “Although Friendship between good men is interrupted, their principles remain unaltered. The stalk of the lotus may be broken, and the fibres remain connected.”

Ignorance and bungling with love are better than wisdom and skill without. There may be courtesy, there may be even temper, and wit, and talent, and sparkling conversation, there may be good-will even,

— and yet the humanest and divinest faculties pine for exercise. Our life without love is like coke and ashes. Men may be pure as alabaster and Parian marble, elegant as a Tuscan villa, sublime as Niagara, and yet if there is no milk mingled with the wine at their entertainments, better is the hospitality of Goths and Vandals.

My Friend is not of some other race or family of men, but flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone. He is my real brother. I see his nature groping yonder so like mine. We do not live far apart. Have not the fates associated us in many ways? It says, in the Vishnu Purana: "Seven paces together is sufficient for the friendship of the virtuous, but thou and I have dwelt together." Is it of no significance that we have so long partaken of the same loaf, drank at the same fountain, breathed the same air summer and winter, felt the same heat and cold; that the same fruits have been pleased to refresh us both, and we have never had a thought of different fibre the one from the other!

Nature doth have her dawn each day,
But mine are far between;
Content, I cry, for sooth to say,
Mine brightest are I ween.

For when my sun doth deign to rise,
Though it be her noontide,
Her fairest field in shadow lies,
Nor can my light abide.

Sometimes I bask me in her day,
Conversing with my mate,
But if we interchange one ray,
Forthwith her heats abate.

Through his discourse I climb and see,
As from some eastern hill,
A brighter morrow rise to me
Than lieth in her skill.

As 't were two summer days in one,

Two Sundays come together,
Our rays united make one sun,
With fairest summer weather.

As surely as the sunset in my latest November shall translate me to the ethereal world, and remind me of the ruddy morning of youth; as surely as the last strain of music which falls on my decaying ear shall make age to be forgotten, or, in short, the manifold influences of nature survive during the term of our natural life, so surely my Friend shall forever be my Friend, and reflect a ray of God to me, and time shall foster and adorn and consecrate our Friendship, no less than the ruins of temples. As I love nature, as I love singing birds, and gleaming stubble, and flowing rivers, and morning and evening, and summer and winter, I love thee, my Friend.

But all that can be said of Friendship, is like botany to flowers. How can the understanding take account of its friendliness?

Even the death of Friends will inspire us as much as their lives. They will leave consolation to the mourners, as the rich leave money to defray the expenses of their funerals, and their memories will be incrusted over with sublime and pleasing thoughts, as monuments of other men are overgrown with moss; for our Friends have no place in the graveyard.

This to our cis-Alpine and cis-Atlantic Friends.

Also this other word of entreaty and advice to the large and respectable nation of Acquaintances, beyond the mountains; — Greeting.

My most serene and irresponsible neighbors, let us see that we have the whole advantage of each other; we will be useful, at least, if not admirable, to one another. I know that the mountains which separate us are high, and covered with perpetual snow, but despair not. Improve the serene winter weather to scale them. If need be, soften the rocks with vinegar. For here lie the verdant plains of Italy ready to receive you. Nor shall I be slow on my side to penetrate to your Provence. Strike then boldly at head or heart or any vital part. Depend upon it, the timber is well seasoned and tough, and will bear rough usage; and if it should crack, there is plenty more where it came from. I am no piece of crockery that cannot be jostled against

my neighbor without danger of being broken by the collision, and must needs ring false and jarringly to the end of my days, when once I am cracked; but rather one of the old-fashioned wooden trenchers, which one while stands at the head of the table, and at another is a milking-stool, and at another a seat for children, and finally goes down to its grave not unadorned with honorable scars, and does not die till it is worn out. Nothing can shock a brave man but dulness. Think how many rebuffs every man has experienced in his day; perhaps has fallen into a horse-pond, eaten fresh-water clams, or worn one shirt for a week without washing. Indeed, you cannot receive a shock unless you have an electric affinity for that which shocks you. Use me, then, for I am useful in my way, and stand as one of many petitioners, from toadstool and henbane up to dahlia and violet, supplicating to be put to my use, if by any means ye may find me serviceable; whether for a medicated drink or bath, as balm and lavender; or for fragrance, as verbena and geranium; or for sight, as cactus; or for thoughts, as pansy. These humbler, at least, if not those higher uses.

Ah, my dear Strangers and Enemies, I would not forget you. I can well afford to welcome you. Let me subscribe myself Yours ever and truly, — your much obliged servant. We have nothing to fear from our foes; God keeps a standing army for that service; but we have no ally against our Friends, those ruthless Vandals.

Once more to one and all,
"Friends, Romans, Countrymen, and Lovers."

Let such pure hate still underprop
Our love, that we may be
Each other's conscience.
And have our sympathy
Mainly from thence.

We'll one another treat like gods,
And all the faith we have
In virtue and in truth, bestow
On either, and suspicion leave
To gods below.

Two solitary stars, —
 Unmeasured systems far
 Between us roll,
 But by our conscious light we are
 Determined to one pole.

What need confound the sphere, —
 Love can afford to wait,
 For it no hour's too late
 That witnesseth one duty's end,
 Or to another doth beginning lend.

It will subserve no use,
 More than the tints of flowers,
 Only the independent guest
 Frequents its bowers,
 Inherits its bequest.

No speech though kind has it,
 But kinder silence doles
 Unto its mates,
 By night consoles,
 By day congratulates.

What saith the tongue to tongue?
 What heareth ear of ear?
 By the decrees of fate
 From year to year,
 Does it communicate.

Pathless the gulf of feeling yawns, —
 No trivial bridge of words,
 Or arch of boldest span,
 Can leap the moat that girds
 The sincere man.

No show of bolts and bars
 Can keep the foeman out,

Or ‘scape his secret mine
Who entered with the doubt
That drew the line.

No warder at the gate
Can let the friendly in,
But, like the sun, o’er all
He will the castle win,
And shine along the wall.

There’s nothing in the world I know
That can escape from love,
For every depth it goes below,
And every height above.

It waits as waits the sky,
Until the clouds go by,
Yet shines serenely on
With an eternal day,
Alike when they are gone,
And when they stay.

Implacable is Love, —
Foes may be bought or teased
From their hostile intent,
But he goes unappeased
Who is on kindness bent.

Having rowed five or six miles above Amoskeag before sunset, and reached a pleasant part of the river, one of us landed to look for a farm-house, where we might replenish our stores, while the other remained cruising about the stream, and exploring the opposite shores to find a suitable harbor for the night. In the mean while the canal-boats began to come round a point in our rear, poling their way along close to the shore, the breeze having quite died away. This time there was no offer of assistance, but one of the boatmen only called out to say, as the truest revenge for having been the losers in

the race, that he had seen a wood-duck, which we had scared up, sitting on a tall white-pine, half a mile down stream; and he repeated the assertion several times, and seemed really chagrined at the apparent suspicion with which this information was received. But there sat the summer duck still, undisturbed by us.

By and by the other voyageur returned from his inland expedition, bringing one of the natives with him, a little flaxen-headed boy, with some tradition, or small edition, of Robinson Crusoe in his head, who had been charmed by the account of our adventures, and asked his father's leave to join us. He examined, at first from the top of the bank, our boat and furniture, with sparkling eyes, and wished himself already his own man. He was a lively and interesting boy, and we should have been glad to ship him; but Nathan was still his father's boy, and had not come to years of discretion.

We had got a loaf of home-made bread, and musk and water melons for dessert. For this farmer, a clever and well-disposed man, cultivated a large patch of melons for the Hooksett and Concord markets. He hospitably entertained us the next day, exhibiting his hop-fields and kiln and melon-patch, warning us to step over the tight rope which surrounded the latter at a foot from the ground, while he pointed to a little bower at one corner, where it connected with the lock of a gun ranging with the line, and where, as he informed us, he sometimes sat in pleasant nights to defend his premises against thieves. We stepped high over the line, and sympathized with our host's on the whole quite human, if not humane, interest in the success of his experiment. That night especially thieves were to be expected, from rumors in the atmosphere, and the priming was not wet. He was a Methodist man, who had his dwelling between the river and Uncannunuc Mountain; who there belonged, and stayed at home there, and by the encouragement of distant political organizations, and by his own tenacity, held a property in his melons, and continued to plant. We suggested melon-seeds of new varieties and fruit of foreign flavor to be added to his stock. We had come away up here among the hills to learn the impartial and unbribable beneficence of Nature. Strawberries and melons grow as well in one man's garden as another's, and the sun lodges as kindly under his hillside, — when we had imagined that she inclined rather to some

few earnest and faithful souls whom we know.

We found a convenient harbor for our boat on the opposite or east shore, still in Hooksett, at the mouth of a small brook which emptied into the Merrimack, where it would be out of the way of any passing boat in the night, — for they commonly hug the shore if bound up stream, either to avoid the current, or touch the bottom with their poles, — and where it would be accessible without stepping on the clayey shore. We set one of our largest melons to cool in the still water among the alders at the mouth of this creek, but when our tent was pitched and ready, and we went to get it, it had floated out into the stream, and was nowhere to be seen. So taking the boat in the twilight, we went in pursuit of this property, and at length, after long straining of the eyes, its green disk was discovered far down the river, gently floating seaward with many twigs and leaves from the mountains that evening, and so perfectly balanced that it had not keeled at all, and no water had run in at the tap which had been taken out to hasten its cooling.

As we sat on the bank eating our supper, the clear light of the western sky fell on the eastern trees, and was reflected in the water, and we enjoyed so serene an evening as left nothing to describe. For the most part we think that there are few degrees of sublimity, and that the highest is but little higher than that which we now behold; but we are always deceived. Sublimer visions appear, and the former pale and fade away. We are grateful when we are reminded by interior evidence of the permanence of universal laws; for our faith is but faintly remembered, indeed, is not a remembered assurance, but a use and enjoyment of knowledge. It is when we do not have to believe, but come into actual contact with Truth, and are related to her in the most direct and intimate way. Waves of serener life pass over us from time to time, like flakes of sunlight over the fields in cloudy weather. In some happier moment, when more sap flows in the withered stalk of our life, Syria and India stretch away from our present as they do in history. All the events which make the annals of the nations are but the shadows of our private experiences. Suddenly and silently the eras which we call history awake and glimmer in us, and *there* is room for Alexander and Hannibal to march and conquer. In short, the history which we read is only a fainter memory of

events which have happened in our own experience. Tradition is a more interrupted and feebler memory.

This world is but canvas to our imaginations. I see men with infinite pains endeavoring to realize to their bodies, what I, with at least equal pains, would realize to my imagination, — its capacities; for certainly there is a life of the mind above the wants of the body, and independent of it. Often the body is warmed, but the imagination is torpid; the body is fat, but the imagination is lean and shrunk. But what avails all other wealth if this is wanting? "Imagination is the air of mind," in which it lives and breathes. All things are as I am. Where is the House of Change? The past is only so heroic as we see it. It is the canvas on which our idea of heroism is painted, and so, in one sense, the dim prospectus of our future field. Our circumstances answer to our expectations and the demand of our natures. I have noticed that if a man thinks that he needs a thousand dollars, and cannot be convinced that he does not, he will commonly be found to have them; if he lives and thinks a thousand dollars will be forthcoming, though it be to buy shoe-strings with. A thousand mills will be just as slow to come to one who finds it equally hard to convince himself that he needs *them*.

Men are by birth equal in this, that given Themselves and their condition, they are even.

I am astonished at the singular pertinacity and endurance of our lives. The miracle is, that what is *is*, when it is so difficult, if not impossible, for anything else to be; that we walk on in our particular paths so far, before we fall on death and fate, merely because we must walk in some path; that every man can get a living, and so few can do anything more. So much only can I accomplish ere health and strength are gone, and yet this suffices. The bird now sits just out of gunshot. I am never rich in money, and I am never meanly poor. If debts are incurred, why, debts are in the course of events cancelled, as it were by the same law by which they were incurred. I heard that an engagement was entered into between a certain youth and a maiden, and then I heard that it was broken off, but I did not know the reason in either case. We are hedged about, we think, by accident and circumstance, now we creep as in a dream, and now again we run, as if there were a fate in it, and all things thwarted or assisted. I

cannot change my clothes but when I do, and yet I do change them, and soil the new ones. It is wonderful that this gets done, when some admirable deeds which I could mention do not get done. Our particular lives seem of such fortune and confident strength and durability as piers of solid rock thrown forward into the tide of circumstance. When every other path would fail, with singular and unerring confidence we advance on our particular course. What risks we run! famine and fire and pestilence, and the thousand forms of a cruel fate, — and yet every man lives till he — dies. How did he manage that? Is there no immediate danger? We wonder superfluously when we hear of a somnambulist walking a plank securely, — we have walked a plank all our lives up to this particular string-piece where we are. My life will wait for nobody, but is being matured still without delay, while I go about the streets, and chaffer with this man and that to secure it a living. It is as indifferent and easy meanwhile as a poor man's dog, and making acquaintance with its kind. It will cut its own channel like a mountain stream, and by the longest ridge is not kept from the sea at last. I have found all things thus far, persons and inanimate matter, elements and seasons, strangely adapted to my resources. No matter what imprudent haste in my career; I am permitted to be rash. Gulfs are bridged in a twinkling, as if some unseen baggage-train carried pontoons for my convenience, and while from the heights I scan the tempting but unexplored Pacific Ocean of Futurity, the ship is being carried over the mountains piecemeal on the backs of mules and lamas, whose keel shall plough its waves, and bear me to the Indies. Day would not dawn if it were not for

THE INWARD MORNING

Packed in my mind lie all the clothes
 Which outward nature wears,
 And in its fashion's hourly change
 It all things else repairs.

In vain I look for change abroad,
 And can no difference find,

Till some new ray of peace uncalled
Illumes my inmost mind.

What is it gilds the trees and clouds,
And paints the heavens so gay,
But yonder fast-abiding light
With its unchanging ray?

Lo, when the sun streams through the wood,
Upon a winter's morn,
Where'er his silent beams intrude,
The murky night is gone.

How could the patient pine have known
The morning breeze would come,
Or humble flowers anticipate
The insect's noonday hum, —

Till the new light with morning cheer
From far streamed through the aisles,
And nimbly told the forest trees
For many stretching miles?

I've heard within my inmost soul
Such cheerful morning news,
In the horizon of my mind
Have seen such orient hues,

As in the twilight of the dawn,
When the first birds awake,
Are heard within some silent wood,
Where they the small twigs break,

Or in the eastern skies are seen,
Before the sun appears,
The harbingers of summer heats
Which from afar he bears.

Whole weeks and months of my summer life slide away in thin volumes like mist and smoke, till at length, some warm morning, perchance, I see a sheet of mist blown down the brook to the swamp, and I float as high above the fields with it. I can recall to mind the stillest summer hours, in which the grasshopper sings over the mulleins, and there is a valor in that time the bare memory of which is armor that can laugh at any blow of fortune. For our lifetime the strains of a harp are heard to swell and die alternately, and death is but "the pause when the blast is recollecting itself."

We lay awake a long while, listening to the murmurs of the brook, in the angle formed by whose bank with the river our tent was pitched, and there was a sort of human interest in its story, which ceases not in freshet or in drought the livelong summer, and the profounder lapse of the river was quite drowned by its din. But the rill, whose

"Silver sands and pebbles sing
Eternal ditties with the spring,"

is silenced by the first frosts of winter, while mightier streams, on whose bottom the sun never shines, clogged with sunken rocks and the ruins of forests, from whose surface comes up no murmur, are strangers to the icy fetters which bind fast a thousand contributary rills.

I dreamed this night of an event which had occurred long before. It was a difference with a Friend, which had not ceased to give me pain, though I had no cause to blame myself. But in my dream ideal justice was at length done me for his suspicions, and I received that compensation which I had never obtained in my waking hours. I was unspeakably soothed and rejoiced, even after I awoke, because in dreams we never deceive ourselves, nor are deceived, and this seemed to have the authority of a final judgment.

We bless and curse ourselves. Some dreams are divine, as well as some waking thoughts. Donne sings of one

"Who dreamt devoutlier than most use to pray."

Dreams are the touchstones of our characters. We are scarcely less afflicted when we remember some unworthiness in our conduct in a

dream, than if it had been actual, and the intensity of our grief, which is our atonement, measures the degree by which this is separated from an actual unworthiness. For in dreams we but act a part which must have been learned and rehearsed in our waking hours, and no doubt could discover some waking consent thereto. If this meanness had not its foundation in us, why are we grieved at it? In dreams we see ourselves naked and acting out our real characters, even more clearly than we see others awake. But an unwavering and commanding virtue would compel even its most fantastic and faintest dreams to respect its ever-wakeful authority; as we are accustomed to say carelessly, we should never have *dreamed* of such a thing. Our truest life is when we are in dreams awake.

”And, more to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rock tumbling downe,
And ever-drizzling raine upon the loft,
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
Of swarming bees, did cast him in a swowne.
No other noyse, nor people’s troublous cryes,
As still are wont t’ annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard; but careless Quiet lyes
Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enemyes.”

THURSDAY.

”He trode the unplanted forest floor, whereon
The all-seeing sun for ages hath not shone,
Where feeds the moose, and walks the surly bear,
And up the tall mast runs the woodpecker.

. . . .

Where darkness found him he lay glad at night;
There the red morning touched him with its light.

. . . .

Go where he will, the wise man is at home,
His hearth the earth, — his hall the azure dome;
Where his clear spirit leads him, there’s his road,
By God’s own light illumined and foreshowed.”

Emerson.

THURSDAY.

— * —

When we awoke this morning, we heard the faint, deliberate, and ominous sound of rain-drops on our cotton roof. The rain had pattered all night, and now the whole country wept, the drops falling in the river, and on the alders, and in the pastures, and instead of any bow in the heavens, there was the trill of the hair-bird all the morning. The cheery faith of this little bird atoned for the silence of the whole woodland choir beside. When we first stepped abroad, a flock of sheep, led by their rams, came rushing down a ravine in our rear, with heedless haste and unreserved frisking, as if unobserved by man, from some higher pasture where they had spent the night, to taste the herbage by the river-side; but when their leaders caught sight of our white tent through the mist, struck with sudden astonishment, with their fore-feet braced, they sustained the rushing torrent in their rear, and the whole flock stood stock-still, endeavoring to solve the mystery in their sheepish brains. At length, concluding that it boded no mischief to them, they spread themselves out quietly over the field. We learned afterward that we had pitched our tent on the very spot which a few summers before had been occupied by a party of Penobscots. We could see rising before us through the mist a dark conical eminence called Hooksett Pinnacle, a landmark to boatmen, and also Uncannunuc Mountain, broad off on the west side of the river.

This was the limit of our voyage, for a few hours more in the rain would have taken us to the last of the locks, and our boat was too heavy to be dragged around the long and numerous rapids which would occur. On foot, however, we continued up along the bank, feeling our way with a stick through the showery and foggy day, and climbing over the slippery logs in our path with as much pleasure and buoyancy as in brightest sunshine; scenting the fragrance of the pines and the wet clay under our feet, and cheered by the tones of invisible waterfalls; with visions of toadstools, and wandering frogs, and festoons of moss hanging from the spruce-trees, and thrushes flitting silent under the leaves; our road still holding together through

that wettest of weather, like faith, while we confidently followed its lead. We managed to keep our thoughts dry, however, and only our clothes were wet. It was altogether a cloudy and drizzling day, with occasional brightenings in the mist, when the trill of the tree-sparrow seemed to be ushering in sunny hours.

"Nothing that naturally happens to man can *hurt* him, earthquakes and thunder-storms not excepted," said a man of genius, who at this time lived a few miles farther on our road. When compelled by a shower to take shelter under a tree, we may improve that opportunity for a more minute inspection of some of Nature's works. I have stood under a tree in the woods half a day at a time, during a heavy rain in the summer, and yet employed myself happily and profitably there prying with microscopic eye into the crevices of the bark or the leaves or the fungi at my feet. "Riches are the attendants of the miser; and the heavens rain plenteously upon the mountains." I can fancy that it would be a luxury to stand up to one's chin in some retired swamp a whole summer day, scenting the wild honeysuckle and bilberry blows, and lulled by the minstrelsy of gnats and mosquitoes! A day passed in the society of those Greek sages, such as described in the Banquet of Xenophon, would not be comparable with the dry wit of decayed cranberry vines, and the fresh Attic salt of the moss-beds. Say twelve hours of genial and familiar converse with the leopard frog; the sun to rise behind alder and dogwood, and climb buoyantly to his meridian of two hands' breadth, and finally sink to rest behind some bold western hummock. To hear the evening chant of the mosquito from a thousand green chapels, and the bittern begin to boom from some concealed fort like a sunset gun! — Surely one may as profitably be soaked in the juices of a swamp for one day as pick his way dry-shod over sand. Cold and damp, — are they not as rich experience as warmth and dryness?

At present, the drops come trickling down the stubble while we lie drenched on a bed of withered wild oats, by the side of a bushy hill, and the gathering in of the clouds, with the last rush and dying breath of the wind, and then the regular dripping of twigs and leaves the country over, enhance the sense of inward comfort and sociableness. The birds draw closer and are more familiar under the thick foliage, seemingly composing new strains upon their roosts against the

sunshine. What were the amusements of the drawing-room and the library in comparison, if we had them here? We should still sing as of old, —

My books I'd fain cast off, I cannot read,
'Twixt every page my thoughts go stray at large
Down in the meadow, where is richer feed,
And will not mind to hit their proper targe.

Plutarch was good, and so was Homer too,
Our Shakespeare's life were rich to live again,
What Plutarch read, that was not good nor true,
Nor Shakespeare's books, unless his books were men

Here while I lie beneath this walnut bough,
What care I for the Greeks or for Troy town,
If juster battles are enacted now
Between the ants upon this hummock's crown?

Bid Homer wait till I the issue learn,
If red or black the gods will favor most,
Or yonder Ajax will the phalanx turn,
Struggling to heave some rock against the host.

Tell Shakespeare to attend some leisure hour,
For now I've business with this drop of dew,
And see you not, the clouds prepare a shower, —
I'll meet him shortly when the sky is blue.

This bed of herd's-grass and wild oats was spread
Last year with nicer skill than monarchs use,
A clover tuft is pillow for my head,
And violets quite overtop my shoes.

And now the cordial clouds have shut all in
And gently swells the wind to say all's well
The scattered drops are falling fast and thin,
Some in the pool, some in the flower-bell.

I am well drenched upon my bed of oats;
But see that globe come rolling down its stem
Now like a lonely planet there it floats,
And now it sinks into my garment's hem.

Drip drip the trees for all the country round,
And richness rare distils from every bough,
The wind alone it is makes every sound,
Shaking down crystals on the leaves below.

For shame the sun will never show himself,
Who could not with his beams e'er melt me so,
My dripping locks, — they would become an elf,
Who in a beaded coat does gayly go.

The Pinnacle is a small wooded hill which rises very abruptly to the height of about two hundred feet, near the shore at Hooksett Falls. As Uncannunuc Mountain is perhaps the best point from which to view the valley of the Merrimack, so this hill affords the best view of the river itself. I have sat upon its summit, a precipitous rock only a few rods long, in fairer weather, when the sun was setting and filling the river valley with a flood of light. You can see up and down the Merrimack several miles each way. The broad and straight river, full of light and life, with its sparkling and foaming falls, the islet which divides the stream, the village of Hooksett on the shore almost directly under your feet, so near that you can converse with its inhabitants or throw a stone into its yards, the woodland lake at its western base, and the mountains in the north and northeast, make a scene of rare beauty and completeness, which the traveller should take pains to behold.

We were hospitably entertained in Concord, New Hampshire, which we persisted in calling *New* Concord, as we had been wont, to distinguish it from our native town, from which we had been told that it was named and in part originally settled. This would have been the proper place to conclude our voyage, uniting Concord with Concord by these meandering rivers, but our boat was moored some miles below its port.

The richness of the intervals at Penacook, now Concord, New Hampshire, had been observed by explorers, and, according to the historian of Haverhill, in the

"year 1726, considerable progress was made in the settlement, and a road was cut through the wilderness from Haverhill to Penacook. In the fall of 1727, the first family, that of Captain Ebenezer Eastman, moved into the place. His team was driven by Jacob Shute, who was by birth a Frenchman, and he is said to have been the first person who drove a team through the wilderness. Soon after, says tradition, one Ayer, a lad of 18, drove a team consisting of ten yoke of oxen to Penacook, swam the river, and ploughed a portion of the interval. He is supposed to have been the first person who ploughed land in that place. After he had completed his work, he started on his return at sunrise, drowned a yoke of oxen while recrossing the river, and arrived at Haverhill about midnight. The crank of the first saw-mill was manufactured in Haverhill, and carried to Penacook on a horse."

But we found that the frontiers were not this way any longer. This generation has come into the world fatally late for some enterprises. Go where we will on the *surface* of things, men have been there before us. We cannot now have the pleasure of erecting the *last* house; that was long ago set up in the suburbs of Astoria City, and our boundaries have literally been run to the South Sea, according to the old patents. But the lives of men, though more extended laterally in their range, are still as shallow as ever. Undoubtedly, as a Western orator said, "Men generally live over about the same surface; some live long and narrow, and others live broad and short"; but it is all superficial living. A worm is as good a traveller as a grasshopper or a cricket, and a much wiser settler. With all their activity these do not hop away from drought nor forward to summer. We do not avoid evil by fleeing before it, but by rising above or diving below its plane; as the worm escapes drought and frost by boring a few inches deeper. The frontiers are not east or west, north or south, but wherever a man *fronts* a fact, though that fact be his neighbor, there is an unsettled wilderness between him and Canada, between him and the setting sun, or, farther still, between him and *it*. Let him build himself a log-house with the bark on where he is, *fronting it*, and wage there an Old French war for seven or seventy years, with Indians and

Rangers, or whatever else may come between him and the reality, and save his scalp if he can.

We now no longer sailed or floated on the river, but trod the unyielding land like pilgrims. Sadi tells who may travel; among others, "A common mechanic, who can earn a subsistence by the industry of his hand, and shall not have to stake his reputation for every morsel of bread, as philosophers have said." He may travel who can subsist on the wild fruits and game of the most cultivated country. A man may travel fast enough and earn his living on the road. I have at times been applied to to do work when on a journey; to do tinkering and repair clocks, when I had a knapsack on my back. A man once applied to me to go into a factory, stating conditions and wages, observing that I succeeded in shutting the window of a railroad car in which we were travelling, when the other passengers had failed. "Hast thou not heard of a Sufi, who was hammering some nails into the sole of his sandal; an officer of cavalry took him by the sleeve, saying, Come along and shoe my horse." Farmers have asked me to assist them in haying, when I was passing their fields. A man once applied to me to mend his umbrella, taking me for an umbrella-mender, because, being on a journey, I carried an umbrella in my hand while the sun shone. Another wished to buy a tin cup of me, observing that I had one strapped to my belt, and a sauce-pan on my back. The cheapest way to travel, and the way to travel the farthest in the shortest distance, is to go afoot, carrying a dipper, a spoon, and a fish-line, some Indian meal, some salt, and some sugar. When you come to a brook or pond, you can catch fish and cook them; or you can boil a hasty-pudding; or you can buy a loaf of bread at a farmer's house for fourpence, moisten it in the next brook that crosses the road, and dip into it your sugar, — this alone will last you a whole day; — or, if you are accustomed to heartier living, you can buy a quart of milk for two cents, crumb your bread or cold pudding into it, and eat it with your own spoon out of your own dish. Any one of these things I mean, not all together. I have travelled thus some hundreds of miles without taking any meal in a house, sleeping on the ground when convenient, and found it cheaper, and in many respects more profitable, than staying at home. So that some have inquired why it would not be best to travel always. But I never

thought of travelling simply as a means of getting a livelihood. A simple woman down in Tyngsborough, at whose house I once stopped to get a draught of water, when I said, recognizing the bucket, that I had stopped there nine years before for the same purpose, asked if I was not a traveller, supposing that I had been travelling ever since, and had now come round again; that travelling was one of the professions, more or less productive, which her husband did not follow. But continued travelling is far from productive. It begins with wearing away the soles of the shoes, and making the feet sore, and erelong it will wear a man clean up, after making his heart sore into the bargain. I have observed that the after-life of those who have travelled much is very pathetic. True and sincere travelling is no pastime, but it is as serious as the grave, or any part of the human journey, and it requires a long probation to be broken into it. I do not speak of those that travel sitting, the sedentary travellers whose legs hang dangling the while, mere idle symbols of the fact, any more than when we speak of sitting hens we mean those that sit standing, but I mean those to whom travelling is life for the legs, and death too, at last. The traveller must be born again on the road, and earn a passport from the elements, the principal powers that be for him. He shall experience at last that old threat of his mother fulfilled, that he shall be skinned alive. His sores shall gradually deepen themselves that they may heal inwardly, while he gives no rest to the sole of his foot, and at night weariness must be his pillow, that so he may acquire experience against his rainy days. — So was it with us.

Sometimes we lodged at an inn in the woods, where trout-fishers from distant cities had arrived before us, and where, to our astonishment, the settlers dropped in at nightfall to have a chat and hear the news, though there was but one road, and no other house was visible, — as if they had come out of the earth. There we sometimes read old newspapers, who never before read new ones, and in the rustle of their leaves heard the dashing of the surf along the Atlantic shore, instead of the sough of the wind among the pines. But then walking had given us an appetite even for the least palatable and nutritious food.

Some hard and dry book in a dead language, which you have

found it impossible to read at home, but for which you have still a lingering regard, is the best to carry with you on a journey. At a country inn, in the barren society of ostlers and travellers, I could undertake the writers of the silver or the brazen age with confidence. Almost the last regular service which I performed in the cause of literature was to read the works of

AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS.

If you have imagined what a divine work is spread out for the poet, and approach this author too, in the hope of finding the field at length fairly entered on, you will hardly dissent from the words of the prologue,

> ”Ipse semipaganus
> Ad sacra Vatum carmen affero nostrum.”
>
> I half pagan
> Bring my verses to the shrine of the poets.

Here is none of the interior dignity of Virgil, nor the elegance and vivacity of Horace, nor will any sibyl be needed to remind you, that from those older Greek poets there is a sad descent to Persius. You can scarcely distinguish one harmonious sound amid this unmusical bickering with the follies of men.

One sees that music has its place in thought, but hardly as yet in language. When the Muse arrives, we wait for her to remould language, and impart to it her own rhythm. Hitherto the verse groans and labors with its load, and goes not forward blithely, singing by the way. The best ode may be parodied, indeed is itself a parody, and has a poor and trivial sound, like a man stepping on the rounds of a ladder. Homer and Shakespeare and Milton and Marvell and Wordsworth are but the rustling of leaves and crackling of twigs in the forest, and there is not yet the sound of any bird. The Muse has never lifted up her voice to sing. Most of all, satire will not be sung. A Juvenal or Persius do not marry music to their verse, but are measured fault-finders at best; stand but just outside the faults they

condemn, and so are concerned rather about the monster which they have escaped, than the fair prospect before them. Let them live on an age, and they will have travelled out of his shadow and reach, and found other objects to ponder.

As long as there is satire, the poet is, as it were, *particeps criminis*. One sees not but he had best let bad take care of itself, and have to do only with what is beyond suspicion. If you light on the least vestige of truth, and it is the weight of the whole body still which stamps the faintest trace, an eternity will not suffice to extol it, while no evil is so huge, but you grudge to bestow on it a moment of hate. Truth never turns to rebuke falsehood; her own straightforwardness is the severest correction. Horace would not have written satire so well if he had not been inspired by it, as by a passion, and fondly cherished his vein. In his odes, the love always exceeds the hate, so that the severest satire still sings itself, and the poet is satisfied, though the folly be not corrected.

A sort of necessary order in the development of Genius is, first, Complaint; second, Plaint; third, Love. Complaint, which is the condition of Persius, lies not in the province of poetry. Erelong the enjoyment of a superior good would have changed his disgust into regret. We can never have much sympathy with the complainer; for after searching nature through, we conclude that he must be both plaintiff and defendant too, and so had best come to a settlement without a hearing. He who receives an injury is to some extent an accomplice of the wrong-doer.

Perhaps it would be truer to say, that the highest strain of the muse is essentially plaintive. The saint's are still *tears* of joy. Who has ever heard the *Innocent* sing?

But the divinest poem, or the life of a great man, is the severest satire; as impersonal as Nature herself, and like the sighs of her winds in the woods, which convey ever a slight reproof to the hearer. The greater the genius, the keener the edge of the satire.

Hence we have to do only with the rare and fragmentary traits, which least belong to Persius, or shall we say, are the properest utterances of his muse; since that which he says best at any time is what he can best say at all times. The Spectators and Ramblers have not failed to cull some quotable sentences from this garden too, so

pleasant is it to meet even the most familiar truth in a new dress, when, if our neighbor had said it, we should have passed it by as hackneyed. Out of these six satires, you may perhaps select some twenty lines, which fit so well as many thoughts, that they will recur to the scholar almost as readily as a natural image; though when translated into familiar language, they lose that insular emphasis, which fitted them for quotation. Such lines as the following, translation cannot render commonplace. Contrasting the man of true religion with those who, with jealous privacy, would fain carry on a secret commerce with the gods, he says: —

”Haud cuivis promptum est, murmurque humilesque susurros
Tollere de templis; et aperto vivere voto.”

It is not easy for every one to take murmurs and low
Whispers out of the temples, and live with open vow.

To the virtuous man, the universe is the only *sanctum sanctorum*, and the penetralia of the temple are the broad noon of his existence. Why should he betake himself to a subterranean crypt, as if it were the only holy ground in all the world which he had left unprofaned? The obedient soul would only the more discover and familiarize things, and escape more and more into light and air, as having henceforth done with secrecy, so that the universe shall not seem open enough for it. At length, it is neglectful even of that silence which is consistent with true modesty, but by its independence of all confidence in its disclosures, makes that which it imparts so private to the hearer, that it becomes the care of the whole world that modesty be not infringed.

To the man who cherishes a secret in his breast, there is a still greater secret unexplored. Our most indifferent acts may be matter for secrecy, but whatever we do with the utmost truthfulness and integrity, by virtue of its pureness, must be transparent as light.

In the third satire, he asks: —

”Est aliquid quo tendis, et in quod dirigis arcum?
An passim sequeris corvos, testave, lutove,

Securus quo pes ferat, atque ex tempore vivis?”

Is there anything to which thou tendest, and against which thou directest thy bow?
Or dost thou pursue crows, at random, with pottery or clay,
Careless whither thy feet bear thee, and live *ex tempore*?

The bad sense is always a secondary one. Language does not appear to have justice done it, but is obviously cramped and narrowed in its significance, when any meanness is described. The truest construction is not put upon it. What may readily be fashioned into a rule of wisdom, is here thrown in the teeth of the sluggard, and constitutes the front of his offence. Universally, the innocent man will come forth from the sharpest inquisition and lecturing, the combined din of reproof and commendation, with a faint sound of eulogy in his ears. Our vices always lie in the direction of our virtues, and in their best estate are but plausible imitations of the latter. Falsehood never attains to the dignity of entire falseness, but is only an inferior sort of truth; if it were more thoroughly false, it would incur danger of becoming true.

“Securus quo pes ferat, atque ex tempore *vivit*,”

is then the motto of a wise man. For first, as the subtle discernment of the language would have taught us, with all his negligence he is still secure; but the sluggard, notwithstanding his heedlessness, is insecure.

The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous, for he lives out of an eternity which includes all time. The cunning mind travels further back than Zoroaster each instant, and comes quite down to the present with its revelation. The utmost thrift and industry of thinking give no man any stock in life; his credit with the inner world is no better, his capital no larger. He must try his fortune again to-day as yesterday. All questions rely on the present for their solution. Time measures nothing but itself. The word that is written may be postponed, but not that on the lip. If this is what the occasion says, let the occasion say it. All the world is forward to prompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket.

In the fifth satire, which is the best, I find, —

”Stat contra ratio, et secretam garrit in aurem,
Ne liceat facere id, quod quis vitiabit agendo.”

Reason opposes, and whispers in the secret ear,
That it is not lawful to do that which one will spoil by doing.

Only they who do not see how anything might be better done are forward to try their hand on it. Even the master workman must be encouraged by the reflection, that his awkwardness will be incompetent to do that thing harm, to which his skill may fail to do justice. Here is no apology for neglecting to do many things from a sense of our incapacity, — for what deed does not fall maimed and imperfect from our hands? — but only a warning to bungle less.

The satires of Persius are the furthest possible from inspired; evidently a chosen, not imposed subject. Perhaps I have given him credit for more earnestness than is apparent; but it is certain, that that which alone we can call Persius, which is forever independent and consistent, *was* in earnest, and so sanctions the sober consideration of all. The artist and his work are not to be separated. The most wilfully foolish man cannot stand aloof from his folly, but the deed and the doer together make ever one sober fact. There is but one stage for the peasant and the actor. The buffoon cannot bribe you to laugh always at his grimaces; they shall sculpture themselves in Egyptian granite, to stand heavy as the pyramids on the ground of his character.

——— —

Suns rose and set and found us still on the dank forest path which meanders up the Pemigewasset, now more like an otter’s or a marten’s trail, or where a beaver had dragged his trap, than where the wheels of travel raise a dust; where towns begin to serve as gores, only to hold the earth together. The wild pigeon sat secure above our heads, high on the dead limbs of naval pines, reduced to a robin’s size. The very yards of our hostelries inclined upon the skirts of mountains, and, as we passed, we looked up at a steep angle at the stems of maples waving in the clouds.

Far up in the country, — for we would be faithful to our experience, — in Thornton, perhaps, we met a soldier lad in the woods, going to muster in full regimentals, and holding the middle of

the road; deep in the forest, with shouldered musket and military step, and thoughts of war and glory all to himself. It was a sore trial to the youth, tougher than many a battle, to get by us creditably and with soldierlike bearing. Poor man! He actually shivered like a reed in his thin military pants, and by the time we had got up with him, all the sternness that becomes the soldier had forsaken his face, and he skulked past as if he were driving his father's sheep under a sword-proof helmet. It was too much for him to carry any extra armor then, who could not easily dispose of his natural arms. And for his legs, they were like heavy artillery in boggy places; better to cut the traces and forsake them. His greaves chafed and wrestled one with another for want of other foes. But he did get by and get off with all his munitions, and lived to fight another day; and I do not record this as casting any suspicion on his honor and real bravery in the field.

Wandering on through notches which the streams had made, by the side and over the brows of hoar hills and mountains, across the stumpy, rocky, forested, and bepastured country, we at length crossed on prostrate trees over the Amonoosuck, and breathed the free air of Unappropriated Land. Thus, in fair days as well as foul, we had traced up the river to which our native stream is a tributary, until from Merrimack it became the Pemigewasset that leaped by our side, and when we had passed its fountain-head, the Wild Amonoosuck, whose puny channel was crossed at a stride, guiding us toward its distant source among the mountains, and at length, without its guidance, we were enabled to reach the summit of *Agiocochook*.

——— ——— ——— —

"Sweet days, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
Sweet dews shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die."
Herbert.

When we returned to Hooksett, a week afterward, the melon man, in whose corn-barn we had hung our tent and buffaloes and other things to dry, was already picking his hops, with many women and

children to help him. We bought one watermelon, the largest in his patch, to carry with us for ballast. It was Nathan's, which he might sell if he wished, having been conveyed to him in the green state, and owned daily by his eyes. After due consultation with "Father," the bargain was concluded, — we to buy it at a venture on the vine, green or ripe, our risk, and pay "what the gentlemen pleased." It proved to be ripe; for we had had honest experience in selecting this fruit.

Finding our boat safe in its harbor, under Uncannunuc Mountain, with a fair wind and the current in our favor, we commenced our return voyage at noon, sitting at our ease and conversing, or in silence watching for the last trace of each reach in the river as a bend concealed it from our view. As the season was further advanced, the wind now blew steadily from the north, and with our sail set we could occasionally lie on our oars without loss of time. The lumbermen throwing down wood from the top of the high bank, thirty or forty feet above the water, that it might be sent down stream, paused in their work to watch our retreating sail. By this time, indeed, we were well known to the boatmen, and were hailed as the Revenue Cutter of the stream. As we sailed rapidly down the river, shut in between two mounds of earth, the sounds of this timber rolled down the bank enhanced the silence and vastness of the noon, and we fancied that only the primeval echoes were awakened. The vision of a distant scow just heaving in sight round a headland also increased by contrast the solitude.

Through the din and desultoriness of noon, even in the most Oriental city, is seen the fresh and primitive and savage nature, in which Scythians and Ethiopians and Indians dwell. What is echo, what are light and shade, day and night, ocean and stars, earthquake and eclipse, there? The works of man are everywhere swallowed up in the immensity of Nature. The Aegean Sea is but Lake Huron still to the Indian. Also there is all the refinement of civilized life in the woods under a sylvan garb. The wildest scenes have an air of domesticity and homeliness even to the citizen, and when the flicker's cackle is heard in the clearing, he is reminded that civilization has wrought but little change there. Science is welcome to the deepest recesses of the forest, for there too nature obeys the

same old civil laws. The little red bug on the stump of a pine, — for it the wind shifts and the sun breaks through the clouds. In the wildest nature, there is not only the material of the most cultivated life, and a sort of anticipation of the last result, but a greater refinement already than is ever attained by man. There is papyrus by the river-side, and rushes for light, and the goose only flies overhead, ages before the studious are born or letters invented, and that literature which the former suggest, and even from the first have rudely served, it may be man does not yet use them to express. Nature is prepared to welcome into her scenery the finest work of human art, for she is herself an art so cunning that the artist never appears in his work.

Art is not tame, and Nature is not wild, in the ordinary sense. A perfect work of man's art would also be wild or natural in a good sense. Man tames Nature only that he may at last make her more free even than he found her, though he may never yet have succeeded.

With this propitious breeze, and the help of our oars, we soon reached the Falls of Amoskeag, and the mouth of the Piscataquoag, and recognized, as we swept rapidly by, many a fair bank and islet on which our eyes had rested in the upward passage. Our boat was like that which Chaucer describes in his Dream, in which the knight took his departure from the island,

"To journey for his marriage,
And return with such an host,
That wedded might be least and most. . . . .
Which barge was as a man's thought,
After his pleasure to him brought,
The queene herself accustomed aye
In the same barge to play,
It needed neither mast ne rother,
I have not heard of such another,
No master for the governance,
Hie sayled by thought and pleasaunce,
Without labor east and west,
All was one, calme or tempest."

So we sailed this afternoon, thinking of the saying of Pythagoras, though we had no peculiar right to remember it, "It is beautiful when prosperity is present with intellect, and when sailing as it were with a prosperous wind, actions are performed looking to virtue; just as a pilot looks to the motions of the stars." All the world reposes in beauty to him who preserves equipoise in his life, and moves serenely on his path without secret violence; as he who sails down a stream, he has only to steer, keeping his bark in the middle, and carry it round the falls. The ripples curled away in our wake, like ringlets from the head of a child, while we steadily held on our course, and under the bows we watched

> "The swaying soft,
> Made by the delicate wave parted in front,
> As through the gentle element we move
> Like shadows gliding through untroubled dreams."

The forms of beauty fall naturally around the path of him who is in the performance of his proper work; as the curled shavings drop from the plane, and borings cluster round the auger. Undulation is the gentlest and most ideal of motions, produced by one fluid falling on another. Rippling is a more graceful flight. From a hill-top you may detect in it the wings of birds endlessly repeated. The two *waving* lines which represent the flight of birds appear to have been copied from the ripple.

The trees made an admirable fence to the landscape, skirting the horizon on every side. The single trees and the groves left standing on the interval appeared naturally disposed, though the farmer had consulted only his convenience, for he too falls into the scheme of Nature. Art can never match the luxury and superfluity of Nature. In the former all is seen; it cannot afford concealed wealth, and is niggardly in comparison; but Nature, even when she is scant and thin outwardly, satisfies us still by the assurance of a certain generosity at the roots. In swamps, where there is only here and there an evergreen tree amid the quaking moss and cranberry beds, the bareness does not suggest poverty. The single-spruce, which I had hardly noticed in gardens, attracts me in such places, and now first I

understand why men try to make them grow about their houses. But though there may be very perfect specimens in front-yard plots, their beauty is for the most part ineffectual there, for there is no such assurance of kindred wealth beneath and around them, to make them show to advantage. As we have said, Nature is a greater and more perfect art, the art of God; though, referred to herself, she is genius; and there is a similarity between her operations and man's art even in the details and trifles. When the overhanging pine drops into the water, by the sun and water, and the wind rubbing it against the shore, its boughs are worn into fantastic shapes, and white and smooth, as if turned in a lathe. Man's art has wisely imitated those forms into which all matter is most inclined to run, as foliage and fruit. A hammock swung in a grove assumes the exact form of a canoe, broader or narrower, and higher or lower at the ends, as more or fewer persons are in it, and it rolls in the air with the motion of the body, like a canoe in the water. Our art leaves its shavings and its dust about; her art exhibits itself even in the shavings and the dust which we make. She has perfected herself by an eternity of practice. The world is well kept; no rubbish accumulates; the morning air is clear even at this day, and no dust has settled on the grass. Behold how the evening now steals over the fields, the shadows of the trees creeping farther and farther into the meadow, and erelong the stars will come to bathe in these retired waters. Her undertakings are secure and never fail. If I were awakened from a deep sleep, I should know which side of the meridian the sun might be by the aspect of nature, and by the chirp of the crickets, and yet no painter can paint this difference. The landscape contains a thousand dials which indicate the natural divisions of time, the shadows of a thousand styles point to the hour.

"Not only o'er the dial's face,
This silent phantom day by day,
With slow, unseen, unceasing pace
Steals moments, months, and years away;
From hoary rock and aged tree,
From proud Palmyra's mouldering walls,
From Teneriffe, towering o'er the sea,

From every blade of grass it falls."

It is almost the only game which the trees play at, this tit-for-tat, now this side in the sun, now that, the drama of the day. In deep ravines under the eastern sides of cliffs, Night forwardly plants her foot even at noonday, and as Day retreats she steps into his trenches, skulking from tree to tree, from fence to fence, until at last she sits in his citadel and draws out her forces into the plain. It may be that the forenoon is brighter than the afternoon, not only because of the greater transparency of its atmosphere, but because we naturally look most into the west, as forward into the day, and so in the forenoon see the sunny side of things, but in the afternoon the shadow of every tree.

The afternoon is now far advanced, and a fresh and leisurely wind is blowing over the river, making long reaches of bright ripples. The river has done its stint, and appears not to flow, but lie at its length reflecting the light, and the haze over the woods is like the inaudible panting, or rather the gentle perspiration of resting nature, rising from a myriad of pores into the attenuated atmosphere.

On the thirty-first day of March, one hundred and forty-two years before this, probably about this time in the afternoon, there were hurriedly paddling down this part of the river, between the pine woods which then fringed these banks, two white women and a boy, who had left an island at the mouth of the Contoocook before daybreak. They were slightly clad for the season, in the English fashion, and handled their paddles unskilfully, but with nervous energy and determination, and at the bottom of their canoe lay the still bleeding scalps of ten of the aborigines. They were Hannah Dustan, and her nurse, Mary Neff, both of Haverhill, eighteen miles from the mouth of this river, and an English boy, named Samuel Lennardson, escaping from captivity among the Indians. On the 15th of March previous, Hannah Dustan had been compelled to rise from child-bed, and half dressed, with one foot bare, accompanied by her nurse, commence an uncertain march, in still inclement weather, through the snow and the wilderness. She had seen her seven elder children flee with their father, but knew not of their fate. She had seen her infant's brains dashed out against an apple-tree, and had left

her own and her neighbors' dwellings in ashes. When she reached the wigwam of her captor, situated on an island in the Merrimack, more than twenty miles above where we now are, she had been told that she and her nurse were soon to be taken to a distant Indian settlement, and there made to run the gauntlet naked. The family of this Indian consisted of two men, three women, and seven children, beside an English boy, whom she found a prisoner among them. Having determined to attempt her escape, she instructed the boy to inquire of one of the men, how he should despatch an enemy in the quickest manner, and take his scalp. "Strike 'em there," said he, placing his finger on his temple, and he also showed him how to take off the scalp. On the morning of the 31st she arose before daybreak, and awoke her nurse and the boy, and taking the Indians' tomahawks, they killed them all in their sleep, excepting one favorite boy, and one squaw who fled wounded with him to the woods. The English boy struck the Indian who had given him the information, on the temple, as he had been directed. They then collected all the provision they could find, and took their master's tomahawk and gun, and scuttling all the canoes but one, commenced their flight to Haverhill, distant about sixty miles by the river. But after having proceeded a short distance, fearing that her story would not be believed if she should escape to tell it, they returned to the silent wigwam, and taking off the scalps of the dead, put them into a bag as proofs of what they had done, and then retracing their steps to the shore in the twilight, recommenced their voyage.

Early this morning this deed was performed, and now, perchance, these tired women and this boy, their clothes stained with blood, and their minds racked with alternate resolution and fear, are making a hasty meal of parched corn and moose-meat, while their canoe glides under these pine roots whose stumps are still standing on the bank. They are thinking of the dead whom they have left behind on that solitary isle far up the stream, and of the relentless living warriors who are in pursuit. Every withered leaf which the winter has left seems to know their story, and in its rustling to repeat it and betray them. An Indian lurks behind every rock and pine, and their nerves cannot bear the tapping of a woodpecker. Or they forget their own dangers and their deeds in conjecturing the fate of their kindred, and

whether, if they escape the Indians, they shall find the former still alive. They do not stop to cook their meals upon the bank, nor land, except to carry their canoe about the falls. The stolen birch forgets its master and does them good service, and the swollen current bears them swiftly along with little need of the paddle, except to steer and keep them warm by exercise. For ice is floating in the river; the spring is opening; the muskrat and the beaver are driven out of their holes by the flood; deer gaze at them from the bank; a few faint-singing forest birds, perchance, fly across the river to the northernmost shore; the fish-hawk sails and screams overhead, and geese fly over with a startling clangor; but they do not observe these things, or they speedily forget them. They do not smile or chat all day. Sometimes they pass an Indian grave surrounded by its paling on the bank, or the frame of a wigwam, with a few coals left behind, or the withered stalks still rustling in the Indian's solitary cornfield on the interval. The birch stripped of its bark, or the charred stump where a tree has been burned down to be made into a canoe, these are the only traces of man, — a fabulous wild man to us. On either side, the primeval forest stretches away uninterrupted to Canada, or to the "South Sea"; to the white man a drear and howling wilderness, but to the Indian a home, adapted to his nature, and cheerful as the smile of the Great Spirit.

While we loiter here this autumn evening, looking for a spot retired enough, where we shall quietly rest to-night, they thus, in that chilly March evening, one hundred and forty-two years before us, with wind and current favoring, have already glided out of sight, not to camp, as we shall, at night, but while two sleep one will manage the canoe, and the swift stream bear them onward to the settlements, it may be, even to old John Lovewell's house on Salmon Brook to-night.

According to the historian, they escaped as by a miracle all roving bands of Indians, and reached their homes in safety, with their trophies, for which the General Court paid them fifty pounds. The family of Hannah Dustan all assembled alive once more, except the infant whose brains were dashed out against the apple-tree, and there have been many who in later times have lived to say that they had eaten of the fruit of that apple-tree.

This seems a long while ago, and yet it happened since Milton wrote his Paradise Lost. But its antiquity is not the less great for that, for we do not regulate our historical time by the English standard, nor did the English by the Roman, nor the Roman by the Greek. "We must look a long way back," says Raleigh, "to find the Romans giving laws to nations, and their consuls bringing kings and princes bound in chains to Rome in triumph; to see men go to Greece for wisdom, or Ophir for gold; when now nothing remains but a poor paper remembrance of their former condition." And yet, in one sense, not so far back as to find the Penacooks and Pawtuckets using bows and arrows and hatchets of stone, on the banks of the Merrimack. From this September afternoon, and from between these now cultivated shores, those times seemed more remote than the dark ages. On beholding an old picture of Concord, as it appeared but seventy-five years ago, with a fair open prospect and a light on trees and river, as if it were broad noon, I find that I had not thought the sun shone in those days, or that men lived in broad daylight then. Still less do we imagine the sun shining on hill and valley during Philip's war, on the war-path of Church or Philip, or later of Lovewell or Paugus, with serene summer weather, but they must have lived and fought in a dim twilight or night.

The age of the world is great enough for our imaginations, even according to the Mosaic account, without borrowing any years from the geologist. From Adam and Eve at one leap sheer down to the deluge, and then through the ancient monarchies, through Babylon and Thebes, Brahma and Abraham, to Greece and the Argonauts; whence we might start again with Orpheus and the Trojan war, the Pyramids and the Olympic games, and Homer and Athens, for our stages; and after a breathing space at the building of Rome, continue our journey down through Odin and Christ to — America. It is a wearisome while. And yet the lives of but sixty old women, such as live under the hill, say of a century each, strung together, are sufficient to reach over the whole ground. Taking hold of hands they would span the interval from Eve to my own mother. A respectable tea-party merely, — whose gossip would be Universal History. The fourth old woman from myself suckled Columbus, — the ninth was nurse to the Norman Conqueror, — the nineteenth was the Virgin

Mary, — the twenty-fourth the Cumaean Sibyl, — the thirtieth was at the Trojan war and Helen her name, — the thirty-eighth was Queen Semiramis, — the sixtieth was Eve the mother of mankind. So much for the

”Old woman that lives under the hill,
And if she’s not gone she lives there still.”

It will not take a very great-granddaughter of hers to be in at the death of Time.

We can never safely exceed the actual facts in our narratives. Of pure invention, such as some suppose, there is no instance. To write a true work of fiction even, is only to take leisure and liberty to describe some things more exactly as they are. A true account of the actual is the rarest poetry, for common sense always takes a hasty and superficial view. Though I am not much acquainted with the works of Goethe, I should say that it was one of his chief excellences as a writer, that he was satisfied with giving an exact description of things as they appeared to him, and their effect upon him. Most travellers have not self-respect enough to do this simply, and make objects and events stand around them as the centre, but still imagine more favorable positions and relations than the actual ones, and so we get no valuable report from them at all. In his Italian Travels Goethe jogs along at a snail’s pace, but always mindful that the earth is beneath and the heavens are above him. His Italy is not merely the fatherland of lazzaroni and virtuosi, and scene of splendid ruins, but a solid turf-clad soil, daily shined on by the sun, and nightly by the moon. Even the few showers are faithfully recorded. He speaks as an unconcerned spectator, whose object is faithfully to describe what he sees, and that, for the most part, in the order in which he sees it. Even his reflections do not interfere with his descriptions. In one place he speaks of himself as giving so glowing and truthful a description of an old tower to the peasants who had gathered around him, that they who had been born and brought up in the neighborhood must needs look over their shoulders, “that,” to use his own words, “they might behold with their eyes, what I had praised to their ears,”— “and I added nothing, not even the ivy which for centuries had decorated

the walls." It would thus be possible for inferior minds to produce invaluable books, if this very moderation were not the evidence of superiority; for the wise are not so much wiser than others as respecters of their own wisdom. Some, poor in spirit, record plaintively only what has happened to them; but others how they have happened to the universe, and the judgment which they have awarded to circumstances. Above all, he possessed a hearty good-will to all men, and never wrote a cross or even careless word. On one occasion the post-boy snivelling, "Signor perdonate, questa e` la mia patria," he confesses that "to me poor northerner came something tear-like into the eyes."

Goethe's whole education and life were those of the artist. He lacks the unconsciousness of the poet. In his autobiography he describes accurately the life of the author of Wilhelm Meister. For as there is in that book, mingled with a rare and serene wisdom, a certain pettiness or exaggeration of trifles, wisdom applied to produce a constrained and partial and merely well-bred man, — a magnifying of the theatre till life itself is turned into a stage, for which it is our duty to study our parts well, and conduct with propriety and precision, — so in the autobiography, the fault of his education is, so to speak, its merely artistic completeness. Nature is hindered, though she prevails at last in making an unusually catholic impression on the boy. It is the life of a city boy, whose toys are pictures and works of art, whose wonders are the theatre and kingly processions and crownings. As the youth studied minutely the order and the degrees in the imperial procession, and suffered none of its effect to be lost on him, so the man aimed to secure a rank in society which would satisfy his notion of fitness and respectability. He was defrauded of much which the savage boy enjoys. Indeed, he himself has occasion to say in this very autobiography, when at last he escapes into the woods without the gates: "Thus much is certain, that only the undefinable, wide-expanding feelings of youth and of uncultivated nations are adapted to the sublime, which, whenever it may be excited in us through external objects, since it is either formless, or else moulded into forms which are incomprehensible, must surround us with a grandeur which we find above our reach." He further says of himself: "I had lived among painters from my

childhood, and had accustomed myself to look at objects, as they did, with reference to art." And this was his practice to the last. He was even too *well-bred* to be thoroughly bred. He says that he had had no intercourse with the lowest class of his towns-boys. The child should have the advantage of ignorance as well as of knowledge, and is fortunate if he gets his share of neglect and exposure.

"The laws of Nature break the rules of Art."

The Man of Genius may at the same time be, indeed is commonly, an Artist, but the two are not to be confounded. The Man of Genius, referred to mankind, is an originator, an inspired or demonic man, who produces a perfect work in obedience to laws yet unexplored. The Artist is he who detects and applies the law from observation of the works of Genius, whether of man or nature. The Artisan is he who merely applies the rules which others have detected. There has been no man of pure Genius; as there has been none wholly destitute of Genius.

Poetry is the mysticism of mankind.

The expressions of the poet cannot be analyzed; his sentence is one word, whose syllables are words. There are indeed no *words* quite worthy to be set to his music. But what matter if we do not hear the words always, if we hear the music?

Much verse fails of being poetry because it was not written exactly at the right crisis, though it may have been inconceivably near to it. It is only by a miracle that poetry is written at all. It is not recoverable thought, but a hue caught from a vaster receding thought.

A poem is one undivided unimpeded expression fallen ripe into literature, and it is undividedly and unimpededly received by those for whom it was matured.

If you can speak what you will never hear, if you can write what you will never read, you have done rare things.

The work we choose should be our own,
God lets alone.

The unconsciousness of man is the consciousness of God.

Deep are the foundations of sincerity. Even stone walls have their foundation below the frost.

What is produced by a free stroke charms us, like the forms of lichens and leaves. There is a certain perfection in accident which we never consciously attain. Draw a blunt quill filled with ink over a sheet of paper, and fold the paper before the ink is dry, transversely to this line, and a delicately shaded and regular figure will be produced, in some respects more pleasing than an elaborate drawing.

The talent of composition is very dangerous, — the striking out the heart of life at a blow, as the Indian takes off a scalp. I feel as if my life had grown more outward when I can express it.

On his journey from Brenner to Verona, Goethe writes:

"The Tees flows now more gently, and makes in many places broad sands. On the land, near to the water, upon the hillsides, everything is so closely planted one to another, that you think they must choke one another, — vineyards, maize, mulberry-trees, apples, pears, quinces, and nuts. The dwarf elder throws itself vigorously over the walls. Ivy grows with strong stems up the rocks, and spreads itself wide over them, the lizard glides through the intervals, and everything that wanders to and fro reminds one of the loveliest pictures of art. The women's tufts of hair bound up, the men's bare breasts and light jackets, the excellent oxen which they drive home from market, the little asses with their loads, — everything forms a living, animated Heinrich Roos. And now that it is evening, in the mild air a few clouds rest upon the mountains, in the heavens more stand still than move, and immediately after sunset the chirping of crickets begins to grow more loud; then one feels for once at home in the world, and not as concealed or in exile. I am contented as though I had been born and brought up here, and were now returning from a Greenland or whaling voyage. Even the dust of my Fatherland, which is often whirled about the wagon, and which for so long a time I had not seen, is greeted. The clock-and-bell jingling of the crickets is altogether lovely, penetrating, and agreeable. It sounds bravely when roguish boys whistle in emulation of a field of such songstresses. One fancies that they really enhance one another. Also the evening is perfectly mild as the day."

"If one who dwelt in the south, and came hither from the south, should hear of my rapture hereupon, he would deem me very childish. Alas! what I here express I have long known while I

suffered under an unpropitious heaven, and now may I joyful feel this joy as an exception, which we should enjoy everforth as an eternal necessity of our nature."

Thus we "sayled by thought and pleasaunce," as Chaucer says, and all things seemed with us to flow; the shore itself, and the distant cliffs, were dissolved by the undiluted air. The hardest material seemed to obey the same law with the most fluid, and so indeed in the long run it does. Trees were but rivers of sap and woody fibre, flowing from the atmosphere, and emptying into the earth by their trunks, as their roots flowed upward to the surface. And in the heavens there were rivers of stars, and milky-ways, already beginning to gleam and ripple over our heads. There were rivers of rock on the surface of the earth, and rivers of ore in its bowels, and our thoughts flowed and circulated, and this portion of time was but the current hour. Let us wander where we will, the universe is built round about us, and we are central still. If we look into the heavens they are concave, and if we were to look into a gulf as bottomless, it would be concave also. The sky is curved downward to the earth in the horizon, because we stand on the plain. I draw down its skirts. The stars so low there seem loath to depart, but by a circuitous path to be remembering me, and returning on their steps.

We had already passed by broad daylight the scene of our encampment at Coos Falls, and at length we pitched our camp on the west bank, in the northern part of Merrimack, nearly opposite to the large island on which we had spent the noon in our way up the river.

There we went to bed that summer evening, on a sloping shelf in the bank, a couple of rods from our boat, which was drawn up on the sand, and just behind a thin fringe of oaks which bordered the river; without having disturbed any inhabitants but the spiders in the grass, which came out by the light of our lamp, and crawled over our buffaloes. When we looked out from under the tent, the trees were seen dimly through the mist, and a cool dew hung upon the grass, which seemed to rejoice in the night, and with the damp air we inhaled a solid fragrance. Having eaten our supper of hot cocoa and bread and watermelon, we soon grew weary of conversing, and writing in our journals, and, putting out the lantern which hung from the tent-pole, fell asleep.

Unfortunately, many things have been omitted which should have been recorded in our journal; for though we made it a rule to set down all our experiences therein, yet such a resolution is very hard to keep, for the important experience rarely allows us to remember such obligations, and so indifferent things get recorded, while that is frequently neglected. It is not easy to write in a journal what interests us at any time, because to write it is not what interests us.

Whenever we awoke in the night, still eking out our dreams with half-awakened thoughts, it was not till after an interval, when the wind breathed harder than usual, flapping the curtains of the tent, and causing its cords to vibrate, that we remembered that we lay on the bank of the Merrimack, and not in our chamber at home. With our heads so low in the grass, we heard the river whirling and sucking, and lapsing downward, kissing the shore as it went, sometimes rippling louder than usual, and again its mighty current making only a slight limpid, trickling sound, as if our water-pail had sprung a leak, and the water were flowing into the grass by our side. The wind, rustling the oaks and hazels, impressed us like a wakeful and inconsiderate person up at midnight, moving about, and putting things to rights, occasionally stirring up whole drawers full of leaves at a puff. There seemed to be a great haste and preparation throughout Nature, as for a distinguished visitor; all her aisles had to be swept in the night, by a thousand hand-maidens, and a thousand pots to be boiled for the next day's feasting; — such a whispering bustle, as if ten thousand fairies made their fingers fly, silently sewing at the new carpet with which the earth was to be clothed, and the new drapery which was to adorn the trees. And then the wind would lull and die away, and we like it fell asleep again.

FRIDAY.

”The Boteman strayt
Held on his course with stayed stedfastnesse,
Ne ever shroncke, ne ever sought to bayt
His tryed armes for toylesome wearinesse;
But with his oares did sweepe the watry wildernesse.”

Spenser.

”Summer’s robe grows
Dusky, and like an oft-dyed garment shows.”
Donne.

FRIDAY.

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As we lay awake long before daybreak, listening to the rippling of the river, and the rustling of the leaves, in suspense whether the wind blew up or down the stream, was favorable or unfavorable to our voyage, we already suspected that there was a change in the weather, from a freshness as of autumn in these sounds. The wind in the woods sounded like an incessant waterfall dashing and roaring amid rocks, and we even felt encouraged by the unusual activity of the elements. He who hears the rippling of rivers in these degenerate days will not utterly despair. That night was the turning-point in the season. We had gone to bed in summer, and we awoke in autumn; for summer passes into autumn in some unimaginable point of time, like the turning of a leaf.

We found our boat in the dawn just as we had left it, and as if waiting for us, there on the shore, in autumn, all cool and dripping with dew, and our tracks still fresh in the wet sand around it, the fairies all gone or concealed. Before five o'clock we pushed it into the fog, and, leaping in, at one shove were out of sight of the shores, and began to sweep downward with the rushing river, keeping a sharp lookout for rocks. We could see only the yellow gurgling water, and a solid bank of fog on every side, forming a small yard around us. We soon passed the mouth of the Souhegan, and the village of Merrimack, and as the mist gradually rolled away, and we were relieved from the trouble of watching for rocks, we saw by the flitting clouds, by the first russet tinge on the hills, by the rushing river, the cottages on shore, and the shore itself, so coolly fresh and shining with dew, and later in the day, by the hue of the grape-vine, the goldfinch on the willow, the flickers flying in flocks, and when we passed near enough to the shore, as we fancied, by the faces of men, that the Fall had commenced. The cottages looked more snug and comfortable, and their inhabitants were seen only for a moment, and then went quietly in and shut the door, retreating inward to the haunts of summer.

”And now the cold autumnal dews are seen
To cobweb ev’ry green;
And by the low-shorn rowens doth appear
The fast-declining year.”

We heard the sigh of the first autumnal wind, and even the water had acquired a grayer hue. The sumach, grape, and maple were already changed, and the milkweed had turned to a deep rich yellow. In all woods the leaves were fast ripening for their fall; for their full veins and lively gloss mark the ripe leaf, and not the sered one of the poets; and we knew that the maples, stripped of their leaves among the earliest, would soon stand like a wreath of smoke along the edge of the meadow. Already the cattle were heard to low wildly in the pastures and along the highways, restlessly running to and fro, as if in apprehension of the withering of the grass and of the approach of winter. Our thoughts, too, began to rustle.

As I pass along the streets of our village of Concord on the day of our annual Cattle-Show, when it usually happens that the leaves of the elms and buttonwoods begin first to strew the ground under the breath of the October wind, the lively spirits in their sap seem to mount as high as any plough-boy’s let loose that day; and they lead my thoughts away to the rustling woods, where the trees are preparing for their winter campaign. This autumnal festival, when men are gathered in crowds in the streets as regularly and by as natural a law as the leaves cluster and rustle by the wayside, is naturally associated in my mind with the fall of the year. The low of cattle in the streets sounds like a hoarse symphony or running bass to the rustling of the leaves. The wind goes hurrying down the country, gleaning every loose straw that is left in the fields, while every farmer lad too appears to scud before it, — having donned his best pea-jacket and pepper-and-salt waistcoat, his unbent trousers, outstanding rigging of duck or kerseymere or corduroy, and his furry hat withal, — to country fairs and cattle-shows, to that Rome among the villages where the treasures of the year are gathered. All the land over they go leaping the fences with their tough, idle palms, which have never learned to hang by their sides, amid the low of calves and the bleating of sheep, — Amos, Abner, Elnathan, Elbridge, —

"From steep pine-bearing mountains to the plain."

I love these sons of earth every mother's son of them, with their great hearty hearts rushing tumultuously in herds from spectacle to spectacle, as if fearful lest there should not be time between sun and sun to see them all, and the sun does not wait more than in haying-time.

"Wise Nature's darlings, they live in the world
Perplexing not themselves how it is hurled."

Running hither and thither with appetite for the coarse pastimes of the day, now with boisterous speed at the heels of the inspired negro from whose larynx the melodies of all Congo and Guinea Coast have broke loose into our streets; now to see the procession of a hundred yoke of oxen, all as august and grave as Osiris, or the droves of neat cattle and milch cows as unspotted as Isis or Io. Such as had no love for Nature

"at all, Came lovers home from this great festival."

They may bring their fattest cattle and richest fruits to the fair, but they are all eclipsed by the show of men. These are stirring autumn days, when men sweep by in crowds, amid the rustle of leaves, like migrating finches; this is the true harvest of the year, when the air is but the breath of men, and the rustling of leaves is as the trampling of the crowd. We read now-a-days of the ancient festivals, games, and processions of the Greeks and Etruscans, with a little incredulity, or at least with little sympathy; but how natural and irrepressible in every people is some hearty and palpable greeting of Nature. The Corybantes, the Bacchantes, the rude primitive tragedians with their procession and goat-song, and the whole paraphernalia of the Panathenaea, which appear so antiquated and peculiar, have their parallel now. The husbandman is always a better Greek than the scholar is prepared to appreciate, and the old custom still survives, while antiquarians and scholars grow gray in commemorating it. The farmers crowd to the fair to-day in obedience to the same ancient law, which Solon or Lycurgus did not enact, as naturally as bees swarm and follow their queen.

It is worth the while to see the country's people, how they pour

into the town, the sober farmer folk, now all agog, their very shirt and coat-collars pointing forward, — collars so broad as if they had put their shirts on wrong end upward, for the fashions always tend to superfluity, — and with an unusual springiness in their gait, jabbering earnestly to one another. The more supple vagabond, too, is sure to appear on the least rumor of such a gathering, and the next day to disappear, and go into his hole like the seventeen-year locust, in an ever-shabby coat, though finer than the farmer's best, yet never dressed; come to see the sport, and have a hand in what is going, — to know "what's the row," if there is any; to be where some men are drunk, some horses race, some cockerels fight; anxious to be shaking props under a table, and above all to see the "striped pig." He especially is the creature of the occasion. He empties both his pockets and his character into the stream, and swims in such a day. He dearly loves the social slush. There is no reserve of soberness in him.

I love to see the herd of men feeding heartily on coarse and succulent pleasures, as cattle on the husks and stalks of vegetables. Though there are many crooked and crabbled specimens of humanity among them, run all to thorn and rind, and crowded out of shape by adverse circumstances, like the third chestnut in the burr, so that you wonder to see some heads wear a whole hat, yet fear not that the race will fail or waver in them; like the crabs which grow in hedges, they furnish the stocks of sweet and thrifty fruits still. Thus is nature recruited from age to age, while the fair and palatable varieties die out, and have their period. This is that mankind. How cheap must be the material of which so many men are made.

The wind blew steadily down the stream, so that we kept our sails set, and lost not a moment of the forenoon by delays, but from early morning until noon were continually dropping downward. With our hands on the steering-paddle, which was thrust deep into the river, or bending to the oar, which indeed we rarely relinquished, we felt each palpitation in the veins of our steed, and each impulse of the wings which drew us above. The current of our thoughts made as sudden bends as the river, which was continually opening new prospects to the east or south, but we are aware that rivers flow most rapidly and shallowest at these points. The steadfast shores never once turned

aside for us, but still trended as they were made; why then should we always turn aside for them?

A man cannot wheedle nor overawe his Genius. It requires to be conciliated by nobler conduct than the world demands or can appreciate. These winged thoughts are like birds, and will not be handled; even hens will not let you touch them like quadrupeds. Nothing was ever so unfamiliar and startling to a man as his own thoughts.

To the rarest genius it is the most expensive to succumb and conform to the ways of the world. Genius is the worst of lumber, if the poet would float upon the breeze of popularity. The bird of paradise is obliged constantly to fly against the wind, lest its gay trappings, pressing close to its body, impede its free movements.

He is the best sailor who can steer within the fewest points of the wind, and extract a motive power out of the greatest obstacles. Most begin to veer and tack as soon as the wind changes from aft, and as within the tropics it does not blow from all points of the compass, there are some harbors which they can never reach.

The poet is no tender slip of fairy stock, who requires peculiar institutions and edicts for his defence, but the toughest son of earth and of Heaven, and by his greater strength and endurance his fainting companions will recognize the God in him. It is the worshippers of beauty, after all, who have done the real pioneer work of the world.

The poet will prevail to be popular in spite of his faults, and in spite of his beauties too. He will hit the nail on the head, and we shall not know the shape of his hammer. He makes us free of his hearth and heart, which is greater than to offer one the freedom of a city.

Great men, unknown to their generation, have their fame among the great who have preceded them, and all true worldly fame subsides from their high estimate beyond the stars.

Orpheus does not hear the strains which issue from his lyre, but only those which are breathed into it; for the original strain precedes the sound, by as much as the echo follows after. The rest is the perquisite of the rocks and trees and beasts.

When I stand in a library where is all the recorded wit of the world, but none of the recording, a mere accumulated, and not truly cumulative treasure, where immortal works stand side by side with

anthologies which did not survive their month, and cobweb and mildew have already spread from these to the binding of those; and happily I am reminded of what poetry is, — I perceive that Shakespeare and Milton did not foresee into what company they were to fall. Alas! that so soon the work of a true poet should be swept into such a dust-hole!

The poet will write for his peers alone. He will remember only that he saw truth and beauty from his position, and expect the time when a vision as broad shall overlook the same field as freely.

We are often prompted to speak our thoughts to our neighbors, or the single travellers whom we meet on the road, but poetry is a communication from our home and solitude addressed to all Intelligence. It never whispers in a private ear. Knowing this, we may understand those sonnets said to be addressed to particular persons, or "To a Mistress's Eyebrow." Let none feel flattered by them. For poetry write love, and it will be equally true.

No doubt it is an important difference between men of genius or poets, and men not of genius, that the latter are unable to grasp and confront the thought which visits them. But it is because it is too faint for expression, or even conscious impression. What merely quickens or retards the blood in their veins and fills their afternoons with pleasure they know not whence, conveys a distinct assurance to the finer organization of the poet.

We talk of genius as if it were a mere knack, and the poet could only express what other men conceived. But in comparison with his task, the poet is the least talented of any; the writer of prose has more skill. See what talent the smith has. His material is pliant in his hands. When the poet is most inspired, is stimulated by an *aura* which never even colors the afternoons of common men, then his talent is all gone, and he is no longer a poet. The gods do not grant him any skill more than another. They never put their gifts into his hands, but they encompass and sustain him with their breath.

To say that God has given a man many and great talents, frequently means that he has brought his heavens down within reach of his hands.

When the poetic frenzy seizes us, we run and scratch with our pen, intent only on worms, calling our mates around us, like the

cock, and delighting in the dust we make, but do not detect where the jewel lies, which, perhaps, we have in the mean time cast to a distance, or quite covered up again.

The poet's body even is not fed like other men's, but he sometimes tastes the genuine nectar and ambrosia of the gods, and lives a divine life. By the healthful and invigorating thrills of inspiration his life is preserved to a serene old age.

Some poems are for holidays only. They are polished and sweet, but it is the sweetness of sugar, and not such as toil gives to sour bread. The breath with which the poet utters his verse must be that by which he lives.

Great prose, of equal elevation, commands our respect more than great verse, since it implies a more permanent and level height, a life more pervaded with the grandeur of the thought. The poet often only makes an irruption, like a Parthian, and is off again, shooting while he retreats; but the prose writer has conquered like a Roman, and settled colonies.

The true poem is not that which the public read. There is always a poem not printed on paper, coincident with the production of this, stereotyped in the poet's life. It is *what he has become through his work*. Not how is the idea expressed in stone, or on canvas or paper, is the question, but how far it has obtained form and expression in the life of the artist. His true work will not stand in any prince's gallery.

My life has been the poem I would have writ,
But I could not both live and utter it.

THE POET'S DELAY.

In vain I see the morning rise,
In vain observe the western blaze,
Who idly look to other skies,
Expecting life by other ways.

Amidst such boundless wealth without,
I only still am poor within,

The birds have sung their summer out,
But still my spring does not begin.

Shall I then wait the autumn wind,
Compelled to seek a milder day,
And leave no curious nest behind,
No woods still echoing to my lay?

This raw and gusty day, and the creaking of the oaks and pines on shore, reminded us of more northern climes than Greece, and more wintry seas than the Aegean.

The genuine remains of Ossian, or those ancient poems which bear his name, though of less fame and extent, are, in many respects, of the same stamp with the Iliad itself. He asserts the dignity of the bard no less than Homer, and in his era we hear of no other priest than he. It will not avail to call him a heathen, because he personifies the sun and addresses it; and what if his heroes did "worship the ghosts of their fathers," their thin, airy, and unsubstantial forms? we worship but the ghosts of our fathers in more substantial forms. We cannot but respect the vigorous faith of those heathen, who sternly believed somewhat, and are inclined to say to the critics, who are offended by their superstitious rites, — Don't interrupt these men's prayers. As if we knew more about human life and a God, than the heathen and ancients. Does English theology contain the recent discoveries!

Ossian reminds us of the most refined and rudest eras, of Homer, Pindar, Isaiah, and the American Indian. In his poetry, as in Homer's, only the simplest and most enduring features of humanity are seen, such essential parts of a man as Stonehenge exhibits of a temple; we see the circles of stone, and the upright shaft alone. The phenomena of life acquire almost an unreal and gigantic size seen through his mists. Like all older and grander poetry, it is distinguished by the few elements in the lives of its heroes. They stand on the heath, between the stars and the earth, shrunk to the bones and sinews. The earth is a boundless plain for their deeds. They lead such a simple, dry, and everlasting life, as hardly needs depart with the flesh, but is transmitted entire from age to age. There are but few objects to

distract their sight, and their life is as unencumbered as the course of the stars they gaze at.

”The wrathful kings, on cairns apart,
Look forward from behind their shields,
And mark the wandering stars,
That brilliant westward move.”

It does not cost much for these heroes to live; they do not want much furniture. They are such forms of men only as can be seen afar through the mist, and have no costume nor dialect, but for language there is the tongue itself, and for costume there are always the skins of beasts and the bark of trees to be had. They live out their years by the vigor of their constitutions. They survive storms and the spears of their foes, and perform a few heroic deeds, and then

”Mounds will answer questions of them,
For many future years.”

Blind and infirm, they spend the remnant of their days listening to the lays of the bards, and feeling the weapons which laid their enemies low, and when at length they die, by a convulsion of nature, the bard allows us a short and misty glance into futurity, yet as clear, perchance, as their lives had been. When Mac-Roine was slain,

”His soul departed to his warlike sires,
To follow misty forms of boars,
In tempestuous islands bleak.”

The hero’s cairn is erected, and the bard sings a brief significant strain, which will suffice for epitaph and biography.

”The weak will find his bow in the dwelling,
The feeble will attempt to bend it.”

Compared with this simple, fibrous life, our civilized history appears the chronicle of debility, of fashion, and the arts of luxury. But the civilized man misses no real refinement in the poetry of the

rudest era. It reminds him that civilization does but dress men. It makes shoes, but it does not toughen the soles of the feet. It makes cloth of finer texture, but it does not touch the skin. Inside the civilized man stand the savage still in the place of honor. We are those blue-eyed, yellow-haired Saxons, those slender, dark-haired Normans.

The profession of the bard attracted more respect in those days from the importance attached to fame. It was his province to record the deeds of heroes. When Ossian hears the traditions of inferior bards, he exclaims, —

”I straightway seize the unfutile tales,
And send them down in faithful verse.”

His philosophy of life is expressed in the opening of the third Duan of Ca-Lodin.

”Whence have sprung the things that are?
And whither roll the passing years?
Where does Time conceal its two heads,
In dense impenetrable gloom,
Its surface marked with heroes’ deeds alone?
I view the generations gone;
The past appears but dim;
As objects by the moon’s faint beams,
Reflected from a distant lake.
I see, indeed, the thunderbolts of war,
But there the unmighty joyless dwell,
All those who send not down their deeds
To far, succeeding times.”

The ignoble warriors die and are forgotten;

”Strangers come to build a tower,
And throw their ashes overhand;
Some rusted swords appear in dust;
One, bending forward, says,

`The arms belonged to heroes gone;
We never heard their praise in song.'"

The grandeur of the similes is another feature which characterizes great poetry. Ossian seems to speak a gigantic and universal language. The images and pictures occupy even much space in the landscape, as if they could be seen only from the sides of mountains, and plains with a wide horizon, or across arms of the sea. The machinery is so massive that it cannot be less than natural. Oivana says to the spirit of her father, "Gray-haired Torkil of Torne," seen in the skies,

"Thou glidest away like receding ships."

So when the hosts of Fingal and Starne approach to battle,

"With murmurs loud, like rivers far,
The race of Torne hither moved."

And when compelled to retire,

"dragging his spear behind, Cudulin sank in the distant wood, Like a fire upblazing ere it dies."

Nor did Fingal want a proper audience when he spoke;

"A thousand orators inclined
To hear the lay of Fingal."

The threats too would have deterred a man. Vengeance and terror were real. Trenmore threatens the young warrior whom he meets on a foreign strand,

"Thy mother shall find thee pale on the shore,
While lessening on the waves she spies
The sails of him who slew her son."

If Ossian's heroes weep, it is from excess of strength, and not from weakness, a sacrifice or libation of fertile natures, like the perspiration of stone in summer's heat. We hardly know that tears have been shed, and it seems as if weeping were proper only for babes and heroes. Their joy and their sorrow are made of one stuff,

like rain and snow, the rainbow and the mist. When Fillan was worsted in fight, and ashamed in the presence of Fingal,

”He strode away forthwith,
And bent in grief above a stream,
His cheeks bedewed with tears.
From time to time the thistles gray
He lopped with his inverted lance.”

Crodar, blind and old, receives Ossian, son of Fingal, who comes to aid him in war; —

”`My eyes have failed,’ says he, `Crodar is blind,
Is thy strength like that of thy fathers?
Stretch, Ossian, thine arm to the hoary-haired.’
I gave my arm to the king.
The aged hero seized my hand;
He heaved a heavy sigh;
Tears flowed incessant down his cheek.
`Strong art thou, son of the mighty,
Though not so dreadful as Morven’s prince.

Let my feast be spread in the hall,
Let every sweet-voiced minstrel sing;
Great is he who is within my walls,
Sons of wave-echoing Croma.’”

Even Ossian himself, the hero-bard, pays tribute to the superior strength of his father Fingal.

”How beauteous, mighty man, was thy mind,
Why succeeded Ossian without its strength?”

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While we sailed fleetly before the wind, with the river gurgling under our stern, the thoughts of autumn coursed as steadily through our minds, and we observed less what was passing on the shore, than the dateless associations and impressions which the season

awakened, anticipating in some measure the progress of the year.

I hearing get, who had but ears,
And sight, who had but eyes before,
I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern, who knew but learning's lore.

Sitting with our faces now up stream, we studied the landscape by degrees, as one unrolls a map, rock, tree, house, hill, and meadow, assuming new and varying positions as wind and water shifted the scene, and there was variety enough for our entertainment in the metamorphoses of the simplest objects. Viewed from this side the scenery appeared new to us.

The most familiar sheet of water viewed from a new hill-top, yields a novel and unexpected pleasure. When we have travelled a few miles, we do not recognize the profiles even of the hills which overlook our native village, and perhaps no man is quite familiar with the horizon as seen from the hill nearest to his house, and can recall its outline distinctly when in the valley. We do not commonly know, beyond a short distance, which way the hills range which take in our houses and farms in their sweep. As if our birth had at first sundered things, and we had been thrust up through into nature like a wedge, and not till the wound heals and the scar disappears, do we begin to discover where we are, and that nature is one and continuous everywhere. It is an important epoch when a man who has always lived on the east side of a mountain, and seen it in the west, travels round and sees it in the east. Yet the universe is a sphere whose centre is wherever there is intelligence. The sun is not so central as a man. Upon an isolated hill-top, in an open country, we seem to ourselves to be standing on the boss of an immense shield, the immediate landscape being apparently depressed below the more remote, and rising gradually to the horizon, which is the rim of the shield, villas, steeples, forests, mountains, one above another, till they are swallowed up in the heavens. The most distant mountains in the horizon appear to rise directly from the shore of that lake in the woods by which we chance to be standing, while from the mountain-top, not only this, but a thousand nearer and larger lakes, are equally

unobserved.

Seen through this clear atmosphere, the works of the farmer, his ploughing and reaping, had a beauty to our eyes which he never saw. How fortunate were we who did not own an acre of these shores, who had not renounced our title to the whole. One who knew how to appropriate the true value of this world would be the poorest man in it. The poor rich man! all he has is what he has bought. What I see is mine. I am a large owner in the Merrimack intervals.

Men dig and dive but cannot my wealth spend,
Who yet no partial store appropriate,
Who no armed ship into the Indies send,
To rob me of my orient estate.

He is the rich man, and enjoys the fruits of riches, who summer and winter forever can find delight in his own thoughts. Buy a farm! What have I to pay for a farm which a farmer will take?

When I visit again some haunt of my youth, I am glad to find that nature wears so well. The landscape is indeed something real, and solid, and sincere, and I have not put my foot through it yet. There is a pleasant tract on the bank of the Concord, called Conantum, which I have in my mind; — the old deserted farm-house, the desolate pasture with its bleak cliff, the open wood, the river-reach, the green meadow in the midst, and the moss-grown wild-apple orchard, — places where one may have many thoughts and not decide anything. It is a scene which I can not only remember, as I might a vision, but when I will can bodily revisit, and find it even so, unaccountable, yet unpretending in its pleasant dreariness. When my thoughts are sensible of change, I love to see and sit on rocks which I *have* known, and pry into their moss, and see unchangeableness so established. I not yet gray on rocks forever gray, I no longer green under the evergreens. There is something even in the lapse of time by which time recovers itself.

As we have said, it proved a cool as well as breezy day, and by the time we reached Penichook Brook we were obliged to sit muffled in our cloaks, while the wind and current carried us along. We bounded swiftly over the rippling surface, far by many cultivated

lands and the ends of fences which divided innumerable farms, with hardly a thought for the various lives which they separated; now by long rows of alders or groves of pines or oaks, and now by some homestead where the women and children stood outside to gaze at us, till we had swept out of their sight, and beyond the limit of their longest Saturday ramble. We glided past the mouth of the Nashua, and not long after, of Salmon Brook, without more pause than the wind.

Salmon Brook,
Penichook,
Ye sweet waters of my brain,
When shall I look,
Or cast the hook,
In your waves again?

Silver eels,
Wooden creels,
These the baits that still allure,
And dragon-fly
That floated by,
May they still endure?

The shadows chased one another swiftly over wood and meadow, and their alternation harmonized with our mood. We could distinguish the clouds which cast each one, though never so high in the heavens. When a shadow flits across the landscape of the soul, where is the substance? Probably, if we were wise enough, we should see to what virtue we are indebted for any happier moment we enjoy. No doubt we have earned it at some time; for the gifts of Heaven are never quite gratuitous. The constant abrasion and decay of our lives makes the soil of our future growth. The wood which we now mature, when it becomes virgin mould, determines the character of our second growth, whether that be oaks or pines. Every man casts a shadow; not his body only, but his imperfectly mingled spirit. This is his grief. Let him turn which way he will, it falls opposite to the sun; short at noon, long at eve. Did you never see it? — But, referred to

the sun, it is widest at its base, which is no greater than his own opacity. The divine light is diffused almost entirely around us, and by means of the refraction of light, or else by a certain self-luminousness, or, as some will have it, transparency, if we preserve ourselves untarnished, we are able to enlighten our shaded side. At any rate, our darkest grief has that bronze color of the moon eclipsed. There is no ill which may not be dissipated, like the dark, if you let in a stronger light upon it. Shadows, referred to the source of light, are pyramids whose bases are never greater than those of the substances which cast them, but light is a spherical congeries of pyramids, whose very apexes are the sun itself, and hence the system shines with uninterrupted light. But if the light we use is but a paltry and narrow taper, most objects will cast a shadow wider than themselves.

The places where we had stopped or spent the night in our way up the river, had already acquired a slight historical interest for us; for many upward day's voyaging were unravelled in this rapid downward passage. When one landed to stretch his limbs by walking, he soon found himself falling behind his companion, and was obliged to take advantage of the curves, and ford the brooks and ravines in haste, to recover his ground. Already the banks and the distant meadows wore a sober and deepened tinge, for the September air had shorn them of their summer's pride.

"And what's a life? The flourishing array
Of the proud summer meadow, which to-day
Wears her green plush, and is to-morrow hay."

The air was really the "fine element" which the poets describe. It had a finer and sharper grain, seen against the russet pastures and meadows, than before, as if cleansed of the summer's impurities.

Having passed the New Hampshire line and reached the Horseshoe Interval in Tyngsborough, where there is a high and regular second bank, we climbed up this in haste to get a nearer sight of the autumnal flowers, asters, golden-rod, and yarrow, and blue-curls (*Trichostema dichotoma*), humble roadside blossoms, and, lingering still, the harebell and the *Rhexia Virginica*. The last,

growing in patches of lively pink flowers on the edge of the meadows, had almost too gay an appearance for the rest of the landscape, like a pink ribbon on the bonnet of a Puritan woman. Asters and golden-rods were the livery which nature wore at present. The latter alone expressed all the ripeness of the season, and shed their mellow lustre over the fields, as if the now declining summer's sun had bequeathed its hues to them. It is the floral solstice a little after midsummer, when the particles of golden light, the sun-dust, have, as it were, fallen like seeds on the earth, and produced these blossoms. On every hillside, and in every valley, stood countless asters, coreopses, tansies, golden-rods, and the whole race of yellow flowers, like Brahminical devotees, turning steadily with their luminary from morning till night.

"I see the golden-rod shine bright,
As sun-showers at the birth of day,
A golden plume of yellow light,
That robs the Day-god's splendid ray.

"The aster's violet rays divide
The bank with many stars for me,
And yarrow in blanch tints is dyed,
As moonlight floats across the sea.

"I see the emerald woods prepare
To shed their vestiture once more,
And distant elm-trees spot the air
With yellow pictures softly o'er.

. . . . .

"No more the water-lily's pride
In milk-white circles swims content,
No more the blue-weed's clusters ride
And mock the heavens' element.

. . . . .

"Autumn, thy wreath and mine are blent
With the same colors, for to me
A richer sky than all is lent,

While fades my dream-like company.

”Our skies glow purple, but the wind
Sobs chill through green trees and bright graas,
To-day shines fair, and lurk behind
The times that into winter pass.

”So fair we seem, so cold we are,
So fast we hasten to decay,
Yet through our night glows many a star,
That still shall claim its sunny day.”

So sang a Concord poet once.

There is a peculiar interest belonging to the still later flowers, which abide with us the approach of winter. There is something witch-like in the appearance of the witch-hazel, which blossoms late in October and in November, with its irregular and angular spray and petals like furies’ hair, or small ribbon streamers. Its blossoming, too, at this irregular period, when other shrubs have lost their leaves, as well as blossoms, looks like witches’ craft. Certainly it blooms in no garden of man’s. There is a whole fairy-land on the hillside where it grows.

Some have thought that the gales do not at present waft to the voyager the natural and original fragrance of the land, such as the early navigators described, and that the loss of many odoriferous native plants, sweet-scented grasses and medicinal herbs, which formerly sweetened the atmosphere, and rendered it salubrious, — by the grazing of cattle and the rooting of swine, is the source of many diseases which now prevail; the earth, say they, having been long subjected to extremely artificial and luxurious modes of cultivation, to gratify the appetite, converted into a stye and hot-bed, where men for profit increase the ordinary decay of nature.

According to the record of an old inhabitant of Tyngsborough, now dead, whose farm we were now gliding past, one of the greatest freshets on this river took place in October, 1785, and its height was marked by a nail driven into an apple-tree behind his house. One of his descendants has shown this to me, and I judged it to be at least

seventeen or eighteen feet above the level of the river at the time. According to Barber, the river rose twenty-one feet above the common high-water mark, at Bradford in the year 1818. Before the Lowell and Nashua railroad was built, the engineer made inquiries of the inhabitants along the banks as to how high they had known the river to rise. When he came to this house he was conducted to the apple-tree, and as the nail was not then visible, the lady of the house placed her hand on the trunk where she said that she remembered the nail to have been from her childhood. In the mean while the old man put his arm inside the tree, which was hollow, and felt the point of the nail sticking through, and it was exactly opposite to her hand. The spot is now plainly marked by a notch in the bark. But as no one else remembered the river to have risen so high as this, the engineer disregarded this statement, and I learn that there has since been a freshet which rose within nine inches of the rails at Biscuit Brook, and such a freshet as that of 1785 would have covered the railroad two feet deep.

The revolutions of nature tell as fine tales, and make as interesting revelations, on this river's banks, as on the Euphrates or the Nile. This apple-tree, which stands within a few rods of the river, is called "Elisha's apple-tree," from a friendly Indian, who was anciently in the service of Jonathan Tyng, and, with one other man, was killed here by his own race in one of the Indian wars, — the particulars of which affair were told us on the spot. He was buried close by, no one knew exactly where, but in the flood of 1785, so great a weight of water standing over the grave, caused the earth to settle where it had once been disturbed, and when the flood went down, a sunken spot, exactly of the form and size of the grave, revealed its locality; but this was now lost again, and no future flood can detect it; yet, no doubt, Nature will know how to point it out in due time, if it be necessary, by methods yet more searching and unexpected. Thus there is not only the crisis when the spirit ceases to inspire and expand the body, marked by a fresh mound in the churchyard, but there is also a crisis when the body ceases to take up room as such in nature, marked by a fainter depression in the earth.

We sat awhile to rest us here upon the brink of the western bank, surrounded by the glossy leaves of the red variety of the mountain

laurel, just above the head of Wicasuck Island, where we could observe some scows which were loading with clay from the opposite shore, and also overlook the grounds of the farmer, of whom I have spoken, who once hospitably entertained us for a night. He had on his pleasant farm, besides an abundance of the beach-plum, or *Prunus littoralis*, which grew wild, the Canada plum under cultivation, fine Porter apples, some peaches, and large patches of musk and water melons, which he cultivated for the Lowell market. Elisha's apple-tree, too, bore a native fruit, which was prized by the family. He raised the blood peach, which, as he showed us with satisfaction, was more like the oak in the color of its bark and in the setting of its branches, and was less liable to break down under the weight of the fruit, or the snow, than other varieties. It was of slower growth, and its branches strong and tough. There, also, was his nursery of native apple-trees, thickly set upon the bank, which cost but little care, and which he sold to the neighboring farmers when they were five or six years old. To see a single peach upon its stem makes an impression of paradisaical fertility and luxury. This reminded us even of an old Roman farm, as described by Varro: — Caesar Vopiscus Aedilicius, when he pleaded before the Censors, said that the grounds of Rosea were the garden (*sumen* the tid-bit) of Italy, in which a pole being left would not be visible the day after, on account of the growth of the herbage. This soil may not have been remarkably fertile, yet at this distance we thought that this anecdote might be told of the Tyngsborough farm.

When we passed Wicasuck Island, there was a pleasure-boat containing a youth and a maiden on the island brook, which we were pleased to see, since it proved that there were some hereabouts to whom our excursion would not be wholly strange. Before this, a canal-boatman, of whom we made some inquiries respecting Wicasuck Island, and who told us that it was disputed property, suspected that we had a claim upon it, and though we assured him that all this was news to us, and explained, as well as we could, why we had come to see it, he believed not a word of it, and seriously offered us one hundred dollars for our title. The only other small boats which we met with were used to pick up driftwood. Some of the poorer class along the stream collect, in this way, all the fuel

which they require. While one of us landed not far from this island to forage for provisions among the farm-houses whose roofs we saw, for our supply was now exhausted, the other, sitting in the boat, which was moored to the shore, was left alone to his reflections.

If there is nothing new on the earth, still the traveller always has a resource in the skies. They are constantly turning a new page to view. The wind sets the types on this blue ground, and the inquiring may always read a new truth there. There are things there written with such fine and subtile tinctures, paler than the juice of limes, that to the diurnal eye they leave no trace, and only the chemistry of night reveals them. Every man's daylight firmament answers in his mind to the brightness of the vision in his starriest hour.

These continents and hemispheres are soon run over, but an always unexplored and infinite region makes off on every side from the mind, further than to sunset, and we can make no highway or beaten track into it, but the grass immediately springs up in the path, for we travel there chiefly with our wings.

Sometimes we see objects as through a thin haze, in their eternal relations, and they stand like Palenque and the Pyramids, and we wonder who set them up, and for what purpose. If we see the reality in things, of what moment is the superficial and apparent longer? What are the earth and all its interests beside the deep surmise which pierces and scatters them? While I sit here listening to the waves which ripple and break on this shore, I am absolved from all obligation to the past, and the council of nations may reconsider its votes. The grating of a pebble annuls them. Still occasionally in my dreams I remember that rippling water.

Oft, as I turn me on my pillow o'er,
I hear the lapse of waves upon the shore,
Distinct as if it were at broad noonday,
And I were drifting down from Nashua.

With a bending sail we glided rapidly by Tyngsborough and Chelmsford, each holding in one hand half of a tart country apple-pie which we had purchased to celebrate our return, and in the other a fragment of the newspaper in which it was wrapped, devouring these

with divided relish, and learning the news which had transpired since we sailed. The river here opened into a broad and straight reach of great length, which we bounded merrily over before a smacking breeze, with a devil-may-care look in our faces, and our boat a white bone in its mouth, and a speed which greatly astonished some scow boatmen whom we met. The wind in the horizon rolled like a flood over valley and plain, and every tree bent to the blast, and the mountains like school-boys turned their cheeks to it. They were great and current motions, the flowing sail, the running stream, the waving tree, the roving wind. The north-wind stepped readily into the harness which we had provided, and pulled us along with good will. Sometimes we sailed as gently and steadily as the clouds overhead, watching the receding shores and the motions of our sail; the play of its pulse so like our own lives, so thin and yet so full of life, so noiseless when it labored hardest, so noisy and impatient when least effective; now bending to some generous impulse of the breeze, and then fluttering and flapping with a kind of human suspense. It was the scale on which the varying temperature of distant atmospheres was graduated, and it was some attraction for us that the breeze it played with had been out of doors so long. Thus we sailed, not being able to fly, but as next best, making a long furrow in the fields of the Merrimack toward our home, with our wings spread, but never lifting our heel from the watery trench; gracefully ploughing homeward with our brisk and willing team, wind and stream, pulling together, the former yet a wild steer, yoked to his more sedate fellow. It was very near flying, as when the duck rushes through the water with an impulse of her wings, throwing the spray about her, before she can rise. How we had stuck fast if drawn up but a few feet on the shore!

When we reached the great bend just above Middlesex, where the river runs east thirty-five miles to the sea, we at length lost the aid of this propitious wind, though we contrived to make one long and judicious tack carry us nearly to the locks of the canal. We were here locked through at noon by our old friend, the lover of the higher mathematics, who seemed glad to see us safe back again through so many locks; but we did not stop to consider any of his problems, though we could cheerfully have spent a whole autumn in this way another time, and never have asked what his religion was. It is so rare

to meet with a man out-doors who cherishes a worthy thought in his mind, which is independent of the labor of his hands. Behind every man's busy-ness there should be a level of undisturbed serenity and industry, as within the reef encircling a coral isle there is always an expanse of still water, where the depositions are going on which will finally raise it above the surface.

The eye which can appreciate the naked and absolute beauty of a scientific truth is far more rare than that which is attracted by a moral one. Few detect the morality in the former, or the science in the latter. Aristotle defined art to be <Lo'gos tou~ e'rgou a'neu hy'les>, *The principle of the work without the wood*; but most men prefer to have some of the wood along with the principle; they demand that the truth be clothed in flesh and blood and the warm colors of life. They prefer the partial statement because it fits and measures them and their commodities best. But science still exists everywhere as the sealer of weights and measures at least.

We have heard much about the poetry of mathematics, but very little of it has yet been sung. The ancients had a juster notion of their poetic value than we. The most distinct and beautiful statement of any truth must take at last the mathematical form. We might so simplify the rules of moral philosophy, as well as of arithmetic, that one formula would express them both. All the moral laws are readily translated into natural philosophy, for often we have only to restore the primitive meaning of the words by which they are expressed, or to attend to their literal instead of their metaphorical sense. They are already *supernatural* philosophy. The whole body of what is now called moral or ethical truth existed in the golden age as abstract science. Or, if we prefer, we may say that the laws of Nature are the purest morality. The Tree of Knowledge is a Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. He is not a true man of science who does not bring some sympathy to his studies, and expect to learn something by behavior as well as by application. It is childish to rest in the discovery of mere coincidences, or of partial and extraneous laws. The study of geometry is a petty and idle exercise of the mind, if it is applied to no larger system than the starry one. Mathematics should be mixed not only with physics but with ethics, *that* is *mixed* mathematics. The fact which interests us most is the life of the

naturalist. The purest science is still biographical. Nothing will dignify and elevate science while it is sundered so wholly from the moral life of its devotee, and he professes another religion than it teaches, and worships at a foreign shrine. Anciently the faith of a philosopher was identical with his system, or, in other words, his view of the universe.

My friends mistake when they communicate facts to me with so much pains. Their presence, even their exaggerations and loose statements, are equally good facts for me. I have no respect for facts even except when I would use them, and for the most part I am independent of those which I hear, and can afford to be inaccurate, or, in other words, to substitute more present and pressing facts in their place.

The poet uses the results of science and philosophy, and generalizes their widest deductions.

The process of discovery is very simple. An unwearied and systematic application of known laws to nature, causes the unknown to reveal themselves. Almost any *mode* of observation will be successful at last, for what is most wanted is method. Only let something be determined and fixed around which observation may rally. How many new relations a foot-rule alone will reveal, and to how many things still this has not been applied! What wonderful discoveries have been, and may still be, made, with a plumb-line, a level, a surveyor's compass, a thermometer, or a barometer! Where there is an observatory and a telescope, we expect that any eyes will see new worlds at once. I should say that the most prominent scientific men of our country, and perhaps of this age, are either serving the arts and not pure science, or are performing faithful but quite subordinate labors in particular departments. They make no steady and systematic approaches to the central fact. A discovery is made, and at once the attention of all observers is distracted to that, and it draws many analogous discoveries in its train; as if their work were not already laid out for them, but they had been lying on their oars. There is wanting constant and accurate observation with enough of theory to direct and discipline it.

But, above all, there is wanting genius. Our books of science, as they improve in accuracy, are in danger of losing the freshness and

vigor and readiness to appreciate the real laws of Nature, which is a marked merit in the ofttimes false theories of the ancients. I am attracted by the slight pride and satisfaction, the emphatic and even exaggerated style in which some of the older naturalists speak of the operations of Nature, though they are better qualified to appreciate than to discriminate the facts. Their assertions are not without value when disproved. If they are not facts, they are suggestions for Nature herself to act upon. "The Greeks," says Gesner, "had a common proverb (<Lagos katheudon>) a sleeping hare, for a dissembler or counterfeit; because the hare sees when she sleeps; for this is an admirable and rare work of Nature, that all the residue of her bodily parts take their rest, but the eye standeth continually sentinel."

Observation is so wide awake, and facts are being so rapidly added to the sum of human experience, that it appears as if the theorizer would always be in arrears, and were doomed forever to arrive at imperfect conclusions; but the power to perceive a law is equally rare in all ages of the world, and depends but little on the number of facts observed. The senses of the savage will furnish him with facts enough to set him up as a philosopher. The ancients can still speak to us with authority, even on the themes of geology and chemistry, though these studies are thought to have had their birth in modern times. Much is said about the progress of science in these centuries. I should say that the useful results of science had accumulated, but that there had been no accumulation of knowledge, strictly speaking, for posterity; for knowledge is to be acquired only by a corresponding experience. How can we *know* what we are *told* merely? Each man can interpret another's experience only by his own. We read that Newton discovered the law of gravitation, but how many who have heard of his famous discovery have recognized the same truth that he did? It may be not one. The revelation which was then made to him has not been superseded by the revelation made to any successor.

We see the *planet* fall,
And that is all.

In a review of Sir James Clark Ross's Antarctic Voyage of

Discovery, there is a passage which shows how far a body of men are commonly impressed by an object of sublimity, and which is also a good instance of the step from the sublime to the ridiculous. After describing the discovery of the Antarctic Continent, at first seen a hundred miles distant over fields of ice, — stupendous ranges of mountains from seven and eight to twelve and fourteen thousand feet high, covered with eternal snow and ice, in solitary and inaccessible grandeur, at one time the weather being beautifully clear, and the sun shining on the icy landscape; a continent whose islands only are accessible, and these exhibited "not the smallest trace of vegetation," only in a few places the rocks protruding through their icy covering, to convince the beholder that land formed the nucleus, and that it was not an iceberg; — the practical British reviewer proceeds thus, sticking to his last, "On the 22d of January, afternoon, the Expedition made the latitude of 74 degrees 20' and by 7h P.M., having ground (ground! where did they get ground?) to believe that they were then in a higher southern latitude than had been attained by that enterprising seaman, the late Captain James Weddel, and therefore higher than all their predecessors, an extra allowance of grog was issued to the crews as a reward for their perseverance."

Let not us sailors of late centuries take upon ourselves any airs on account of our Newtons and our Cuviers; we deserve an extra allowance of grog only.

We endeavored in vain to persuade the wind to blow through the long corridor of the canal, which is here cut straight through the woods, and were obliged to resort to our old expedient of drawing by a cord. When we reached the Concord, we were forced to row once more in good earnest, with neither wind nor current in our favor, but by this time the rawness of the day had disappeared, and we experienced the warmth of a summer afternoon. This change in the weather was favorable to our contemplative mood, and disposed us to dream yet deeper at our oars, while we floated in imagination farther down the stream of time, as we had floated down the stream of the Merrimack, to poets of a milder period than had engaged us in the morning. Chelmsford and Billerica appeared like old English towns, compared with Merrimack and Nashua, and many generations of civil poets might have lived and sung here.

What a contrast between the stern and desolate poetry of Ossian, and that of Chaucer, and even of Shakespeare and Milton, much more of Dryden, and Pope, and Gray. Our summer of English poetry like the Greek and Latin before it, seems well advanced toward its fall, and laden with the fruit and foliage of the season, with bright autumnal tints, but soon the winter will scatter its myriad clustering and shading leaves, and leave only a few desolate and fibrous boughs to sustain the snow and rime, and creak in the blasts of ages. We cannot escape the impression that the Muse has stooped a little in her flight, when we come to the literature of civilized eras. Now first we hear of various ages and styles of poetry; it is pastoral, and lyric, and narrative, and didactic; but the poetry of runic monuments is of one style, and for every age. The bard has in a great measure lost the dignity and sacredness of his office. Formerly he was called a *seer*, but now it is thought that one man sees as much as another. He has no longer the bardic rage, and only conceives the deed, which he formerly stood ready to perform. Hosts of warriors earnest for battle could not mistake nor dispense with the ancient bard. His lays were heard in the pauses of the fight. There was no danger of his being overlooked by his contemporaries. But now the hero and the bard are of different professions. When we come to the pleasant English verse, the storms have all cleared away and it will never thunder and lighten more. The poet has come within doors, and exchanged the forest and crag for the fireside, the hut of the Gael, and Stonehenge with its circles of stones, for the house of the Englishman. No hero stands at the door prepared to break forth into song or heroic action, but a homely Englishman, who cultivates the art of poetry. We see the comfortable fireside, and hear the crackling fagots in all the verse.

Notwithstanding the broad humanity of Chaucer, and the many social and domestic comforts which we meet with in his verse, we have to narrow our vision somewhat to consider him, as if he occupied less space in the landscape, and did not stretch over hill and valley as Ossian does. Yet, seen from the side of posterity, as the father of English poetry, preceded by a long silence or confusion in history, unenlivened by any strain of pure melody, we easily come to reverence him. Passing over the earlier continental poets, since we

are bound to the pleasant archipelago of English poetry, Chaucer's is the first name after that misty weather in which Ossian lived, which can detain us long. Indeed, though he represents so different a culture and society, he may be regarded as in many respects the Homer of the English poets. Perhaps he is the youthfullest of them all. We return to him as to the purest well, the fountain farthest removed from the highway of desultory life. He is so natural and cheerful, compared with later poets, that we might almost regard him as a personification of spring. To the faithful reader his muse has even given an aspect to his times, and when he is fresh from perusing him, they seem related to the golden age. It is still the poetry of youth and life, rather than of thought; and though the moral vein is obvious and constant, it has not yet banished the sun and daylight from his verse. The loftiest strains of the muse are, for the most part, sublimely plaintive, and not a carol as free as nature's. The content which the sun shines to celebrate from morning to evening, is unsung. The muse solaces herself, and is not ravished but consoled. There is a catastrophe implied, and a tragic element in all our verse, and less of the lark and morning dews, than of the nightingale and evening shades. But in Homer and Chaucer there is more of the innocence and serenity of youth than in the more modern and moral poets. The Iliad is not Sabbath but morning reading, and men cling to this old song, because they still have moments of unbaptized and uncommitted life, which give them an appetite for more. To the innocent there are neither cherubim nor angels. At rare intervals we rise above the necessity of virtue into an unchangeable morning light, in which we have only to live right on and breathe the ambrosial air. The Iliad represents no creed nor opinion, and we read it with a rare sense of freedom and irresponsibility, as if we trod on native ground, and were autochthones of the soil.

Chaucer had eminently the habits of a literary man and a scholar. There were never any times so stirring that there were not to be found some sedentary still. He was surrounded by the din of arms. The battles of Hallidon Hill and Neville's Cross, and the still more memorable battles of Cressy and Poictiers, were fought in his youth; but these did not concern our poet much, Wickliffe and his reform much more. He regarded himself always as one privileged to sit and

converse with books. He helped to establish the literary class. His character as one of the fathers of the English language would alone make his works important, even those which have little poetical merit. He was as simple as Wordsworth in preferring his homely but vigorous Saxon tongue, when it was neglected by the court, and had not yet attained to the dignity of a literature, and rendered a similar service to his country to that which Dante rendered to Italy. If Greek sufficeth for Greek, and Arabic for Arabian, and Hebrew for Jew, and Latin for Latin, then English shall suffice for him, for any of these will serve to teach truth "right as divers pathes leaden divers folke the right waye to Rome." In the Testament of Love he writes, "Let then clerkes enditen in Latin, for they have the propertie of science, and the knowinge in that facultie, and lette Frenchmen in their Frenche also enditen their queinte termes, for it is kyndely to their mouthes, and let us shewe our fantasies in soche wordes as we lerneden of our dames tonge."

He will know how to appreciate Chaucer best, who has come down to him the natural way, through the meagre pastures of Saxon and ante-Chaucerian poetry; and yet, so human and wise he appears after such diet, that we are liable to misjudge him still. In the Saxon poetry extant, in the earliest English, and the contemporary Scottish poetry, there is less to remind the reader of the rudeness and vigor of youth, than of the feebleness of a declining age. It is for the most part translation of imitation merely, with only an occasional and slight tinge of poetry, oftentimes the falsehood and exaggeration of fable, without its imagination to redeem it, and we look in vain to find antiquity restored, humanized, and made blithe again by some natural sympathy between it and the present. But Chaucer is fresh and modern still, and no dust settles on his true passages. It lightens along the line, and we are reminded that flowers have bloomed, and birds sung, and hearts beaten in England. Before the earnest gaze of the reader, the rust and moss of time gradually drop off, and the original green life is revealed. He was a homely and domestic man, and did breathe quite as modern men do.

There is no wisdom that can take place of humanity, and we find *that* in Chaucer. We can expand at last in his breadth, and we think that we could have been that man's acquaintance. He was worthy to

be a citizen of England, while Petrarch and Boccacio lived in Italy, and Tell and Tamerlane in Switzerland and in Asia, and Bruce in Scotland, and Wickliffe, and Gower, and Edward the Third, and John of Gaunt, and the Black Prince, were his own countrymen as well as contemporaries; all stout and stirring names. The fame of Roger Bacon came down from the preceding century, and the name of Dante still possessed the influence of a living presence. On the whole, Chaucer impresses us as greater than his reputation, and not a little like Homer and Shakespeare, for he would have held up his head in their company. Among early English poets he is the landlord and host, and has the authority of such. The affectionate mention which succeeding early poets make of him, coupling him with Homer and Virgil, is to be taken into the account in estimating his character and influence. King James and Dunbar of Scotland speak of him with more love and reverence than any modern author of his predecessors of the last century. The same childlike relation is without a parallel now. For the most part we read him without criticism, for he does not plead his own cause, but speaks for his readers, and has that greatness of trust and reliance which compels popularity. He confides in the reader, and speaks privily with him, keeping nothing back. And in return the reader has great confidence in him, that he tells no lies, and reads his story with indulgence, as if it were the circumlocution of a child, but often discovers afterwards that he has spoken with more directness and economy of words than a sage. He is never heartless,

”For first the thing is thought within the hart,
Er any word out from the mouth astart.”

And so new was all his theme in those days, that he did not have to invent, but only to tell.

We admire Chaucer for his sturdy English wit. The easy height he speaks from in his Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, as if he were equal to any of the company there assembled, is as good as any particular excellence in it. But though it is full of good sense and humanity, it is not transcendent poetry. For picturesque description of persons it is, perhaps, without a parallel in English poetry; yet it is

essentially humorous, as the loftiest genius never is. Humor, however broad and genial, takes a narrower view than enthusiasm. To his own finer vein he added all the common wit and wisdom of his time, and everywhere in his works his remarkable knowledge of the world, and nice perception of character, his rare common sense and proverbial wisdom, are apparent. His genius does not soar like Milton's, but is genial and familiar. It shows great tenderness and delicacy, but not the heroic sentiment. It is only a greater portion of humanity with all its weakness. He is not heroic, as Raleigh, nor pious, as Herbert, nor philosophical, as Shakespeare, but he is the child of the English muse, that child which is the father of the man. The charm of his poetry consists often only in an exceeding naturalness, perfect sincerity, with the behavior of a child rather than of a man.

Gentleness and delicacy of character are everywhere apparent in his verse. The simplest and humblest words come readily to his lips. No one can read the Prioress's tale, understanding the spirit in which it was written, and in which the child sings *O alma redemptoris mater*, or the account of the departure of Constance with her child upon the sea, in the Man of Lawe's tale, without feeling the native innocence and refinement of the author. Nor can we be mistaken respecting the essential purity of his character, disregarding the apology of the manners of the age. A simple pathos and feminine gentleness, which Wordsworth only occasionally approaches, but does not equal, are peculiar to him. We are tempted to say that his genius was feminine, not masculine. It was such a femininess, however, as is rarest to find in woman, though not the appreciation of it; perhaps it is not to be found at all in woman, but is only the feminine in man.

Such pure and genuine and childlike love of Nature is hardly to be found in any poet.

Chaucer's remarkably trustful and affectionate character appears in his familiar, yet innocent and reverent, manner of speaking of his God. He comes into his thought without any false reverence, and with no more parade than the zephyr to his ear. If Nature is our mother, then God is our father. There is less love and simple, practical trust in Shakespeare and Milton. How rarely in our English tongue do we find expressed any affection for God. Certainly, there is

no sentiment so rare as the love of God. Herbert almost alone expresses it, "Ah, my dear God!" Our poet uses similar words with propriety; and whenever he sees a beautiful person, or other object, prides himself on the "maistry" of his God. He even recommends Dido to be his bride, —

"if that God that heaven and yearth made, Would have a love for beauty and goodnesse, And womanhede, trouth, and semeliness."

But in justification of our praise, we must refer to his works themselves; to the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, the account of Gentilesse, the Flower and the Leaf, the stories of Griselda, Virginia, Ariadne, and Blanche the Dutchesse, and much more of less distinguished merit. There are many poets of more taste, and better manners, who knew how to leave out their dulness; but such negative genius cannot detain us long; we shall return to Chaucer still with love. Some natures, which are really rude and ill-developed, have yet a higher standard of perfection than others which are refined and well balanced. Even the clown has taste, whose dictates, though he disregards them, are higher and purer than those which the artist obeys. If we have to wander through many dull and prosaic passages in Chaucer, we have at least the satisfaction of knowing that it is not an artificial dulness, but too easily matched by many passages in life. We confess that we feel a disposition commonly to concentrate sweets, and accumulate pleasures; but the poet may be presumed always to speak as a traveller, who leads us through a varied scenery, from one eminence to another, and it is, perhaps, more pleasing, after all, to meet with a fine thought in its natural setting. Surely fate has enshrined it in these circumstances for some end. Nature strews her nuts and flowers broadcast, and never collects them into heaps. This was the soil it grew in, and this the hour it bloomed in; if sun, wind, and rain came here to cherish and expand the flower, shall not we come here to pluck it?

A true poem is distinguished not so much by a felicitous expression, or any thought it suggests, as by the atmosphere which surrounds it. Most have beauty of outline merely, and are striking as the form and bearing of a stranger; but true verses come toward us indistinctly, as the very breath of all friendliness, and envelop us in their spirit and fragrance. Much of our poetry has the very best

manners, but no character. It is only an unusual precision and elasticity of speech, as if its author had taken, not an intoxicating draught, but an electuary. It has the distinct outline of sculpture, and chronicles an early hour. Under the influence of passion all men speak thus distinctly, but wrath is not always divine.

There are two classes of men called poets. The one cultivates life, the other art, — one seeks food for nutriment, the other for flavor; one satisfies hunger, the other gratifies the palate. There are two kinds of writing, both great and rare; one that of genius, or the inspired, the other of intellect and taste, in the intervals of inspiration. The former is above criticism, always correct, giving the law to criticism. It vibrates and pulsates with life forever. It is sacred, and to be read with reverence, as the works of nature are studied. There are few instances of a sustained style of this kind; perhaps every man has spoken words, but the speaker is then careless of the record. Such a style removes us out of personal relations with its author; we do not take his words on our lips, but his sense into our hearts. It is the stream of inspiration, which bubbles out, now here, now there, now in this man, now in that. It matters not through what ice-crystals it is seen, now a fountain, now the ocean stream running under ground. It is in Shakespeare, Alpheus, in Burns, Arethuse; but ever the same. The other is self-possessed and wise. It is reverent of genius, and greedy of inspiration. It is conscious in the highest and the least degree. It consists with the most perfect command of the faculties. It dwells in a repose as of the desert, and objects are as distinct in it as oases or palms in the horizon of sand. The train of thought moves with subdued and measured step, like a caravan. But the pen is only an instrument in its hand, and not instinct with life, like a longer arm. It leaves a thin varnish or glaze over all its work. The works of Goethe furnish remarkable instances of the latter.

There is no just and serene criticism as yet. Nothing is considered simply as it lies in the lap of eternal beauty, but our thoughts, as well as our bodies, must be dressed after the latest fashions. Our taste is too delicate and particular. It says nay to the poet's work, but never yea to his hope. It invites him to adorn his deformities, and not to cast them off by expansion, as the tree its bark. We are a people who live in a bright light, in houses of pearl and porcelain, and drink only

light wines, whose teeth are easily set on edge by the least natural sour. If we had been consulted, the backbone of the earth would have been made, not of granite, but of Bristol spar. A modern author would have died in infancy in a ruder age. But the poet is something more than a scald, "a smoother and polisher of language"; he is a Cincinnatus in literature, and occupies no west end of the world. Like the sun, he will indifferently select his rhymes, and with a liberal taste weave into his verse the planet and the stubble.

In these old books the stucco has long since crumbled away, and we read what was sculptured in the granite. They are rude and massive in their proportions, rather than smooth and delicate in their finish. The workers in stone polish only their chimney ornaments, but their pyramids are roughly done. There is a soberness in a rough aspect, as of unhewn granite, which addresses a depth in us, but a polished surface hits only the ball of the eye. The true finish is the work of time, and the use to which a thing is put. The elements are still polishing the pyramids. Art may varnish and gild, but it can do no more. A work of genius is rough-hewn from the first, because it anticipates the lapse of time, and has an ingrained polish, which still appears when fragments are broken off, an essential quality of its substance. Its beauty is at the same time its strength, and it breaks with a lustre.

The great poem must have the stamp of greatness as well as its essence. The reader easily goes within the shallowest contemporary poetry, and informs it with all the life and promise of the day, as the pilgrim goes within the temple, and hears the faintest strains of the worshippers; but it will have to speak to posterity, traversing these deserts, through the ruins of its outmost walls, by the grandeur and beauty of its proportions.

——— ——— ——— —

But here on the stream of the Concord, where we have all the while been bodily, Nature, who is superior to all styles and ages, is now, with pensive face, composing her poem Autumn, with which no work of man will bear to be compared.

In summer we live out of doors, and have only impulses and feelings, which are all for action, and must wait commonly for the stillness and longer nights of autumn and winter before any thought

will subside; we are sensible that behind the rustling leaves, and the stacks of grain, and the bare clusters of the grape, there is the field of a wholly new life, which no man has lived; that even this earth was made for more mysterious and nobler inhabitants than men and women. In the hues of October sunsets, we see the portals to other mansions than those which we occupy, not far off geographically, —

”There is a place beyond that flaming hill,
From whence the stars their thin appearance shed,
A place beyond all place, where never ill,
Nor impure thought was ever harbored.”

Sometimes a mortal feels in himself Nature, not his Father but his Mother stirs within him, and he becomes immortal with her immortality. From time to time she claims kindredship with us, and some globule from her veins steals up into our own.

I am the autumnal sun,
With autumn gales my race is run;
When will the hazel put forth its flowers,
Or the grape ripen under my bowers?
When will the harvest or the hunter’s moon,
Turn my midnight into mid-noon?
I am all sere and yellow,
And to my core mellow.
The mast is dropping within my woods,
The winter is lurking within my moods,
And the rustling of the withered leaf
Is the constant music of my grief.

To an unskilful rhymer the Muse thus spoke in prose:

The moon no longer reflects the day, but rises to her absolute rule, and the husbandman and hunter acknowledge her for their mistress. Asters and golden-rods reign along the way, and the life-everlasting withers not. The fields are reaped and shorn of their pride, but an inward verdure still crowns them. The thistle scatters its down on the pool, and yellow leaves clothe the vine, and naught disturbs the

serious life of men. But behind the sheaves, and under the sod, there lurks a ripe fruit, which the reapers have not gathered, the true harvest of the year, which it bears forever, annually watering and maturing it, and man never severs the stalk which bears this palatable fruit.

Men nowhere, east or west, live yet a *natural* life, round which the vine clings, and which the elm willingly shadows. Man would desecrate it by his touch, and so the beauty of the world remains veiled to him. He needs not only to be spiritualized, but *naturalized*, on the soil of earth. Who shall conceive what kind of roof the heavens might extend over him, what seasons minister to him, and what employment dignify his life! Only the convalescent raise the veil of nature. An immortality in his life would confer immortality on his abode. The winds should be his breath, the seasons his moods, and he should impart of his serenity to Nature herself. But such as we know him he is ephemeral like the scenery which surrounds him, and does not aspire to an enduring existence. When we come down into the distant village, visible from the mountain-top, the nobler inhabitants with whom we peopled it have departed, and left only vermin in its desolate streets. It is the imagination of poets which puts those brave speeches into the mouths of their heroes. They may feign that Cato's last words were

> "The earth, the air, and seas I know, and all
> The joys and horrors of their peace and wars;
> And now will view the Gods' state and the stars,"

but such are not the thoughts nor the destiny of common men. What is this heaven which they expect, if it is no better than they expect? Are they prepared for a better than they can now imagine? Where is the heaven of him who dies on a stage, in a theatre? Here or nowhere is our heaven.

> "Although we see celestial bodies move
> Above the earth, the earth we till and love."

We can conceive of nothing more fair than something which we

have experienced. “The remembrance of youth is a sigh.” We linger in manhood to tell the dreams of our childhood, and they are half forgotten ere we have learned the language. We have need to be earth-born as well as heaven-born, <gegenei~s>, as was said of the Titans of old, or in a better sense than they. There have been heroes for whom this world seemed expressly prepared, as if creation had at last succeeded; whose daily life was the stuff of which our dreams are made, and whose presence enhanced the beauty and ampleness of Nature herself. Where they walked,

”Largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
Purpureo: Solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.”

“Here a more copious air invests the fields, and clothes with purple light; and they know their own sun and their own stars.” We love to hear some men speak, though we hear not what they say; the very air they breathe is rich and perfumed, and the sound of their voices falls on the ear like the rustling of leaves or the crackling of the fire. They stand many deep. They have the heavens for their abettors, as those who have never stood from under them, and they look at the stars with an answering ray. Their eyes are like glow-worms, and their motions graceful and flowing, as if a place were already found for them, like rivers flowing through valleys. The distinctions of morality, of right and wrong, sense and nonsense, are petty, and have lost their significance, beside these pure primeval natures. When I consider the clouds stretched in stupendous masses across the sky, frowning with darkness or glowing with downy light, or gilded with the rays of the setting sun, like the battlements of a city in the heavens, their grandeur appears thrown away on the meanness of my employment; the drapery is altogether too rich for such poor acting. I am hardly worthy to be a suburban dweller outside those walls

”Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!”

With our music we would fain challenge transiently another and

finer sort of intercourse than our daily toil permits. The strains come back to us amended in the echo, as when a friend reads our verse. Why have they so painted the fruits, and freighted them with such fragrance as to satisfy a more than animal appetite?

”I asked the schoolman, his advice was free,
But scored me out too intricate a way.”

These things imply, perchance, that we live on the verge of another and purer realm, from which these odors and sounds are wafted over to us. The borders of our plot are set with flowers, whose seeds were blown from more Elysian fields adjacent. They are the pot-herbs of the gods. Some fairer fruits and sweeter fragrances wafted over to us, betray another realm’s vicinity. There, too, does Echo dwell, and there is the abutment of the rainbow’s arch.

A finer race and finer fed
Feast and revel o’er our head,
And we titmen are only able
To catch the fragments from their table.
Theirs is the fragrance of the fruits,
While we consume the pulp and roots.
What are the moments that we stand
Astonished on the Olympian land!

We need pray for no higher heaven than the pure senses can furnish, a *purely* sensuous life. Our present senses are but the rudiments of what they are destined to become. We are comparatively deaf and dumb and blind, and without smell or taste or feeling. Every generation makes the discovery, that its divine vigor has been dissipated, and each sense and faculty misapplied and debauched. The ears were made, not for such trivial uses as men are wont to suppose, but to hear celestial sounds. The eyes were not made for such grovelling uses as they are now put to and worn out by, but to behold beauty now invisible. May we not *see* God? Are we to be put off and amused in this life, as it were with a mere allegory? Is not Nature, rightly read, that of which she is commonly taken to be

the symbol merely? When the common man looks into the sky, which he has not so much profaned, he thinks it less gross than the earth, and with reverence speaks of "the Heavens," but the seer will in the same sense speak of "the Earths," and his Father who is in them. "Did not he that made that which is *within*, make that which is *without* also?" What is it, then, to educate but to develop these divine germs called the senses? for individuals and states to deal magnanimously with the rising generation, leading it not into temptation, — not teach the eye to squint, nor attune the ear to profanity. But where is the instructed teacher? Where are the *normal* schools?

A Hindoo sage said, "As a dancer, having exhibited herself to the spectator, desists from the dance, so does Nature desist, having manifested herself to soul — . Nothing, in my opinion, is more gentle than Nature; once aware of having been seen, she does not again expose herself to the gaze of soul."

It is easier to discover another such a new world as Columbus did, than to go within one fold of this which we appear to know so well; the land is lost sight of, the compass varies, and mankind mutiny; and still history accumulates like rubbish before the portals of nature. But there is only necessary a moment's sanity and sound senses, to teach us that there is a nature behind the ordinary, in which we have only some vague pre-emption right and western reserve as yet. We live on the outskirts of that region. Carved wood, and floating boughs, and sunset skies, are all that we know of it. We are not to be imposed on by the longest spell of weather. Let us not, my friends, be wheedled and cheated into good behavior to earn the salt of our eternal porridge, whoever they are that attempt it. Let us wait a little, and not purchase any clearing here, trusting that richer bottoms will soon be put up. It is but thin soil where we stand; I have felt my roots in a richer ere this. I have seen a bunch of violets in a glass vase, tied loosely with a straw, which reminded me of myself.

I am a parcel of vain strivings tied
By a chance bond together,
Dangling this way and that, their links
Were made so loose and wide,

Methinks,
For milder weather.

A bunch of violets without their roots,
And sorrel intermixed,
Encircled by a wisp of straw
Once coiled about their shoots,
The law
By which I'm fixed.

A nosegay which Time clutched from out
Those fair Elysian fields,
With weeds and broken stems, in haste,
Doth make the rabble rout
That waste
The day he yields.

And here I bloom for a short hour unseen,
Drinking my juices up,
With no root in the land
To keep my branches green,
But stand
In a bare cup.

Some tender buds were left upon my stem
In mimicry of life,
But ah! the children will not know,
Till time has withered them,
The woe
With which they're rife.

But now I see I was not plucked for naught,
And after in life's vase
Of glass set while I might survive,
But by a kind hand brought
Alive
To a strange place.

That stock thus thinned will soon redeem its hours,
And by another year,
Such as God knows, with freer air,
More fruits and fairer flowers
Will bear,
While I droop here.

This world has many rings, like Saturn, and we live now on the outmost of them all. None can say deliberately that he inhabits the same sphere, or is contemporary with, the flower which his hands have plucked, and though his feet may seem to crush it, inconceivable spaces and ages separate them, and perchance there is no danger that he will hurt it. What do the botanists know? Our lives should go between the lichen and the bark. The eye may see for the hand, but not for the mind. We are still being born, and have as yet but a dim vision of sea and land, sun, moon and stars, and shall not see clearly till after nine days at least. That is a pathetic inquiry among travellers and geographers after the site of ancient Troy. It is not near where they think it is. When a thing is decayed and gone, how indistinct must be the place it occupied!

The anecdotes of modern astronomy affect me in the same way as do those faint revelations of the Real which are vouchsafed to men from time to time, or rather from eternity to eternity. When I remember the history of that faint light in our firmament, which we call Venus, which ancient men regarded, and which most modern men still regard, as a bright spark attached to a hollow sphere revolving about our earth, but which we have discovered to be *another world*, in itself, — how Copernicus, reasoning long and patiently about the matter, predicted confidently concerning it, before yet the telescope had been invented, that if ever men came to see it more clearly than they did then, they would discover that it had phases like our moon, and that within a century after his death the telescope was invented, and that prediction verified, by Galileo, — I am not without hope that we may, even here and now obtain some accurate information concerning that OTHER WORLD which the instinct of mankind has so long predicted. Indeed, all that we call science, as well as all that we call poetry, is a particle of such

information, accurate as far as it goes, though it be but to the confines of the truth. If we can reason so accurately, and with such wonderful confirmation of our reasoning, respecting so-called material objects and events infinitely removed beyond the range of our natural vision, so that the mind hesitates to trust its calculations even when they are confirmed by observation, why may not our speculations penetrate as far into the immaterial starry system, of which the former is but the outward and visible type? Surely, we are provided with senses as well fitted to penetrate the spaces of the real, the substantial, the eternal, as these outward are to penetrate the material universe. Veias, Menu, Zoroaster, Socrates, Christ, Shakespeare, Swedenborg, — these are some of our astronomers.

There are perturbations in our orbits produced by the influence of outlying spheres, and no astronomer has ever yet calculated the elements of that undiscovered world which produces them. I perceive in the common train of my thoughts a natural and uninterrupted sequence, each implying the next, or, if interruption occurs, it is occasioned by a new object being presented to my *senses*. But a steep, and sudden, and by these means unaccountable transition, is that from a comparatively narrow and partial, what is called common sense view of things, to an infinitely expanded and liberating one, from seeing things as men describe them, to seeing them as men cannot describe them. This implies a sense which is not common, but rare in the wisest man's experience; which is sensible or sentient of more than common.

In what enclosures does the astronomer loiter! His skies are shoal, and imagination, like a thirsty traveller, pants to be through their desert. The roving mind impatiently bursts the fetters of astronomical orbits, like cobwebs in a corner of its universe, and launches itself to where distance fails to follow, and law, such as science has discovered, grows weak and weary. The mind knows a distance and a space of which all those sums combined do not make a unit of measure, — the interval between that which *appears*, and that which *is*. I know that there are many stars, I know that they are far enough off, bright enough, steady enough in their orbits, — but what are they all worth? They are more waste land in the West, — star territory, — to be made slave States, perchance, if we colonize them. I have

interest but for six feet of star, and that interest is transient. Then farewell to all ye bodies, such as I have known ye.

Every man, if he is wise, will stand on such bottom as will sustain him, and if one gravitates downward more strongly than another, he will not venture on those meads where the latter walks securely, but rather leave the cranberries which grow there unraked by himself. Perchance, some spring a higher freshet will float them within his reach, though they may be watery and frost-bitten by that time. Such shrivelled berries I have seen in many a poor man's garret, ay, in many a church-bin and state-coffer, and with a little water and heat they swell again to their original size and fairness, and added sugar enough, stead mankind for sauce to this world's dish.

What is called common sense is excellent in its department, and as invaluable as the virtue of conformity in the army and navy, — for there must be subordination, — but uncommon sense, that sense which is common only to the wisest, is as much more excellent as it is more rare. Some aspire to excellence in the subordinate department, and may God speed them. What Fuller says of masters of colleges is universally applicable, that "a little alloy of dulness in a master of a college makes him fitter to manage secular affairs."

"He that wants faith, and apprehends a grief
Because he wants it, hath a true belief;
And he that grieves because his grief's so small,
Has a true grief, and the best Faith of all."

Or be encouraged by this other poet's strain, —

"By them went Fido marshal of the field:
Weak was his mother when she gave him day;
And he at first a sick and weakly child,
As e'er with tears welcomed the sunny ray;
Yet when more years afford more growth and might,
A champion stout he was, and puissant knight,
As ever came in field, or shone in armor bright.

"Mountains he flings in seas with mighty hand;

Stops and turns back the sun's impetuous course;
Nature breaks Nature's laws at his command;
No force of Hell or Heaven withstands his force;
Events to come yet many ages hence,
He present makes, by wondrous prescience;
Proving the senses blind by being blind to sense."

"Yesterday, at dawn," says Hafiz, "God delivered me from all worldly affliction; and amidst the gloom of night presented me with the water of immortality."

In the life of Sadi by Dowlat Shah occurs this sentence: "The eagle of the immaterial soul of Shaikh Sadi shook from his plumage the dust of his body."

Thus thoughtfully we were rowing homeward to find some autumnal work to do, and help on the revolution of the seasons. Perhaps Nature would condescend to make use of us even without our knowledge, as when we help to scatter her seeds in our walks, and carry burrs and cockles on our clothes from field to field.

All things are current found
On earthly ground,
Spirits and elements
Have their descents.

Night and day, year on year,
High and low, far and near,
These are our own aspects,
These are our own regrets.

Ye gods of the shore,
Who abide evermore,
I see your far headland,
Stretching on either hand;

I hear the sweet evening sounds
From your undecaying grounds;
Cheat me no more with time,

Take me to your clime.

As it grew later in the afternoon, and we rowed leisurely up the gentle stream, shut in between fragrant and blooming banks, where we had first pitched our tent, and drew nearer to the fields where our lives had passed, we seemed to detect the hues of our native sky in the southwest horizon. The sun was just setting behind the edge of a wooded hill, so rich a sunset as would never have ended but for some reason unknown to men, and to be marked with brighter colors than ordinary in the scroll of time. Though the shadows of the hills were beginning to steal over the stream, the whole river valley undulated with mild light, purer and more memorable than the noon. For so day bids farewell even to solitary vales uninhabited by man. Two herons, *Ardea herodias*, with their long and slender limbs relieved against the sky, were seen travelling high over our heads, — their lofty and silent flight, as they were wending their way at evening, surely not to alight in any marsh on the earth's surface, but, perchance, on the other side of our atmosphere, a symbol for the ages to study, whether impressed upon the sky, or sculptured amid the hieroglyphics of Egypt. Bound to some northern meadow, they held on their stately, stationary flight, like the storks in the picture, and disappeared at length behind the clouds. Dense flocks of blackbirds were winging their way along the river's course, as if on a short evening pilgrimage to some shrine of theirs, or to celebrate so fair a sunset.

"Therefore, as doth the pilgrim, whom the night
Hastes darkly to imprison on his way,
Think on thy home, my soul, and think aright
Of what's yet left thee of life's wasting day:
Thy sun posts westward, passed is thy morn,
And twice it is not given thee to be born."

The sun-setting presumed all men at leisure, and in a contemplative mood; but the farmer's boy only whistled the more thoughtfully as he drove his cows home from pasture, and the teamster refrained from cracking his whip, and guided his team with a subdued voice. The last vestiges of daylight at length disappeared,

and as we rowed silently along with our backs toward home through the darkness, only a few stars being visible, we had little to say, but sat absorbed in thought, or in silence listened to the monotonous sound of our oars, a sort of rudimental music, suitable for the ear of Night and the acoustics of her dimly lighted halls;

"Pulsae referunt ad sidera valles,"

and the valleys echoed the sound to the stars.

As we looked up in silence to those distant lights, we were reminded that it was a rare imagination which first taught that the stars are worlds, and had conferred a great benefit on mankind. It is recorded in the Chronicle of Bernaldez, that in Columbus's first voyage the natives "pointed towards the heavens, making signs that they believed that there was all power and holiness." We have reason to be grateful for celestial phenomena, for they chiefly answer to the ideal in man. The stars are distant and unobtrusive, but bright and enduring as our fairest and most memorable experiences. "Let the immortal depth of your soul lead you, but earnestly extend your eyes upwards."

As the truest society approaches always nearer to solitude, so the most excellent speech finally falls into Silence. Silence is audible to all men, at all times, and in all places. She is when we hear inwardly, sound when we hear outwardly. Creation has not displaced her, but is her visible framework and foil. All sounds are her servants, and purveyors, proclaiming not only that their mistress is, but is a rare mistress, and earnestly to be sought after. They are so far akin to Silence, that they are but bubbles on her surface, which straightway burst, an evidence of the strength and prolificness of the under-current; a faint utterance of Silence, and then only agreeable to our auditory nerves when they contrast themselves with and relieve the former. In proportion as they do this, and are heighteners and intensifiers of the Silence, they are harmony and purest melody.

Silence is the universal refuge, the sequel to all dull discourses and all foolish acts, a balm to our every chagrin, as welcome after satiety as after disappointment; that background which the painter may not daub, be he master or bungler, and which, however awkward a figure we may have made in the foreground, remains ever our inviolable asylum, where no indignity can assail, no personality

disturb us.

The orator puts off his individuality, and is then most eloquent when most silent. He listens while he speaks, and is a hearer along with his audience. Who has not hearkened to Her infinite din? She is Truth's speaking-trumpet, the sole oracle, the true Delphi and Dodona, which kings and courtiers would do well to consult, nor will they be balked by an ambiguous answer. For through Her all revelations have been made, and just in proportion as men have consulted her oracle within, they have obtained a clear insight, and their age has been marked as an enlightened one. But as often as they have gone gadding abroad to a strange Delphi and her mad priestess, their age has been dark and leaden. Such were garrulous and noisy eras, which no longer yield any sound, but the Grecian or silent and melodious era is ever sounding and resounding in the ears of men.

A good book is the plectrum with which our else silent lyres are struck. We not unfrequently refer the interest which belongs to our own unwritten sequel, to the written and comparatively lifeless body of the work. Of all books this sequel is the most indispensable part. It should be the author's aim to say once and emphatically, "He said," <e'phe, e'>. This is the most the book-maker can attain to. If he make his volume a mole whereon the waves of Silence may break, it is well.

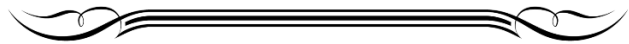
It were vain for me to endeavor to interrupt the Silence. She cannot be done into English. For six thousand years men have translated her with what fidelity belonged to each, and still she is little better than a sealed book. A man may run on confidently for a time, thinking he has her under his thumb, and shall one day exhaust her, but he too must at last be silent, and men remark only how brave a beginning he made; for when he at length dives into her, so vast is the disproportion of the told to the untold, that the former will seem but the bubble on the surface where he disappeared. Nevertheless, we will go on, like those Chinese cliff swallows, feathering our nests with the froth, which may one day be bread of life to such as dwell by the sea-shore.

We had made about fifty miles this day with sail and oar, and now, far in the evening, our boat was grating against the bulrushes of its native port, and its keel recognized the Concord mud, where some

semblance of its outline was still preserved in the flattened flags which had scarce yet erected themselves since our departure; and we leaped gladly on shore, drawing it up, and fastening it to the wild apple-tree, whose stem still bore the mark which its chain had worn in the chafing of the spring freshets.

THE END

WALDEN, OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS

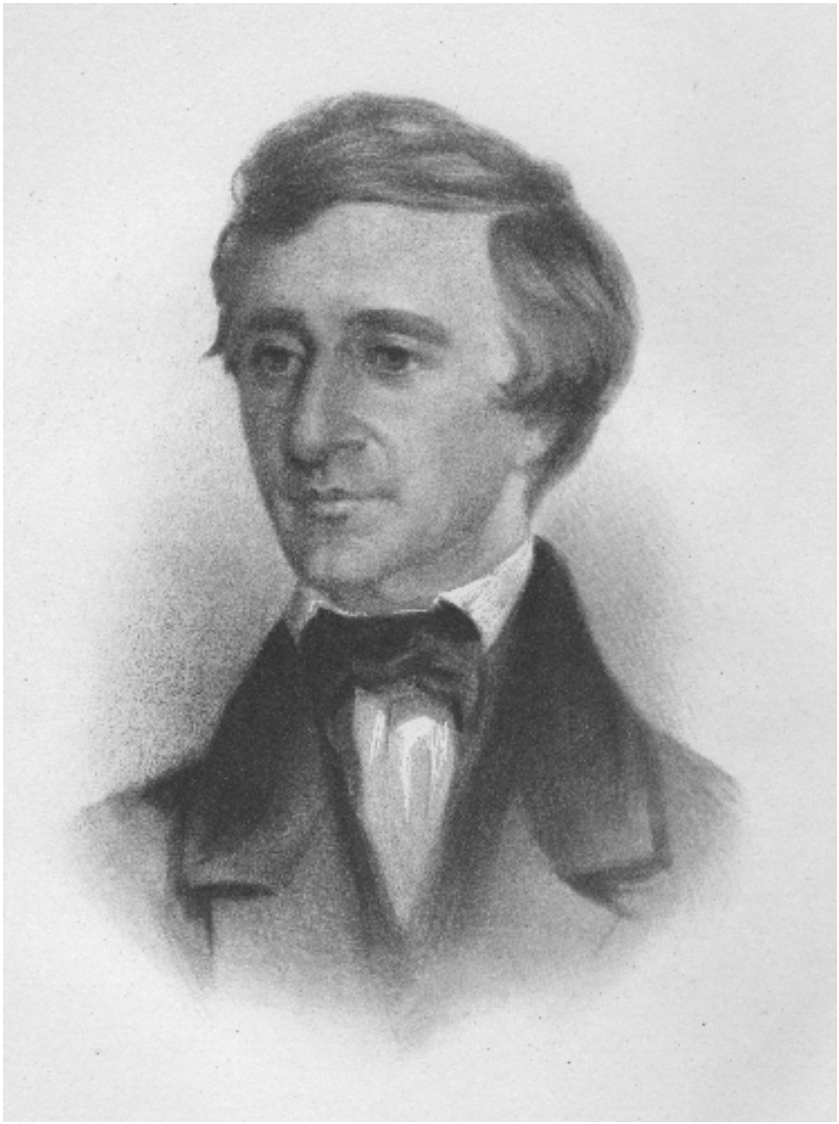


Widely regarded as Thoreau's masterpiece, this famous book was published in 1854 and details Thoreau's experiences over the course of two years, two months and two days in a cabin he built near Walden Pond, amidst woodland owned by his friend and mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson, near Concord, Massachusetts. The book compresses the time into a single calendar year and uses passages of four seasons to symbolise various steps in human development and experience. By immersing himself in nature, Thoreau hoped to gain a more objective understanding of society through personal introspection. Frugal and simplistic living and self-sufficiency were Thoreau's other goals, inspired by transcendentalist philosophy, a central theme of the American Romantic Period.

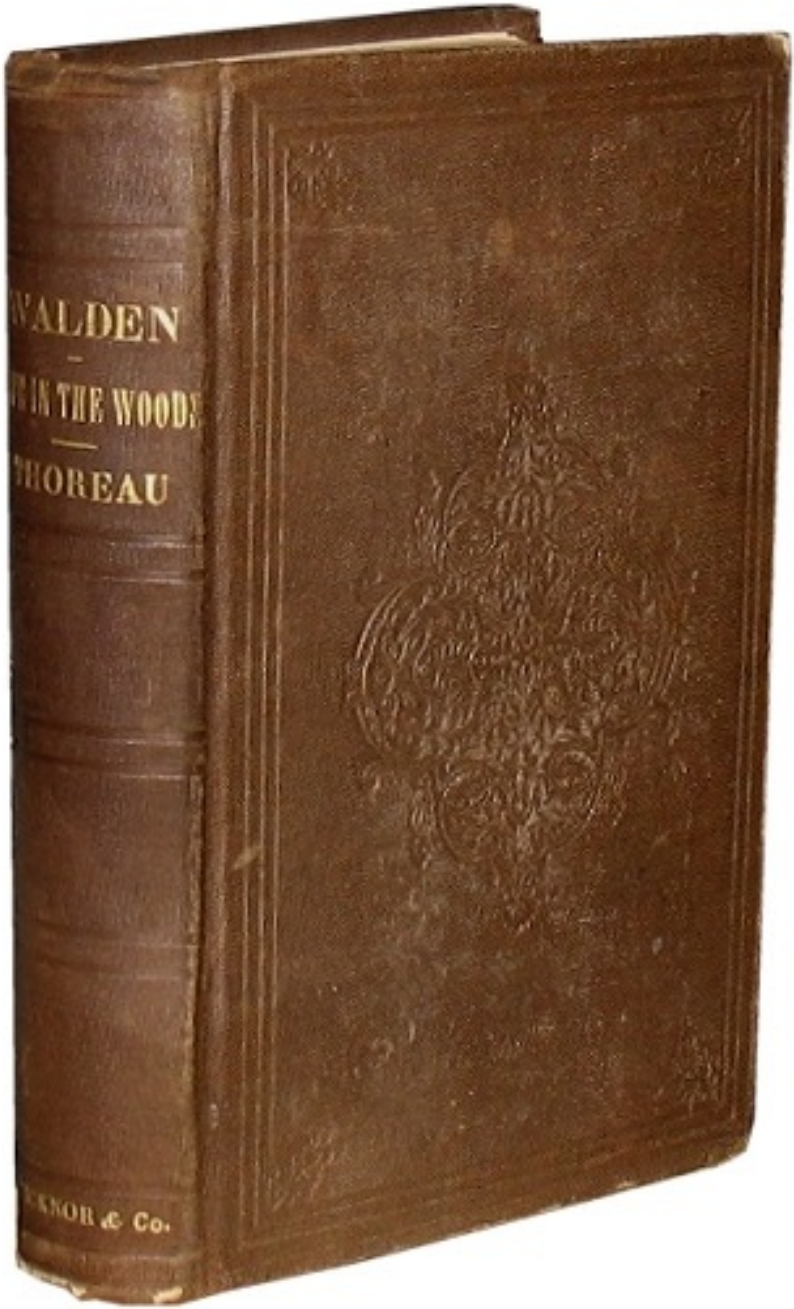
Part memoir and part spiritual quest, *Walden* opens with the announcement that Thoreau spent two years at Walden Pond living a simple life without support of any kind. As Thoreau writes, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." The book is separated into specific chapters, with each focussing on specific themes. For example, the first and longest chapter concerns economy, where Thoreau outlines his project: a two-year, two-month, and two-day stay at a cozy, "tightly shingled and plastered," English-style 10' × 15' cottage in the woods near Walden Pond. He does this, he says, to illustrate the spiritual benefits of a simplified lifestyle. He easily supplies the four necessities of life - food, shelter, clothing, and fuel - with the help of family and friends, particularly his mother, his best friend, and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Waldo Emerson. The latter provided Thoreau with a work exchange – he could build a small house and plant a garden if he cleared some land on the woodlot and did other chores while there. Thoreau meticulously records his expenditures and earnings, demonstrating his understanding of economy, as he builds his house and buys and

grows food. For a home and freedom, he spends a mere $28.12½, in 1845.

Walden emphasises the importance of solitude, contemplation, and closeness to nature in transcending the "desperate" existence that, the author argues, is the lot of most people. The book is not a traditional autobiography, but combines autobiography with a social critique of contemporary Western culture's consumerist and materialist attitudes and its distance from and destruction of nature. Following its release *Walden* enjoyed considerable success, steadily selling its run of 2,000 copies in five years and the work is now regarded as an American classic, celebrated for its natural simplicity, harmony and beauty of expression. Many have found great comfort in the escape it offers from the grasps of modern technology, while others have found *Walden* to be a reflection of what the world should actually be, using the book as a reference for leading a better life.



A drawing of Thoreau in 1854, the year of Walden's publication


WALDEN
IN THE WOODS
THOREAU
KNOR & Co.

The first edition

WALDEN;

OR,

LIFE IN THE WOODS.

By HENRY D. THOREAU,

AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS."



I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up. — Page 13.

BOSTON:

TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

M DCCC LIV.

The original title page

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Walden Pond



A replica of Thoreau's cabin at Walden



Site of Thoreau's cabin

Economy

When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months. At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again.

I should not obtrude my affairs so much on the notice of my readers if very particular inquiries had not been made by my townsmen concerning my mode of life, which some would call impertinent, though they do not appear to me at all impertinent, but, considering the circumstances, very natural and pertinent. Some have asked what I got to eat; if I did not feel lonesome; if I was not afraid; and the like. Others have been curious to learn what portion of my income I devoted to charitable purposes; and some, who have large families, how many poor children I maintained. I will therefore ask those of my readers who feel no particular interest in me to pardon me if I undertake to answer some of these questions in this book. In most books, the *I*, or first person, is omitted; in this it will be retained; that, in respect to egotism, is the main difference. We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well. Unfortunately, I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experience. Moreover, I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life, and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives; some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me. Perhaps these pages are more particularly addressed to poor students. As for the rest of my readers, they will accept such portions as apply to them. I trust that none will stretch the seams in putting on the coat, for it may do good service to him whom it fits.

I would fain say something, not so much concerning the Chinese and Sandwich Islanders as you who read these pages, who are said to

live in New England; something about your condition, especially your outward condition or circumstances in this world, in this town, what it is, whether it is necessary that it be as bad as it is, whether it cannot be improved as well as not. I have travelled a good deal in Concord; and everywhere, in shops, and offices, and fields, the inhabitants have appeared to me to be doing penance in a thousand remarkable ways. What I have heard of Bramins sitting exposed to four fires and looking in the face of the sun; or hanging suspended, with their heads downward, over flames; or looking at the heavens over their shoulders "until it becomes impossible for them to resume their natural position, while from the twist of the neck nothing but liquids can pass into the stomach"; or dwelling, chained for life, at the foot of a tree; or measuring with their bodies, like caterpillars, the breadth of vast empires; or standing on one leg on the tops of pillars — even these forms of conscious penance are hardly more incredible and astonishing than the scenes which I daily witness. The twelve labors of Hercules were trifling in comparison with those which my neighbors have undertaken; for they were only twelve, and had an end; but I could never see that these men slew or captured any monster or finished any labor. They have no friend Iolaus to burn with a hot iron the root of the hydra's head, but as soon as one head is crushed, two spring up.

I see young men, my townsmen, whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools; for these are more easily acquired than got rid of. Better if they had been born in the open pasture and suckled by a wolf, that they might have seen with clearer eyes what field they were called to labor in. Who made them serfs of the soil? Why should they eat their sixty acres, when man is condemned to eat only his peck of dirt? Why should they begin digging their graves as soon as they are born? They have got to live a man's life, pushing all these things before them, and get on as well as they can. How many a poor immortal soul have I met well-nigh crushed and smothered under its load, creeping down the road of life, pushing before it a barn seventy-five feet by forty, its Augean stables never cleansed, and one hundred acres of land, tillage, mowing, pasture, and woodlot! The portionless, who struggle with no such unnecessary inherited encumbrances, find it labor enough to

subdue and cultivate a few cubic feet of flesh.

But men labor under a mistake. The better part of the man is soon plowed into the soil for compost. By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, they are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal. It is a fool's life, as they will find when they get to the end of it, if not before. It is said that Deucalion and Pyrrha created men by throwing stones over their heads behind them: —

> Inde genus durum sumus, experiensque laborum,
> Et documenta damus qua simus origine nati.

Or, as Raleigh rhymes it in his sonorous way, —

> "From thence our kind hard-hearted is, enduring pain and care,
> Approving that our bodies of a stony nature are."

So much for a blind obedience to a blundering oracle, throwing the stones over their heads behind them, and not seeing where they fell.

Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the factitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them. Their fingers, from excessive toil, are too clumsy and tremble too much for that. Actually, the laboring man has not leisure for a true integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain the manliest relations to men; his labor would be depreciated in the market. He has no time to be anything but a machine. How can he remember well his ignorance — which his growth requires — who has so often to use his knowledge? We should feed and clothe him gratuitously sometimes, and recruit him with our cordials, before we judge of him. The finest qualities of our nature, like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling. Yet we do not treat ourselves nor one another thus tenderly.

Some of you, we all know, are poor, find it hard to live, are sometimes, as it were, gasping for breath. I have no doubt that some of you who read this book are unable to pay for all the dinners which

you have actually eaten, or for the coats and shoes which are fast wearing or are already worn out, and have come to this page to spend borrowed or stolen time, robbing your creditors of an hour. It is very evident what mean and sneaking lives many of you live, for my sight has been whetted by experience; always on the limits, trying to get into business and trying to get out of debt, a very ancient slough, called by the Latins *aes alienum*, another's brass, for some of their coins were made of brass; still living, and dying, and buried by this other's brass; always promising to pay, promising to pay, tomorrow, and dying today, insolvent; seeking to curry favor, to get custom, by how many modes, only not state-prison offenses; lying, flattering, voting, contracting yourselves into a nutshell of civility or dilating into an atmosphere of thin and vaporous generosity, that you may persuade your neighbor to let you make his shoes, or his hat, or his coat, or his carriage, or import his groceries for him; making yourselves sick, that you may lay up something against a sick day, something to be tucked away in an old chest, or in a stocking behind the plastering, or, more safely, in the brick bank; no matter where, no matter how much or how little.

I sometimes wonder that we can be so frivolous, I may almost say, as to attend to the gross but somewhat foreign form of servitude called Negro Slavery, there are so many keen and subtle masters that enslave both North and South. It is hard to have a Southern overseer; it is worse to have a Northern one; but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself. Talk of a divinity in man! Look at the teamster on the highway, wending to market by day or night; does any divinity stir within him? His highest duty to fodder and water his horses! What is his destiny to him compared with the shipping interests? Does not he drive for Squire Make-a-stir? How godlike, how immortal, is he? See how he cowers and sneaks, how vaguely all the day he fears, not being immortal nor divine, but the slave and prisoner of his own opinion of himself, a fame won by his own deeds. Public opinion is a weak tyrant compared with our own private opinion. What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate. Self-emancipation even in the West Indian provinces of the fancy and imagination — what Wilberforce is there to bring that about? Think, also, of the ladies of

the land weaving toilet cushions against the last day, not to betray too green an interest in their fates! As if you could kill time without injuring eternity.

The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.

When we consider what, to use the words of the catechism, is the chief end of man, and what are the true necessaries and means of life, it appears as if men had deliberately chosen the common mode of living because they preferred it to any other. Yet they honestly think there is no choice left. But alert and healthy natures remember that the sun rose clear. It is never too late to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof. What everybody echoes or in silence passes by as true to-day may turn out to be falsehood to-morrow, mere smoke of opinion, which some had trusted for a cloud that would sprinkle fertilizing rain on their fields. What old people say you cannot do, you try and find that you can. Old deeds for old people, and new deeds for new. Old people did not know enough once, perchance, to fetch fresh fuel to keep the fire a-going; new people put a little dry wood under a pot, and are whirled round the globe with the speed of birds, in a way to kill old people, as the phrase is. Age is no better, hardly so well, qualified for an instructor as youth, for it has not profited so much as it has lost. One may almost doubt if the wisest man has learned anything of absolute value by living. Practically, the old have no very important advice to give the young, their own experience has been so partial, and their lives have been such miserable failures, for private reasons, as they must believe; and it may be that they have some faith left which belies that experience, and they are only less young than they were. I have lived some thirty years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors. They have told me nothing, and probably

cannot tell me anything to the purpose. Here is life, an experiment to a great extent untried by me; but it does not avail me that they have tried it. If I have any experience which I think valuable, I am sure to reflect that this my Mentors said nothing about.

One farmer says to me, "You cannot live on vegetable food solely, for it furnishes nothing to make bones with"; and so he religiously devotes a part of his day to supplying his system with the raw material of bones; walking all the while he talks behind his oxen, which, with vegetable-made bones, jerk him and his lumbering plow along in spite of every obstacle. Some things are really necessaries of life in some circles, the most helpless and diseased, which in others are luxuries merely, and in others still are entirely unknown.

The whole ground of human life seems to some to have been gone over by their predecessors, both the heights and the valleys, and all things to have been cared for. According to Evelyn, "the wise Solomon prescribed ordinances for the very distances of trees; and the Roman prætors have decided how often you may go into your neighbor's land to gather the acorns which fall on it without trespass, and what share belongs to that neighbor." Hippocrates has even left directions how we should cut our nails; that is, even with the ends of the fingers, neither shorter nor longer. Undoubtedly the very tedium and ennui which presume to have exhausted the variety and the joys of life are as old as Adam. But man's capacities have never been measured; nor are we to judge of what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried. Whatever have been thy failures hitherto, "be not afflicted, my child, for who shall assign to thee what thou hast left undone?"

We might try our lives by a thousand simple tests; as, for instance, that the same sun which ripens my beans illumines at once a system of earths like ours. If I had remembered this it would have prevented some mistakes. This was not the light in which I hoed them. The stars are the apexes of what wonderful triangles! What distant and different beings in the various mansions of the universe are contemplating the same one at the same moment! Nature and human life are as various as our several constitutions. Who shall say what prospect life offers to another? Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant? We

should live in all the ages of the world in an hour; ay, in all the worlds of the ages. History, Poetry, Mythology! — I know of no reading of another's experience so startling and informing as this would be.

The greater part of what my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad, and if I repent of anything, it is very likely to be my good behavior. What demon possessed me that I behaved so well? You may say the wisest thing you can, old man — you who have lived seventy years, not without honor of a kind — I hear an irresistible voice which invites me away from all that. One generation abandons the enterprises of another like stranded vessels.

I think that we may safely trust a good deal more than we do. We may waive just so much care of ourselves as we honestly bestow elsewhere. Nature is as well adapted to our weakness as to our strength. The incessant anxiety and strain of some is a well-nigh incurable form of disease. We are made to exaggerate the importance of what work we do; and yet how much is not done by us! or, what if we had been taken sick? How vigilant we are! determined not to live by faith if we can avoid it; all the day long on the alert, at night we unwillingly say our prayers and commit ourselves to uncertainties. So thoroughly and sincerely are we compelled to live, reverencing our life, and denying the possibility of change. This is the only way, we say; but there are as many ways as there can be drawn radii from one centre. All change is a miracle to contemplate; but it is a miracle which is taking place every instant. Confucius said, "To know that we know what we know, and that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge." When one man has reduced a fact of the imagination to be a fact to his understanding, I foresee that all men at length establish their lives on that basis.

Let us consider for a moment what most of the trouble and anxiety which I have referred to is about, and how much it is necessary that we be troubled, or at least careful. It would be some advantage to live a primitive and frontier life, though in the midst of an outward civilization, if only to learn what are the gross necessaries of life and what methods have been taken to obtain them; or even to look over the old day-books of the merchants, to see what it was that men most commonly bought at the stores, what they

stored, that is, what are the grossest groceries. For the improvements of ages have had but little influence on the essential laws of man's existence; as our skeletons, probably, are not to be distinguished from those of our ancestors.

By the words, *necessary of life*, I mean whatever, of all that man obtains by his own exertions, has been from the first, or from long use has become, so important to human life that few, if any, whether from savageness, or poverty, or philosophy, ever attempt to do without it. To many creatures there is in this sense but one necessary of life, Food. To the bison of the prairie it is a few inches of palatable grass, with water to drink; unless he seeks the Shelter of the forest or the mountain's shadow. None of the brute creation requires more than Food and Shelter. The necessaries of life for man in this climate may, accurately enough, be distributed under the several heads of Food, Shelter, Clothing, and Fuel; for not till we have secured these are we prepared to entertain the true problems of life with freedom and a prospect of success. Man has invented, not only houses, but clothes and cooked food; and possibly from the accidental discovery of the warmth of fire, and the consequent use of it, at first a luxury, arose the present necessity to sit by it. We observe cats and dogs acquiring the same second nature. By proper Shelter and Clothing we legitimately retain our own internal heat; but with an excess of these, or of Fuel, that is, with an external heat greater than our own internal, may not cookery properly be said to begin? Darwin, the naturalist, says of the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, that while his own party, who were well clothed and sitting close to a fire, were far from too warm, these naked savages, who were farther off, were observed, to his great surprise, "to be streaming with perspiration at undergoing such a roasting." So, we are told, the New Hollander goes naked with impunity, while the European shivers in his clothes. Is it impossible to combine the hardiness of these savages with the intellectualness of the civilized man? According to Liebig, man's body is a stove, and food the fuel which keeps up the internal combustion in the lungs. In cold weather we eat more, in warm less. The animal heat is the result of a slow combustion, and disease and death take place when this is too rapid; or for want of fuel, or from some defect in the draught, the fire goes out. Of course the vital heat is not to be confounded with

fire; but so much for analogy. It appears, therefore, from the above list, that the expression, *animal life*, is nearly synonymous with the expression, *animal heat*; for while Food may be regarded as the Fuel which keeps up the fire within us — and Fuel serves only to prepare that Food or to increase the warmth of our bodies by addition from without — Shelter and Clothing also serve only to retain the heat thus generated and absorbed.

The grand necessity, then, for our bodies, is to keep warm, to keep the vital heat in us. What pains we accordingly take, not only with our Food, and Clothing, and Shelter, but with our beds, which are our night-clothes, robbing the nests and breasts of birds to prepare this shelter within a shelter, as the mole has its bed of grass and leaves at the end of its burrow! The poor man is wont to complain that this is a cold world; and to cold, no less physical than social, we refer directly a great part of our ails. The summer, in some climates, makes possible to man a sort of Elysian life. Fuel, except to cook his Food, is then unnecessary; the sun is his fire, and many of the fruits are sufficiently cooked by its rays; while Food generally is more various, and more easily obtained, and Clothing and Shelter are wholly or half unnecessary. At the present day, and in this country, as I find by my own experience, a few implements, a knife, an axe, a spade, a wheelbarrow, etc., and for the studious, lamplight, stationery, and access to a few books, rank next to necessaries, and can all be obtained at a trifling cost. Yet some, not wise, go to the other side of the globe, to barbarous and unhealthy regions, and devote themselves to trade for ten or twenty years, in order that they may live — that is, keep comfortably warm — and die in New England at last. The luxuriously rich are not simply kept comfortably warm, but unnaturally hot; as I implied before, they are cooked, of course *à la mode*.

Most of the luxuries, and many of the so-called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind. With respect to luxuries and comforts, the wisest have ever lived a more simple and meagre life than the poor. The ancient philosophers, Chinese, Hindoo, Persian, and Greek, were a class than which none has been poorer in outward riches, none so rich in inward. We know not much about them. It is remarkable that

we know so much of them as we do. The same is true of the more modern reformers and benefactors of their race. None can be an impartial or wise observer of human life but from the vantage ground of what we should call voluntary poverty. Of a life of luxury the fruit is luxury, whether in agriculture, or commerce, or literature, or art. There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers. Yet it is admirable to profess because it was once admirable to live. To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust. It is to solve some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically. The success of great scholars and thinkers is commonly a courtier-like success, not kingly, not manly. They make shift to live merely by conformity, practically as their fathers did, and are in no sense the progenitors of a noble race of men. But why do men degenerate ever? What makes families run out? What is the nature of the luxury which enervates and destroys nations? Are we sure that there is none of it in our own lives? The philosopher is in advance of his age even in the outward form of his life. He is not fed, sheltered, clothed, warmed, like his contemporaries. How can a man be a philosopher and not maintain his vital heat by better methods than other men?

When a man is warmed by the several modes which I have described, what does he want next? Surely not more warmth of the same kind, as more and richer food, larger and more splendid houses, finer and more abundant clothing, more numerous, incessant, and hotter fires, and the like. When he has obtained those things which are necessary to life, there is another alternative than to obtain the superfluities; and that is, to adventure on life now, his vacation from humbler toil having commenced. The soil, it appears, is suited to the seed, for it has sent its radicle downward, and it may now send its shoot upward also with confidence. Why has man rooted himself thus firmly in the earth, but that he may rise in the same proportion into the heavens above? — for the nobler plants are valued for the fruit they bear at last in the air and light, far from the ground, and are not treated like the humbler esculents, which, though they may be biennials, are cultivated only till they have perfected their root, and

often cut down at top for this purpose, so that most would not know them in their flowering season.

I do not mean to prescribe rules to strong and valiant natures, who will mind their own affairs whether in heaven or hell, and perchance build more magnificently and spend more lavishly than the richest, without ever impoverishing themselves, not knowing how they live — if, indeed, there are any such, as has been dreamed; nor to those who find their encouragement and inspiration in precisely the present condition of things, and cherish it with the fondness and enthusiasm of lovers — and, to some extent, I reckon myself in this number; I do not speak to those who are well employed, in whatever circumstances, and they know whether they are well employed or not; — but mainly to the mass of men who are discontented, and idly complaining of the hardness of their lot or of the times, when they might improve them. There are some who complain most energetically and inconsolably of any, because they are, as they say, doing their duty. I also have in my mind that seemingly wealthy, but most terribly impoverished class of all, who have accumulated dross, but know not how to use it, or get rid of it, and thus have forged their own golden or silver fetters.

If I should attempt to tell how I have desired to spend my life in years past, it would probably surprise those of my readers who are somewhat acquainted with its actual history; it would certainly astonish those who know nothing about it. I will only hint at some of the enterprises which I have cherished.

In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternities, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line. You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men's, and yet not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint "No Admittance" on my gate.

I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtle dove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks and what calls they answered to. I have met

one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud, and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.

To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but, if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter, before yet any neighbor was stirring about his business, have I been about mine! No doubt, many of my townsmen have met me returning from this enterprise, farmers starting for Boston in the twilight, or woodchoppers going to their work. It is true, I never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but, doubt not, it was of the last importance only to be present at it.

So many autumn, ay, and winter days, spent outside the town, trying to hear what was in the wind, to hear and carry it express! I well-nigh sunk all my capital in it, and lost my own breath into the bargain, running in the face of it. If it had concerned either of the political parties, depend upon it, it would have appeared in the Gazette with the earliest intelligence. At other times watching from the observatory of some cliff or tree, to telegraph any new arrival; or waiting at evening on the hill-tops for the sky to fall, that I might catch something, though I never caught much, and that, manna-wise, would dissolve again in the sun.

For a long time I was reporter to a journal, of no very wide circulation, whose editor has never yet seen fit to print the bulk of my contributions, and, as is too common with writers, I got only my labor for my pains. However, in this case my pains were their own reward.

For many years I was self-appointed inspector of snow-storms and rain-storms, and did my duty faithfully; surveyor, if not of highways, then of forest paths and all across-lot routes, keeping them open, and ravines bridged and passable at all seasons, where the public heel had testified to their utility.

I have looked after the wild stock of the town, which give a faithful herdsman a good deal of trouble by leaping fences; and I have had an eye to the unfrequented nooks and corners of the farm; though I did not always know whether Jonas or Solomon worked in a particular field to-day; that was none of my business. I have watered the red huckleberry, the sand cherry and the nettle-tree, the red pine

and the black ash, the white grape and the yellow violet, which might have withered else in dry seasons.

In short, I went on thus for a long time (I may say it without boasting), faithfully minding my business, till it became more and more evident that my townsmen would not after all admit me into the list of town officers, nor make my place a sinecure with a moderate allowance. My accounts, which I can swear to have kept faithfully, I have, indeed, never got audited, still less accepted, still less paid and settled. However, I have not set my heart on that.

Not long since, a strolling Indian went to sell baskets at the house of a well-known lawyer in my neighborhood. "Do you wish to buy any baskets?" he asked. "No, we do not want any," was the reply. "What!" exclaimed the Indian as he went out the gate, "do you mean to starve us?" Having seen his industrious white neighbors so well off — that the lawyer had only to weave arguments, and, by some magic, wealth and standing followed — he had said to himself: I will go into business; I will weave baskets; it is a thing which I can do. Thinking that when he had made the baskets he would have done his part, and then it would be the white man's to buy them. He had not discovered that it was necessary for him to make it worth the other's while to buy them, or at least make him think that it was so, or to make something else which it would be worth his while to buy. I too had woven a kind of basket of a delicate texture, but I had not made it worth any one's while to buy them. Yet not the less, in my case, did I think it worth my while to weave them, and instead of studying how to make it worth men's while to buy my baskets, I studied rather how to avoid the necessity of selling them. The life which men praise and regard as successful is but one kind. Why should we exaggerate any one kind at the expense of the others?

Finding that my fellow-citizens were not likely to offer me any room in the court house, or any curacy or living anywhere else, but I must shift for myself, I turned my face more exclusively than ever to the woods, where I was better known. I determined to go into business at once, and not wait to acquire the usual capital, using such slender means as I had already got. My purpose in going to Walden Pond was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles; to be hindered from

accomplishing which for want of a little common sense, a little enterprise and business talent, appeared not so sad as foolish.

I have always endeavored to acquire strict business habits; they are indispensable to every man. If your trade is with the Celestial Empire, then some small counting house on the coast, in some Salem harbor, will be fixture enough. You will export such articles as the country affords, purely native products, much ice and pine timber and a little granite, always in native bottoms. These will be good ventures. To oversee all the details yourself in person; to be at once pilot and captain, and owner and underwriter; to buy and sell and keep the accounts; to read every letter received, and write or read every letter sent; to superintend the discharge of imports night and day; to be upon many parts of the coast almost at the same time — often the richest freight will be discharged upon a Jersey shore; — to be your own telegraph, unweariedly sweeping the horizon, speaking all passing vessels bound coastwise; to keep up a steady despatch of commodities, for the supply of such a distant and exorbitant market; to keep yourself informed of the state of the markets, prospects of war and peace everywhere, and anticipate the tendencies of trade and civilization — taking advantage of the results of all exploring expeditions, using new passages and all improvements in navigation; — charts to be studied, the position of reefs and new lights and buoys to be ascertained, and ever, and ever, the logarithmic tables to be corrected, for by the error of some calculator the vessel often splits upon a rock that should have reached a friendly pier — there is the untold fate of La Prouse; — universal science to be kept pace with, studying the lives of all great discoverers and navigators, great adventurers and merchants, from Hanno and the Phoenicians down to our day; in fine, account of stock to be taken from time to time, to know how you stand. It is a labor to task the faculties of a man — such problems of profit and loss, of interest, of tare and tret, and gauging of all kinds in it, as demand a universal knowledge.

I have thought that Walden Pond would be a good place for business, not solely on account of the railroad and the ice trade; it offers advantages which it may not be good policy to divulge; it is a good port and a good foundation. No Neva marshes to be filled; though you must everywhere build on piles of your own driving. It is

said that a flood-tide, with a westerly wind, and ice in the Neva, would sweep St. Petersburg from the face of the earth.

As this business was to be entered into without the usual capital, it may not be easy to conjecture where those means, that will still be indispensable to every such undertaking, were to be obtained. As for Clothing, to come at once to the practical part of the question, perhaps we are led oftener by the love of novelty and a regard for the opinions of men, in procuring it, than by a true utility. Let him who has work to do recollect that the object of clothing is, first, to retain the vital heat, and secondly, in this state of society, to cover nakedness, and he may judge how much of any necessary or important work may be accomplished without adding to his wardrobe. Kings and queens who wear a suit but once, though made by some tailor or dressmaker to their majesties, cannot know the comfort of wearing a suit that fits. They are no better than wooden horses to hang the clean clothes on. Every day our garments become more assimilated to ourselves, receiving the impress of the wearer's character, until we hesitate to lay them aside without such delay and medical appliances and some such solemnity even as our bodies. No man ever stood the lower in my estimation for having a patch in his clothes; yet I am sure that there is greater anxiety, commonly, to have fashionable, or at least clean and unpatched clothes, than to have a sound conscience. But even if the rent is not mended, perhaps the worst vice betrayed is improvidence. I sometimes try my acquaintances by such tests as this — Who could wear a patch, or two extra seams only, over the knee? Most behave as if they believed that their prospects for life would be ruined if they should do it. It would be easier for them to hobble to town with a broken leg than with a broken pantaloon. Often if an accident happens to a gentleman's legs, they can be mended; but if a similar accident happens to the legs of his pantaloons, there is no help for it; for he considers, not what is truly respectable, but what is respected. We know but few men, a great many coats and breeches. Dress a scarecrow in your last shift, you standing shiftless by, who would not soonest salute the scarecrow? Passing a cornfield the other day, close by a hat and coat on a stake, I recognized the owner of the farm. He was only a little more weather-beaten than when I saw him last. I

have heard of a dog that barked at every stranger who approached his master's premises with clothes on, but was easily quieted by a naked thief. It is an interesting question how far men would retain their relative rank if they were divested of their clothes. Could you, in such a case, tell surely of any company of civilized men which belonged to the most respected class? When Madam Pfeiffer, in her adventurous travels round the world, from east to west, had got so near home as Asiatic Russia, she says that she felt the necessity of wearing other than a travelling dress, when she went to meet the authorities, for she "was now in a civilized country, where... people are judged of by their clothes." Even in our democratic New England towns the accidental possession of wealth, and its manifestation in dress and equipage alone, obtain for the possessor almost universal respect. But they yield such respect, numerous as they are, are so far heathen, and need to have a missionary sent to them. Beside, clothes introduced sewing, a kind of work which you may call endless; a woman's dress, at least, is never done.

A man who has at length found something to do will not need to get a new suit to do it in; for him the old will do, that has lain dusty in the garret for an indeterminate period. Old shoes will serve a hero longer than they have served his valet — if a hero ever has a valet — bare feet are older than shoes, and he can make them do. Only they who go to soirées and legislative balls must have new coats, coats to change as often as the man changes in them. But if my jacket and trousers, my hat and shoes, are fit to worship God in, they will do; will they not? Who ever saw his old clothes — his old coat, actually worn out, resolved into its primitive elements, so that it was not a deed of charity to bestow it on some poor boy, by him perchance to be bestowed on some poorer still, or shall we say richer, who could do with less? I say, beware of all enterprises that require new clothes, and not rather a new wearer of clothes. If there is not a new man, how can the new clothes be made to fit? If you have any enterprise before you, try it in your old clothes. All men want, not something to *do with*, but something to *do*, or rather something to *be*. Perhaps we should never procure a new suit, however ragged or dirty the old, until we have so conducted, so enterprised or sailed in some way, that we feel like new men in the old, and that to retain it would be

like keeping new wine in old bottles. Our moulting season, like that of the fowls, must be a crisis in our lives. The loon retires to solitary ponds to spend it. Thus also the snake casts its slough, and the caterpillar its wormy coat, by an internal industry and expansion; for clothes are but our outmost cuticle and mortal coil. Otherwise we shall be found sailing under false colors, and be inevitably cashiered at last by our own opinion, as well as that of mankind.

We don garment after garment, as if we grew like exogenous plants by addition without. Our outside and often thin and fanciful clothes are our epidermis, or false skin, which partakes not of our life, and may be stripped off here and there without fatal injury; our thicker garments, constantly worn, are our cellular integument, or cortex; but our shirts are our liber, or true bark, which cannot be removed without girdling and so destroying the man. I believe that all races at some seasons wear something equivalent to the shirt. It is desirable that a man be clad so simply that he can lay his hands on himself in the dark, and that he live in all respects so compactly and preparedly that, if an enemy take the town, he can, like the old philosopher, walk out the gate empty-handed without anxiety. While one thick garment is, for most purposes, as good as three thin ones, and cheap clothing can be obtained at prices really to suit customers; while a thick coat can be bought for five dollars, which will last as many years, thick pantaloons for two dollars, cowhide boots for a dollar and a half a pair, a summer hat for a quarter of a dollar, and a winter cap for sixty-two and a half cents, or a better be made at home at a nominal cost, where is he so poor that, clad in such a suit, of *his own earning*, there will not be found wise men to do him reverence?

When I ask for a garment of a particular form, my tailoress tells me gravely, "They do not make them so now," not emphasizing the "They" at all, as if she quoted an authority as impersonal as the Fates, and I find it difficult to get made what I want, simply because she cannot believe that I mean what I say, that I am so rash. When I hear this oracular sentence, I am for a moment absorbed in thought, emphasizing to myself each word separately that I may come at the meaning of it, that I may find out by what degree of consanguinity *They* are related to *me*, and what authority they may have in an affair which affects me so nearly; and, finally, I am inclined to answer her

with equal mystery, and without any more emphasis of the "they"—"It is true, they did not make them so recently, but they do now." Of what use this measuring of me if she does not measure my character, but only the breadth of my shoulders, as it were a peg to bang the coat on? We worship not the Graces, nor the Parcae, but Fashion. She spins and weaves and cuts with full authority. The head monkey at Paris puts on a traveller's cap, and all the monkeys in America do the same. I sometimes despair of getting anything quite simple and honest done in this world by the help of men. They would have to be passed through a powerful press first, to squeeze their old notions out of them, so that they would not soon get upon their legs again; and then there would be some one in the company with a maggot in his head, hatched from an egg deposited there nobody knows when, for not even fire kills these things, and you would have lost your labor. Nevertheless, we will not forget that some Egyptian wheat was handed down to us by a mummy.

On the whole, I think that it cannot be maintained that dressing has in this or any country risen to the dignity of an art. At present men make shift to wear what they can get. Like shipwrecked sailors, they put on what they can find on the beach, and at a little distance, whether of space or time, laugh at each other's masquerade. Every generation laughs at the old fashions, but follows religiously the new. We are amused at beholding the costume of Henry VIII, or Queen Elizabeth, as much as if it was that of the King and Queen of the Cannibal Islands. All costume off a man is pitiful or grotesque. It is only the serious eye peering from and the sincere life passed within it which restrain laughter and consecrate the costume of any people. Let Harlequin be taken with a fit of the colic and his trappings will have to serve that mood too. When the soldier is hit by a cannonball, rags are as becoming as purple.

The childish and savage taste of men and women for new patterns keeps how many shaking and squinting through kaleidoscopes that they may discover the particular figure which this generation requires today. The manufacturers have learned that this taste is merely whimsical. Of two patterns which differ only by a few threads more or less of a particular color, the one will be sold readily, the other lie on the shelf, though it frequently happens that after the lapse of a

season the latter becomes the most fashionable. Comparatively, tattooing is not the hideous custom which it is called. It is not barbarous merely because the printing is skin-deep and unalterable.

I cannot believe that our factory system is the best mode by which men may get clothing. The condition of the operatives is becoming every day more like that of the English; and it cannot be wondered at, since, as far as I have heard or observed, the principal object is, not that mankind may be well and honestly clad, but, unquestionably, that corporations may be enriched. In the long run men hit only what they aim at. Therefore, though they should fail immediately, they had better aim at something high.

As for a Shelter, I will not deny that this is now a necessary of life, though there are instances of men having done without it for long periods in colder countries than this. Samuel Laing says that "the Laplander in his skin dress, and in a skin bag which he puts over his head and shoulders, will sleep night after night on the snow... in a degree of cold which would extinguish the life of one exposed to it in any woollen clothing." He had seen them asleep thus. Yet he adds, "They are not hardier than other people." But, probably, man did not live long on the earth without discovering the convenience which there is in a house, the domestic comforts, which phrase may have originally signified the satisfactions of the house more than of the family; though these must be extremely partial and occasional in those climates where the house is associated in our thoughts with winter or the rainy season chiefly, and two thirds of the year, except for a parasol, is unnecessary. In our climate, in the summer, it was formerly almost solely a covering at night. In the Indian gazettes a wigwam was the symbol of a day's march, and a row of them cut or painted on the bark of a tree signified that so many times they had camped. Man was not made so large limbed and robust but that he must seek to narrow his world and wall in a space such as fitted him. He was at first bare and out of doors; but though this was pleasant enough in serene and warm weather, by daylight, the rainy season and the winter, to say nothing of the torrid sun, would perhaps have nipped his race in the bud if he had not made haste to clothe himself with the shelter of a house. Adam and Eve, according to the fable, wore the bower before other clothes. Man wanted a home, a place of

warmth, or comfort, first of warmth, then the warmth of the affections.

We may imagine a time when, in the infancy of the human race, some enterprising mortal crept into a hollow in a rock for shelter. Every child begins the world again, to some extent, and loves to stay outdoors, even in wet and cold. It plays house, as well as horse, having an instinct for it. Who does not remember the interest with which, when young, he looked at shelving rocks, or any approach to a cave? It was the natural yearning of that portion, any portion of our most primitive ancestor which still survived in us. From the cave we have advanced to roofs of palm leaves, of bark and boughs, of linen woven and stretched, of grass and straw, of boards and shingles, of stones and tiles. At last, we know not what it is to live in the open air, and our lives are domestic in more senses than we think. From the hearth the field is a great distance. It would be well, perhaps, if we were to spend more of our days and nights without any obstruction between us and the celestial bodies, if the poet did not speak so much from under a roof, or the saint dwell there so long. Birds do not sing in caves, nor do doves cherish their innocence in dovecots.

However, if one designs to construct a dwelling-house, it behooves him to exercise a little Yankee shrewdness, lest after all he find himself in a workhouse, a labyrinth without a clue, a museum, an almshouse, a prison, or a splendid mausoleum instead. Consider first how slight a shelter is absolutely necessary. I have seen Penobscot Indians, in this town, living in tents of thin cotton cloth, while the snow was nearly a foot deep around them, and I thought that they would be glad to have it deeper to keep out the wind. Formerly, when how to get my living honestly, with freedom left for my proper pursuits, was a question which vexed me even more than it does now, for unfortunately I am become somewhat callous, I used to see a large box by the railroad, six feet long by three wide, in which the laborers locked up their tools at night; and it suggested to me that every man who was hard pushed might get such a one for a dollar, and, having bored a few auger holes in it, to admit the air at least, get into it when it rained and at night, and hook down the lid, and so have freedom in his love, and in his soul be free. This did not

appear the worst, nor by any means a despicable alternative. You could sit up as late as you pleased, and, whenever you got up, go abroad without any landlord or house-lord dogging you for rent. Many a man is harassed to death to pay the rent of a larger and more luxurious box who would not have frozen to death in such a box as this. I am far from jesting. Economy is a subject which admits of being treated with levity, but it cannot so be disposed of. A comfortable house for a rude and hardy race, that lived mostly out of doors, was once made here almost entirely of such materials as Nature furnished ready to their hands. Gookin, who was superintendent of the Indians subject to the Massachusetts Colony, writing in 1674, says, "The best of their houses are covered very neatly, tight and warm, with barks of trees, slipped from their bodies at those seasons when the sap is up, and made into great flakes, with pressure of weighty timber, when they are green.... The meaner sort are covered with mats which they make of a kind of bulrush, and are also indifferently tight and warm, but not so good as the former.... Some I have seen, sixty or a hundred feet long and thirty feet broad.... I have often lodged in their wigwams, and found them as warm as the best English houses." He adds that they were commonly carpeted and lined within with well-wrought embroidered mats, and were furnished with various utensils. The Indians had advanced so far as to regulate the effect of the wind by a mat suspended over the hole in the roof and moved by a string. Such a lodge was in the first instance constructed in a day or two at most, and taken down and put up in a few hours; and every family owned one, or its apartment in one.

In the savage state every family owns a shelter as good as the best, and sufficient for its coarser and simpler wants; but I think that I speak within bounds when I say that, though the birds of the air have their nests, and the foxes their holes, and the savages their wigwams, in modern civilized society not more than one half the families own a shelter. In the large towns and cities, where civilization especially prevails, the number of those who own a shelter is a very small fraction of the whole. The rest pay an annual tax for this outside garment of all, become indispensable summer and winter, which would buy a village of Indian wigwams, but now helps to keep them

poor as long as they live. I do not mean to insist here on the disadvantage of hiring compared with owning, but it is evident that the savage owns his shelter because it costs so little, while the civilized man hires his commonly because he cannot afford to own it; nor can he, in the long run, any better afford to hire. But, answers one, by merely paying this tax, the poor civilized man secures an abode which is a palace compared with the savage's. An annual rent of from twenty-five to a hundred dollars (these are the country rates) entitles him to the benefit of the improvements of centuries, spacious apartments, clean paint and paper, Rumford fire-place, back plastering, Venetian blinds, copper pump, spring lock, a commodious cellar, and many other things. But how happens it that he who is said to enjoy these things is so commonly a poor civilized man, while the savage, who has them not, is rich as a savage? If it is asserted that civilization is a real advance in the condition of man — and I think that it is, though only the wise improve their advantages — it must be shown that it has produced better dwellings without making them more costly; and the cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run. An average house in this neighborhood costs perhaps eight hundred dollars, and to lay up this sum will take from ten to fifteen years of the laborer's life, even if he is not encumbered with a family — estimating the pecuniary value of every man's labor at one dollar a day, for if some receive more, others receive less; — so that he must have spent more than half his life commonly before his wigwam will be earned. If we suppose him to pay a rent instead, this is but a doubtful choice of evils. Would the savage have been wise to exchange his wigwam for a palace on these terms?

It may be guessed that I reduce almost the whole advantage of holding this superfluous property as a fund in store against the future, so far as the individual is concerned, mainly to the defraying of funeral expenses. But perhaps a man is not required to bury himself. Nevertheless this points to an important distinction between the civilized man and the savage; and, no doubt, they have designs on us for our benefit, in making the life of a civilized people an *institution*, in which the life of the individual is to a great extent absorbed, in order to preserve and perfect that of the race. But I wish to show at

what a sacrifice this advantage is at present obtained, and to suggest that we may possibly so live as to secure all the advantage without suffering any of the disadvantage. What mean ye by saying that the poor ye have always with you, or that the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?

"As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.

"Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

When I consider my neighbors, the farmers of Concord, who are at least as well off as the other classes, I find that for the most part they have been toiling twenty, thirty, or forty years, that they may become the real owners of their farms, which commonly they have inherited with encumbrances, or else bought with hired money — and we may regard one third of that toil as the cost of their houses — but commonly they have not paid for them yet. It is true, the encumbrances sometimes outweigh the value of the farm, so that the farm itself becomes one great encumbrance, and still a man is found to inherit it, being well acquainted with it, as he says. On applying to the assessors, I am surprised to learn that they cannot at once name a dozen in the town who own their farms free and clear. If you would know the history of these homesteads, inquire at the bank where they are mortgaged. The man who has actually paid for his farm with labor on it is so rare that every neighbor can point to him. I doubt if there are three such men in Concord. What has been said of the merchants, that a very large majority, even ninety-seven in a hundred, are sure to fail, is equally true of the farmers. With regard to the merchants, however, one of them says pertinently that a great part of their failures are not genuine pecuniary failures, but merely failures to fulfil their engagements, because it is inconvenient; that is, it is the moral character that breaks down. But this puts an infinitely worse face on the matter, and suggests, beside, that probably not even the other three succeed in saving their souls, but are perchance bankrupt in a worse sense than they who fail honestly. Bankruptcy and repudiation are the springboards from which much of our civilization vaults and turns its somersets, but the savage stands on the unelastic plank of famine. Yet the Middlesex Cattle Show goes

off here with *éclat* annually, as if all the joints of the agricultural machine were suent.

The farmer is endeavoring to solve the problem of a livelihood by a formula more complicated than the problem itself. To get his shoestrings he speculates in herds of cattle. With consummate skill he has set his trap with a hair spring to catch comfort and independence, and then, as he turned away, got his own leg into it. This is the reason he is poor; and for a similar reason we are all poor in respect to a thousand savage comforts, though surrounded by luxuries. As Chapman sings,

> "The false society of men —
> — for earthly greatness
> All heavenly comforts rarefies to air."

And when the farmer has got his house, he may not be the richer but the poorer for it, and it be the house that has got him. As I understand it, that was a valid objection urged by Momus against the house which Minerva made, that she "had not made it movable, by which means a bad neighborhood might be avoided"; and it may still be urged, for our houses are such unwieldy property that we are often imprisoned rather than housed in them; and the bad neighborhood to be avoided is our own scurvy selves. I know one or two families, at least, in this town, who, for nearly a generation, have been wishing to sell their houses in the outskirts and move into the village, but have not been able to accomplish it, and only death will set them free.

Granted that the majority are able at last either to own or hire the modern house with all its improvements. While civilization has been improving our houses, it has not equally improved the men who are to inhabit them. It has created palaces, but it was not so easy to create noblemen and kings. And *if the civilized man's pursuits are no worthier than the savage's, if he is employed the greater part of his life in obtaining gross necessaries and comforts merely, why should he have a better dwelling than the former?*

But how do the poor minority fare? Perhaps it will be found that just in proportion as some have been placed in outward circumstances above the savage, others have been degraded below

him. The luxury of one class is counterbalanced by the indigence of another. On the one side is the palace, on the other are the almshouse and "silent poor." The myriads who built the pyramids to be the tombs of the Pharaohs were fed on garlic, and it may be were not decently buried themselves. The mason who finishes the cornice of the palace returns at night perchance to a hut not so good as a wigwam. It is a mistake to suppose that, in a country where the usual evidences of civilization exist, the condition of a very large body of the inhabitants may not be as degraded as that of savages. I refer to the degraded poor, not now to the degraded rich. To know this I should not need to look farther than to the shanties which everywhere border our railroads, that last improvement in civilization; where I see in my daily walks human beings living in sties, and all winter with an open door, for the sake of light, without any visible, often imaginable, wood-pile, and the forms of both old and young are permanently contracted by the long habit of shrinking from cold and misery, and the development of all their limbs and faculties is checked. It certainly is fair to look at that class by whose labor the works which distinguish this generation are accomplished. Such too, to a greater or less extent, is the condition of the operatives of every denomination in England, which is the great workhouse of the world. Or I could refer you to Ireland, which is marked as one of the white or enlightened spots on the map. Contrast the physical condition of the Irish with that of the North American Indian, or the South Sea Islander, or any other savage race before it was degraded by contact with the civilized man. Yet I have no doubt that that people's rulers are as wise as the average of civilized rulers. Their condition only proves what squalidness may consist with civilization. I hardly need refer now to the laborers in our Southern States who produce the staple exports of this country, and are themselves a staple production of the South. But to confine myself to those who are said to be in *moderate* circumstances.

Most men appear never to have considered what a house is, and are actually though needlessly poor all their lives because they think that they must have such a one as their neighbors have. As if one were to wear any sort of coat which the tailor might cut out for him, or, gradually leaving off palm-leaf hat or cap of woodchuck skin,

complain of hard times because he could not afford to buy him a crown! It is possible to invent a house still more convenient and luxurious than we have, which yet all would admit that man could not afford to pay for. Shall we always study to obtain more of these things, and not sometimes to be content with less? Shall the respectable citizen thus gravely teach, by precept and example, the necessity of the young man's providing a certain number of superfluous glow-shoes, and umbrellas, and empty guest chambers for empty guests, before he dies? Why should not our furniture be as simple as the Arab's or the Indian's? When I think of the benefactors of the race, whom we have apotheosized as messengers from heaven, bearers of divine gifts to man, I do not see in my mind any retinue at their heels, any carload of fashionable furniture. Or what if I were to allow — would it not be a singular allowance? — that our furniture should be more complex than the Arab's, in proportion as we are morally and intellectually his superiors! At present our houses are cluttered and defiled with it, and a good housewife would sweep out the greater part into the dust hole, and not leave her morning's work undone. Morning work! By the blushes of Aurora and the music of Memnon, what should be man's *morning work* in this world? I had three pieces of limestone on my desk, but I was terrified to find that they required to be dusted daily, when the furniture of my mind was all undusted still, and threw them out the window in disgust. How, then, could I have a furnished house? I would rather sit in the open air, for no dust gathers on the grass, unless where man has broken ground.

It is the luxurious and dissipated who set the fashions which the herd so diligently follow. The traveller who stops at the best houses, so called, soon discovers this, for the publicans presume him to be a Sardanapalus, and if he resigned himself to their tender mercies he would soon be completely emasculated. I think that in the railroad car we are inclined to spend more on luxury than on safety and convenience, and it threatens without attaining these to become no better than a modern drawing-room, with its divans, and ottomans, and sun-shades, and a hundred other oriental things, which we are taking west with us, invented for the ladies of the harem and the effeminate natives of the Celestial Empire, which Jonathan should be

ashamed to know the names of. I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself than be crowded on a velvet cushion. I would rather ride on earth in an ox cart, with a free circulation, than go to heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train and breathe a *malaria* all the way.

The very simplicity and nakedness of man's life in the primitive ages imply this advantage, at least, that they left him still but a sojourner in nature. When he was refreshed with food and sleep, he contemplated his journey again. He dwelt, as it were, in a tent in this world, and was either threading the valleys, or crossing the plains, or climbing the mountain-tops. But lo! men have become the tools of their tools. The man who independently plucked the fruits when he was hungry is become a farmer; and he who stood under a tree for shelter, a housekeeper. We now no longer camp as for a night, but have settled down on earth and forgotten heaven. We have adopted Christianity merely as an improved method of *agri*-culture. We have built for this world a family mansion, and for the next a family tomb. The best works of art are the expression of man's struggle to free himself from this condition, but the effect of our art is merely to make this low state comfortable and that higher state to be forgotten. There is actually no place in this village for a work of *fine* art, if any had come down to us, to stand, for our lives, our houses and streets, furnish no proper pedestal for it. There is not a nail to hang a picture on, nor a shelf to receive the bust of a hero or a saint. When I consider how our houses are built and paid for, or not paid for, and their internal economy managed and sustained, I wonder that the floor does not give way under the visitor while he is admiring the gewgaws upon the mantelpiece, and let him through into the cellar, to some solid and honest though earthy foundation. I cannot but perceive that this so-called rich and refined life is a thing jumped at, and I do not get on in the enjoyment of the fine arts which adorn it, my attention being wholly occupied with the jump; for I remember that the greatest genuine leap, due to human muscles alone, on record, is that of certain wandering Arabs, who are said to have cleared twenty-five feet on level ground. Without factitious support, man is sure to come to earth again beyond that distance. The first question which I am tempted to put to the proprietor of such great

impropriety is, Who bolsters you? Are you one of the ninety-seven who fail, or the three who succeed? Answer me these questions, and then perhaps I may look at your bawbles and find them ornamental. The cart before the horse is neither beautiful nor useful. Before we can adorn our houses with beautiful objects the walls must be stripped, and our lives must be stripped, and beautiful housekeeping and beautiful living be laid for a foundation: now, a taste for the beautiful is most cultivated out of doors, where there is no house and no housekeeper.

Old Johnson, in his "Wonder-Working Providence," speaking of the first settlers of this town, with whom he was contemporary, tells us that "they burrow themselves in the earth for their first shelter under some hillside, and, casting the soil aloft upon timber, they make a smoky fire against the earth, at the highest side." They did not "provide them houses," says he, "till the earth, by the Lord's blessing, brought forth bread to feed them," and the first year's crop was so light that "they were forced to cut their bread very thin for a long season." The secretary of the Province of New Netherland, writing in Dutch, in 1650, for the information of those who wished to take up land there, states more particularly that "those in New Netherland, and especially in New England, who have no means to build farmhouses at first according to their wishes, dig a square pit in the ground, cellar fashion, six or seven feet deep, as long and as broad as they think proper, case the earth inside with wood all round the wall, and line the wood with the bark of trees or something else to prevent the caving in of the earth; floor this cellar with plank, and wainscot it overhead for a ceiling, raise a roof of spars clear up, and cover the spars with bark or green sods, so that they can live dry and warm in these houses with their entire families for two, three, and four years, it being understood that partitions are run through those cellars which are adapted to the size of the family. The wealthy and principal men in New England, in the beginning of the colonies, commenced their first dwelling-houses in this fashion for two reasons: firstly, in order not to waste time in building, and not to want food the next season; secondly, in order not to discourage poor laboring people whom they brought over in numbers from Fatherland. In the course of three or four years, when the country

became adapted to agriculture, they built themselves handsome houses, spending on them several thousands."

In this course which our ancestors took there was a show of prudence at least, as if their principle were to satisfy the more pressing wants first. But are the more pressing wants satisfied now? When I think of acquiring for myself one of our luxurious dwellings, I am deterred, for, so to speak, the country is not yet adapted to *human* culture, and we are still forced to cut our *spiritual* bread far thinner than our forefathers did their wheaten. Not that all architectural ornament is to be neglected even in the rudest periods; but let our houses first be lined with beauty, where they come in contact with our lives, like the tenement of the shellfish, and not overlaid with it. But, alas! I have been inside one or two of them, and know what they are lined with.

Though we are not so degenerate but that we might possibly live in a cave or a wigwam or wear skins today, it certainly is better to accept the advantages, though so dearly bought, which the invention and industry of mankind offer. In such a neighborhood as this, boards and shingles, lime and bricks, are cheaper and more easily obtained than suitable caves, or whole logs, or bark in sufficient quantities, or even well-tempered clay or flat stones. I speak understandingly on this subject, for I have made myself acquainted with it both theoretically and practically. With a little more wit we might use these materials so as to become richer than the richest now are, and make our civilization a blessing. The civilized man is a more experienced and wiser savage. But to make haste to my own experiment.

Near the end of March, 1845, I borrowed an axe and went down to the woods by Walden Pond, nearest to where I intended to build my house, and began to cut down some tall, arrowy white pines, still in their youth, for timber. It is difficult to begin without borrowing, but perhaps it is the most generous course thus to permit your fellow-men to have an interest in your enterprise. The owner of the axe, as he released his hold on it, said that it was the apple of his eye; but I returned it sharper than I received it. It was a pleasant hillside where I worked, covered with pine woods, through which I looked out on the pond, and a small open field in the woods where pines and

hickories were springing up. The ice in the pond was not yet dissolved, though there were some open spaces, and it was all dark-colored and saturated with water. There were some slight flurries of snow during the days that I worked there; but for the most part when I came out on to the railroad, on my way home, its yellow sand heap stretched away gleaming in the hazy atmosphere, and the rails shone in the spring sun, and I heard the lark and pewee and other birds already come to commence another year with us. They were pleasant spring days, in which the winter of man's discontent was thawing as well as the earth, and the life that had lain torpid began to stretch itself. One day, when my axe had come off and I had cut a green hickory for a wedge, driving it with a stone, and had placed the whole to soak in a pond-hole in order to swell the wood, I saw a striped snake run into the water, and he lay on the bottom, apparently without inconvenience, as long as I stayed there, or more than a quarter of an hour; perhaps because he had not yet fairly come out of the torpid state. It appeared to me that for a like reason men remain in their present low and primitive condition; but if they should feel the influence of the spring of springs arousing them, they would of necessity rise to a higher and more ethereal life. I had previously seen the snakes in frosty mornings in my path with portions of their bodies still numb and inflexible, waiting for the sun to thaw them. On the 1st of April it rained and melted the ice, and in the early part of the day, which was very foggy, I heard a stray goose groping about over the pond and cackling as if lost, or like the spirit of the fog.

So I went on for some days cutting and hewing timber, and also studs and rafters, all with my narrow axe, not having many communicable or scholar-like thoughts, singing to myself, —

Men say they know many things;
But lo! they have taken wings —
The arts and sciences,
And a thousand appliances;
The wind that blows
Is all that any body knows.

I hewed the main timbers six inches square, most of the studs on

two sides only, and the rafters and floor timbers on one side, leaving the rest of the bark on, so that they were just as straight and much stronger than sawed ones. Each stick was carefully mortised or tenoned by its stump, for I had borrowed other tools by this time. My days in the woods were not very long ones; yet I usually carried my dinner of bread and butter, and read the newspaper in which it was wrapped, at noon, sitting amid the green pine boughs which I had cut off, and to my bread was imparted some of their fragrance, for my hands were covered with a thick coat of pitch. Before I had done I was more the friend than the foe of the pine tree, though I had cut down some of them, having become better acquainted with it. Sometimes a rambler in the wood was attracted by the sound of my axe, and we chatted pleasantly over the chips which I had made.

By the middle of April, for I made no haste in my work, but rather made the most of it, my house was framed and ready for the raising. I had already bought the shanty of James Collins, an Irishman who worked on the Fitchburg Railroad, for boards. James Collins' shanty was considered an uncommonly fine one. When I called to see it he was not at home. I walked about the outside, at first unobserved from within, the window was so deep and high. It was of small dimensions, with a peaked cottage roof, and not much else to be seen, the dirt being raised five feet all around as if it were a compost heap. The roof was the soundest part, though a good deal warped and made brittle by the sun. Doorsill there was none, but a perennial passage for the hens under the door board. Mrs. C. came to the door and asked me to view it from the inside. The hens were driven in by my approach. It was dark, and had a dirt floor for the most part, dank, clammy, and aguish, only here a board and there a board which would not bear removal. She lighted a lamp to show me the inside of the roof and the walls, and also that the board floor extended under the bed, warning me not to step into the cellar, a sort of dust hole two feet deep. In her own words, they were "good boards overhead, good boards all around, and a good window" — of two whole squares originally, only the cat had passed out that way lately. There was a stove, a bed, and a place to sit, an infant in the house where it was born, a silk parasol, gilt-framed looking-glass, and a patent new coffee-mill nailed to an oak sapling, all told. The bargain was soon

concluded, for James had in the meanwhile returned. I to pay four dollars and twenty-five cents tonight, he to vacate at five tomorrow morning, selling to nobody else meanwhile: I to take possession at six. It were well, he said, to be there early, and anticipate certain indistinct but wholly unjust claims on the score of ground rent and fuel. This he assured me was the only encumbrance. At six I passed him and his family on the road. One large bundle held their all — bed, coffee-mill, looking-glass, hens — all but the cat; she took to the woods and became a wild cat, and, as I learned afterward, trod in a trap set for woodchucks, and so became a dead cat at last.

I took down this dwelling the same morning, drawing the nails, and removed it to the pond-side by small cartloads, spreading the boards on the grass there to bleach and warp back again in the sun. One early thrush gave me a note or two as I drove along the woodland path. I was informed treacherously by a young Patrick that neighbor Seeley, an Irishman, in the intervals of the carting, transferred the still tolerable, straight, and drivable nails, staples, and spikes to his pocket, and then stood when I came back to pass the time of day, and look freshly up, unconcerned, with spring thoughts, at the devastation; there being a dearth of work, as he said. He was there to represent spectatordom, and help make this seemingly insignificant event one with the removal of the gods of Troy.

I dug my cellar in the side of a hill sloping to the south, where a woodchuck had formerly dug his burrow, down through sumach and blackberry roots, and the lowest stain of vegetation, six feet square by seven deep, to a fine sand where potatoes would not freeze in any winter. The sides were left shelving, and not stoned; but the sun having never shone on them, the sand still keeps its place. It was but two hours' work. I took particular pleasure in this breaking of ground, for in almost all latitudes men dig into the earth for an equable temperature. Under the most splendid house in the city is still to be found the cellar where they store their roots as of old, and long after the superstructure has disappeared posterity remark its dent in the earth. The house is still but a sort of porch at the entrance of a burrow.

At length, in the beginning of May, with the help of some of my acquaintances, rather to improve so good an occasion for

neighborliness than from any necessity, I set up the frame of my house. No man was ever more honored in the character of his raisers than I. They are destined, I trust, to assist at the raising of loftier structures one day. I began to occupy my house on the 4th of July, as soon as it was boarded and roofed, for the boards were carefully feather-edged and lapped, so that it was perfectly impervious to rain, but before boarding I laid the foundation of a chimney at one end, bringing two cartloads of stones up the hill from the pond in my arms. I built the chimney after my hoeing in the fall, before a fire became necessary for warmth, doing my cooking in the meanwhile out of doors on the ground, early in the morning: which mode I still think is in some respects more convenient and agreeable than the usual one. When it stormed before my bread was baked, I fixed a few boards over the fire, and sat under them to watch my loaf, and passed some pleasant hours in that way. In those days, when my hands were much employed, I read but little, but the least scraps of paper which lay on the ground, my holder, or tablecloth, afforded me as much entertainment, in fact answered the same purpose as the Iliad.

It would be worth the while to build still more deliberately than I did, considering, for instance, what foundation a door, a window, a cellar, a garret, have in the nature of man, and perchance never raising any superstructure until we found a better reason for it than our temporal necessities even. There is some of the same fitness in a man's building his own house that there is in a bird's building its own nest. Who knows but if men constructed their dwellings with their own hands, and provided food for themselves and families simply and honestly enough, the poetic faculty would be universally developed, as birds universally sing when they are so engaged? But alas! we do like cowbirds and cuckoos, which lay their eggs in nests which other birds have built, and cheer no traveller with their chattering and unmusical notes. Shall we forever resign the pleasure of construction to the carpenter? What does architecture amount to in the experience of the mass of men? I never in all my walks came across a man engaged in so simple and natural an occupation as building his house. We belong to the community. It is not the tailor alone who is the ninth part of a man; it is as much the preacher, and

the merchant, and the farmer. Where is this division of labor to end? and what object does it finally serve? No doubt another *may* also think for me; but it is not therefore desirable that he should do so to the exclusion of my thinking for myself.

True, there are architects so called in this country, and I have heard of one at least possessed with the idea of making architectural ornaments have a core of truth, a necessity, and hence a beauty, as if it were a revelation to him. All very well perhaps from his point of view, but only a little better than the common dilettantism. A sentimental reformer in architecture, he began at the cornice, not at the foundation. It was only how to put a core of truth within the ornaments, that every sugarplum, in fact, might have an almond or caraway seed in it — though I hold that almonds are most wholesome without the sugar — and not how the inhabitant, the indweller, might build truly within and without, and let the ornaments take care of themselves. What reasonable man ever supposed that ornaments were something outward and in the skin merely — that the tortoise got his spotted shell, or the shell-fish its mother-o'-pearl tints, by such a contract as the inhabitants of Broadway their Trinity Church? But a man has no more to do with the style of architecture of his house than a tortoise with that of its shell: nor need the soldier be so idle as to try to paint the precise color of his virtue on his standard. The enemy will find it out. He may turn pale when the trial comes. This man seemed to me to lean over the cornice, and timidly whisper his half truth to the rude occupants who really knew it better than he. What of architectural beauty I now see, I know has gradually grown from within outward, out of the necessities and character of the indweller, who is the only builder — out of some unconscious truthfulness, and nobleness, without ever a thought for the appearance and whatever additional beauty of this kind is destined to be produced will be preceded by a like unconscious beauty of life. The most interesting dwellings in this country, as the painter knows, are the most unpretending, humble log huts and cottages of the poor commonly; it is the life of the inhabitants whose shells they are, and not any peculiarity in their surfaces merely, which makes them picturesque; and equally interesting will be the citizen's suburban box, when his life shall be

as simple and as agreeable to the imagination, and there is as little straining after effect in the style of his dwelling. A great proportion of architectural ornaments are literally hollow, and a September gale would strip them off, like borrowed plumes, without injury to the substantials. They can do without architecture who have no olives nor wines in the cellar. What if an equal ado were made about the ornaments of style in literature, and the architects of our bibles spent as much time about their cornices as the architects of our churches do? So are made the *belles-lettres* and the *beaux-arts* and their professors. Much it concerns a man, forsooth, how a few sticks are slanted over him or under him, and what colors are daubed upon his box. It would signify somewhat, if, in any earnest sense, he slanted them and daubed it; but the spirit having departed out of the tenant, it is of a piece with constructing his own coffin — the architecture of the grave — and "carpenter" is but another name for "coffin-maker." One man says, in his despair or indifference to life, take up a handful of the earth at your feet, and paint your house that color. Is he thinking of his last and narrow house? Toss up a copper for it as well. What an abundance of leisure he must have! Why do you take up a handful of dirt? Better paint your house your own complexion; let it turn pale or blush for you. An enterprise to improve the style of cottage architecture! When you have got my ornaments ready, I will wear them.

Before winter I built a chimney, and shingled the sides of my house, which were already impervious to rain, with imperfect and sappy shingles made of the first slice of the log, whose edges I was obliged to straighten with a plane.

I have thus a tight shingled and plastered house, ten feet wide by fifteen long, and eight-feet posts, with a garret and a closet, a large window on each side, two trap doors, one door at the end, and a brick fireplace opposite. The exact cost of my house, paying the usual price for such materials as I used, but not counting the work, all of which was done by myself, was as follows; and I give the details because very few are able to tell exactly what their houses cost, and fewer still, if any, the separate cost of the various materials which compose them: —

Boards.....$ 8.03-1/2;, mostly shanty boards.
Refuse shingles for roof sides... 4.00
Laths..... 1.25
Two second-hand windows
with glass..... 2.43
One thousand old brick..... 4.00
Two casks of lime..... 2.40 That was high.
Hair.....0.31 More than I needed.
Mantle-tree iron..... 0.15
Nails..... 3.90
Hinges and screws..... 0.14
Latch..... 0.10
Chalk..... 0.01
Transportation.....1.40 I carried a good part
—— —— on my back.
In all..... $28.12-1/2

These are all the materials, excepting the timber, stones, and sand, which I claimed by squatter's right. I have also a small woodshed adjoining, made chiefly of the stuff which was left after building the house.

I intend to build me a house which will surpass any on the main street in Concord in grandeur and luxury, as soon as it pleases me as much and will cost me no more than my present one.

I thus found that the student who wishes for a shelter can obtain one for a lifetime at an expense not greater than the rent which he now pays annually. If I seem to boast more than is becoming, my excuse is that I brag for humanity rather than for myself; and my shortcomings and inconsistencies do not affect the truth of my statement. Notwithstanding much cant and hypocrisy — chaff which I find it difficult to separate from my wheat, but for which I am as sorry as any man — I will breathe freely and stretch myself in this respect, it is such a relief to both the moral and physical system; and I am resolved that I will not through humility become the devil's attorney. I will endeavor to speak a good word for the truth. At Cambridge College the mere rent of a student's room, which is only a little larger than my own, is thirty dollars each year, though the corporation had the advantage of building thirty-two side by side and under one roof, and the occupant suffers the inconvenience of many and noisy neighbors, and perhaps a residence in the fourth story. I

cannot but think that if we had more true wisdom in these respects, not only less education would be needed, because, forsooth, more would already have been acquired, but the pecuniary expense of getting an education would in a great measure vanish. Those conveniences which the student requires at Cambridge or elsewhere cost him or somebody else ten times as great a sacrifice of life as they would with proper management on both sides. Those things for which the most money is demanded are never the things which the student most wants. Tuition, for instance, is an important item in the term bill, while for the far more valuable education which he gets by associating with the most cultivated of his contemporaries no charge is made. The mode of founding a college is, commonly, to get up a subscription of dollars and cents, and then, following blindly the principles of a division of labor to its extreme — a principle which should never be followed but with circumspection — to call in a contractor who makes this a subject of speculation, and he employs Irishmen or other operatives actually to lay the foundations, while the students that are to be are said to be fitting themselves for it; and for these oversights successive generations have to pay. I think that it would be better *than this*, for the students, or those who desire to be benefited by it, even to lay the foundation themselves. The student who secures his coveted leisure and retirement by systematically shirking any labor necessary to man obtains but an ignoble and unprofitable leisure, defrauding himself of the experience which alone can make leisure fruitful. "But," says one, "you do not mean that the students should go to work with their hands instead of their heads?" I do not mean that exactly, but I mean something which he might think a good deal like that; I mean that they should not *play* life, or *study* it merely, while the community supports them at this expensive game, but earnestly live it from beginning to end. How could youths better learn to live than by at once trying the experiment of living? Methinks this would exercise their minds as much as mathematics. If I wished a boy to know something about the arts and sciences, for instance, I would not pursue the common course, which is merely to send him into the neighborhood of some professor, where anything is professed and practised but the art of life; — to survey the world through a telescope or a microscope, and

never with his natural eye; to study chemistry, and not learn how his bread is made, or mechanics, and not learn how it is earned; to discover new satellites to Neptune, and not detect the motes in his eyes, or to what vagabond he is a satellite himself; or to be devoured by the monsters that swarm all around him, while contemplating the monsters in a drop of vinegar. Which would have advanced the most at the end of a month — the boy who had made his own jackknife from the ore which he had dug and smelted, reading as much as would be necessary for this — or the boy who had attended the lectures on metallurgy at the Institute in the meanwhile, and had received a Rodgers' penknife from his father? Which would be most likely to cut his fingers?... To my astonishment I was informed on leaving college that I had studied navigation! — why, if I had taken one turn down the harbor I should have known more about it. Even the poor student studies and is taught only *political* economy, while that economy of living which is synonymous with philosophy is not even sincerely professed in our colleges. The consequence is, that while he is reading Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Say, he runs his father in debt irretrievably.

As with our colleges, so with a hundred "modern improvements"; there is an illusion about them; there is not always a positive advance. The devil goes on exacting compound interest to the last for his early share and numerous succeeding investments in them. Our inventions are wont to be pretty toys, which distract our attention from serious things. They are but improved means to an unimproved end, an end which it was already but too easy to arrive at; as railroads lead to Boston or New York. We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate. Either is in such a predicament as the man who was earnest to be introduced to a distinguished deaf woman, but when he was presented, and one end of her ear trumpet was put into his hand, had nothing to say. As if the main object were to talk fast and not to talk sensibly. We are eager to tunnel under the Atlantic and bring the Old World some weeks nearer to the New; but perchance the first news that will leak through into the broad, flapping American ear will be that the Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough. After all, the man whose horse

trots a mile in a minute does not carry the most important messages; he is not an evangelist, nor does he come round eating locusts and wild honey. I doubt if Flying Childers ever carried a peck of corn to mill.

One says to me, "I wonder that you do not lay up money; you love to travel; you might take the cars and go to Fitchburg today and see the country." But I am wiser than that. I have learned that the swiftest traveller is he that goes afoot. I say to my friend, Suppose we try who will get there first. The distance is thirty miles; the fare ninety cents. That is almost a day's wages. I remember when wages were sixty cents a day for laborers on this very road. Well, I start now on foot, and get there before night; I have travelled at that rate by the week together. You will in the meanwhile have earned your fare, and arrive there some time tomorrow, or possibly this evening, if you are lucky enough to get a job in season. Instead of going to Fitchburg, you will be working here the greater part of the day. And so, if the railroad reached round the world, I think that I should keep ahead of you; and as for seeing the country and getting experience of that kind, I should have to cut your acquaintance altogether.

Such is the universal law, which no man can ever outwit, and with regard to the railroad even we may say it is as broad as it is long. To make a railroad round the world available to all mankind is equivalent to grading the whole surface of the planet. Men have an indistinct notion that if they keep up this activity of joint stocks and spades long enough all will at length ride somewhere, in next to no time, and for nothing; but though a crowd rushes to the depot, and the conductor shouts "All aboard!" when the smoke is blown away and the vapor condensed, it will be perceived that a few are riding, but the rest are run over — and it will be called, and will be, "A melancholy accident." No doubt they can ride at last who shall have earned their fare, that is, if they survive so long, but they will probably have lost their elasticity and desire to travel by that time. This spending of the best part of one's life earning money in order to enjoy a questionable liberty during the least valuable part of it reminds me of the Englishman who went to India to make a fortune first, in order that he might return to England and live the life of a poet. He should have gone up garret at once. "What!" exclaim a

million Irishmen starting up from all the shanties in the land, “is not this railroad which we have built a good thing?” Yes, I answer, comparatively good, that is, you might have done worse; but I wish, as you are brothers of mine, that you could have spent your time better than digging in this dirt.

Before I finished my house, wishing to earn ten or twelve dollars by some honest and agreeable method, in order to meet my unusual expenses, I planted about two acres and a half of light and sandy soil near it chiefly with beans, but also a small part with potatoes, corn, peas, and turnips. The whole lot contains eleven acres, mostly growing up to pines and hickories, and was sold the preceding season for eight dollars and eight cents an acre. One farmer said that it was “good for nothing but to raise cheeping squirrels on.” I put no manure whatever on this land, not being the owner, but merely a squatter, and not expecting to cultivate so much again, and I did not quite hoe it all once. I got out several cords of stumps in plowing, which supplied me with fuel for a long time, and left small circles of virgin mould, easily distinguishable through the summer by the greater luxuriance of the beans there. The dead and for the most part unmerchantable wood behind my house, and the driftwood from the pond, have supplied the remainder of my fuel. I was obliged to hire a team and a man for the plowing, though I held the plow myself. My farm outgoes for the first season were, for implements, seed, work, etc., $14.72-1/2. The seed corn was given me. This never costs anything to speak of, unless you plant more than enough. I got twelve bushels of beans, and eighteen bushels of potatoes, beside some peas and sweet corn. The yellow corn and turnips were too late to come to anything. My whole income from the farm was

	$ 23.44
Deducting the outgoes.....	14.72-1/2
There are left.....	$ 8.71-1/2

beside produce consumed and on hand at the time this estimate was made of the value of $4.50 — the amount on hand much more than balancing a little grass which I did not raise. All things

considered, that is, considering the importance of a man's soul and of today, notwithstanding the short time occupied by my experiment, nay, partly even because of its transient character, I believe that that was doing better than any farmer in Concord did that year.

The next year I did better still, for I spaded up all the land which I required, about a third of an acre, and I learned from the experience of both years, not being in the least awed by many celebrated works on husbandry, Arthur Young among the rest, that if one would live simply and eat only the crop which he raised, and raise no more than he ate, and not exchange it for an insufficient quantity of more luxurious and expensive things, he would need to cultivate only a few rods of ground, and that it would be cheaper to spade up that than to use oxen to plow it, and to select a fresh spot from time to time than to manure the old, and he could do all his necessary farm work as it were with his left hand at odd hours in the summer; and thus he would not be tied to an ox, or horse, or cow, or pig, as at present. I desire to speak impartially on this point, and as one not interested in the success or failure of the present economical and social arrangements. I was more independent than any farmer in Concord, for I was not anchored to a house or farm, but could follow the bent of my genius, which is a very crooked one, every moment. Beside being better off than they already, if my house had been burned or my crops had failed, I should have been nearly as well off as before.

I am wont to think that men are not so much the keepers of herds as herds are the keepers of men, the former are so much the freer. Men and oxen exchange work; but if we consider necessary work only, the oxen will be seen to have greatly the advantage, their farm is so much the larger. Man does some of his part of the exchange work in his six weeks of haying, and it is no boy's play. Certainly no nation that lived simply in all respects, that is, no nation of philosophers, would commit so great a blunder as to use the labor of animals. True, there never was and is not likely soon to be a nation of philosophers, nor am I certain it is desirable that there should be. However, *I* should never have broken a horse or bull and taken him to board for any work he might do for me, for fear I should become a horseman or a herdsman merely; and if society seems to be the

gainer by so doing, are we certain that what is one man's gain is not another's loss, and that the stable-boy has equal cause with his master to be satisfied? Granted that some public works would not have been constructed without this aid, and let man share the glory of such with the ox and horse; does it follow that he could not have accomplished works yet more worthy of himself in that case? When men begin to do, not merely unnecessary or artistic, but luxurious and idle work, with their assistance, it is inevitable that a few do all the exchange work with the oxen, or, in other words, become the slaves of the strongest. Man thus not only works for the animal within him, but, for a symbol of this, he works for the animal without him. Though we have many substantial houses of brick or stone, the prosperity of the farmer is still measured by the degree to which the barn overshadows the house. This town is said to have the largest houses for oxen, cows, and horses hereabouts, and it is not behindhand in its public buildings; but there are very few halls for free worship or free speech in this county. It should not be by their architecture, but why not even by their power of abstract thought, that nations should seek to commemorate themselves? How much more admirable the Bhagvat-Geeta than all the ruins of the East! Towers and temples are the luxury of princes. A simple and independent mind does not toil at the bidding of any prince. Genius is not a retainer to any emperor, nor is its material silver, or gold, or marble, except to a trifling extent. To what end, pray, is so much stone hammered? In Arcadia, when I was there, I did not see any hammering stone. Nations are possessed with an insane ambition to perpetuate the memory of themselves by the amount of hammered stone they leave. What if equal pains were taken to smooth and polish their manners? One piece of good sense would be more memorable than a monument as high as the moon. I love better to see stones in place. The grandeur of Thebes was a vulgar grandeur. More sensible is a rod of stone wall that bounds an honest man's field than a hundred-gated Thebes that has wandered farther from the true end of life. The religion and civilization which are barbaric and heathenish build splendid temples; but what you might call Christianity does not. Most of the stone a nation hammers goes toward its tomb only. It buries itself alive. As for the Pyramids, there

is nothing to wonder at in them so much as the fact that so many men could be found degraded enough to spend their lives constructing a tomb for some ambitious booby, whom it would have been wiser and manlier to have drowned in the Nile, and then given his body to the dogs. I might possibly invent some excuse for them and him, but I have no time for it. As for the religion and love of art of the builders, it is much the same all the world over, whether the building be an Egyptian temple or the United States Bank. It costs more than it comes to. The mainspring is vanity, assisted by the love of garlic and bread and butter. Mr. Balcom, a promising young architect, designs it on the back of his Vitruvius, with hard pencil and ruler, and the job is let out to Dobson & Sons, stonecutters. When the thirty centuries begin to look down on it, mankind begin to look up at it. As for your high towers and monuments, there was a crazy fellow once in this town who undertook to dig through to China, and he got so far that, as he said, he heard the Chinese pots and kettles rattle; but I think that I shall not go out of my way to admire the hole which he made. Many are concerned about the monuments of the West and the East — to know who built them. For my part, I should like to know who in those days did not build them — who were above such trifling. But to proceed with my statistics.

By surveying, carpentry, and day-labor of various other kinds in the village in the meanwhile, for I have as many trades as fingers, I had earned $13.34. The expense of food for eight months, namely, from July 4th to March 1st, the time when these estimates were made, though I lived there more than two years — not counting potatoes, a little green corn, and some peas, which I had raised, nor considering the value of what was on hand at the last date — was

Rice.....	$ 1.73-1/2	
Molasses.....	1.73	Cheapest form of the saccharine.
Rye meal.....	1.04-3/4	
Indian meal.....	0.99-3/4	Cheaper than rye.
Pork.....	0.22	
All experiments which failed:		
Flour.....	0.88	Costs more than Indian meal, both money and trouble.
Sugar.....	0.80	

Lard..... 0.65
Apples..... 0.25
Dried apple..... 0.22
Sweet potatoes..... 0.10
One pumpkin..... 0.06
One watermelon..... 0.02
Salt..... 0.03

Yes, I did eat $8.74, all told; but I should not thus unblushingly publish my guilt, if I did not know that most of my readers were equally guilty with myself, and that their deeds would look no better in print. The next year I sometimes caught a mess of fish for my dinner, and once I went so far as to slaughter a woodchuck which ravaged my bean-field — effect his transmigration, as a Tartar would say — and devour him, partly for experiment's sake; but though it afforded me a momentary enjoyment, notwithstanding a musky flavor, I saw that the longest use would not make that a good practice, however it might seem to have your woodchucks ready dressed by the village butcher.

Clothing and some incidental expenses within the same dates, though little can be inferred from this item, amounted to

$8.40-3/4
Oil and some household utensils..... 2.00

So that all the pecuniary outgoes, excepting for washing and mending, which for the most part were done out of the house, and their bills have not yet been received — and these are all and more than all the ways by which money necessarily goes out in this part of the world — were

House..... $ 28.12-1/2
Farm one year..... 14.72-1/2
Food eight months..... 8.74
Clothing, etc., eight months..... 8.40-3/4
Oil, etc., eight months..... 2.00
——— ——— ———
In all..... $ 61.99-3/4

I address myself now to those of my readers who have a living to

get. And to meet this I have for farm produce sold

	$23.44
Earned by day-labor.....	13.34
In all.....	$36.78,

which subtracted from the sum of the outgoes leaves a balance of $25.21-3/4 on the one side — this being very nearly the means with which I started, and the measure of expenses to be incurred — and on the other, beside the leisure and independence and health thus secured, a comfortable house for me as long as I choose to occupy it.

These statistics, however accidental and therefore uninstructive they may appear, as they have a certain completeness, have a certain value also. Nothing was given me of which I have not rendered some account. It appears from the above estimate, that my food alone cost me in money about twenty-seven cents a week. It was, for nearly two years after this, rye and Indian meal without yeast, potatoes, rice, a very little salt pork, molasses, and salt; and my drink, water. It was fit that I should live on rice, mainly, who love so well the philosophy of India. To meet the objections of some inveterate cavillers, I may as well state, that if I dined out occasionally, as I always had done, and I trust shall have opportunities to do again, it was frequently to the detriment of my domestic arrangements. But the dining out, being, as I have stated, a constant element, does not in the least affect a comparative statement like this.

I learned from my two years' experience that it would cost incredibly little trouble to obtain one's necessary food, even in this latitude; that a man may use as simple a diet as the animals, and yet retain health and strength. I have made a satisfactory dinner, satisfactory on several accounts, simply off a dish of purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) which I gathered in my cornfield, boiled and salted. I give the Latin on account of the savoriness of the trivial name. And pray what more can a reasonable man desire, in peaceful times, in ordinary noons, than a sufficient number of ears of green sweet corn boiled, with the addition of salt? Even the little variety which I used was a yielding to the demands of appetite, and not of

health. Yet men have come to such a pass that they frequently starve, not for want of necessaries, but for want of luxuries; and I know a good woman who thinks that her son lost his life because he took to drinking water only.

The reader will perceive that I am treating the subject rather from an economic than a dietetic point of view, and he will not venture to put my abstemiousness to the test unless he has a well-stocked larder.

Bread I at first made of pure Indian meal and salt, genuine hoe-cakes, which I baked before my fire out of doors on a shingle or the end of a stick of timber sawed off in building my house; but it was wont to get smoked and to have a piny flavor. I tried flour also; but have at last found a mixture of rye and Indian meal most convenient and agreeable. In cold weather it was no little amusement to bake several small loaves of this in succession, tending and turning them as carefully as an Egyptian his hatching eggs. They were a real cereal fruit which I ripened, and they had to my senses a fragrance like that of other noble fruits, which I kept in as long as possible by wrapping them in cloths. I made a study of the ancient and indispensable art of bread-making, consulting such authorities as offered, going back to the primitive days and first invention of the unleavened kind, when from the wildness of nuts and meats men first reached the mildness and refinement of this diet, and travelling gradually down in my studies through that accidental souring of the dough which, it is supposed, taught the leavening process, and through the various fermentations thereafter, till I came to "good, sweet, wholesome bread," the staff of life. Leaven, which some deem the soul of bread, the *spiritus* which fills its cellular tissue, which is religiously preserved like the vestal fire — some precious bottleful, I suppose, first brought over in the Mayflower, did the business for America, and its influence is still rising, swelling, spreading, in cerealian billows over the land — this seed I regularly and faithfully procured from the village, till at length one morning I forgot the rules, and scalded my yeast; by which accident I discovered that even this was not indispensable — for my discoveries were not by the synthetic but analytic process — and I have gladly omitted it since, though most housewives earnestly assured me that safe and wholesome bread without yeast might not be, and elderly people prophesied a speedy

decay of the vital forces. Yet I find it not to be an essential ingredient, and after going without it for a year am still in the land of the living; and I am glad to escape the trivialness of carrying a bottleful in my pocket, which would sometimes pop and discharge its contents to my discomfiture. It is simpler and more respectable to omit it. Man is an animal who more than any other can adapt himself to all climates and circumstances. Neither did I put any sal-soda, or other acid or alkali, into my bread. It would seem that I made it according to the recipe which Marcus Porcius Cato gave about two centuries before Christ. "Panem depsticium sic facito. Manus mortariumque bene lavato. Farinam in mortarium indito, aquae paulatim addito, subigitoque pulchre. Ubi bene subegeris, defingito, coquitoque sub testu." Which I take to mean,— "Make kneaded bread thus. Wash your hands and trough well. Put the meal into the trough, add water gradually, and knead it thoroughly. When you have kneaded it well, mould it, and bake it under a cover," that is, in a baking kettle. Not a word about leaven. But I did not always use this staff of life. At one time, owing to the emptiness of my purse, I saw none of it for more than a month.

Every New Englander might easily raise all his own breadstuffs in this land of rye and Indian corn, and not depend on distant and fluctuating markets for them. Yet so far are we from simplicity and independence that, in Concord, fresh and sweet meal is rarely sold in the shops, and hominy and corn in a still coarser form are hardly used by any. For the most part the farmer gives to his cattle and hogs the grain of his own producing, and buys flour, which is at least no more wholesome, at a greater cost, at the store. I saw that I could easily raise my bushel or two of rye and Indian corn, for the former will grow on the poorest land, and the latter does not require the best, and grind them in a hand-mill, and so do without rice and pork; and if I must have some concentrated sweet, I found by experiment that I could make a very good molasses either of pumpkins or beets, and I knew that I needed only to set out a few maples to obtain it more easily still, and while these were growing I could use various substitutes beside those which I have named. "For," as the Forefathers sang, —

"we can make liquor to sweeten our lips
Of pumpkins and parsnips and walnut-tree chips."

Finally, as for salt, that grossest of groceries, to obtain this might be a fit occasion for a visit to the seashore, or, if I did without it altogether, I should probably drink the less water. I do not learn that the Indians ever troubled themselves to go after it.

Thus I could avoid all trade and barter, so far as my food was concerned, and having a shelter already, it would only remain to get clothing and fuel. The pantaloons which I now wear were woven in a farmer's family — thank Heaven there is so much virtue still in man; for I think the fall from the farmer to the operative as great and memorable as that from the man to the farmer; — and in a new country, fuel is an encumbrance. As for a habitat, if I were not permitted still to squat, I might purchase one acre at the same price for which the land I cultivated was sold — namely, eight dollars and eight cents. But as it was, I considered that I enhanced the value of the land by squatting on it.

There is a certain class of unbelievers who sometimes ask me such questions as, if I think that I can live on vegetable food alone; and to strike at the root of the matter at once — for the root is faith — I am accustomed to answer such, that I can live on board nails. If they cannot understand that, they cannot understand much that I have to say. For my part, I am glad to hear of experiments of this kind being tried; as that a young man tried for a fortnight to live on hard, raw corn on the ear, using his teeth for all mortar. The squirrel tribe tried the same and succeeded. The human race is interested in these experiments, though a few old women who are incapacitated for them, or who own their thirds in mills, may be alarmed.

My furniture, part of which I made myself — and the rest cost me nothing of which I have not rendered an account — consisted of a bed, a table, a desk, three chairs, a looking-glass three inches in diameter, a pair of tongs and andirons, a kettle, a skillet, and a frying-pan, a dipper, a wash-bowl, two knives and forks, three plates, one cup, one spoon, a jug for oil, a jug for molasses, and a japanned lamp. None is so poor that he need sit on a pumpkin. That is

shiftlessness. There is a plenty of such chairs as I like best in the village garrets to be had for taking them away. Furniture! Thank God, I can sit and I can stand without the aid of a furniture warehouse. What man but a philosopher would not be ashamed to see his furniture packed in a cart and going up country exposed to the light of heaven and the eyes of men, a beggarly account of empty boxes? That is Spaulding's furniture. I could never tell from inspecting such a load whether it belonged to a so-called rich man or a poor one; the owner always seemed poverty-stricken. Indeed, the more you have of such things the poorer you are. Each load looks as if it contained the contents of a dozen shanties; and if one shanty is poor, this is a dozen times as poor. Pray, for what do we *move* ever but to get rid of our furniture, our *exuviæ*: at last to go from this world to another newly furnished, and leave this to be burned? It is the same as if all these traps were buckled to a man's belt, and he could not move over the rough country where our lines are cast without dragging them — dragging his trap. He was a lucky fox that left his tail in the trap. The muskrat will gnaw his third leg off to be free. No wonder man has lost his elasticity. How often he is at a dead set! "Sir, if I may be so bold, what do you mean by a dead set?" If you are a seer, whenever you meet a man you will see all that he owns, ay, and much that he pretends to disown, behind him, even to his kitchen furniture and all the trumpery which he saves and will not burn, and he will appear to be harnessed to it and making what headway he can. I think that the man is at a dead set who has got through a knot-hole or gateway where his sledge load of furniture cannot follow him. I cannot but feel compassion when I hear some trig, compact-looking man, seemingly free, all girded and ready, speak of his "furniture," as whether it is insured or not. "But what shall I do with my furniture?" — My gay butterfly is entangled in a spider's web then. Even those who seem for a long while not to have any, if you inquire more narrowly you will find have some stored in somebody's barn. I look upon England today as an old gentleman who is travelling with a great deal of baggage, trumpery which has accumulated from long housekeeping, which he has not the courage to burn; great trunk, little trunk, bandbox, and bundle. Throw away the first three at least. It would surpass the powers of a well man

nowadays to take up his bed and walk, and I should certainly advise a sick one to lay down his bed and run. When I have met an immigrant tottering under a bundle which contained his all — looking like an enormous wen which had grown out of the nape of his neck — I have pitied him, not because that was his all, but because he had all *that* to carry. If I have got to drag my trap, I will take care that it be a light one and do not nip me in a vital part. But perchance it would be wisest never to put one's paw into it.

I would observe, by the way, that it costs me nothing for curtains, for I have no gazers to shut out but the sun and moon, and I am willing that they should look in. The moon will not sour milk nor taint meat of mine, nor will the sun injure my furniture or fade my carpet; and if he is sometimes too warm a friend, I find it still better economy to retreat behind some curtain which nature has provided, than to add a single item to the details of housekeeping. A lady once offered me a mat, but as I had no room to spare within the house, nor time to spare within or without to shake it, I declined it, preferring to wipe my feet on the sod before my door. It is best to avoid the beginnings of evil.

Not long since I was present at the auction of a deacon's effects, for his life had not been ineffectual: —

"The evil that men do lives after them."

As usual, a great proportion was trumpery which had begun to accumulate in his father's day. Among the rest was a dried tapeworm. And now, after lying half a century in his garret and other dust holes, these things were not burned; instead of a *bonfire*, or purifying destruction of them, there was an *auction*, or increasing of them. The neighbors eagerly collected to view them, bought them all, and carefully transported them to their garrets and dust holes, to lie there till their estates are settled, when they will start again. When a man dies he kicks the dust.

The customs of some savage nations might, perchance, be profitably imitated by us, for they at least go through the semblance of casting their slough annually; they have the idea of the thing, whether they have the reality or not. Would it not be well if we were

to celebrate such a "busk," or "feast of first fruits," as Bartram describes to have been the custom of the Mucclasse Indians? "When a town celebrates the busk," says he, "having previously provided themselves with new clothes, new pots, pans, and other household utensils and furniture, they collect all their worn out clothes and other despicable things, sweep and cleanse their houses, squares, and the whole town of their filth, which with all the remaining grain and other old provisions they cast together into one common heap, and consume it with fire. After having taken medicine, and fasted for three days, all the fire in the town is extinguished. During this fast they abstain from the gratification of every appetite and passion whatever. A general amnesty is proclaimed; all malefactors may return to their town."

"On the fourth morning, the high priest, by rubbing dry wood together, produces new fire in the public square, from whence every habitation in the town is supplied with the new and pure flame."

They then feast on the new corn and fruits, and dance and sing for three days, "and the four following days they receive visits and rejoice with their friends from neighboring towns who have in like manner purified and prepared themselves."

The Mexicans also practised a similar purification at the end of every fifty-two years, in the belief that it was time for the world to come to an end.

I have scarcely heard of a truer sacrament, that is, as the dictionary defines it, "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," than this, and I have no doubt that they were originally inspired directly from Heaven to do thus, though they have no Biblical record of the revelation.

For more than five years I maintained myself thus solely by the labor of my hands, and I found that, by working about six weeks in a year, I could meet all the expenses of living. The whole of my winters, as well as most of my summers, I had free and clear for study. I have thoroughly tried school-keeping, and found that my expenses were in proportion, or rather out of proportion, to my income, for I was obliged to dress and train, not to say think and believe, accordingly, and I lost my time into the bargain. As I did not

teach for the good of my fellow-men, but simply for a livelihood, this was a failure. I have tried trade but I found that it would take ten years to get under way in that, and that then I should probably be on my way to the devil. I was actually afraid that I might by that time be doing what is called a good business. When formerly I was looking about to see what I could do for a living, some sad experience in conforming to the wishes of friends being fresh in my mind to tax my ingenuity, I thought often and seriously of picking huckleberries; that surely I could do, and its small profits might suffice — for my greatest skill has been to want but little — so little capital it required, so little distraction from my wonted moods, I foolishly thought. While my acquaintances went unhesitatingly into trade or the professions, I contemplated this occupation as most like theirs; ranging the hills all summer to pick the berries which came in my way, and thereafter carelessly dispose of them; so, to keep the flocks of Admetus. I also dreamed that I might gather the wild herbs, or carry evergreens to such villagers as loved to be reminded of the woods, even to the city, by hay-cart loads. But I have since learned that trade curses everything it handles; and though you trade in messages from heaven, the whole curse of trade attaches to the business.

As I preferred some things to others, and especially valued my freedom, as I could fare hard and yet succeed well, I did not wish to spend my time in earning rich carpets or other fine furniture, or delicate cookery, or a house in the Grecian or the Gothic style just yet. If there are any to whom it is no interruption to acquire these things, and who know how to use them when acquired, I relinquish to them the pursuit. Some are "industrious," and appear to love labor for its own sake, or perhaps because it keeps them out of worse mischief; to such I have at present nothing to say. Those who would not know what to do with more leisure than they now enjoy, I might advise to work twice as hard as they do — work till they pay for themselves, and get their free papers. For myself I found that the occupation of a day-laborer was the most independent of any, especially as it required only thirty or forty days in a year to support one. The laborer's day ends with the going down of the sun, and he is then free to devote himself to his chosen pursuit, independent of his

labor; but his employer, who speculates from month to month, has no respite from one end of the year to the other.

In short, I am convinced, both by faith and experience, that to maintain one's self on this earth is not a hardship but a pastime, if we will live simply and wisely; as the pursuits of the simpler nations are still the sports of the more artificial. It is not necessary that a man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow, unless he sweats easier than I do.

One young man of my acquaintance, who has inherited some acres, told me that he thought he should live as I did, *if he had the means*. I would not have any one adopt *my* mode of living on any account; for, beside that before he has fairly learned it I may have found out another for myself, I desire that there may be as many different persons in the world as possible; but I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue *his own* way, and not his father's or his mother's or his neighbor's instead. The youth may build or plant or sail, only let him not be hindered from doing that which he tells me he would like to do. It is by a mathematical point only that we are wise, as the sailor or the fugitive slave keeps the polestar in his eye; but that is sufficient guidance for all our life. We may not arrive at our port within a calculable period, but we would preserve the true course.

Undoubtedly, in this case, what is true for one is truer still for a thousand, as a large house is not proportionally more expensive than a small one, since one roof may cover, one cellar underlie, and one wall separate several apartments. But for my part, I preferred the solitary dwelling. Moreover, it will commonly be cheaper to build the whole yourself than to convince another of the advantage of the common wall; and when you have done this, the common partition, to be much cheaper, must be a thin one, and that other may prove a bad neighbor, and also not keep his side in repair. The only co-operation which is commonly possible is exceedingly partial and superficial; and what little true co-operation there is, is as if it were not, being a harmony inaudible to men. If a man has faith, he will co-operate with equal faith everywhere; if he has not faith, he will continue to live like the rest of the world, whatever company he is joined to. To co-operate in the highest as well as the lowest sense,

means *to get our living together*. I heard it proposed lately that two young men should travel together over the world, the one without money, earning his means as he went, before the mast and behind the plow, the other carrying a bill of exchange in his pocket. It was easy to see that they could not long be companions or co-operate, since one would not *operate* at all. They would part at the first interesting crisis in their adventures. Above all, as I have implied, the man who goes alone can start today; but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready, and it may be a long time before they get off.

But all this is very selfish, I have heard some of my townsmen say. I confess that I have hitherto indulged very little in philanthropic enterprises. I have made some sacrifices to a sense of duty, and among others have sacrificed this pleasure also. There are those who have used all their arts to persuade me to undertake the support of some poor family in the town; and if I had nothing to do — for the devil finds employment for the idle — I might try my hand at some such pastime as that. However, when I have thought to indulge myself in this respect, and lay their Heaven under an obligation by maintaining certain poor persons in all respects as comfortably as I maintain myself, and have even ventured so far as to make them the offer, they have one and all unhesitatingly preferred to remain poor. While my townsmen and women are devoted in so many ways to the good of their fellows, I trust that one at least may be spared to other and less humane pursuits. You must have a genius for charity as well as for anything else. As for Doing-good, that is one of the professions which are full. Moreover, I have tried it fairly, and, strange as it may seem, am satisfied that it does not agree with my constitution. Probably I should not consciously and deliberately forsake my particular calling to do the good which society demands of me, to save the universe from annihilation; and I believe that a like but infinitely greater steadfastness elsewhere is all that now preserves it. But I would not stand between any man and his genius; and to him who does this work, which I decline, with his whole heart and soul and life, I would say, Persevere, even if the world call it doing evil, as it is most likely they will.

I am far from supposing that my case is a peculiar one; no doubt

many of my readers would make a similar defence. At doing something — I will not engage that my neighbors shall pronounce it good — I do not hesitate to say that I should be a capital fellow to hire; but what that is, it is for my employer to find out. What *good* I do, in the common sense of that word, must be aside from my main path, and for the most part wholly unintended. Men say, practically, Begin where you are and such as you are, without aiming mainly to become of more worth, and with kindness aforethought go about doing good. If I were to preach at all in this strain, I should say rather, Set about being good. As if the sun should stop when he had kindled his fires up to the splendor of a moon or a star of the sixth magnitude, and go about like a Robin Goodfellow, peeping in at every cottage window, inspiring lunatics, and tainting meats, and making darkness visible, instead of steadily increasing his genial heat and beneficence till he is of such brightness that no mortal can look him in the face, and then, and in the meanwhile too, going about the world in his own orbit, doing it good, or rather, as a truer philosophy has discovered, the world going about him getting good. When Phaeton, wishing to prove his heavenly birth by his beneficence, had the sun's chariot but one day, and drove out of the beaten track, he burned several blocks of houses in the lower streets of heaven, and scorched the surface of the earth, and dried up every spring, and made the great desert of Sahara, till at length Jupiter hurled him headlong to the earth with a thunderbolt, and the sun, through grief at his death, did not shine for a year.

There is no odor so bad as that which arises from goodness tainted. It is human, it is divine, carrion. If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life, as from that dry and parching wind of the African deserts called the simoom, which fills the mouth and nose and ears and eyes with dust till you are suffocated, for fear that I should get some of his good done to me — some of its virus mingled with my blood. No — in this case I would rather suffer evil the natural way. A man is not a good *man* to me because he will feed me if I should be starving, or warm me if I should be freezing, or pull me out of a ditch if I should ever fall into one. I can find you a Newfoundland dog that will do as much. Philanthropy is not love for

one's fellow-man in the broadest sense. Howard was no doubt an exceedingly kind and worthy man in his way, and has his reward; but, comparatively speaking, what are a hundred Howards to *us*, if their philanthropy do not help us in our best estate, when we are most worthy to be helped? I never heard of a philanthropic meeting in which it was sincerely proposed to do any good to me, or the like of me.

The Jesuits were quite balked by those Indians who, being burned at the stake, suggested new modes of torture to their tormentors. Being superior to physical suffering, it sometimes chanced that they were superior to any consolation which the missionaries could offer; and the law to do as you would be done by fell with less persuasiveness on the ears of those who, for their part, did not care how they were done by, who loved their enemies after a new fashion, and came very near freely forgiving them all they did.

Be sure that you give the poor the aid they most need, though it be your example which leaves them far behind. If you give money, spend yourself with it, and do not merely abandon it to them. We make curious mistakes sometimes. Often the poor man is not so cold and hungry as he is dirty and ragged and gross. It is partly his taste, and not merely his misfortune. If you give him money, he will perhaps buy more rags with it. I was wont to pity the clumsy Irish laborers who cut ice on the pond, in such mean and ragged clothes, while I shivered in my more tidy and somewhat more fashionable garments, till, one bitter cold day, one who had slipped into the water came to my house to warm him, and I saw him strip off three pairs of pants and two pairs of stockings ere he got down to the skin, though they were dirty and ragged enough, it is true, and that he could afford to refuse the *extra* garments which I offered him, he had so many *intra* ones. This ducking was the very thing he needed. Then I began to pity myself, and I saw that it would be a greater charity to bestow on me a flannel shirt than a whole slop-shop on him. There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root, and it may be that he who bestows the largest amount of time and money on the needy is doing the most by his mode of life to produce that misery which he strives in vain to relieve. It is the pious slave-breeder devoting the proceeds of every tenth slave to buy a

Sunday's liberty for the rest. Some show their kindness to the poor by employing them in their kitchens. Would they not be kinder if they employed themselves there? You boast of spending a tenth part of your income in charity; maybe you should spend the nine tenths so, and done with it. Society recovers only a tenth part of the property then. Is this owing to the generosity of him in whose possession it is found, or to the remissness of the officers of justice?

Philanthropy is almost the only virtue which is sufficiently appreciated by mankind. Nay, it is greatly overrated; and it is our selfishness which overrates it. A robust poor man, one sunny day here in Concord, praised a fellow-townsman to me, because, as he said, he was kind to the poor; meaning himself. The kind uncles and aunts of the race are more esteemed than its true spiritual fathers and mothers. I once heard a reverend lecturer on England, a man of learning and intelligence, after enumerating her scientific, literary, and political worthies, Shakespeare, Bacon, Cromwell, Milton, Newton, and others, speak next of her Christian heroes, whom, as if his profession required it of him, he elevated to a place far above all the rest, as the greatest of the great. They were Penn, Howard, and Mrs. Fry. Every one must feel the falsehood and cant of this. The last were not England's best men and women; only, perhaps, her best philanthropists.

I would not subtract anything from the praise that is due to philanthropy, but merely demand justice for all who by their lives and works are a blessing to mankind. I do not value chiefly a man's uprightness and benevolence, which are, as it were, his stem and leaves. Those plants of whose greenness withered we make herb tea for the sick serve but a humble use, and are most employed by quacks. I want the flower and fruit of a man; that some fragrance be wafted over from him to me, and some ripeness flavor our intercourse. His goodness must not be a partial and transitory act, but a constant superfluity, which costs him nothing and of which he is unconscious. This is a charity that hides a multitude of sins. The philanthropist too often surrounds mankind with the remembrance of his own castoff griefs as an atmosphere, and calls it sympathy. We should impart our courage, and not our despair, our health and ease, and not our disease, and take care that this does not spread by

contagion. From what southern plains comes up the voice of wailing? Under what latitudes reside the heathen to whom we would send light? Who is that intemperate and brutal man whom we would redeem? If anything ail a man, so that he does not perform his functions, if he have a pain in his bowels even — for that is the seat of sympathy — he forthwith sets about reforming — the world. Being a microcosm himself, he discovers — and it is a true discovery, and he is the man to make it — that the world has been eating green apples; to his eyes, in fact, the globe itself is a great green apple, which there is danger awful to think of that the children of men will nibble before it is ripe; and straightway his drastic philanthropy seeks out the Esquimau and the Patagonian, and embraces the populous Indian and Chinese villages; and thus, by a few years of philanthropic activity, the powers in the meanwhile using him for their own ends, no doubt, he cures himself of his dyspepsia, the globe acquires a faint blush on one or both of its cheeks, as if it were beginning to be ripe, and life loses its crudity and is once more sweet and wholesome to live. I never dreamed of any enormity greater than I have committed. I never knew, and never shall know, a worse man than myself.

I believe that what so saddens the reformer is not his sympathy with his fellows in distress, but, though he be the holiest son of God, is his private ail. Let this be righted, let the spring come to him, the morning rise over his couch, and he will forsake his generous companions without apology. My excuse for not lecturing against the use of tobacco is, that I never chewed it, that is a penalty which reformed tobacco-chewers have to pay; though there are things enough I have chewed which I could lecture against. If you should ever be betrayed into any of these philanthropies, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does, for it is not worth knowing. Rescue the drowning and tie your shoestrings. Take your time, and set about some free labor.

Our manners have been corrupted by communication with the saints. Our hymn-books resound with a melodious cursing of God and enduring Him forever. One would say that even the prophets and redeemers had rather consoled the fears than confirmed the hopes of man. There is nowhere recorded a simple and irrepressible

satisfaction with the gift of life, any memorable praise of God. All health and success does me good, however far off and withdrawn it may appear; all disease and failure helps to make me sad and does me evil, however much sympathy it may have with me or I with it. If, then, we would indeed restore mankind by truly Indian, botanic, magnetic, or natural means, let us first be as simple and well as Nature ourselves, dispel the clouds which hang over our own brows, and take up a little life into our pores. Do not stay to be an overseer of the poor, but endeavor to become one of the worthies of the world.

I read in the Gulistan, or Flower Garden, of Sheik Sadi of Shiraz, that "they asked a wise man, saying: Of the many celebrated trees which the Most High God has created lofty and umbrageous, they call none azad, or free, excepting the cypress, which bears no fruit; what mystery is there in this? He replied, Each has its appropriate produce, and appointed season, during the continuance of which it is fresh and blooming, and during their absence dry and withered; to neither of which states is the cypress exposed, being always flourishing; and of this nature are the azads, or religious independents. — Fix not thy heart on that which is transitory; for the Dijlah, or Tigris, will continue to flow through Bagdad after the race of caliphs is extinct: if thy hand has plenty, be liberal as the date tree; but if it affords nothing to give away, be an azad, or free man, like the cypress."

COMPLEMENTAL VERSES

The Pretensions of Poverty

Thou dost presume too much, poor needy wretch,
To claim a station in the firmament
Because thy humble cottage, or thy tub,
Nurses some lazy or pedantic virtue
In the cheap sunshine or by shady springs,
With roots and pot-herbs; where thy right hand,
Tearing those humane passions from the mind,
Upon whose stocks fair blooming virtues flourish,
Degradeth nature, and benumbeth sense,
And, Gorgon-like, turns active men to stone.

We not require the dull society
Of your necessitated temperance,
Or that unnatural stupidity
That knows nor joy nor sorrow; nor your forc'd
Falsely exalted passive fortitude
Above the active. This low abject brood,
That fix their seats in mediocrity,
Become your servile minds; but we advance
Such virtues only as admit excess,
Brave, bounteous acts, regal magnificence,
All-seeing prudence, magnanimity
That knows no bound, and that heroic virtue
For which antiquity hath left no name,
But patterns only, such as Hercules,
Achilles, Theseus. Back to thy loath'd cell;
And when thou seest the new enlightened sphere,
Study to know but what those worthies were.

T. CAREW

Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

At a certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it — took everything but a deed of it — took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk — cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat? — better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, wood-lot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow, perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms — the refusal was all I wanted — but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with; but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife — every man has such a wife — changed her

mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough; or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes,

"I am monarch of all I *survey*,
My right there is none to dispute."

I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only. Why, the owner does not know it for many years when a poet has put his farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly impounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk.

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were: its complete retirement, being, about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me; the gray color and ruinous state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant; the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have; but above all, the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these advantages I was ready to carry it on;

like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders — I never heard what compensation he received for that — and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it; for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted, if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said.

All that I could say, then, with respect to farming on a large scale — I have always cultivated a garden — was, that I had had my seeds ready. Many think that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between the good and the bad; and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all, As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato, whose "De Re Rusticâ" is my "Cultivator," says — and the only translation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage — "When you think of getting a farm turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily; nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the more it will please you, if it is good." I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first, that it may please me the more at last.

The present was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at length, for convenience putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said, I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon

some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited a year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere.

The only house I had been the owner of before, if I except a boat, was a tent, which I used occasionally when making excursions in the summer, and this is still rolled up in my garret; but the boat, after passing from hand to hand, has gone down the stream of time. With this more substantial shelter about me, I had made some progress toward settling in the world. This frame, so slightly clad, was a sort of crystallization around me, and reacted on the builder. It was suggestive somewhat as a picture in outlines. I did not need to go outdoors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. The Harivansa says, “An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning.” Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those smaller and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager — the wood thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field sparrow, the whip-poor-will, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its

bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal conventicle. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

This small lake was of most value as a neighbor in the intervals of a gentle rain-storm in August, when, both air and water being perfectly still, but the sky overcast, mid-afternoon had all the serenity of evening, and the wood thrush sang around, and was heard from shore to shore. A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being, shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important. From a hill-top near by, where the wood had been recently cut off, there was a pleasing vista southward across the pond, through a wide indentation in the hills which form the shore there, where their opposite sides sloping toward each other suggested a stream flowing out in that direction through a wooded valley, but stream there was none. That way I looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the northwest, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps butter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of interverting water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but *dry land*.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. "There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon" — said Damodara, when his herds required new and larger pastures.

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. Such was that part of creation where I had squatted;

"There was a shepherd that did live,
And held his thoughts as high
As were the mounts whereon his flocks
Did hourly feed him by."

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered to higher pastures than his thoughts?

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were engraven on the bathing tub of King Tchingthang to this effect: "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and

unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly acquired force and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air — to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life, and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make. All memorable events, I should say, transpire in morning time and in a morning atmosphere. The Vedas say, "All intelligences awake with the morning." Poetry and art, and the fairest and most memorable of the actions of men, date from such an hour. All poets and heroes, like Memnon, are the children of Aurora, and emit their music at sunrise. To him whose elastic and vigorous thought keeps pace with the sun, the day is a perpetual morning. It matters not what the clocks say or the attitudes and labors of men. Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep. Why is it that men give so poor an account of their day if they have not been slumbering? They are not such poor calculators. If they had not been overcome with drowsiness, they would have performed something. The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To

be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. How could I have looked him in the face?

We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our soundest sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour. If we refused, or rather used up, such paltry information as we get, the oracles would distinctly inform us how this might be done.

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion. For most men, it appears to me, are in a strange uncertainty about it, whether it is of the devil or of God, and have *somewhat hastily* concluded that it is the chief end of man here to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."

Still we live meanly, like ants; though the fable tells us that we were long ago changed into men; like pygmies we fight with cranes; it is error upon error, and clout upon clout, and our best virtue has for its occasion a superfluous and evitable wretchedness. Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and lump the rest. Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let

your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand; instead of a million count half a dozen, and keep your accounts on your thumb-nail. In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life, such are the clouds and storms and quicksands and thousand-and-one items to be allowed for, that a man has to live, if he would not founder and go to the bottom and not make his port at all, by dead reckoning, and he must be a great calculator indeed who succeeds. Simplify, simplify. Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion. Our life is like a German Confederacy, made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land; and the only cure for it, as for them, is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers, and forge rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our *lives* to improve *them*, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this

were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches today to save nine tomorrow. As for *work*, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus' dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire — or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely; yes, even if it were the parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half-hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, "What's the news?" as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half-hour, doubtless for no other purpose; and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed. After a night's sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. "Pray tell me anything new that has happened to a man anywhere on this globe" — and he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River; never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life — I wrote this some years ago — that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or

one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter — we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all *news*, as it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure — news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelve-month, or twelve years, beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and Don Pedro and Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions — they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers — and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state or ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England, almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649; and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted.

What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! "Kieou-he-yu (great dignitary of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!" The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week — for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one — with this one other draggle-tail of a

sermon, should shout with thundering voice, “Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?”

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights’ Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence, that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. I have read in a Hindoo book, that “there was a king’s son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a forester, and, growing up to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father’s ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So soul,” continues the Hindoo philosopher, “from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be Brahme.” I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that *is* which *appears* to be. If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the “Mill-dam” go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and

after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so fair and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry — determined to make a day of it. Why should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why should we run? We will consider what kind of music they are like. Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through Church and State, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin, having a *point d'appui*, below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamp-post safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on both its surfaces, as if it were a cimeter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily

conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities; if we are alive, let us go about our business.

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver; it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining-rod and thin rising vapors I judge; and here I will begin to mine.

Reading

With a little more deliberation in the choice of their pursuits, all men would perhaps become essentially students and observers, for certainly their nature and destiny are interesting to all alike. In accumulating property for ourselves or our posterity, in founding a family or a state, or acquiring fame even, we are mortal; but in dealing with truth we are immortal, and need fear no change nor accident. The oldest Egyptian or Hindoo philosopher raised a corner of the veil from the statue of the divinity; and still the trembling robe remains raised, and I gaze upon as fresh a glory as he did, since it was I in him that was then so bold, and it is he in me that now reviews the vision. No dust has settled on that robe; no time has elapsed since that divinity was revealed. That time which we really improve, or which is improvable, is neither past, present, nor future.

My residence was more favorable, not only to thought, but to serious reading, than a university; and though I was beyond the range of the ordinary circulating library, I had more than ever come within the influence of those books which circulate round the world, whose sentences were first written on bark, and are now merely copied from time to time on to linen paper. Says the poet Mîr Camar Uddîn Mast, "Being seated, to run through the region of the spiritual world; I have had this advantage in books. To be intoxicated by a single glass of wine; I have experienced this pleasure when I have drunk the liquor of the esoteric doctrines." I kept Homer's Iliad on my table through the summer, though I looked at his page only now and then. Incessant labor with my hands, at first, for I had my house to finish and my beans to hoe at the same time, made more study impossible. Yet I sustained myself by the prospect of such reading in future. I read one or two shallow books of travel in the intervals of my work, till that employment made me ashamed of myself, and I asked where it was then that *I* lived.

The student may read Homer or Æschylus in the Greek without danger of dissipation or luxuriousness, for it implies that he in some measure emulate their heroes, and consecrate morning hours to their pages. The heroic books, even if printed in the character of our

mother tongue, will always be in a language dead to degenerate times; and we must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than common use permits out of what wisdom and valor and generosity we have. The modern cheap and fertile press, with all its translations, has done little to bring us nearer to the heroic writers of antiquity. They seem as solitary, and the letter in which they are printed as rare and curious, as ever. It is worth the expense of youthful days and costly hours, if you learn only some words of an ancient language, which are raised out of the trivialness of the street, to be perpetual suggestions and provocations. It is not in vain that the farmer remembers and repeats the few Latin words which he has heard. Men sometimes speak as if the study of the classics would at length make way for more modern and practical studies; but the adventurous student will always study classics, in whatever language they may be written and however ancient they may be. For what are the classics but the noblest recorded thoughts of man? They are the only oracles which are not decayed, and there are such answers to the most modern inquiry in them as Delphi and Dodona never gave. We might as well omit to study Nature because she is old. To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written. It is not enough even to be able to speak the language of that nation by which they are written, for there is a memorable interval between the spoken and the written language, the language heard and the language read. The one is commonly transitory, a sound, a tongue, a dialect merely, almost brutish, and we learn it unconsciously, like the brutes, of our mothers. The other is the maturity and experience of that; if that is our mother tongue, this is our father tongue, a reserved and select expression, too significant to be heard by the ear, which we must be born again in order to speak. The crowds of men who merely spoke the Greek and Latin tongues in the Middle Ages were not entitled by the accident of birth to read the works of genius written in those languages; for these were not written in that Greek or Latin which

they knew, but in the select language of literature. They had not learned the nobler dialects of Greece and Rome, but the very materials on which they were written were waste paper to them, and they prized instead a cheap contemporary literature. But when the several nations of Europe had acquired distinct though rude written languages of their own, sufficient for the purposes of their rising literatures, then first learning revived, and scholars were enabled to discern from that remoteness the treasures of antiquity. What the Roman and Grecian multitude could not *hear*, after the lapse of ages a few scholars *read*, and a few scholars only are still reading it.

However much we may admire the orator's occasional bursts of eloquence, the noblest written words are commonly as far behind or above the fleeting spoken language as the firmament with its stars is behind the clouds. *There* are the stars, and they who can may read them. The astronomers forever comment on and observe them. They are not exhalations like our daily colloquies and vaporous breath. What is called eloquence in the forum is commonly found to be rhetoric in the study. The orator yields to the inspiration of a transient occasion, and speaks to the mob before him, to those who can *hear* him; but the writer, whose more equable life is his occasion, and who would be distracted by the event and the crowd which inspire the orator, speaks to the intellect and health of mankind, to all in any age who can *understand* him.

No wonder that Alexander carried the Iliad with him on his expeditions in a precious casket. A written word is the choicest of relics. It is something at once more intimate with us and more universal than any other work of art. It is the work of art nearest to life itself. It may be translated into every language, and not only be read but actually breathed from all human lips; — not be represented on canvas or in marble only, but be carved out of the breath of life itself. The symbol of an ancient man's thought becomes a modern man's speech. Two thousand summers have imparted to the monuments of Grecian literature, as to her marbles, only a maturer golden and autumnal tint, for they have carried their own serene and celestial atmosphere into all lands to protect them against the corrosion of time. Books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations and nations. Books, the oldest and

the best, stand naturally and rightfully on the shelves of every cottage. They have no cause of their own to plead, but while they enlighten and sustain the reader his common sense will not refuse them. Their authors are a natural and irresistible aristocracy in every society, and, more than kings or emperors, exert an influence on mankind. When the illiterate and perhaps scornful trader has earned by enterprise and industry his coveted leisure and independence, and is admitted to the circles of wealth and fashion, he turns inevitably at last to those still higher but yet inaccessible circles of intellect and genius, and is sensible only of the imperfection of his culture and the vanity and insufficiency of all his riches, and further proves his good sense by the pains which he takes to secure for his children that intellectual culture whose want he so keenly feels; and thus it is that he becomes the founder of a family.

Those who have not learned to read the ancient classics in the language in which they were written must have a very imperfect knowledge of the history of the human race; for it is remarkable that no transcript of them has ever been made into any modern tongue, unless our civilization itself may be regarded as such a transcript. Homer has never yet been printed in English, nor Æschylus, nor Virgil even — works as refined, as solidly done, and as beautiful almost as the morning itself; for later writers, say what we will of their genius, have rarely, if ever, equalled the elaborate beauty and finish and the lifelong and heroic literary labors of the ancients. They only talk of forgetting them who never knew them. It will be soon enough to forget them when we have the learning and the genius which will enable us to attend to and appreciate them. That age will be rich indeed when those relics which we call Classics, and the still older and more than classic but even less known Scriptures of the nations, shall have still further accumulated, when the Vaticans shall be filled with Vedas and Zendavestas and Bibles, with Homers and Dantes and Shakespeares, and all the centuries to come shall have successively deposited their trophies in the forum of the world. By such a pile we may hope to scale heaven at last.

The works of the great poets have never yet been read by mankind, for only great poets can read them. They have only been read as the multitude read the stars, at most astrologically, not

astronomically. Most men have learned to read to serve a paltry convenience, as they have learned to cipher in order to keep accounts and not be cheated in trade; but of reading as a noble intellectual exercise they know little or nothing; yet this only is reading, in a high sense, not that which lulls us as a luxury and suffers the nobler faculties to sleep the while, but what we have to stand on tip-toe to read and devote our most alert and wakeful hours to.

I think that having learned our letters we should read the best that is in literature, and not be forever repeating our a-b-abs, and words of one syllable, in the fourth or fifth classes, sitting on the lowest and foremost form all our lives. Most men are satisfied if they read or hear read, and perchance have been convicted by the wisdom of one good book, the Bible, and for the rest of their lives vegetate and dissipate their faculties in what is called easy reading. There is a work in several volumes in our Circulating Library entitled "Little Reading," which I thought referred to a town of that name which I had not been to. There are those who, like cormorants and ostriches, can digest all sorts of this, even after the fullest dinner of meats and vegetables, for they suffer nothing to be wasted. If others are the machines to provide this provender, they are the machines to read it. They read the nine thousandth tale about Zebulon and Sophronia, and how they loved as none had ever loved before, and neither did the course of their true love run smooth — at any rate, how it did run and stumble, and get up again and go on! how some poor unfortunate got up on to a steeple, who had better never have gone up as far as the belfry; and then, having needlessly got him up there, the happy novelist rings the bell for all the world to come together and hear, O dear! how he did get down again! For my part, I think that they had better metamorphose all such aspiring heroes of universal noveldom into man weather-cocks, as they used to put heroes among the constellations, and let them swing round there till they are rusty, and not come down at all to bother honest men with their pranks. The next time the novelist rings the bell I will not stir though the meeting-house burn down. "The Skip of the Tip-Toe-Hop, a Romance of the Middle Ages, by the celebrated author of 'Tittle-Tol-Tan,' to appear in monthly parts; a great rush; don't all come together." All this they read with saucer eyes, and erect and primitive

curiosity, and with unwearied gizzard, whose corrugations even yet need no sharpening, just as some little four-year-old bencher his two-cent gilt-covered edition of Cinderella — without any improvement, that I can see, in the pronunciation, or accent, or emphasis, or any more skill in extracting or inserting the moral. The result is dulness of sight, a stagnation of the vital circulations, and a general deliquium and sloughing off of all the intellectual faculties. This sort of gingerbread is baked daily and more sedulously than pure wheat or rye-and-Indian in almost every oven, and finds a surer market.

The best books are not read even by those who are called good readers. What does our Concord culture amount to? There is in this town, with a very few exceptions, no taste for the best or for very good books even in English literature, whose words all can read and spell. Even the college-bred and so-called liberally educated men here and elsewhere have really little or no acquaintance with the English classics; and as for the recorded wisdom of mankind, the ancient classics and Bibles, which are accessible to all who will know of them, there are the feeblest efforts anywhere made to become acquainted with them. I know a woodchopper, of middle age, who takes a French paper, not for news as he says, for he is above that, but to "keep himself in practice," he being a Canadian by birth; and when I ask him what he considers the best thing he can do in this world, he says, beside this, to keep up and add to his English. This is about as much as the college-bred generally do or aspire to do, and they take an English paper for the purpose. One who has just come from reading perhaps one of the best English books will find how many with whom he can converse about it? Or suppose he comes from reading a Greek or Latin classic in the original, whose praises are familiar even to the so-called illiterate; he will find nobody at all to speak to, but must keep silence about it. Indeed, there is hardly the professor in our colleges, who, if he has mastered the difficulties of the language, has proportionally mastered the difficulties of the wit and poetry of a Greek poet, and has any sympathy to impart to the alert and heroic reader; and as for the sacred Scriptures, or Bibles of mankind, who in this town can tell me even their titles? Most men do not know that any nation but the Hebrews have had a scripture. A man, any man, will go considerably

out of his way to pick up a silver dollar; but here are golden words, which the wisest men of antiquity have uttered, and whose worth the wise of every succeeding age have assured us of; — and yet we learn to read only as far as Easy Reading, the primers and class-books, and when we leave school, the "Little Reading," and story-books, which are for boys and beginners; and our reading, our conversation and thinking, are all on a very low level, worthy only of pygmies and manikins.

I aspire to be acquainted with wiser men than this our Concord soil has produced, whose names are hardly known here. Or shall I hear the name of Plato and never read his book? As if Plato were my townsman and I never saw him — my next neighbor and I never heard him speak or attended to the wisdom of his words. But how actually is it? His Dialogues, which contain what was immortal in him, lie on the next shelf, and yet I never read them. We are underbred and low-lived and illiterate; and in this respect I confess I do not make any very broad distinction between the illiterateness of my townsman who cannot read at all and the illiterateness of him who has learned to read only what is for children and feeble intellects. We should be as good as the worthies of antiquity, but partly by first knowing how good they were. We are a race of tit-men, and soar but little higher in our intellectual flights than the columns of the daily paper.

It is not all books that are as dull as their readers. There are probably words addressed to our condition exactly, which, if we could really hear and understand, would be more salutary than the morning or the spring to our lives, and possibly put a new aspect on the face of things for us. How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book! The book exists for us, perchance, which will explain our miracles and reveal new ones. The at present unutterable things we may find somewhere uttered. These same questions that disturb and puzzle and confound us have in their turn occurred to all the wise men; not one has been omitted; and each has answered them, according to his ability, by his words and his life. Moreover, with wisdom we shall learn liberality. The solitary hired man on a farm in the outskirts of Concord, who has had his second birth and peculiar religious experience, and is driven as he believes

into the silent gravity and exclusiveness by his faith, may think it is not true; but Zoroaster, thousands of years ago, travelled the same road and had the same experience; but he, being wise, knew it to be universal, and treated his neighbors accordingly, and is even said to have invented and established worship among men. Let him humbly commune with Zoroaster then, and through the liberalizing influence of all the worthies, with Jesus Christ himself, and let "our church" go by the board.

We boast that we belong to the Nineteenth Century and are making the most rapid strides of any nation. But consider how little this village does for its own culture. I do not wish to flatter my townsmen, nor to be flattered by them, for that will not advance either of us. We need to be provoked — goaded like oxen, as we are, into a trot. We have a comparatively decent system of common schools, schools for infants only; but excepting the half-starved Lyceum in the winter, and latterly the puny beginning of a library suggested by the State, no school for ourselves. We spend more on almost any article of bodily aliment or ailment than on our mental aliment. It is time that we had uncommon schools, that we did not leave off our education when we begin to be men and women. It is time that villages were universities, and their elder inhabitants the fellows of universities, with leisure — if they are, indeed, so well off — to pursue liberal studies the rest of their lives. Shall the world be confined to one Paris or one Oxford forever? Cannot students be boarded here and get a liberal education under the skies of Concord? Can we not hire some Abelard to lecture to us? Alas! what with foddering the cattle and tending the store, we are kept from school too long, and our education is sadly neglected. In this country, the village should in some respects take the place of the nobleman of Europe. It should be the patron of the fine arts. It is rich enough. It wants only the magnanimity and refinement. It can spend money enough on such things as farmers and traders value, but it is thought Utopian to propose spending money for things which more intelligent men know to be of far more worth. This town has spent seventeen thousand dollars on a town-house, thank fortune or politics, but probably it will not spend so much on living wit, the true meat to put into that shell, in a hundred years. The one hundred and

twenty-five dollars annually subscribed for a Lyceum in the winter is better spent than any other equal sum raised in the town. If we live in the Nineteenth Century, why should we not enjoy the advantages which the Nineteenth Century offers? Why should our life be in any respect provincial? If we will read newspapers, why not skip the gossip of Boston and take the best newspaper in the world at once? — not be sucking the pap of "neutral family" papers, or browsing "Olive Branches" here in New England. Let the reports of all the learned societies come to us, and we will see if they know anything. Why should we leave it to Harper & Brothers and Redding & Co. to select our reading? As the nobleman of cultivated taste surrounds himself with whatever conduces to his culture — genius — learning — wit — books — paintings — statuary — music — philosophical instruments, and the like; so let the village do — not stop short at a pedagogue, a parson, a sexton, a parish library, and three selectmen, because our Pilgrim forefathers got through a cold winter once on a bleak rock with these. To act collectively is according to the spirit of our institutions; and I am confident that, as our circumstances are more flourishing, our means are greater than the nobleman's. New England can hire all the wise men in the world to come and teach her, and board them round the while, and not be provincial at all. That is the *uncommon* school we want. Instead of noblemen, let us have noble villages of men. If it is necessary, omit one bridge over the river, go round a little there, and throw one arch at least over the darker gulf of ignorance which surrounds us.

Sounds

But while we are confined to books, though the most select and classic, and read only particular written languages, which are themselves but dialects and provincial, we are in danger of forgetting the language which all things and events speak without metaphor, which alone is copious and standard. Much is published, but little printed. The rays which stream through the shutter will be no longer remembered when the shutter is wholly removed. No method nor discipline can supersede the necessity of being forever on the alert. What is a course of history or philosophy, or poetry, no matter how well selected, or the best society, or the most admirable routine of life, compared with the discipline of looking always at what is to be seen? Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a seer? Read your fate, see what is before you, and walk on into futurity.

I did not read books the first summer; I hoed beans. Nay, I often did better than this. There were times when I could not afford to sacrifice the bloom of the present moment to any work, whether of the head or hands. I love a broad margin to my life. Sometimes, in a summer morning, having taken my accustomed bath, I sat in my sunny doorway from sunrise till noon, rapt in a revery, amidst the pines and hickories and sumachs, in undisturbed solitude and stillness, while the birds sing around or flitted noiseless through the house, until by the sun falling in at my west window, or the noise of some traveller's wagon on the distant highway, I was reminded of the lapse of time. I grew in those seasons like corn in the night, and they were far better than any work of the hands would have been. They were not time subtracted from my life, but so much over and above my usual allowance. I realized what the Orientals mean by contemplation and the forsaking of works. For the most part, I minded not how the hours went. The day advanced as if to light some work of mine; it was morning, and lo, now it is evening, and nothing memorable is accomplished. Instead of singing like the birds, I silently smiled at my incessant good fortune. As the sparrow had its trill, sitting on the hickory before my door, so had I my chuckle or suppressed warble which he might hear out of my nest. My days

were not days of the week, bearing the stamp of any heathen deity, nor were they minced into hours and fretted by the ticking of a clock; for I lived like the Puri Indians, of whom it is said that "for yesterday, today, and tomorrow they have only one word, and they express the variety of meaning by pointing backward for yesterday forward for tomorrow, and overhead for the passing day." This was sheer idleness to my fellow-townsmen, no doubt; but if the birds and flowers had tried me by their standard, I should not have been found wanting. A man must find his occasions in himself, it is true. The natural day is very calm, and will hardly reprove his indolence.

I had this advantage, at least, in my mode of life, over those who were obliged to look abroad for amusement, to society and the theatre, that my life itself was become my amusement and never ceased to be novel. It was a drama of many scenes and without an end. If we were always, indeed, getting our living, and regulating our lives according to the last and best mode we had learned, we should never be troubled with ennui. Follow your genius closely enough, and it will not fail to show you a fresh prospect every hour. Housework was a pleasant pastime. When my floor was dirty, I rose early, and, setting all my furniture out of doors on the grass, bed and bedstead making but one budget, dashed water on the floor, and sprinkled white sand from the pond on it, and then with a broom scrubbed it clean and white; and by the time the villagers had broken their fast the morning sun had dried my house sufficiently to allow me to move in again, and my meditations were almost uninterupted. It was pleasant to see my whole household effects out on the grass, making a little pile like a gypsy's pack, and my three-legged table, from which I did not remove the books and pen and ink, standing amid the pines and hickories. They seemed glad to get out themselves, and as if unwilling to be brought in. I was sometimes tempted to stretch an awning over them and take my seat there. It was worth the while to see the sun shine on these things, and hear the free wind blow on them; so much more interesting most familiar objects look out of doors than in the house. A bird sits on the next bough, life-everlasting grows under the table, and blackberry vines run round its legs; pine cones, chestnut burs, and strawberry leaves are strewn about. It looked as if this was the way these forms came to

be transferred to our furniture, to tables, chairs, and bedsteads — because they once stood in their midst.

My house was on the side of a hill, immediately on the edge of the larger wood, in the midst of a young forest of pitch pines and hickories, and half a dozen rods from the pond, to which a narrow footpath led down the hill. In my front yard grew the strawberry, blackberry, and life-everlasting, johnswort and goldenrod, shrub oaks and sand cherry, blueberry and groundnut. Near the end of May, the sand cherry (*Cerasus pumila*) adorned the sides of the path with its delicate flowers arranged in umbels cylindrically about its short stems, which last, in the fall, weighed down with good-sized and handsome cherries, fell over in wreaths like rays on every side. I tasted them out of compliment to Nature, though they were scarcely palatable. The sumach (*Rhus glabra*) grew luxuriantly about the house, pushing up through the embankment which I had made, and growing five or six feet the first season. Its broad pinnate tropical leaf was pleasant though strange to look on. The large buds, suddenly pushing out late in the spring from dry sticks which had seemed to be dead, developed themselves as by magic into graceful green and tender boughs, an inch in diameter; and sometimes, as I sat at my window, so heedlessly did they grow and tax their weak joints, I heard a fresh and tender bough suddenly fall like a fan to the ground, when there was not a breath of air stirring, broken off by its own weight. In August, the large masses of berries, which, when in flower, had attracted many wild bees, gradually assumed their bright velvety crimson hue, and by their weight again bent down and broke the tender limbs.

As I sit at my window this summer afternoon, hawks are circling about my clearing; the tantivy of wild pigeons, flying by two and threes athwart my view, or perching restless on the white pine boughs behind my house, gives a voice to the air; a fish hawk dimples the glassy surface of the pond and brings up a fish; a mink steals out of the marsh before my door and seizes a frog by the shore; the sedge is bending under the weight of the reed-birds flitting hither and thither; and for the last half-hour I have heard the rattle of railroad cars, now dying away and then reviving like the beat of a

partridge, conveying travellers from Boston to the country. For I did not live so out of the world as that boy who, as I hear, was put out to a farmer in the east part of the town, but ere long ran away and came home again, quite down at the heel and homesick. He had never seen such a dull and out-of-the-way place; the folks were all gone off; why, you couldn't even hear the whistle! I doubt if there is such a place in Massachusetts now: —

"In truth, our village has become a butt
For one of those fleet railroad shafts, and o'er
Our peaceful plain its soothing sound is — Concord."

The Fitchburg Railroad touches the pond about a hundred rods south of where I dwell. I usually go to the village along its causeway, and am, as it were, related to society by this link. The men on the freight trains, who go over the whole length of the road, bow to me as to an old acquaintance, they pass me so often, and apparently they take me for an employee; and so I am. I too would fain be a track-repairer somewhere in the orbit of the earth.

The whistle of the locomotive penetrates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer's yard, informing me that many restless city merchants are arriving within the circle of the town, or adventurous country traders from the other side. As they come under one horizon, they shout their warning to get off the track to the other, heard sometimes through the circles of two towns. Here come your groceries, country; your rations, countrymen! Nor is there any man so independent on his farm that he can say them nay. And here's your pay for them! screams the countryman's whistle; timber like long battering-rams going twenty miles an hour against the city's walls, and chairs enough to seat all the weary and heavy-laden that dwell within them. With such huge and lumbering civility the country hands a chair to the city. All the Indian huckleberry hills are stripped, all the cranberry meadows are raked into the city. Up comes the cotton, down goes the woven cloth; up comes the silk, down goes the woollen; up come the books, but down goes the wit that writes them.

When I meet the engine with its train of cars moving off with planetary motion — or, rather, like a comet, for the beholder knows not if with that velocity and with that direction it will ever revisit this

system, since its orbit does not look like a returning curve — with its steam cloud like a banner streaming behind in golden and silver wreaths, like many a downy cloud which I have seen, high in the heavens, unfolding its masses to the light — as if this traveling demigod, this cloud-compeller, would ere long take the sunset sky for the livery of his train; when I hear the iron horse make the hills echo with his snort like thunder, shaking the earth with his feet, and breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils (what kind of winged horse or fiery dragon they will put into the new Mythology I don't know), it seems as if the earth had got a race now worthy to inhabit it. If all were as it seems, and men made the elements their servants for noble ends! If the cloud that hangs over the engine were the perspiration of heroic deeds, or as beneficent as that which floats over the farmer's fields, then the elements and Nature herself would cheerfully accompany men on their errands and be their escort.

I watch the passage of the morning cars with the same feeling that I do the rising of the sun, which is hardly more regular. Their train of clouds stretching far behind and rising higher and higher, going to heaven while the cars are going to Boston, conceals the sun for a minute and casts my distant field into the shade, a celestial train beside which the petty train of cars which hugs the earth is but the barb of the spear. The stabler of the iron horse was up early this winter morning by the light of the stars amid the mountains, to fodder and harness his steed. Fire, too, was awakened thus early to put the vital heat in him and get him off. If the enterprise were as innocent as it is early! If the snow lies deep, they strap on his snowshoes, and, with the giant plow, plow a furrow from the mountains to the seaboard, in which the cars, like a following drill-barrow, sprinkle all the restless men and floating merchandise in the country for seed. All day the fire-steed flies over the country, stopping only that his master may rest, and I am awakened by his tramp and defiant snort at midnight, when in some remote glen in the woods he fronts the elements incased in ice and snow; and he will reach his stall only with the morning star, to start once more on his travels without rest or slumber. Or perchance, at evening, I hear him in his stable blowing off the superfluous energy of the day, that he may calm his nerves and cool his liver and brain for a few hours of

iron slumber. If the enterprise were as heroic and commanding as it is protracted and unwearied!

Far through unfrequented woods on the confines of towns, where once only the hunter penetrated by day, in the darkest night dart these bright saloons without the knowledge of their inhabitants; this moment stopping at some brilliant station-house in town or city, where a social crowd is gathered, the next in the Dismal Swamp, scaring the owl and fox. The startings and arrivals of the cars are now the epochs in the village day. They go and come with such regularity and precision, and their whistle can be heard so far, that the farmers set their clocks by them, and thus one well-conducted institution regulates a whole country. Have not men improved somewhat in punctuality since the railroad was invented? Do they not talk and think faster in the depot than they did in the stage-office? There is something electrifying in the atmosphere of the former place. I have been astonished at the miracles it has wrought; that some of my neighbors, who, I should have prophesied, once for all, would never get to Boston by so prompt a conveyance, are on hand when the bell rings. To do things "railroad fashion" is now the byword; and it is worth the while to be warned so often and so sincerely by any power to get off its track. There is no stopping to read the riot act, no firing over the heads of the mob, in this case. We have constructed a fate, an *Atropos*, that never turns aside. (Let that be the name of your engine.) Men are advertised that at a certain hour and minute these bolts will be shot toward particular points of the compass; yet it interferes with no man's business, and the children go to school on the other track. We live the steadier for it. We are all educated thus to be sons of Tell. The air is full of invisible bolts. Every path but your own is the path of fate. Keep on your own track, then.

What recommends commerce to me is its enterprise and bravery. It does not clasp its hands and pray to Jupiter. I see these men every day go about their business with more or less courage and content, doing more even than they suspect, and perchance better employed than they could have consciously devised. I am less affected by their heroism who stood up for half an hour in the front line at Buena Vista, than by the steady and cheerful valor of the men who inhabit

the snowplow for their winter quarters; who have not merely the three-o'-clock-in-the-morning courage, which Bonaparte thought was the rarest, but whose courage does not go to rest so early, who go to sleep only when the storm sleeps or the sinews of their iron steed are frozen. On this morning of the Great Snow, perchance, which is still raging and chilling men's blood, I bear the muffled tone of their engine bell from out the fog bank of their chilled breath, which announces that the cars *are coming*, without long delay, notwithstanding the veto of a New England northeast snow-storm, and I behold the plowmen covered with snow and rime, their heads peering, above the mould-board which is turning down other than daisies and the nests of field mice, like bowlders of the Sierra Nevada, that occupy an outside place in the universe.

Commerce is unexpectedly confident and serene, alert, adventurous, and unwearied. It is very natural in its methods withal, far more so than many fantastic enterprises and sentimental experiments, and hence its singular success. I am refreshed and expanded when the freight train rattles past me, and I smell the stores which go dispensing their odors all the way from Long Wharf to Lake Champlain, reminding me of foreign parts, of coral reefs, and Indian oceans, and tropical climes, and the extent of the globe. I feel more like a citizen of the world at the sight of the palm-leaf which will cover so many flaxen New England heads the next summer, the Manilla hemp and cocoanut husks, the old junk, gunny bags, scrap iron, and rusty nails. This carload of torn sails is more legible and interesting now than if they should be wrought into paper and printed books. Who can write so graphically the history of the storms they have weathered as these rents have done? They are proof-sheets which need no correction. Here goes lumber from the Maine woods, which did not go out to sea in the last freshet, risen four dollars on the thousand because of what did go out or was split up; pine, spruce, cedar — first, second, third, and fourth qualities, so lately all of one quality, to wave over the bear, and moose, and caribou. Next rolls Thomaston lime, a prime lot, which will get far among the hills before it gets slacked. These rags in bales, of all hues and qualities, the lowest condition to which cotton and linen descend, the final result of dress — of patterns which are now no longer cried up,

unless it be in Milwaukee, as those splendid articles, English, French, or American prints, ginghams, muslins, etc., gathered from all quarters both of fashion and poverty, going to become paper of one color or a few shades only, on which, forsooth, will be written tales of real life, high and low, and founded on fact! This closed car smells of salt fish, the strong New England and commercial scent, reminding me of the Grand Banks and the fisheries. Who has not seen a salt fish, thoroughly cured for this world, so that nothing can spoil it, and putting the perseverance of the saints to the blush? with which you may sweep or pave the streets, and split your kindlings, and the teamster shelter himself and his lading against sun, wind, and rain behind it — and the trader, as a Concord trader once did, hang it up by his door for a sign when he commences business, until at last his oldest customer cannot tell surely whether it be animal, vegetable, or mineral, and yet it shall be as pure as a snowflake, and if it be put into a pot and boiled, will come out an excellent dun-fish for a Saturday's dinner. Next Spanish hides, with the tails still preserving their twist and the angle of elevation they had when the oxen that wore them were careering over the pampas of the Spanish Main — a type of all obstinacy, and evincing how almost hopeless and incurable are all constitutional vices. I confess, that practically speaking, when I have learned a man's real disposition, I have no hopes of changing it for the better or worse in this state of existence. As the Orientals say, "A cur's tail may be warmed, and pressed, and bound round with ligatures, and after a twelve years' labor bestowed upon it, still it will retain its natural form." The only effectual cure for such inveteracies as these tails exhibit is to make glue of them, which I believe is what is usually done with them, and then they will stay put and stick. Here is a hogshead of molasses or of brandy directed to John Smith, Cuttingsville, Vermont, some trader among the Green Mountains, who imports for the farmers near his clearing, and now perchance stands over his bulkhead and thinks of the last arrivals on the coast, how they may affect the price for him, telling his customers this moment, as he has told them twenty times before this morning, that he expects some by the next train of prime quality. It is advertised in the Cuttingsville Times.

While these things go up other things come down. Warned by the

whizzing sound, I look up from my book and see some tall pine, hewn on far northern hills, which has winged its way over the Green Mountains and the Connecticut, shot like an arrow through the township within ten minutes, and scarce another eye beholds it; going

"to be the mast
Of some great ammiral."

And hark! here comes the cattle-train bearing the cattle of a thousand hills, sheepcots, stables, and cow-yards in the air, drovers with their sticks, and shepherd boys in the midst of their flocks, all but the mountain pastures, whirled along like leaves blown from the mountains by the September gales. The air is filled with the bleating of calves and sheep, and the hustling of oxen, as if a pastoral valley were going by. When the old bell-wether at the head rattles his bell, the mountains do indeed skip like rams and the little hills like lambs. A carload of drovers, too, in the midst, on a level with their droves now, their vocation gone, but still clinging to their useless sticks as their badge of office. But their dogs, where are they? It is a stampede to them; they are quite thrown out; they have lost the scent. Methinks I hear them barking behind the Peterboro' Hills, or panting up the western slope of the Green Mountains. They will not be in at the death. Their vocation, too, is gone. Their fidelity and sagacity are below par now. They will slink back to their kennels in disgrace, or perchance run wild and strike a league with the wolf and the fox. So is your pastoral life whirled past and away. But the bell rings, and I must get off the track and let the cars go by; —

What's the railroad to me?
I never go to see
Where it ends.
It fills a few hollows,
And makes banks for the swallows,
It sets the sand a-blowing,
And the blackberries a-growing,

but I cross it like a cart-path in the woods. I will not have my eyes put out and my ears spoiled by its smoke and steam and hissing.

Now that the cars are gone by and all the restless world with them, and the fishes in the pond no longer feel their rumbling, I am more alone than ever. For the rest of the long afternoon, perhaps, my meditations are interrupted only by the faint rattle of a carriage or team along the distant highway.

Sometimes, on Sundays, I heard the bells, the Lincoln, Acton, Bedford, or Concord bell, when the wind was favorable, a faint, sweet, and, as it were, natural melody, worth importing into the wilderness. At a sufficient distance over the woods this sound acquires a certain vibratory hum, as if the pine needles in the horizon were the strings of a harp which it swept. All sound heard at the greatest possible distance produces one and the same effect, a vibration of the universal lyre, just as the intervening atmosphere makes a distant ridge of earth interesting to our eyes by the azure tint it imparts to it. There came to me in this case a melody which the air had strained, and which had conversed with every leaf and needle of the wood, that portion of the sound which the elements had taken up and modulated and echoed from vale to vale. The echo is, to some extent, an original sound, and therein is the magic and charm of it. It is not merely a repetition of what was worth repeating in the bell, but partly the voice of the wood; the same trivial words and notes sung by a wood-nymph.

At evening, the distant lowing of some cow in the horizon beyond the woods sounded sweet and melodious, and at first I would mistake it for the voices of certain minstrels by whom I was sometimes serenaded, who might be straying over hill and dale; but soon I was not unpleasantly disappointed when it was prolonged into the cheap and natural music of the cow. I do not mean to be satirical, but to express my appreciation of those youths' singing, when I state that I perceived clearly that it was akin to the music of the cow, and they were at length one articulation of Nature.

Regularly at half-past seven, in one part of the summer, after the evening train had gone by, the whip-poor-wills chanted their vespers for half an hour, sitting on a stump by my door, or upon the ridge-

pole of the house. They would begin to sing almost with as much precision as a clock, within five minutes of a particular time, referred to the setting of the sun, every evening. I had a rare opportunity to become acquainted with their habits. Sometimes I heard four or five at once in different parts of the wood, by accident one a bar behind another, and so near me that I distinguished not only the cluck after each note, but often that singular buzzing sound like a fly in a spider's web, only proportionally louder. Sometimes one would circle round and round me in the woods a few feet distant as if tethered by a string, when probably I was near its eggs. They sang at intervals throughout the night, and were again as musical as ever just before and about dawn.

When other birds are still, the screech owls take up the strain, like mourning women their ancient u-lu-lu. Their dismal scream is truly Ben Jonsonian. Wise midnight hags! It is no honest and blunt tu-whit tu-who of the poets, but, without jesting, a most solemn graveyard ditty, the mutual consolations of suicide lovers remembering the pangs and the delights of supernal love in the infernal groves. Yet I love to hear their wailing, their doleful responses, trilled along the woodside; reminding me sometimes of music and singing birds; as if it were the dark and tearful side of music, the regrets and sighs that would fain be sung. They are the spirits, the low spirits and melancholy forebodings, of fallen souls that once in human shape night-walked the earth and did the deeds of darkness, now expiating their sins with their wailing hymns or threnodies in the scenery of their transgressions. They give me a new sense of the variety and capacity of that nature which is our common dwelling. *Oh-o-o-o-o that I never had been bor-r-r-r-n!* sighs one on this side of the pond, and circles with the restlessness of despair to some new perch on the gray oaks. Then — *that I never had been bor-r-r-r-n!* echoes another on the farther side with tremulous sincerity, and — *bor-r-r-r-n!* comes faintly from far in the Lincoln woods.

I was also serenaded by a hooting owl. Near at hand you could fancy it the most melancholy sound in Nature, as if she meant by this to stereotype and make permanent in her choir the dying moans of a human being — some poor weak relic of mortality who has left hope behind, and howls like an animal, yet with human sobs, on entering

the dark valley, made more awful by a certain gurgling melodiousness — I find myself beginning with the letters *gl* when I try to imitate it — expressive of a mind which has reached the gelatinous, mildewy stage in the mortification of all healthy and courageous thought. It reminded me of ghouls and idiots and insane howlings. But now one answers from far woods in a strain made really melodious by distance — *Hoo hoo hoo, hoorer hoo*; and indeed for the most part it suggested only pleasing associations, whether heard by day or night, summer or winter.

I rejoice that there are owls. Let them do the idiotic and maniacal hooting for men. It is a sound admirably suited to swamps and twilight woods which no day illustrates, suggesting a vast and undeveloped nature which men have not recognized. They represent the stark twilight and unsatisfied thoughts which all have. All day the sun has shone on the surface of some savage swamp, where the single spruce stands hung with usnea lichens, and small hawks circulate above, and the chickadee lisps amid the evergreens, and the partridge and rabbit skulk beneath; but now a more dismal and fitting day dawns, and a different race of creatures awakes to express the meaning of Nature there.

Late in the evening I heard the distant rumbling of wagons over bridges — a sound heard farther than almost any other at night — the baying of dogs, and sometimes again the lowing of some disconsolate cow in a distant barn-yard. In the mean-while all the shore rang with the trump of bullfrogs, the sturdy spirits of ancient wine-bibbers and wassailers, still unrepentant, trying to sing a catch in their Stygian lake — if the Walden nymphs will pardon the comparison, for though there are almost no weeds, there are frogs there — who would fain keep up the hilarious rules of their old festal tables, though their voices have waxed hoarse and solemnly grave, mocking at mirth, and the wine has lost its flavor, and become only liquor to distend their paunches, and sweet intoxication never comes to drown the memory of the past, but mere saturation and waterloggedness and distention. The most aldermanic, with his chin upon a heart-leaf, which serves for a napkin to his drooling chaps, under this northern shore quaffs a deep draught of the once scorned water, and passes round the cup with the ejaculation *tr-r-r-oonk, tr-r-*

r — oonk, tr-r-r-oonk! and straightway comes over the water from some distant cove the same password repeated, where the next in seniority and girth has gulped down to his mark; and when this observance has made the circuit of the shores, then ejaculates the master of ceremonies, with satisfaction, *tr-r-r-oonk!* and each in his turn repeats the same down to the least distended, leakiest, and flabbiest paunched, that there be no mistake; and then the howl goes round again and again, until the sun disperses the morning mist, and only the patriarch is not under the pond, but vainly bellowing *troonk* from time to time, and pausing for a reply.

I am not sure that I ever heard the sound of cock-crowing from my clearing, and I thought that it might be worth the while to keep a cockerel for his music merely, as a singing bird. The note of this once wild Indian pheasant is certainly the most remarkable of any bird's, and if they could be naturalized without being domesticated, it would soon become the most famous sound in our woods, surpassing the clangor of the goose and the hooting of the owl; and then imagine the cackling of the hens to fill the pauses when their lords' clarions rested! No wonder that man added this bird to his tame stock — to say nothing of the eggs and drumsticks. To walk in a winter morning in a wood where these birds abounded, their native woods, and hear the wild cockerels crow on the trees, clear and shrill for miles over the resounding earth, drowning the feebler notes of other birds — think of it! It would put nations on the alert. Who would not be early to rise, and rise earlier and earlier every successive day of his life, till he became unspeakably healthy, wealthy, and wise? This foreign bird's note is celebrated by the poets of all countries along with the notes of their native songsters. All climates agree with brave Chanticleer. He is more indigenous even than the natives. His health is ever good, his lungs are sound, his spirits never flag. Even the sailor on the Atlantic and Pacific is awakened by his voice; but its shrill sound never roused me from my slumbers. I kept neither dog, cat, cow, pig, nor hens, so that you would have said there was a deficiency of domestic sounds; neither the churn, nor the spinning-wheel, nor even the singing of the kettle, nor the hissing of the urn, nor children crying, to comfort one. An old-fashioned man would have lost his senses or died of ennui before this. Not even rats in the

wall, for they were starved out, or rather were never baited in — only squirrels on the roof and under the floor, a whip-poor-will on the ridge-pole, a blue jay screaming beneath the window, a hare or woodchuck under the house, a screech owl or a cat owl behind it, a flock of wild geese or a laughing loon on the pond, and a fox to bark in the night. Not even a lark or an oriole, those mild plantation birds, ever visited my clearing. No cockerels to crow nor hens to cackle in the yard. No yard! but unfenced nature reaching up to your very sills. A young forest growing up under your meadows, and wild sumachs and blackberry vines breaking through into your cellar; sturdy pitch pines rubbing and creaking against the shingles for want of room, their roots reaching quite under the house. Instead of a scuttle or a blind blown off in the gale — a pine tree snapped off or torn up by the roots behind your house for fuel. Instead of no path to the front-yard gate in the Great Snow — no gate — no front-yard — and no path to the civilized world.

Solitude

This is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself. As I walk along the stony shore of the pond in my shirt-sleeves, though it is cool as well as cloudy and windy, and I see nothing special to attract me, all the elements are unusually congenial to me. The bullfrogs trump to usher in the night, and the note of the whip-poor-will is borne on the rippling wind from over the water. Sympathy with the fluttering alder and poplar leaves almost takes away my breath; yet, like the lake, my serenity is rippled but not ruffled. These small waves raised by the evening wind are as remote from storm as the smooth reflecting surface. Though it is now dark, the wind still blows and roars in the wood, the waves still dash, and some creatures lull the rest with their notes. The repose is never complete. The wildest animals do not repose, but seek their prey now; the fox, and skunk, and rabbit, now roam the fields and woods without fear. They are Nature's watchmen — links which connect the days of animated life.

When I return to my house I find that visitors have been there and left their cards, either a bunch of flowers, or a wreath of evergreen, or a name in pencil on a yellow walnut leaf or a chip. They who come rarely to the woods take some little piece of the forest into their hands to play with by the way, which they leave, either intentionally or accidentally. One has peeled a willow wand, woven it into a ring, and dropped it on my table. I could always tell if visitors had called in my absence, either by the bended twigs or grass, or the print of their shoes, and generally of what sex or age or quality they were by some slight trace left, as a flower dropped, or a bunch of grass plucked and thrown away, even as far off as the railroad, half a mile distant, or by the lingering odor of a cigar or pipe. Nay, I was frequently notified of the passage of a traveller along the highway sixty rods off by the scent of his pipe.

There is commonly sufficient space about us. Our horizon is never quite at our elbows. The thick wood is not just at our door, nor the pond, but somewhat is always clearing, familiar and worn by us,

appropriated and fenced in some way, and reclaimed from Nature. For what reason have I this vast range and circuit, some square miles of unfrequented forest, for my privacy, abandoned to me by men? My nearest neighbor is a mile distant, and no house is visible from any place but the hill-tops within half a mile of my own. I have my horizon bounded by woods all to myself; a distant view of the railroad where it touches the pond on the one hand, and of the fence which skirts the woodland road on the other. But for the most part it is as solitary where I live as on the prairies. It is as much Asia or Africa as New England. I have, as it were, my own sun and moon and stars, and a little world all to myself. At night there was never a traveller passed my house, or knocked at my door, more than if I were the first or last man; unless it were in the spring, when at long intervals some came from the village to fish for pouts — they plainly fished much more in the Walden Pond of their own natures, and baited their hooks with darkness — but they soon retreated, usually with light baskets, and left "the world to darkness and to me," and the black kernel of the night was never profaned by any human neighborhood. I believe that men are generally still a little afraid of the dark, though the witches are all hung, and Christianity and candles have been introduced.

Yet I experienced sometimes that the most sweet and tender, the most innocent and encouraging society may be found in any natural object, even for the poor misanthrope and most melancholy man. There can be no very black melancholy to him who lives in the midst of Nature and has his senses still. There was never yet such a storm but it was Æolian music to a healthy and innocent ear. Nothing can rightly compel a simple and brave man to a vulgar sadness. While I enjoy the friendship of the seasons I trust that nothing can make life a burden to me. The gentle rain which waters my beans and keeps me in the house today is not drear and melancholy, but good for me too. Though it prevents my hoeing them, it is of far more worth than my hoeing. If it should continue so long as to cause the seeds to rot in the ground and destroy the potatoes in the low lands, it would still be good for the grass on the uplands, and, being good for the grass, it would be good for me. Sometimes, when I compare myself with other men, it seems as if I were more favored by the gods than they,

beyond any deserts that I am conscious of; as if I had a warrant and surety at their hands which my fellows have not, and were especially guided and guarded. I do not flatter myself, but if it be possible they flatter me. I have never felt lonesome, or in the least oppressed by a sense of solitude, but once, and that was a few weeks after I came to the woods, when, for an hour, I doubted if the near neighborhood of man was not essential to a serene and healthy life. To be alone was something unpleasant. But I was at the same time conscious of a slight insanity in my mood, and seemed to foresee my recovery. In the midst of a gentle rain while these thoughts prevailed, I was suddenly sensible of such sweet and beneficent society in Nature, in the very pattering of the drops, and in every sound and sight around my house, an infinite and unaccountable friendliness all at once like an atmosphere sustaining me, as made the fancied advantages of human neighborhood insignificant, and I have never thought of them since. Every little pine needle expanded and swelled with sympathy and befriended me. I was so distinctly made aware of the presence of something kindred to me, even in scenes which we are accustomed to call wild and dreary, and also that the nearest of blood to me and humanest was not a person nor a villager, that I thought no place could ever be strange to me again.

"Mourning untimely consumes the sad;
Few are their days in the land of the living,
Beautiful daughter of Toscar."

Some of my pleasantest hours were during the long rain-storms in the spring or fall, which confined me to the house for the afternoon as well as the forenoon, soothed by their ceaseless roar and pelting; when an early twilight ushered in a long evening in which many thoughts had time to take root and unfold themselves. In those driving northeast rains which tried the village houses so, when the maids stood ready with mop and pail in front entries to keep the deluge out, I sat behind my door in my little house, which was all entry, and thoroughly enjoyed its protection. In one heavy thunder-shower the lightning struck a large pitch pine across the pond, making a very conspicuous and perfectly regular spiral groove from top to bottom, an inch or more deep, and four or five inches wide, as you would groove a walking-stick. I passed it again the other day,

and was struck with awe on looking up and beholding that mark, now more distinct than ever, where a terrific and resistless bolt came down out of the harmless sky eight years ago. Men frequently say to me, "I should think you would feel lonesome down there, and want to be nearer to folks, rainy and snowy days and nights especially." I am tempted to reply to such — This whole earth which we inhabit is but a point in space. How far apart, think you, dwell the two most distant inhabitants of yonder star, the breadth of whose disk cannot be appreciated by our instruments? Why should I feel lonely? is not our planet in the Milky Way? This which you put seems to me not to be the most important question. What sort of space is that which separates a man from his fellows and makes him solitary? I have found that no exertion of the legs can bring two minds much nearer to one another. What do we want most to dwell near to? Not to many men surely, the depot, the post-office, the bar-room, the meeting-house, the school-house, the grocery, Beacon Hill, or the Five Points, where men most congregate, but to the perennial source of our life, whence in all our experience we have found that to issue, as the willow stands near the water and sends out its roots in that direction. This will vary with different natures, but this is the place where a wise man will dig his cellar.... I one evening overtook one of my townsmen, who has accumulated what is called "a handsome property" — though I never got a *fair* view of it — on the Walden road, driving a pair of cattle to market, who inquired of me how I could bring my mind to give up so many of the comforts of life. I answered that I was very sure I liked it passably well; I was not joking. And so I went home to my bed, and left him to pick his way through the darkness and the mud to Brighton — or Bright-town — which place he would reach some time in the morning.

Any prospect of awakening or coming to life to a dead man makes indifferent all times and places. The place where that may occur is always the same, and indescribably pleasant to all our senses. For the most part we allow only outlying and transient circumstances to make our occasions. They are, in fact, the cause of our distraction. Nearest to all things is that power which fashions their being. *Next* to us the grandest laws are continually being executed. *Next* to us is not the workman whom we have hired, with whom we love so well to

talk, but the workman whose work we are.

"How vast and profound is the influence of the subtile powers of Heaven and of Earth!"

"We seek to perceive them, and we do not see them; we seek to hear them, and we do not hear them; identified with the substance of things, they cannot be separated from them."

"They cause that in all the universe men purify and sanctify their hearts, and clothe themselves in their holiday garments to offer sacrifices and oblations to their ancestors. It is an ocean of subtile intelligences. They are everywhere, above us, on our left, on our right; they environ us on all sides."

We are the subjects of an experiment which is not a little interesting to me. Can we not do without the society of our gossips a little while under these circumstances — have our own thoughts to cheer us? Confucius says truly, "Virtue does not remain as an abandoned orphan; it must of necessity have neighbors."

With thinking we may be beside ourselves in a sane sense. By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent. We are not wholly involved in Nature. I may be either the driftwood in the stream, or Indra in the sky looking down on it. I *may* be affected by a theatrical exhibition; on the other hand, I *may not* be affected by an actual event which appears to concern me much more. I only know myself as a human entity; the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections; and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it, and that is no more I than it is you. When the play, it may be the tragedy, of life is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned. This doubleness may easily make us poor neighbors and friends sometimes.

I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. To be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating. I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude. We are for the most part more lonely

when we go abroad among men than when we stay in our chambers. A man thinking or working is always alone, let him be where he will. Solitude is not measured by the miles of space that intervene between a man and his fellows. The really diligent student in one of the crowded hives of Cambridge College is as solitary as a dervish in the desert. The farmer can work alone in the field or the woods all day, hoeing or chopping, and not feel lonesome, because he is employed; but when he comes home at night he cannot sit down in a room alone, at the mercy of his thoughts, but must be where he can "see the folks," and recreate, and, as he thinks, remunerate himself for his day's solitude; and hence he wonders how the student can sit alone in the house all night and most of the day without ennui and "the blues"; but he does not realize that the student, though in the house, is still at work in *his* field, and chopping in *his* woods, as the farmer in his, and in turn seeks the same recreation and society that the latter does, though it may be a more condensed form of it.

Society is commonly too cheap. We meet at very short intervals, not having had time to acquire any new value for each other. We meet at meals three times a day, and give each other a new taste of that old musty cheese that we are. We have had to agree on a certain set of rules, called etiquette and politeness, to make this frequent meeting tolerable and that we need not come to open war. We meet at the post-office, and at the sociable, and about the fireside every night; we live thick and are in each other's way, and stumble over one another, and I think that we thus lose some respect for one another. Certainly less frequency would suffice for all important and hearty communications. Consider the girls in a factory — never alone, hardly in their dreams. It would be better if there were but one inhabitant to a square mile, as where I live. The value of a man is not in his skin, that we should touch him.

I have heard of a man lost in the woods and dying of famine and exhaustion at the foot of a tree, whose loneliness was relieved by the grotesque visions with which, owing to bodily weakness, his diseased imagination surrounded him, and which he believed to be real. So also, owing to bodily and mental health and strength, we may be continually cheered by a like but more normal and natural society, and come to know that we are never alone.

I have a great deal of company in my house; especially in the morning, when nobody calls. Let me suggest a few comparisons, that some one may convey an idea of my situation. I am no more lonely than the loon in the pond that laughs so loud, or than Walden Pond itself. What company has that lonely lake, I pray? And yet it has not the blue devils, but the blue angels in it, in the azure tint of its waters. The sun is alone, except in thick weather, when there sometimes appear to be two, but one is a mock sun. God is alone — but the devil, he is far from being alone; he sees a great deal of company; he is legion. I am no more lonely than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture, or a bean leaf, or sorrel, or a horse-fly, or a bumblebee. I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook, or a weathercock, or the north star, or the south wind, or an April shower, or a January thaw, or the first spider in a new house.

I have occasional visits in the long winter evenings, when the snow falls fast and the wind howls in the wood, from an old settler and original proprietor, who is reported to have dug Walden Pond, and stoned it, and fringed it with pine woods; who tells me stories of old time and of new eternity; and between us we manage to pass a cheerful evening with social mirth and pleasant views of things, even without apples or cider — a most wise and humorous friend, whom I love much, who keeps himself more secret than ever did Goffe or Whalley; and though he is thought to be dead, none can show where he is buried. An elderly dame, too, dwells in my neighborhood, invisible to most persons, in whose odorous herb garden I love to stroll sometimes, gathering simples and listening to her fables; for she has a genius of unequalled fertility, and her memory runs back farther than mythology, and she can tell me the original of every fable, and on what fact every one is founded, for the incidents occurred when she was young. A ruddy and lusty old dame, who delights in all weathers and seasons, and is likely to outlive all her children yet.

The indescribable innocence and beneficence of Nature — of sun and wind and rain, of summer and winter — such health, such cheer, they afford forever! and such sympathy have they ever with our race, that all Nature would be affected, and the sun's brightness fade, and the winds would sigh humanely, and the clouds rain tears, and the

woods shed their leaves and put on mourning in midsummer, if any man should ever for a just cause grieve. Shall I not have intelligence with the earth? Am I not partly leaves and vegetable mould myself?

What is the pill which will keep us well, serene, contented? Not my or thy great-grandfather's, but our great-grandmother Nature's universal, vegetable, botanic medicines, by which she has kept herself young always, outlived so many old Parrs in her day, and fed her health with their decaying fatness. For my panacea, instead of one of those quack vials of a mixture dipped from Acheron and the Dead Sea, which come out of those long shallow black-schooner looking wagons which we sometimes see made to carry bottles, let me have a draught of undiluted morning air. Morning air! If men will not drink of this at the fountainhead of the day, why, then, we must even bottle up some and sell it in the shops, for the benefit of those who have lost their subscription ticket to morning time in this world. But remember, it will not keep quite till noonday even in the coolest cellar, but drive out the stopples long ere that and follow westward the steps of Aurora. I am no worshipper of Hygeia, who was the daughter of that old herb-doctor Æsculapius, and who is represented on monuments holding a serpent in one hand, and in the other a cup out of which the serpent sometimes drinks; but rather of Hebe, cup-bearer to Jupiter, who was the daughter of Juno and wild lettuce, and who had the power of restoring gods and men to the vigor of youth. She was probably the only thoroughly sound-conditioned, healthy, and robust young lady that ever walked the globe, and wherever she came it was spring.

Visitors

I think that I love society as much as most, and am ready enough to fasten myself like a bloodsucker for the time to any full-blooded man that comes in my way. I am naturally no hermit, but might possibly sit out the sturdiest frequenter of the bar-room, if my business called me thither.

I had three chairs in my house; one for solitude, two for friendship, three for society. When visitors came in larger and unexpected numbers there was but the third chair for them all, but they generally economized the room by standing up. It is surprising how many great men and women a small house will contain. I have had twenty-five or thirty souls, with their bodies, at once under my roof, and yet we often parted without being aware that we had come very near to one another. Many of our houses, both public and private, with their almost innumerable apartments, their huge halls and their cellars for the storage of wines and other munitions of peace, appear to be extravagantly large for their inhabitants. They are so vast and magnificent that the latter seem to be only vermin which infest them. I am surprised when the herald blows his summons before some Tremont or Astor or Middlesex House, to see come creeping out over the piazza for all inhabitants a ridiculous mouse, which soon again slinks into some hole in the pavement.

One inconvenience I sometimes experienced in so small a house, the difficulty of getting to a sufficient distance from my guest when we began to utter the big thoughts in big words. You want room for your thoughts to get into sailing trim and run a course or two before they make their port. The bullet of your thought must have overcome its lateral and ricochet motion and fallen into its last and steady course before it reaches the ear of the hearer, else it may plow out again through the side of his head. Also, our sentences wanted room to unfold and form their columns in the interval. Individuals, like nations, must have suitable broad and natural boundaries, even a considerable neutral ground, between them. I have found it a singular luxury to talk across the pond to a companion on the opposite side. In my house we were so near that we could not begin to hear — we

could not speak low enough to be heard; as when you throw two stones into calm water so near that they break each other's undulations. If we are merely loquacious and loud talkers, then we can afford to stand very near together, cheek by jowl, and feel each other's breath; but if we speak reservedly and thoughtfully, we want to be farther apart, that all animal heat and moisture may have a chance to evaporate. If we would enjoy the most intimate society with that in each of us which is without, or above, being spoken to, we must not only be silent, but commonly so far apart bodily that we cannot possibly hear each other's voice in any case. Referred to this standard, speech is for the convenience of those who are hard of hearing; but there are many fine things which we cannot say if we have to shout. As the conversation began to assume a loftier and grander tone, we gradually shoved our chairs farther apart till they touched the wall in opposite corners, and then commonly there was not room enough.

My "best" room, however, my withdrawing room, always ready for company, on whose carpet the sun rarely fell, was the pine wood behind my house. Thither in summer days, when distinguished guests came, I took them, and a priceless domestic swept the floor and dusted the furniture and kept the things in order.

If one guest came he sometimes partook of my frugal meal, and it was no interruption to conversation to be stirring a hasty-pudding, or watching the rising and maturing of a loaf of bread in the ashes, in the meanwhile. But if twenty came and sat in my house there was nothing said about dinner, though there might be bread enough for two, more than if eating were a forsaken habit; but we naturally practised abstinence; and this was never felt to be an offence against hospitality, but the most proper and considerate course. The waste and decay of physical life, which so often needs repair, seemed miraculously retarded in such a case, and the vital vigor stood its ground. I could entertain thus a thousand as well as twenty; and if any ever went away disappointed or hungry from my house when they found me at home, they may depend upon it that I sympathized with them at least. So easy is it, though many housekeepers doubt it, to establish new and better customs in the place of the old. You need not rest your reputation on the dinners you give. For my own part, I

was never so effectually deterred from frequenting a man's house, by any kind of Cerberus whatever, as by the parade one made about dining me, which I took to be a very polite and roundabout hint never to trouble him so again. I think I shall never revisit those scenes. I should be proud to have for the motto of my cabin those lines of Spenser which one of my visitors inscribed on a yellow walnut leaf for a card: —

"Arrivèd there, the little house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainment where none was;
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will:
The noblest mind the best contentment has."

When Winslow, afterward governor of the Plymouth Colony, went with a companion on a visit of ceremony to Massasoit on foot through the woods, and arrived tired and hungry at his lodge, they were well received by the king, but nothing was said about eating that day. When the night arrived, to quote their own words— "He laid us on the bed with himself and his wife, they at the one end and we at the other, it being only planks laid a foot from the ground and a thin mat upon them. Two more of his chief men, for want of room, pressed by and upon us; so that we were worse weary of our lodging than of our journey." At one o'clock the next day Massasoit "brought two fishes that he had shot," about thrice as big as a bream. "These being boiled, there were at least forty looked for a share in them; the most eat of them. This meal only we had in two nights and a day; and had not one of us bought a partridge, we had taken our journey fasting." Fearing that they would be light-headed for want of food and also sleep, owing to "the savages' barbarous singing, (for they use to sing themselves asleep,)" and that they might get home while they had strength to travel, they departed. As for lodging, it is true they were but poorly entertained, though what they found an inconvenience was no doubt intended for an honor; but as far as eating was concerned, I do not see how the Indians could have done better. They had nothing to eat themselves, and they were wiser than to think that apologies could supply the place of food to their guests; so they drew their belts tighter and said nothing about it. Another

time when Winslow visited them, it being a season of plenty with them, there was no deficiency in this respect.

As for men, they will hardly fail one anywhere. I had more visitors while I lived in the woods than at any other period in my life; I mean that I had some. I met several there under more favorable circumstances than I could anywhere else. But fewer came to see me on trivial business. In this respect, my company was winnowed by my mere distance from town. I had withdrawn so far within the great ocean of solitude, into which the rivers of society empty, that for the most part, so far as my needs were concerned, only the finest sediment was deposited around me. Beside, there were wafted to me evidences of unexplored and uncultivated continents on the other side.

Who should come to my lodge this morning but a true Homeric or Paphlagonian man — he had so suitable and poetic a name that I am sorry I cannot print it here — a Canadian, a woodchopper and post-maker, who can hole fifty posts in a day, who made his last supper on a woodchuck which his dog caught. He, too, has heard of Homer, and, "if it were not for books," would "not know what to do rainy days," though perhaps he has not read one wholly through for many rainy seasons. Some priest who could pronounce the Greek itself taught him to read his verse in the Testament in his native parish far away; and now I must translate to him, while he holds the book, Achilles' reproof to Patroclus for his sad countenance.— "Why are you in tears, Patroclus, like a young girl?" —

> "Or have you alone heard some news from Phthia?
> They say that Menoetius lives yet, son of Actor,
> And Peleus lives, son of Æacus, among the Myrmidons,
> Either of whom having died, we should greatly grieve."

He says, "That's good." He has a great bundle of white oak bark under his arm for a sick man, gathered this Sunday morning. "I suppose there's no harm in going after such a thing to-day," says he. To him Homer was a great writer, though what his writing was about he did not know. A more simple and natural man it would be hard to find. Vice and disease, which cast such a sombre moral hue over the

world, seemed to have hardly any existence for him. He was about twenty-eight years old, and had left Canada and his father's house a dozen years before to work in the States, and earn money to buy a farm with at last, perhaps in his native country. He was cast in the coarsest mould; a stout but sluggish body, yet gracefully carried, with a thick sunburnt neck, dark bushy hair, and dull sleepy blue eyes, which were occasionally lit up with expression. He wore a flat gray cloth cap, a dingy wool-colored greatcoat, and cowhide boots. He was a great consumer of meat, usually carrying his dinner to his work a couple of miles past my house — for he chopped all summer — in a tin pail; cold meats, often cold woodchucks, and coffee in a stone bottle which dangled by a string from his belt; and sometimes he offered me a drink. He came along early, crossing my bean-field, though without anxiety or haste to get to his work, such as Yankees exhibit. He wasn't a-going to hurt himself. He didn't care if he only earned his board. Frequently he would leave his dinner in the bushes, when his dog had caught a woodchuck by the way, and go back a mile and a half to dress it and leave it in the cellar of the house where he boarded, after deliberating first for half an hour whether he could not sink it in the pond safely till nightfall — loving to dwell long upon these themes. He would say, as he went by in the morning, "How thick the pigeons are! If working every day were not my trade, I could get all the meat I should want by hunting-pigeons, woodchucks, rabbits, partridges — by gosh! I could get all I should want for a week in one day."

He was a skilful chopper, and indulged in some flourishes and ornaments in his art. He cut his trees level and close to the ground, that the sprouts which came up afterward might be more vigorous and a sled might slide over the stumps; and instead of leaving a whole tree to support his corded wood, he would pare it away to a slender stake or splinter which you could break off with your hand at last.

He interested me because he was so quiet and solitary and so happy withal; a well of good humor and contentment which overflowed at his eyes. His mirth was without alloy. Sometimes I saw him at his work in the woods, felling trees, and he would greet me with a laugh of inexpressible satisfaction, and a salutation in

Canadian French, though he spoke English as well. When I approached him he would suspend his work, and with half-suppressed mirth lie along the trunk of a pine which he had felled, and, peeling off the inner bark, roll it up into a ball and chew it while he laughed and talked. Such an exuberance of animal spirits had he that he sometimes tumbled down and rolled on the ground with laughter at anything which made him think and tickled him. Looking round upon the trees he would exclaim— "By George! I can enjoy myself well enough here chopping; I want no better sport." Sometimes, when at leisure, he amused himself all day in the woods with a pocket pistol, firing salutes to himself at regular intervals as he walked. In the winter he had a fire by which at noon he warmed his coffee in a kettle; and as he sat on a log to eat his dinner the chickadees would sometimes come round and alight on his arm and peck at the potato in his fingers; and he said that he "liked to have the little *fellers* about him."

In him the animal man chiefly was developed. In physical endurance and contentment he was cousin to the pine and the rock. I asked him once if he was not sometimes tired at night, after working all day; and he answered, with a sincere and serious look, "Gorrappit, I never was tired in my life." But the intellectual and what is called spiritual man in him were slumbering as in an infant. He had been instructed only in that innocent and ineffectual way in which the Catholic priests teach the aborigines, by which the pupil is never educated to the degree of consciousness, but only to the degree of trust and reverence, and a child is not made a man, but kept a child. When Nature made him, she gave him a strong body and contentment for his portion, and propped him on every side with reverence and reliance, that he might live out his threescore years and ten a child. He was so genuine and unsophisticated that no introduction would serve to introduce him, more than if you introduced a woodchuck to your neighbor. He had got to find him out as you did. He would not play any part. Men paid him wages for work, and so helped to feed and clothe him; but he never exchanged opinions with them. He was so simply and naturally humble — if he can be called humble who never aspires — that humility was no distinct quality in him, nor could he conceive of it. Wiser men were

demigods to him. If you told him that such a one was coming, he did as if he thought that anything so grand would expect nothing of himself, but take all the responsibility on itself, and let him be forgotten still. He never heard the sound of praise. He particularly reverenced the writer and the preacher. Their performances were miracles. When I told him that I wrote considerably, he thought for a long time that it was merely the handwriting which I meant, for he could write a remarkably good hand himself. I sometimes found the name of his native parish handsomely written in the snow by the highway, with the proper French accent, and knew that he had passed. I asked him if he ever wished to write his thoughts. He said that he had read and written letters for those who could not, but he never tried to write thoughts — no, he could not, he could not tell what to put first, it would kill him, and then there was spelling to be attended to at the same time!

I heard that a distinguished wise man and reformer asked him if he did not want the world to be changed; but he answered with a chuckle of surprise in his Canadian accent, not knowing that the question had ever been entertained before, "No, I like it well enough." It would have suggested many things to a philosopher to have dealings with him. To a stranger he appeared to know nothing of things in general; yet I sometimes saw in him a man whom I had not seen before, and I did not know whether he was as wise as Shakespeare or as simply ignorant as a child, whether to suspect him of a fine poetic consciousness or of stupidity. A townsman told me that when he met him sauntering through the village in his small close-fitting cap, and whistling to himself, he reminded him of a prince in disguise.

His only books were an almanac and an arithmetic, in which last he was considerably expert. The former was a sort of cyclopaedia to him, which he supposed to contain an abstract of human knowledge, as indeed it does to a considerable extent. I loved to sound him on the various reforms of the day, and he never failed to look at them in the most simple and practical light. He had never heard of such things before. Could he do without factories? I asked. He had worn the home-made Vermont gray, he said, and that was good. Could he dispense with tea and coffee? Did this country afford any beverage

beside water? He had soaked hemlock leaves in water and drank it, and thought that was better than water in warm weather. When I asked him if he could do without money, he showed the convenience of money in such a way as to suggest and coincide with the most philosophical accounts of the origin of this institution, and the very derivation of the word *pecunia*. If an ox were his property, and he wished to get needles and thread at the store, he thought it would be inconvenient and impossible soon to go on mortgaging some portion of the creature each time to that amount. He could defend many institutions better than any philosopher, because, in describing them as they concerned him, he gave the true reason for their prevalence, and speculation had not suggested to him any other. At another time, hearing Plato's definition of a man — a biped without feathers — and that one exhibited a cock plucked and called it Plato's man, he thought it an important difference that the *knees* bent the wrong way. He would sometimes exclaim, "How I love to talk! By George, I could talk all day!" I asked him once, when I had not seen him for many months, if he had got a new idea this summer. "Good Lord" — said he, "a man that has to work as I do, if he does not forget the ideas he has had, he will do well. May be the man you hoe with is inclined to race; then, by gorry, your mind must be there; you think of weeds." He would sometimes ask me first on such occasions, if I had made any improvement. One winter day I asked him if he was always satisfied with himself, wishing to suggest a substitute within him for the priest without, and some higher motive for living. "Satisfied!" said he; "some men are satisfied with one thing, and some with another. One man, perhaps, if he has got enough, will be satisfied to sit all day with his back to the fire and his belly to the table, by George!" Yet I never, by any manoeuvring, could get him to take the spiritual view of things; the highest that he appeared to conceive of was a simple expediency, such as you might expect an animal to appreciate; and this, practically, is true of most men. If I suggested any improvement in his mode of life, he merely answered, without expressing any regret, that it was too late. Yet he thoroughly believed in honesty and the like virtues.

There was a certain positive originality, however slight, to be detected in him, and I occasionally observed that he was thinking for

himself and expressing his own opinion, a phenomenon so rare that I would any day walk ten miles to observe it, and it amounted to the re-origination of many of the institutions of society. Though he hesitated, and perhaps failed to express himself distinctly, he always had a presentable thought behind. Yet his thinking was so primitive and immersed in his animal life, that, though more promising than a merely learned man's, it rarely ripened to anything which can be reported. He suggested that there might be men of genius in the lowest grades of life, however permanently humble and illiterate, who take their own view always, or do not pretend to see at all; who are as bottomless even as Walden Pond was thought to be, though they may be dark and muddy.

Many a traveller came out of his way to see me and the inside of my house, and, as an excuse for calling, asked for a glass of water. I told them that I drank at the pond, and pointed thither, offering to lend them a dipper. Far off as I lived, I was not exempted from the annual visitation which occurs, methinks, about the first of April, when everybody is on the move; and I had my share of good luck, though there were some curious specimens among my visitors. Half-witted men from the almshouse and elsewhere came to see me; but I endeavored to make them exercise all the wit they had, and make their confessions to me; in such cases making wit the theme of our conversation; and so was compensated. Indeed, I found some of them to be wiser than the so-called *overseers* of the poor and selectmen of the town, and thought it was time that the tables were turned. With respect to wit, I learned that there was not much difference between the half and the whole. One day, in particular, an inoffensive, simple-minded pauper, whom with others I had often seen used as fencing stuff, standing or sitting on a bushel in the fields to keep cattle and himself from straying, visited me, and expressed a wish to live as I did. He told me, with the utmost simplicity and truth, quite superior, or rather *inferior*, to anything that is called humility, that he was "deficient in intellect." These were his words. The Lord had made him so, yet he supposed the Lord cared as much for him as for another. "I have always been so," said he, "from my childhood; I never had much mind; I was not like other children; I am weak in the head. It was the Lord's will, I suppose." And there he was to prove

the truth of his words. He was a metaphysical puzzle to me. I have rarely met a fellowman on such promising ground — it was so simple and sincere and so true all that he said. And, true enough, in proportion as he appeared to humble himself was he exalted. I did not know at first but it was the result of a wise policy. It seemed that from such a basis of truth and frankness as the poor weak-headed pauper had laid, our intercourse might go forward to something better than the intercourse of sages.

I had some guests from those not reckoned commonly among the town's poor, but who should be; who are among the world's poor, at any rate; guests who appeal, not to your hospitality, but to your *hospitalality*; who earnestly wish to be helped, and preface their appeal with the information that they are resolved, for one thing, never to help themselves. I require of a visitor that he be not actually starving, though he may have the very best appetite in the world, however he got it. Objects of charity are not guests. Men who did not know when their visit had terminated, though I went about my business again, answering them from greater and greater remoteness. Men of almost every degree of wit called on me in the migrating season. Some who had more wits than they knew what to do with; runaway slaves with plantation manners, who listened from time to time, like the fox in the fable, as if they heard the hounds a-baying on their track, and looked at me beseechingly, as much as to say, —

"O Christian, will you send me back?

One real runaway slave, among the rest, whom I helped to forward toward the north star. Men of one idea, like a hen with one chicken, and that a duckling; men of a thousand ideas, and unkempt heads, like those hens which are made to take charge of a hundred chickens, all in pursuit of one bug, a score of them lost in every morning's dew — and become frizzled and mangy in consequence; men of ideas instead of legs, a sort of intellectual centipede that made you crawl all over. One man proposed a book in which visitors should write their names, as at the White Mountains; but, alas! I have too good a memory to make that necessary.

I could not but notice some of the peculiarities of my visitors. Girls and boys and young women generally seemed glad to be in the woods. They looked in the pond and at the flowers, and improved

their time. Men of business, even farmers, thought only of solitude and employment, and of the great distance at which I dwelt from something or other; and though they said that they loved a ramble in the woods occasionally, it was obvious that they did not. Restless committed men, whose time was an taken up in getting a living or keeping it; ministers who spoke of God as if they enjoyed a monopoly of the subject, who could not bear all kinds of opinions; doctors, lawyers, uneasy housekeepers who pried into my cupboard and bed when I was out — how came Mrs. — to know that my sheets were not as clean as hers? — young men who had ceased to be young, and had concluded that it was safest to follow the beaten track of the professions — all these generally said that it was not possible to do so much good in my position. Ay! there was the rub. The old and infirm and the timid, of whatever age or sex, thought most of sickness, and sudden accident and death; to them life seemed full of danger — what danger is there if you don't think of any? — and they thought that a prudent man would carefully select the safest position, where Dr. B. might be on hand at a moment's warning. To them the village was literally a *com-munity*, a league for mutual defence, and you would suppose that they would not go a-huckleberrying without a medicine chest. The amount of it is, if a man is alive, there is always danger that he may die, though the danger must be allowed to be less in proportion as he is dead-and-alive to begin with. A man sits as many risks as he runs. Finally, there were the self-styled reformers, the greatest bores of all, who thought that I was forever singing, —

> This is the house that I built;
> This is the man that lives in the house that I built;
> but they did not know that the third line was,
> These are the folks that worry the man
> That lives in the house that I built.

I did not fear the hen-harriers, for I kept no chickens; but I feared the men-harriers rather.

I had more cheering visitors than the last. Children come a-berrying, railroad men taking a Sunday morning walk in clean shirts,

fishermen and hunters, poets and philosophers; in short, all honest pilgrims, who came out to the woods for freedom's sake, and really left the village behind, I was ready to greet with— "Welcome, Englishmen! welcome, Englishmen!" for I had had communication with that race.

The Bean-Field

Meanwhile my beans, the length of whose rows, added together, was seven miles already planted, were impatient to be hoed, for the earliest had grown considerably before the latest were in the ground; indeed they were not easily to be put off. What was the meaning of this so steady and self-respecting, this small Herculean labor, I knew not. I came to love my rows, my beans, though so many more than I wanted. They attached me to the earth, and so I got strength like Antaeus. But why should I raise them? Only Heaven knows. This was my curious labor all summer — to make this portion of the earth's surface, which had yielded only cinquefoil, blackberries, johnswort, and the like, before, sweet wild fruits and pleasant flowers, produce instead this pulse. What shall I learn of beans or beans of me? I cherish them, I hoe them, early and late I have an eye to them; and this is my day's work. It is a fine broad leaf to look on. My auxiliaries are the dews and rains which water this dry soil, and what fertility is in the soil itself, which for the most part is lean and effete. My enemies are worms, cool days, and most of all woodchucks. The last have nibbled for me a quarter of an acre clean. But what right had I to oust johnswort and the rest, and break up their ancient herb garden? Soon, however, the remaining beans will be too tough for them, and go forward to meet new foes.

When I was four years old, as I well remember, I was brought from Boston to this my native town, through these very woods and this field, to the pond. It is one of the oldest scenes stamped on my memory. And now to-night my flute has waked the echoes over that very water. The pines still stand here older than I; or, if some have fallen, I have cooked my supper with their stumps, and a new growth is rising all around, preparing another aspect for new infant eyes. Almost the same johnswort springs from the same perennial root in this pasture, and even I have at length helped to clothe that fabulous landscape of my infant dreams, and one of the results of my presence and influence is seen in these bean leaves, corn blades, and potato vines.

I planted about two acres and a half of upland; and as it was only

about fifteen years since the land was cleared, and I myself had got out two or three cords of stumps, I did not give it any manure; but in the course of the summer it appeared by the arrowheads which I turned up in hoeing, that an extinct nation had anciently dwelt here and planted corn and beans ere white men came to clear the land, and so, to some extent, had exhausted the soil for this very crop.

Before yet any woodchuck or squirrel had run across the road, or the sun had got above the shrub oaks, while all the dew was on, though the farmers warned me against it — I would advise you to do all your work if possible while the dew is on — I began to level the ranks of haughty weeds in my bean-field and throw dust upon their heads. Early in the morning I worked barefooted, dabbling like a plastic artist in the dewy and crumbling sand, but later in the day the sun blistered my feet. There the sun lighted me to hoe beans, pacing slowly backward and forward over that yellow gravelly upland, between the long green rows, fifteen rods, the one end terminating in a shrub oak copse where I could rest in the shade, the other in a blackberry field where the green berries deepened their tints by the time I had made another bout. Removing the weeds, putting fresh soil about the bean stems, and encouraging this weed which I had sown, making the yellow soil express its summer thought in bean leaves and blossoms rather than in wormwood and piper and millet grass, making the earth say beans instead of grass — this was my daily work. As I had little aid from horses or cattle, or hired men or boys, or improved implements of husbandry, I was much slower, and became much more intimate with my beans than usual. But labor of the hands, even when pursued to the verge of drudgery, is perhaps never the worst form of idleness. It has a constant and imperishable moral, and to the scholar it yields a classic result. A very *agricola laboriosus* was I to travellers bound westward through Lincoln and Wayland to nobody knows where; they sitting at their ease in gigs, with elbows on knees, and reins loosely hanging in festoons; I the home-staying, laborious native of the soil. But soon my homestead was out of their sight and thought. It was the only open and cultivated field for a great distance on either side of the road, so they made the most of it; and sometimes the man in the field heard more of travellers' gossip and comment than was meant for his ear: "Beans

so late! peas so late!" — for I continued to plant when others had begun to hoe — the ministerial husbandman had not suspected it. "Corn, my boy, for fodder; corn for fodder." "Does he *live* there?" asks the black bonnet of the gray coat; and the hard-featured farmer reins up his grateful dobbin to inquire what you are doing where he sees no manure in the furrow, and recommends a little chip dirt, or any little waste stuff, or it may be ashes or plaster. But here were two acres and a half of furrows, and only a hoe for cart and two hands to draw it — there being an aversion to other carts and horses — and chip dirt far away. Fellow-travellers as they rattled by compared it aloud with the fields which they had passed, so that I came to know how I stood in the agricultural world. This was one field not in Mr. Coleman's report. And, by the way, who estimates the value of the crop which nature yields in the still wilder fields unimproved by man? The crop of *English* hay is carefully weighed, the moisture calculated, the silicates and the potash; but in all dells and pond-holes in the woods and pastures and swamps grows a rich and various crop only unreaped by man. Mine was, as it were, the connecting link between wild and cultivated fields; as some states are civilized, and others half-civilized, and others savage or barbarous, so my field was, though not in a bad sense, a half-cultivated field. They were beans cheerfully returning to their wild and primitive state that I cultivated, and my hoe played the *Ranz des Vaches* for them.

Near at hand, upon the topmost spray of a birch, sings the brown thrasher — or red mavis, as some love to call him — all the morning, glad of your society, that would find out another farmer's field if yours were not here. While you are planting the seed, he cries— "Drop it, drop it — cover it up, cover it up — pull it up, pull it up, pull it up." But this was not corn, and so it was safe from such enemies as he. You may wonder what his rigmarole, his amateur Paganini performances on one string or on twenty, have to do with your planting, and yet prefer it to leached ashes or plaster. It was a cheap sort of top dressing in which I had entire faith.

As I drew a still fresher soil about the rows with my hoe, I disturbed the ashes of unchronicled nations who in primeval years lived under these heavens, and their small implements of war and hunting were brought to the light of this modern day. They lay

mingled with other natural stones, some of which bore the marks of having been burned by Indian fires, and some by the sun, and also bits of pottery and glass brought hither by the recent cultivators of the soil. When my hoe tinkled against the stones, that music echoed to the woods and the sky, and was an accompaniment to my labor which yielded an instant and immeasurable crop. It was no longer beans that I hoed, nor I that hoed beans; and I remembered with as much pity as pride, if I remembered at all, my acquaintances who had gone to the city to attend the oratorios. The nighthawk circled overhead in the sunny afternoons — for I sometimes made a day of it — like a mote in the eye, or in heaven's eye, falling from time to time with a swoop and a sound as if the heavens were rent, torn at last to very rags and tatters, and yet a seamless cope remained; small imps that fill the air and lay their eggs on the ground on bare sand or rocks on the tops of hills, where few have found them; graceful and slender like ripples caught up from the pond, as leaves are raised by the wind to float in the heavens; such kindredship is in nature. The hawk is aerial brother of the wave which he sails over and surveys, those his perfect air-inflated wings answering to the elemental unfledged pinions of the sea. Or sometimes I watched a pair of hen-hawks circling high in the sky, alternately soaring and descending, approaching, and leaving one another, as if they were the embodiment of my own thoughts. Or I was attracted by the passage of wild pigeons from this wood to that, with a slight quivering winnowing sound and carrier haste; or from under a rotten stump my hoe turned up a sluggish portentous and outlandish spotted salamander, a trace of Egypt and the Nile, yet our contemporary. When I paused to lean on my hoe, these sounds and sights I heard and saw anywhere in the row, a part of the inexhaustible entertainment which the country offers.

On gala days the town fires its great guns, which echo like popguns to these woods, and some waifs of martial music occasionally penetrate thus far. To me, away there in my bean-field at the other end of the town, the big guns sounded as if a puffball had burst; and when there was a military turnout of which I was ignorant, I have sometimes had a vague sense all the day of some sort of itching and disease in the horizon, as if some eruption would break

out there soon, either scarlatina or canker-rash, until at length some more favorable puff of wind, making haste over the fields and up the Wayland road, brought me information of the "trainers." It seemed by the distant hum as if somebody's bees had swarmed, and that the neighbors, according to Virgil's advice, by a faint *tintinnabulum* upon the most sonorous of their domestic utensils, were endeavoring to call them down into the hive again. And when the sound died quite away, and the hum had ceased, and the most favorable breezes told no tale, I knew that they had got the last drone of them all safely into the Middlesex hive, and that now their minds were bent on the honey with which it was smeared.

I felt proud to know that the liberties of Massachusetts and of our fatherland were in such safe keeping; and as I turned to my hoeing again I was filled with an inexpressible confidence, and pursued my labor cheerfully with a calm trust in the future.

When there were several bands of musicians, it sounded as if all the village was a vast bellows and all the buildings expanded and collapsed alternately with a din. But sometimes it was a really noble and inspiring strain that reached these woods, and the trumpet that sings of fame, and I felt as if I could spit a Mexican with a good relish — for why should we always stand for trifles? — and looked round for a woodchuck or a skunk to exercise my chivalry upon. These martial strains seemed as far away as Palestine, and reminded me of a march of crusaders in the horizon, with a slight tantivy and tremulous motion of the elm tree tops which overhang the village. This was one of the *great* days; though the sky had from my clearing only the same everlastingly great look that it wears daily, and I saw no difference in it.

It was a singular experience that long acquaintance which I cultivated with beans, what with planting, and hoeing, and harvesting, and threshing, and picking over and selling them — the last was the hardest of all — I might add eating, for I did taste. I was determined to know beans. When they were growing, I used to hoe from five o'clock in the morning till noon, and commonly spent the rest of the day about other affairs. Consider the intimate and curious acquaintance one makes with various kinds of weeds — it will bear some iteration in the account, for there was no little iteration in the

labor — disturbing their delicate organizations so ruthlessly, and making such invidious distinctions with his hoe, levelling whole ranks of one species, and sedulously cultivating another. That's Roman wormwood — that's pigweed — that's sorrel — that's piper-grass — have at him, chop him up, turn his roots upward to the sun, don't let him have a fibre in the shade, if you do he'll turn himself t' other side up and be as green as a leek in two days. A long war, not with cranes, but with weeds, those Trojans who had sun and rain and dews on their side. Daily the beans saw me come to their rescue armed with a hoe, and thin the ranks of their enemies, filling up the trenches with weedy dead. Many a lusty crest — waving Hector, that towered a whole foot above his crowding comrades, fell before my weapon and rolled in the dust.

Those summer days which some of my contemporaries devoted to the fine arts in Boston or Rome, and others to contemplation in India, and others to trade in London or New York, I thus, with the other farmers of New England, devoted to husbandry. Not that I wanted beans to eat, for I am by nature a Pythagorean, so far as beans are concerned, whether they mean porridge or voting, and exchanged them for rice; but, perchance, as some must work in fields if only for the sake of tropes and expression, to serve a parable-maker one day. It was on the whole a rare amusement, which, continued too long, might have become a dissipation. Though I gave them no manure, and did not hoe them all once, I hoed them unusually well as far as I went, and was paid for it in the end, "there being in truth," as Evelyn says, "no compost or laetation whatsoever comparable to this continual motion, repastination, and turning of the mould with the spade." "The earth," he adds elsewhere, "especially if fresh, has a certain magnetism in it, by which it attracts the salt, power, or virtue (call it either) which gives it life, and is the logic of all the labor and stir we keep about it, to sustain us; all dungings and other sordid temperings being but the vicars succedaneous to this improvement." Moreover, this being one of those "worn-out and exhausted lay fields which enjoy their sabbath," had perchance, as Sir Kenelm Digby thinks likely, attracted "vital spirits" from the air. I harvested twelve bushels of beans.

But to be more particular, for it is complained that Mr. Coleman

has reported chiefly the expensive experiments of gentlemen farmers, my outgoes were, —

For a hoe.....	$ 0.54	
Plowing, harrowing, and furrowing.....	7.50	Too much.
Beans for seed.....	3.12-1/2	
Potatoes for seed.....	1.33	
Peas for seed.....	0.40	
Turnip seed.....	0.06	
White line for crow fence.....	0.02	
Horse cultivator and boy three hours.....	1.00	
Horse and cart to get crop.....	0.75	
In all.....	$14.72-1/2	

My income was (patrem familias vendacem, non emacem esse oportet), from

Nine bushels and twelve quarts of beans sold..	$16.94
Five " large potatoes.....	2.50
Nine " small.....	2.25
Grass.....	1.00
Stalks.....	0.75
In all.....	$23.44

Leaving a pecuniary profit,
as I have elsewhere said, of..... $8.71-1/2

This is the result of my experience in raising beans: Plant the common small white bush bean about the first of June, in rows three feet by eighteen inches apart, being careful to select fresh round and unmixed seed. First look out for worms, and supply vacancies by planting anew. Then look out for woodchucks, if it is an exposed place, for they will nibble off the earliest tender leaves almost clean as they go; and again, when the young tendrils make their appearance, they have notice of it, and will shear them off with both buds and young pods, sitting erect like a squirrel. But above all harvest as early as possible, if you would escape frosts and have a fair and salable crop; you may save much loss by this means.

This further experience also I gained: I said to myself, I will not plant beans and corn with so much industry another summer, but such seeds, if the seed is not lost, as sincerity, truth, simplicity, faith, innocence, and the like, and see if they will not grow in this soil,

even with less toil and manurance, and sustain me, for surely it has not been exhausted for these crops. Alas! I said this to myself; but now another summer is gone, and another, and another, and I am obliged to say to you, Reader, that the seeds which I planted, if indeed they *were* the seeds of those virtues, were wormeaten or had lost their vitality, and so did not come up. Commonly men will only be brave as their fathers were brave, or timid. This generation is very sure to plant corn and beans each new year precisely as the Indians did centuries ago and taught the first settlers to do, as if there were a fate in it. I saw an old man the other day, to my astonishment, making the holes with a hoe for the seventieth time at least, and not for himself to lie down in! But why should not the New Englander try new adventures, and not lay so much stress on his grain, his potato and grass crop, and his orchards — raise other crops than these? Why concern ourselves so much about our beans for seed, and not be concerned at all about a new generation of men? We should really be fed and cheered if when we met a man we were sure to see that some of the qualities which I have named, which we all prize more than those other productions, but which are for the most part broadcast and floating in the air, had taken root and grown in him. Here comes such a subtile and ineffable quality, for instance, as truth or justice, though the slightest amount or new variety of it, along the road. Our ambassadors should be instructed to send home such seeds as these, and Congress help to distribute them over all the land. We should never stand upon ceremony with sincerity. We should never cheat and insult and banish one another by our meanness, if there were present the kernel of worth and friendliness. We should not meet thus in haste. Most men I do not meet at all, for they seem not to have time; they are busy about their beans. We would not deal with a man thus plodding ever, leaning on a hoe or a spade as a staff between his work, not as a mushroom, but partially risen out of the earth, something more than erect, like swallows alighted and walking on the ground: —

"And as he spake, his wings would now and then
Spread, as he meant to fly, then close again— "

so that we should suspect that we might be conversing with an angel. Bread may not always nourish us; but it always does us good,

it even takes stiffness out of our joints, and makes us supple and buoyant, when we knew not what ailed us, to recognize any generosity in man or Nature, to share any unmixed and heroic joy.

Ancient poetry and mythology suggest, at least, that husbandry was once a sacred art; but it is pursued with irreverent haste and heedlessness by us, our object being to have large farms and large crops merely. We have no festival, nor procession, nor ceremony, not excepting our cattle-shows and so-called Thanksgivings, by which the farmer expresses a sense of the sacredness of his calling, or is reminded of its sacred origin. It is the premium and the feast which tempt him. He sacrifices not to Ceres and the Terrestrial Jove, but to the infernal Plutus rather. By avarice and selfishness, and a grovelling habit, from which none of us is free, of regarding the soil as property, or the means of acquiring property chiefly, the landscape is deformed, husbandry is degraded with us, and the farmer leads the meanest of lives. He knows Nature but as a robber. Cato says that the profits of agriculture are particularly pious or just (*maximeque pius quaestus*), and according to Varro the old Romans "called the same earth Mother and Ceres, and thought that they who cultivated it led a pious and useful life, and that they alone were left of the race of King Saturn."

We are wont to forget that the sun looks on our cultivated fields and on the prairies and forests without distinction. They all reflect and absorb his rays alike, and the former make but a small part of the glorious picture which he beholds in his daily course. In his view the earth is all equally cultivated like a garden. Therefore we should receive the benefit of his light and heat with a corresponding trust and magnanimity. What though I value the seed of these beans, and harvest that in the fall of the year? This broad field which I have looked at so long looks not to me as the principal cultivator, but away from me to influences more genial to it, which water and make it green. These beans have results which are not harvested by me. Do they not grow for woodchucks partly? The ear of wheat (in Latin *spica*, obsoletely *speca*, from *spe*, hope) should not be the only hope of the husbandman; its kernel or grain (*granum* from *gerendo*, bearing) is not all that it bears. How, then, can our harvest fail? Shall I not rejoice also at the abundance of the weeds whose seeds are the

granary of the birds? It matters little comparatively whether the fields fill the farmer's barns. The true husbandman will cease from anxiety, as the squirrels manifest no concern whether the woods will bear chestnuts this year or not, and finish his labor with every day, relinquishing all claim to the produce of his fields, and sacrificing in his mind not only his first but his last fruits also.

The Village

After hoeing, or perhaps reading and writing, in the forenoon, I usually bathed again in the pond, swimming across one of its coves for a stint, and washed the dust of labor from my person, or smoothed out the last wrinkle which study had made, and for the afternoon was absolutely free. Every day or two I strolled to the village to hear some of the gossip which is incessantly going on there, circulating either from mouth to mouth, or from newspaper to newspaper, and which, taken in homoeopathic doses, was really as refreshing in its way as the rustle of leaves and the peeping of frogs. As I walked in the woods to see the birds and squirrels, so I walked in the village to see the men and boys; instead of the wind among the pines I heard the carts rattle. In one direction from my house there was a colony of muskrats in the river meadows; under the grove of elms and buttonwoods in the other horizon was a village of busy men, as curious to me as if they had been prairie-dogs, each sitting at the mouth of its burrow, or running over to a neighbor's to gossip. I went there frequently to observe their habits. The village appeared to me a great news room; and on one side, to support it, as once at Redding & Company's on State Street, they kept nuts and raisins, or salt and meal and other groceries. Some have such a vast appetite for the former commodity, that is, the news, and such sound digestive organs, that they can sit forever in public avenues without stirring, and let it simmer and whisper through them like the Etesian winds, or as if inhaling ether, it only producing numbness and insensibility to pain — otherwise it would often be painful to bear — without affecting the consciousness. I hardly ever failed, when I rambled through the village, to see a row of such worthies, either sitting on a ladder sunning themselves, with their bodies inclined forward and their eyes glancing along the line this way and that, from time to time, with a voluptuous expression, or else leaning against a barn with their hands in their pockets, like caryatides, as if to prop it up. They, being commonly out of doors, heard whatever was in the wind. These are the coarsest mills, in which all gossip is first rudely digested or cracked up before it is emptied into finer and more

delicate hoppers within doors. I observed that the vitals of the village were the grocery, the bar-room, the post-office, and the bank; and, as a necessary part of the machinery, they kept a bell, a big gun, and a fire-engine, at convenient places; and the houses were so arranged as to make the most of mankind, in lanes and fronting one another, so that every traveller had to run the gauntlet, and every man, woman, and child might get a lick at him. Of course, those who were stationed nearest to the head of the line, where they could most see and be seen, and have the first blow at him, paid the highest prices for their places; and the few straggling inhabitants in the outskirts, where long gaps in the line began to occur, and the traveller could get over walls or turn aside into cow-paths, and so escape, paid a very slight ground or window tax. Signs were hung out on all sides to allure him; some to catch him by the appetite, as the tavern and victualling cellar; some by the fancy, as the dry goods store and the jeweller's; and others by the hair or the feet or the skirts, as the barber, the shoemaker, or the tailor. Besides, there was a still more terrible standing invitation to call at every one of these houses, and company expected about these times. For the most part I escaped wonderfully from these dangers, either by proceeding at once boldly and without deliberation to the goal, as is recommended to those who run the gauntlet, or by keeping my thoughts on high things, like Orpheus, who, "loudly singing the praises of the gods to his lyre, drowned the voices of the Sirens, and kept out of danger." Sometimes I bolted suddenly, and nobody could tell my whereabouts, for I did not stand much about gracefulness, and never hesitated at a gap in a fence. I was even accustomed to make an irruption into some houses, where I was well entertained, and after learning the kernels and very last sieveful of news — what had subsided, the prospects of war and peace, and whether the world was likely to hold together much longer — I was let out through the rear avenues, and so escaped to the woods again.

It was very pleasant, when I stayed late in town, to launch myself into the night, especially if it was dark and tempestuous, and set sail from some bright village parlor or lecture room, with a bag of rye or Indian meal upon my shoulder, for my snug harbor in the woods, having made all tight without and withdrawn under hatches with a

merry crew of thoughts, leaving only my outer man at the helm, or even tying up the helm when it was plain sailing. I had many a genial thought by the cabin fire "as I sailed." I was never cast away nor distressed in any weather, though I encountered some severe storms. It is darker in the woods, even in common nights, than most suppose. I frequently had to look up at the opening between the trees above the path in order to learn my route, and, where there was no cart-path, to feel with my feet the faint track which I had worn, or steer by the known relation of particular trees which I felt with my hands, passing between two pines for instance, not more than eighteen inches apart, in the midst of the woods, invariably, in the darkest night. Sometimes, after coming home thus late in a dark and muggy night, when my feet felt the path which my eyes could not see, dreaming and absent-minded all the way, until I was aroused by having to raise my hand to lift the latch, I have not been able to recall a single step of my walk, and I have thought that perhaps my body would find its way home if its master should forsake it, as the hand finds its way to the mouth without assistance. Several times, when a visitor chanced to stay into evening, and it proved a dark night, I was obliged to conduct him to the cart-path in the rear of the house, and then point out to him the direction he was to pursue, and in keeping which he was to be guided rather by his feet than his eyes. One very dark night I directed thus on their way two young men who had been fishing in the pond. They lived about a mile off through the woods, and were quite used to the route. A day or two after one of them told me that they wandered about the greater part of the night, close by their own premises, and did not get home till toward morning, by which time, as there had been several heavy showers in the meanwhile, and the leaves were very wet, they were drenched to their skins. I have heard of many going astray even in the village streets, when the darkness was so thick that you could cut it with a knife, as the saying is. Some who live in the outskirts, having come to town a-shopping in their wagons, have been obliged to put up for the night; and gentlemen and ladies making a call have gone half a mile out of their way, feeling the sidewalk only with their feet, and not knowing when they turned. It is a surprising and memorable, as well as valuable experience, to be lost in the woods any time. Often

in a snow-storm, even by day, one will come out upon a well-known road and yet find it impossible to tell which way leads to the village. Though he knows that he has travelled it a thousand times, he cannot recognize a feature in it, but it is as strange to him as if it were a road in Siberia. By night, of course, the perplexity is infinitely greater. In our most trivial walks, we are constantly, though unconsciously, steering like pilots by certain well-known beacons and headlands, and if we go beyond our usual course we still carry in our minds the bearing of some neighboring cape; and not till we are completely lost, or turned round — for a man needs only to be turned round once with his eyes shut in this world to be lost — do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature. Every man has to learn the points of compass again as often as he awakes, whether from sleep or any abstraction. Not till we are lost, in other words not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations.

One afternoon, near the end of the first summer, when I went to the village to get a shoe from the cobbler's, I was seized and put into jail, because, as I have elsewhere related, I did not pay a tax to, or recognize the authority of, the State which buys and sells men, women, and children, like cattle, at the door of its senate-house. I had gone down to the woods for other purposes. But, wherever a man goes, men will pursue and paw him with their dirty institutions, and, if they can, constrain him to belong to their desperate odd-fellow society. It is true, I might have resisted forcibly with more or less effect, might have run "amok" against society; but I preferred that society should run "amok" against me, it being the desperate party. However, I was released the next day, obtained my mended shoe, and returned to the woods in season to get my dinner of huckleberries on Fair Haven Hill. I was never molested by any person but those who represented the State. I had no lock nor bolt but for the desk which held my papers, not even a nail to put over my latch or windows. I never fastened my door night or day, though I was to be absent several days; not even when the next fall I spent a fortnight in the woods of Maine. And yet my house was more respected than if it had been surrounded by a file of soldiers. The tired rambler could rest and warm himself by my fire, the literary

amuse himself with the few books on my table, or the curious, by opening my closet door, see what was left of my dinner, and what prospect I had of a supper. Yet, though many people of every class came this way to the pond, I suffered no serious inconvenience from these sources, and I never missed anything but one small book, a volume of Homer, which perhaps was improperly gilded, and this I trust a soldier of our camp has found by this time. I am convinced, that if all men were to live as simply as I then did, thieving and robbery would be unknown. These take place only in communities where some have got more than is sufficient while others have not enough. The Pope's Homers would soon get properly distributed.

"Nec bella fuerunt,
Faginus astabat dum scyphus ante dapes."

"Nor wars did men molest,
When only beechen bowls were in request."

"You who govern public affairs, what need have you to employ punishments? Love virtue, and the people will be virtuous. The virtues of a superior man are like the wind; the virtues of a common man are like the grass — the grass, when the wind passes over it, bends."

The Ponds

Sometimes, having had a surfeit of human society and gossip, and worn out all my village friends, I rambled still farther westward than I habitually dwell, into yet more unfrequented parts of the town, "to fresh woods and pastures new," or, while the sun was setting, made my supper of huckleberries and blueberries on Fair Haven Hill, and laid up a store for several days. The fruits do not yield their true flavor to the purchaser of them, nor to him who raises them for the market. There is but one way to obtain it, yet few take that way. If you would know the flavor of huckleberries, ask the cowboy or the partridge. It is a vulgar error to suppose that you have tasted huckleberries who never plucked them. A huckleberry never reaches Boston; they have not been known there since they grew on her three hills. The ambrosial and essential part of the fruit is lost with the bloom which is rubbed off in the market cart, and they become mere provender. As long as Eternal Justice reigns, not one innocent huckleberry can be transported thither from the country's hills.

Occasionally, after my hoeing was done for the day, I joined some impatient companion who had been fishing on the pond since morning, as silent and motionless as a duck or a floating leaf, and, after practising various kinds of philosophy, had concluded commonly, by the time I arrived, that he belonged to the ancient sect of Cœnobites. There was one older man, an excellent fisher and skilled in all kinds of woodcraft, who was pleased to look upon my house as a building erected for the convenience of fishermen; and I was equally pleased when he sat in my doorway to arrange his lines. Once in a while we sat together on the pond, he at one end of the boat, and I at the other; but not many words passed between us, for he had grown deaf in his later years, but he occasionally hummed a psalm, which harmonized well enough with my philosophy. Our intercourse was thus altogether one of unbroken harmony, far more pleasing to remember than if it had been carried on by speech. When, as was commonly the case, I had none to commune with, I used to raise the echoes by striking with a paddle on the side of my boat, filling the surrounding woods with circling and dilating sound,

stirring them up as the keeper of a menagerie his wild beasts, until I elicited a growl from every wooded vale and hillside.

In warm evenings I frequently sat in the boat playing the flute, and saw the perch, which I seem to have charmed, hovering around me, and the moon travelling over the ribbed bottom, which was strewed with the wrecks of the forest. Formerly I had come to this pond adventurously, from time to time, in dark summer nights, with a companion, and, making a fire close to the water's edge, which we thought attracted the fishes, we caught pouts with a bunch of worms strung on a thread, and when we had done, far in the night, threw the burning brands high into the air like skyrockets, which, coming down into the pond, were quenched with a loud hissing, and we were suddenly groping in total darkness. Through this, whistling a tune, we took our way to the haunts of men again. But now I had made my home by the shore.

Sometimes, after staying in a village parlor till the family had all retired, I have returned to the woods, and, partly with a view to the next day's dinner, spent the hours of midnight fishing from a boat by moonlight, serenaded by owls and foxes, and hearing, from time to time, the creaking note of some unknown bird close at hand. These experiences were very memorable and valuable to me — anchored in forty feet of water, and twenty or thirty rods from the shore, surrounded sometimes by thousands of small perch and shiners, dimpling the surface with their tails in the moonlight, and communicating by a long flaxen line with mysterious nocturnal fishes which had their dwelling forty feet below, or sometimes dragging sixty feet of line about the pond as I drifted in the gentle night breeze, now and then feeling a slight vibration along it, indicative of some life prowling about its extremity, of dull uncertain blundering purpose there, and slow to make up its mind. At length you slowly raise, pulling hand over hand, some horned pout squeaking and squirming to the upper air. It was very queer, especially in dark nights, when your thoughts had wandered to vast and cosmogonal themes in other spheres, to feel this faint jerk, which came to interrupt your dreams and link you to Nature again. It seemed as if I might next cast my line upward into the air, as well as downward into this element, which was scarcely more dense. Thus I

caught two fishes as it were with one hook.

The scenery of Walden is on a humble scale, and, though very beautiful, does not approach to grandeur, nor can it much concern one who has not long frequented it or lived by its shore; yet this pond is so remarkable for its depth and purity as to merit a particular description. It is a clear and deep green well, half a mile long and a mile and three quarters in circumference, and contains about sixty-one and a half acres; a perennial spring in the midst of pine and oak woods, without any visible inlet or outlet except by the clouds and evaporation. The surrounding hills rise abruptly from the water to the height of forty to eighty feet, though on the southeast and east they attain to about one hundred and one hundred and fifty feet respectively, within a quarter and a third of a mile. They are exclusively woodland. All our Concord waters have two colors at least; one when viewed at a distance, and another, more proper, close at hand. The first depends more on the light, and follows the sky. In clear weather, in summer, they appear blue at a little distance, especially if agitated, and at a great distance all appear alike. In stormy weather they are sometimes of a dark slate-color. The sea, however, is said to be blue one day and green another without any perceptible change in the atmosphere. I have seen our river, when, the landscape being covered with snow, both water and ice were almost as green as grass. Some consider blue "to be the color of pure water, whether liquid or solid." But, looking directly down into our waters from a boat, they are seen to be of very different colors. Walden is blue at one time and green at another, even from the same point of view. Lying between the earth and the heavens, it partakes of the color of both. Viewed from a hilltop it reflects the color of the sky; but near at hand it is of a yellowish tint next the shore where you can see the sand, then a light green, which gradually deepens to a uniform dark green in the body of the pond. In some lights, viewed even from a hilltop, it is of a vivid green next the shore. Some have referred this to the reflection of the verdure; but it is equally green there against the railroad sandbank, and in the spring, before the leaves are expanded, and it may be simply the result of the prevailing blue mixed with the yellow of the sand. Such is the color of its iris.

This is that portion, also, where in the spring, the ice being warmed by the heat of the sun reflected from the bottom, and also transmitted through the earth, melts first and forms a narrow canal about the still frozen middle. Like the rest of our waters, when much agitated, in clear weather, so that the surface of the waves may reflect the sky at the right angle, or because there is more light mixed with it, it appears at a little distance of a darker blue than the sky itself; and at such a time, being on its surface, and looking with divided vision, so as to see the reflection, I have discerned a matchless and indescribable light blue, such as watered or changeable silks and sword blades suggest, more cerulean than the sky itself, alternating with the original dark green on the opposite sides of the waves, which last appeared but muddy in comparison. It is a vitreous greenish blue, as I remember it, like those patches of the winter sky seen through cloud vistas in the west before sundown. Yet a single glass of its water held up to the light is as colorless as an equal quantity of air. It is well known that a large plate of glass will have a green tint, owing, as the makers say, to its "body," but a small piece of the same will be colorless. How large a body of Walden water would be required to reflect a green tint I have never proved. The water of our river is black or a very dark brown to one looking directly down on it, and, like that of most ponds, imparts to the body of one bathing in it a yellowish tinge; but this water is of such crystalline purity that the body of the bather appears of an alabaster whiteness, still more unnatural, which, as the limbs are magnified and distorted withal, produces a monstrous effect, making fit studies for a Michael Angelo.

The water is so transparent that the bottom can easily be discerned at the depth of twenty-five or thirty feet. Paddling over it, you may see, many feet beneath the surface, the schools of perch and shiners, perhaps only an inch long, yet the former easily distinguished by their transverse bars, and you think that they must be ascetic fish that find a subsistence there. Once, in the winter, many years ago, when I had been cutting holes through the ice in order to catch pickerel, as I stepped ashore I tossed my axe back on to the ice, but, as if some evil genius had directed it, it slid four or five rods directly into one of the holes, where the water was twenty-five feet deep. Out of curiosity, I

lay down on the ice and looked through the hole, until I saw the axe a little on one side, standing on its head, with its helve erect and gently swaying to and fro with the pulse of the pond; and there it might have stood erect and swaying till in the course of time the handle rotted off, if I had not disturbed it. Making another hole directly over it with an ice chisel which I had, and cutting down the longest birch which I could find in the neighborhood with my knife, I made a slip-noose, which I attached to its end, and, letting it down carefully, passed it over the knob of the handle, and drew it by a line along the birch, and so pulled the axe out again.

The shore is composed of a belt of smooth rounded white stones like paving-stones, excepting one or two short sand beaches, and is so steep that in many places a single leap will carry you into water over your head; and were it not for its remarkable transparency, that would be the last to be seen of its bottom till it rose on the opposite side. Some think it is bottomless. It is nowhere muddy, and a casual observer would say that there were no weeds at all in it; and of noticeable plants, except in the little meadows recently overflowed, which do not properly belong to it, a closer scrutiny does not detect a flag nor a bulrush, nor even a lily, yellow or white, but only a few small heart-leaves and potamogetons, and perhaps a water-target or two; all which however a bather might not perceive; and these plants are clean and bright like the element they grow in. The stones extend a rod or two into the water, and then the bottom is pure sand, except in the deepest parts, where there is usually a little sediment, probably from the decay of the leaves which have been wafted on to it so many successive falls, and a bright green weed is brought up on anchors even in midwinter.

We have one other pond just like this, White Pond, in Nine Acre Corner, about two and a half miles westerly; but, though I am acquainted with most of the ponds within a dozen miles of this centre I do not know a third of this pure and well-like character. Successive nations perchance have drank at, admired, and fathomed it, and passed away, and still its water is green and pellucid as ever. Not an intermitting spring! Perhaps on that spring morning when Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden Walden Pond was already in existence, and even then breaking up in a gentle spring rain accompanied with

mist and a southerly wind, and covered with myriads of ducks and geese, which had not heard of the fall, when still such pure lakes sufficed them. Even then it had commenced to rise and fall, and had clarified its waters and colored them of the hue they now wear, and obtained a patent of Heaven to be the only Walden Pond in the world and distiller of celestial dews. Who knows in how many unremembered nations' literatures this has been the Castalian Fountain? or what nymphs presided over it in the Golden Age? It is a gem of the first water which Concord wears in her coronet.

Yet perchance the first who came to this well have left some trace of their footsteps. I have been surprised to detect encircling the pond, even where a thick wood has just been cut down on the shore, a narrow shelf-like path in the steep hillside, alternately rising and falling, approaching and receding from the water's edge, as old probably as the race of man here, worn by the feet of aboriginal hunters, and still from time to time unwittingly trodden by the present occupants of the land. This is particularly distinct to one standing on the middle of the pond in winter, just after a light snow has fallen, appearing as a clear undulating white line, unobscured by weeds and twigs, and very obvious a quarter of a mile off in many places where in summer it is hardly distinguishable close at hand. The snow reprints it, as it were, in clear white type alto-relievo. The ornamented grounds of villas which will one day be built here may still preserve some trace of this.

The pond rises and falls, but whether regularly or not, and within what period, nobody knows, though, as usual, many pretend to know. It is commonly higher in the winter and lower in the summer, though not corresponding to the general wet and dryness. I can remember when it was a foot or two lower, and also when it was at least five feet higher, than when I lived by it. There is a narrow sand-bar running into it, with very deep water on one side, on which I helped boil a kettle of chowder, some six rods from the main shore, about the year 1824, which it has not been possible to do for twenty-five years; and, on the other hand, my friends used to listen with incredulity when I told them, that a few years later I was accustomed to fish from a boat in a secluded cove in the woods, fifteen rods from the only shore they knew, which place was long since converted into

a meadow. But the pond has risen steadily for two years, and now, in the summer of ‘52, is just five feet higher than when I lived there, or as high as it was thirty years ago, and fishing goes on again in the meadow. This makes a difference of level, at the outside, of six or seven feet; and yet the water shed by the surrounding hills is insignificant in amount, and this overflow must be referred to causes which affect the deep springs. This same summer the pond has begun to fall again. It is remarkable that this fluctuation, whether periodical or not, appears thus to require many years for its accomplishment. I have observed one rise and a part of two falls, and I expect that a dozen or fifteen years hence the water will again be as low as I have ever known it. Flint’s Pond, a mile eastward, allowing for the disturbance occasioned by its inlets and outlets, and the smaller intermediate ponds also, sympathize with Walden, and recently attained their greatest height at the same time with the latter. The same is true, as far as my observation goes, of White Pond.

This rise and fall of Walden at long intervals serves this use at least; the water standing at this great height for a year or more, though it makes it difficult to walk round it, kills the shrubs and trees which have sprung up about its edge since the last rise — pitch pines, birches, alders, aspens, and others — and, falling again, leaves an unobstructed shore; for, unlike many ponds and all waters which are subject to a daily tide, its shore is cleanest when the water is lowest. On the side of the pond next my house a row of pitch pines, fifteen feet high, has been killed and tipped over as if by a lever, and thus a stop put to their encroachments; and their size indicates how many years have elapsed since the last rise to this height. By this fluctuation the pond asserts its title to a shore, and thus the *shore* is *shorn*, and the trees cannot hold it by right of possession. These are the lips of the lake, on which no beard grows. It licks its chaps from time to time. When the water is at its height, the alders, willows, and maples send forth a mass of fibrous red roots several feet long from all sides of their stems in the water, and to the height of three or four feet from the ground, in the effort to maintain themselves; and I have known the high blueberry bushes about the shore, which commonly produce no fruit, bear an abundant crop under these circumstances.

Some have been puzzled to tell how the shore became so regularly

paved. My townsmen have all heard the tradition — the oldest people tell me that they heard it in their youth — that anciently the Indians were holding a pow-wow upon a hill here, which rose as high into the heavens as the pond now sinks deep into the earth, and they used much profanity, as the story goes, though this vice is one of which the Indians were never guilty, and while they were thus engaged the hill shook and suddenly sank, and only one old squaw, named Walden, escaped, and from her the pond was named. It has been conjectured that when the hill shook these stones rolled down its side and became the present shore. It is very certain, at any rate, that once there was no pond here, and now there is one; and this Indian fable does not in any respect conflict with the account of that ancient settler whom I have mentioned, who remembers so well when he first came here with his divining-rod, saw a thin vapor rising from the sward, and the hazel pointed steadily downward, and he concluded to dig a well here. As for the stones, many still think that they are hardly to be accounted for by the action of the waves on these hills; but I observe that the surrounding hills are remarkably full of the same kind of stones, so that they have been obliged to pile them up in walls on both sides of the railroad cut nearest the pond; and, moreover, there are most stones where the shore is most abrupt; so that, unfortunately, it is no longer a mystery to me. I detect the paver. If the name was not derived from that of some English locality — Saffron Walden, for instance — one might suppose that it was called originally *Walled-in* Pond.

The pond was my well ready dug. For four months in the year its water is as cold as it is pure at all times; and I think that it is then as good as any, if not the best, in the town. In the winter, all water which is exposed to the air is colder than springs and wells which are protected from it. The temperature of the pond water which had stood in the room where I sat from five o'clock in the afternoon till noon the next day, the sixth of March, 1846, the thermometer having been up to 65° or 70° some of the time, owing partly to the sun on the roof, was 42°, or one degree colder than the water of one of the coldest wells in the village just drawn. The temperature of the Boiling Spring the same day was 45°, or the warmest of any water tried, though it is the coldest that I know of in summer, when, beside,

shallow and stagnant surface water is not mingled with it. Moreover, in summer, Walden never becomes so warm as most water which is exposed to the sun, on account of its depth. In the warmest weather I usually placed a pailful in my cellar, where it became cool in the night, and remained so during the day; though I also resorted to a spring in the neighborhood. It was as good when a week old as the day it was dipped, and had no taste of the pump. Whoever camps for a week in summer by the shore of a pond, needs only bury a pail of water a few feet deep in the shade of his camp to be independent of the luxury of ice.

There have been caught in Walden pickerel, one weighing seven pounds — to say nothing of another which carried off a reel with great velocity, which the fisherman safely set down at eight pounds because he did not see him — perch and pouts, some of each weighing over two pounds, shiners, chivins or roach (*Leuciscus pulchellus*), a very few breams, and a couple of eels, one weighing four pounds — I am thus particular because the weight of a fish is commonly its only title to fame, and these are the only eels I have heard of here; — also, I have a faint recollection of a little fish some five inches long, with silvery sides and a greenish back, somewhat dace-like in its character, which I mention here chiefly to link my facts to fable. Nevertheless, this pond is not very fertile in fish. Its pickerel, though not abundant, are its chief boast. I have seen at one time lying on the ice pickerel of at least three different kinds: a long and shallow one, steel-colored, most like those caught in the river; a bright golden kind, with greenish reflections and remarkably deep, which is the most common here; and another, golden-colored, and shaped like the last, but peppered on the sides with small dark brown or black spots, intermixed with a few faint blood-red ones, very much like a trout. The specific name *reticulatus* would not apply to this; it should be *guttatus* rather. These are all very firm fish, and weigh more than their size promises. The shiners, pouts, and perch also, and indeed all the fishes which inhabit this pond, are much cleaner, handsomer, and firmer-fleshed than those in the river and most other ponds, as the water is purer, and they can easily be distinguished from them. Probably many ichthyologists would make new varieties of some of them. There are also a clean race of frogs

and tortoises, and a few mussels in it; muskrats and minks leave their traces about it, and occasionally a travelling mud-turtle visits it. Sometimes, when I pushed off my boat in the morning, I disturbed a great mud-turtle which had secreted himself under the boat in the night. Ducks and geese frequent it in the spring and fall, the white-bellied swallows (*Hirundo bicolor*) skim over it, and the peetweets (*Totanus macularius*) "teeter" along its stony shores all summer. I have sometimes disturbed a fish hawk sitting on a white pine over the water; but I doubt if it is ever profaned by the wind of a gull, like Fair Haven. At most, it tolerates one annual loon. These are all the animals of consequence which frequent it now.

You may see from a boat, in calm weather, near the sandy eastern shore, where the water is eight or ten feet deep, and also in some other parts of the pond, some circular heaps half a dozen feet in diameter by a foot in height, consisting of small stones less than a hen's egg in size, where all around is bare sand. At first you wonder if the Indians could have formed them on the ice for any purpose, and so, when the ice melted, they sank to the bottom; but they are too regular and some of them plainly too fresh for that. They are similar to those found in rivers; but as there are no suckers nor lampreys here, I know not by what fish they could be made. Perhaps they are the nests of the chivin. These lend a pleasing mystery to the bottom.

The shore is irregular enough not to be monotonous. I have in my mind's eye the western, indented with deep bays, the bolder northern, and the beautifully scalloped southern shore, where successive capes overlap each other and suggest unexplored coves between. The forest has never so good a setting, nor is so distinctly beautiful, as when seen from the middle of a small lake amid hills which rise from the water's edge; for the water in which it is reflected not only makes the best foreground in such a case, but, with its winding shore, the most natural and agreeable boundary to it. There is no rawness nor imperfection in its edge there, as where the axe has cleared a part, or a cultivated field abuts on it. The trees have ample room to expand on the water side, and each sends forth its most vigorous branch in that direction. There Nature has woven a natural selvage, and the eye rises by just gradations from the low shrubs of the shore to the highest trees. There are few traces of man's hand to be seen. The

water laves the shore as it did a thousand years ago.

A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. The fluviatile trees next the shore are the slender eyelashes which fringe it, and the wooded hills and cliffs around are its overhanging brows.

Standing on the smooth sandy beach at the east end of the pond, in a calm September afternoon, when a slight haze makes the opposite shore-line indistinct, I have seen whence came the expression, "the glassy surface of a lake." When you invert your head, it looks like a thread of finest gossamer stretched across the valley, and gleaming against the distant pine woods, separating one stratum of the atmosphere from another. You would think that you could walk dry under it to the opposite hills, and that the swallows which skim over might perch on it. Indeed, they sometimes dive below this line, as it were by mistake, and are undeceived. As you look over the pond westward you are obliged to employ both your hands to defend your eyes against the reflected as well as the true sun, for they are equally bright; and if, between the two, you survey its surface critically, it is literally as smooth as glass, except where the skater insects, at equal intervals scattered over its whole extent, by their motions in the sun produce the finest imaginable sparkle on it, or, perchance, a duck plumes itself, or, as I have said, a swallow skims so low as to touch it. It may be that in the distance a fish describes an arc of three or four feet in the air, and there is one bright flash where it emerges, and another where it strikes the water; sometimes the whole silvery arc is revealed; or here and there, perhaps, is a thistle-down floating on its surface, which the fishes dart at and so dimple it again. It is like molten glass cooled but not congealed, and the few motes in it are pure and beautiful like the imperfections in glass. You may often detect a yet smoother and darker water, separated from the rest as if by an invisible cobweb, boom of the water nymphs, resting on it. From a hilltop you can see a fish leap in almost any part; for not a pickerel or shiner picks an insect from this smooth surface but it manifestly disturbs the equilibrium of the whole lake. It is wonderful with what elaborateness this simple fact is advertised — this piscine murder

will out — and from my distant perch I distinguish the circling undulations when they are half a dozen rods in diameter. You can even detect a water-bug (*Gyrinus*) ceaselessly progressing over the smooth surface a quarter of a mile off; for they furrow the water slightly, making a conspicuous ripple bounded by two diverging lines, but the skaters glide over it without rippling it perceptibly. When the surface is considerably agitated there are no skaters nor water-bugs on it, but apparently, in calm days, they leave their havens and adventurously glide forth from the shore by short impulses till they completely cover it. It is a soothing employment, on one of those fine days in the fall when all the warmth of the sun is fully appreciated, to sit on a stump on such a height as this, overlooking the pond, and study the dimpling circles which are incessantly inscribed on its otherwise invisible surface amid the reflected skies and trees. Over this great expanse there is no disturbance but it is thus at once gently smoothed away and assuaged, as, when a vase of water is jarred, the trembling circles seek the shore and all is smooth again. Not a fish can leap or an insect fall on the pond but it is thus reported in circling dimples, in lines of beauty, as it were the constant welling up of its fountain, the gentle pulsing of its life, the heaving of its breast. The thrills of joy and thrills of pain are undistinguishable. How peaceful the phenomena of the lake! Again the works of man shine as in the spring. Ay, every leaf and twig and stone and cobweb sparkles now at mid-afternoon as when covered with dew in a spring morning. Every motion of an oar or an insect produces a flash of light; and if an oar falls, how sweet the echo!

In such a day, in September or October, Walden is a perfect forest mirror, set round with stones as precious to my eye as if fewer or rarer. Nothing so fair, so pure, and at the same time so large, as a lake, perchance, lies on the surface of the earth. Sky water. It needs no fence. Nations come and go without defiling it. It is a mirror which no stone can crack, whose quicksilver will never wear off, whose gilding Nature continually repairs; no storms, no dust, can dim its surface ever fresh; — a mirror in which all impurity presented to it sinks, swept and dusted by the sun's hazy brush — this the light dust-cloth — which retains no breath that is breathed on

it, but sends its own to float as clouds high above its surface, and be reflected in its bosom still.

A field of water betrays the spirit that is in the air. It is continually receiving new life and motion from above. It is intermediate in its nature between land and sky. On land only the grass and trees wave, but the water itself is rippled by the wind. I see where the breeze dashes across it by the streaks or flakes of light. It is remarkable that we can look down on its surface. We shall, perhaps, look down thus on the surface of air at length, and mark where a still subtler spirit sweeps over it.

The skaters and water-bugs finally disappear in the latter part of October, when the severe frosts have come; and then and in November, usually, in a calm day, there is absolutely nothing to ripple the surface. One November afternoon, in the calm at the end of a rain-storm of several days' duration, when the sky was still completely overcast and the air was full of mist, I observed that the pond was remarkably smooth, so that it was difficult to distinguish its surface; though it no longer reflected the bright tints of October, but the sombre November colors of the surrounding hills. Though I passed over it as gently as possible, the slight undulations produced by my boat extended almost as far as I could see, and gave a ribbed appearance to the reflections. But, as I was looking over the surface, I saw here and there at a distance a faint glimmer, as if some skater insects which had escaped the frosts might be collected there, or, perchance, the surface, being so smooth, betrayed where a spring welled up from the bottom. Paddling gently to one of these places, I was surprised to find myself surrounded by myriads of small perch, about five inches long, of a rich bronze color in the green water, sporting there, and constantly rising to the surface and dimpling it, sometimes leaving bubbles on it. In such transparent and seemingly bottomless water, reflecting the clouds, I seemed to be floating through the air as in a balloon, and their swimming impressed me as a kind of flight or hovering, as if they were a compact flock of birds passing just beneath my level on the right or left, their fins, like sails, set all around them. There were many such schools in the pond, apparently improving the short season before winter would draw an icy shutter over their broad skylight, sometimes giving to the surface

an appearance as if a slight breeze struck it, or a few rain-drops fell there. When I approached carelessly and alarmed them, they made a sudden splash and rippling with their tails, as if one had struck the water with a brushy bough, and instantly took refuge in the depths. At length the wind rose, the mist increased, and the waves began to run, and the perch leaped much higher than before, half out of water, a hundred black points, three inches long, at once above the surface. Even as late as the fifth of December, one year, I saw some dimples on the surface, and thinking it was going to rain hard immediately, the air being full of mist, I made haste to take my place at the oars and row homeward; already the rain seemed rapidly increasing, though I felt none on my cheek, and I anticipated a thorough soaking. But suddenly the dimples ceased, for they were produced by the perch, which the noise of my oars had seared into the depths, and I saw their schools dimly disappearing; so I spent a dry afternoon after all.

An old man who used to frequent this pond nearly sixty years ago, when it was dark with surrounding forests, tells me that in those days he sometimes saw it all alive with ducks and other water-fowl, and that there were many eagles about it. He came here a-fishing, and used an old log canoe which he found on the shore. It was made of two white pine logs dug out and pinned together, and was cut off square at the ends. It was very clumsy, but lasted a great many years before it became water-logged and perhaps sank to the bottom. He did not know whose it was; it belonged to the pond. He used to make a cable for his anchor of strips of hickory bark tied together. An old man, a potter, who lived by the pond before the Revolution, told him once that there was an iron chest at the bottom, and that he had seen it. Sometimes it would come floating up to the shore; but when you went toward it, it would go back into deep water and disappear. I was pleased to hear of the old log canoe, which took the place of an Indian one of the same material but more graceful construction, which perchance had first been a tree on the bank, and then, as it were, fell into the water, to float there for a generation, the most proper vessel for the lake. I remember that when I first looked into these depths there were many large trunks to be seen indistinctly lying on the bottom, which had either been blown over formerly, or

left on the ice at the last cutting, when wood was cheaper; but now they have mostly disappeared.

When I first paddled a boat on Walden, it was completely surrounded by thick and lofty pine and oak woods, and in some of its coves grape-vines had run over the trees next the water and formed bowers under which a boat could pass. The hills which form its shores are so steep, and the woods on them were then so high, that, as you looked down from the west end, it had the appearance of an amphitheatre for some land of sylvan spectacle. I have spent many an hour, when I was younger, floating over its surface as the zephyr willed, having paddled my boat to the middle, and lying on my back across the seats, in a summer forenoon, dreaming awake, until I was aroused by the boat touching the sand, and I arose to see what shore my fates had impelled me to; days when idleness was the most attractive and productive industry. Many a forenoon have I stolen away, preferring to spend thus the most valued part of the day; for I was rich, if not in money, in sunny hours and summer days, and spent them lavishly; nor do I regret that I did not waste more of them in the workshop or the teacher's desk. But since I left those shores the woodchoppers have still further laid them waste, and now for many a year there will be no more rambling through the aisles of the wood, with occasional vistas through which you see the water. My Muse may be excused if she is silent henceforth. How can you expect the birds to sing when their groves are cut down?

Now the trunks of trees on the bottom, and the old log canoe, and the dark surrounding woods, are gone, and the villagers, who scarcely know where it lies, instead of going to the pond to bathe or drink, are thinking to bring its water, which should be as sacred as the Ganges at least, to the village in a pipe, to wash their dishes with! — to earn their Walden by the turning of a cock or drawing of a plug! That devilish Iron Horse, whose ear-rending neigh is heard throughout the town, has muddied the Boiling Spring with his foot, and he it is that has browsed off all the woods on Walden shore, that Trojan horse, with a thousand men in his belly, introduced by mercenary Greeks! Where is the country's champion, the Moore of Moore Hill, to meet him at the Deep Cut and thrust an avenging lance between the ribs of the bloated pest?

Nevertheless, of all the characters I have known, perhaps Walden wears best, and best preserves its purity. Many men have been likened to it, but few deserve that honor. Though the woodchoppers have laid bare first this shore and then that, and the Irish have built their sties by it, and the railroad has infringed on its border, and the ice-men have skimmed it once, it is itself unchanged, the same water which my youthful eyes fell on; all the change is in me. It has not acquired one permanent wrinkle after all its ripples. It is perennially young, and I may stand and see a swallow dip apparently to pick an insect from its surface as of yore. It struck me again tonight, as if I had not seen it almost daily for more than twenty years — Why, here is Walden, the same woodland lake that I discovered so many years ago; where a forest was cut down last winter another is springing up by its shore as lustily as ever; the same thought is welling up to its surface that was then; it is the same liquid joy and happiness to itself and its Maker, ay, and it may be to me. It is the work of a brave man surely, in whom there was no guile! He rounded this water with his hand, deepened and clarified it in his thought, and in his will bequeathed it to Concord. I see by its face that it is visited by the same reflection; and I can almost say, Walden, is it you?

> It is no dream of mine,
> To ornament a line;
> I cannot come nearer to God and Heaven
> Than I live to Walden even.
> I am its stony shore,
> And the breeze that passes o'er;
> In the hollow of my hand
> Are its water and its sand,
> And its deepest resort
> Lies high in my thought.

The cars never pause to look at it; yet I fancy that the engineers and firemen and brakemen, and those passengers who have a season ticket and see it often, are better men for the sight. The engineer does not forget at night, or his nature does not, that he has beheld this vision of serenity and purity once at least during the day. Though

seen but once, it helps to wash out State Street and the engine's soot. One proposes that it be called "God's Drop."

I have said that Walden has no visible inlet nor outlet, but it is on the one hand distantly and indirectly related to Flint's Pond, which is more elevated, by a chain of small ponds coming from that quarter, and on the other directly and manifestly to Concord River, which is lower, by a similar chain of ponds through which in some other geological period it may have flowed, and by a little digging, which God forbid, it can be made to flow thither again. If by living thus reserved and austere, like a hermit in the woods, so long, it has acquired such wonderful purity, who would not regret that the comparatively impure waters of Flint's Pond should be mingled with it, or itself should ever go to waste its sweetness in the ocean wave?

Flint's, or Sandy Pond, in Lincoln, our greatest lake and inland sea, lies about a mile east of Walden. It is much larger, being said to contain one hundred and ninety-seven acres, and is more fertile in fish; but it is comparatively shallow, and not remarkably pure. A walk through the woods thither was often my recreation. It was worth the while, if only to feel the wind blow on your cheek freely, and see the waves run, and remember the life of mariners. I went a-chestnutting there in the fall, on windy days, when the nuts were dropping into the water and were washed to my feet; and one day, as I crept along its sedgy shore, the fresh spray blowing in my face, I came upon the mouldering wreck of a boat, the sides gone, and hardly more than the impression of its flat bottom left amid the rushes; yet its model was sharply defined, as if it were a large decayed pad, with its veins. It was as impressive a wreck as one could imagine on the seashore, and had as good a moral. It is by this time mere vegetable mould and undistinguishable pond shore, through which rushes and flags have pushed up. I used to admire the ripple marks on the sandy bottom, at the north end of this pond, made firm and hard to the feet of the wader by the pressure of the water, and the rushes which grew in Indian file, in waving lines, corresponding to these marks, rank behind rank, as if the waves had planted them. There also I have found, in considerable quantities, curious balls, composed apparently of fine grass or roots, of pipewort

perhaps, from half an inch to four inches in diameter, and perfectly spherical. These wash back and forth in shallow water on a sandy bottom, and are sometimes cast on the shore. They are either solid grass, or have a little sand in the middle. At first you would say that they were formed by the action of the waves, like a pebble; yet the smallest are made of equally coarse materials, half an inch long, and they are produced only at one season of the year. Moreover, the waves, I suspect, do not so much construct as wear down a material which has already acquired consistency. They preserve their form when dry for an indefinite period.

Flint's Pond! Such is the poverty of our nomenclature. What right had the unclean and stupid farmer, whose farm abutted on this sky water, whose shores he has ruthlessly laid bare, to give his name to it? Some skin-flint, who loved better the reflecting surface of a dollar, or a bright cent, in which he could see his own brazen face; who regarded even the wild ducks which settled in it as trespassers; his fingers grown into crooked and bony talons from the long habit of grasping harpy-like; — so it is not named for me. I go not there to see him nor to hear of him; who never saw it, who never bathed in it, who never loved it, who never protected it, who never spoke a good word for it, nor thanked God that He had made it. Rather let it be named from the fishes that swim in it, the wild fowl or quadrupeds which frequent it, the wild flowers which grow by its shores, or some wild man or child the thread of whose history is interwoven with its own; not from him who could show no title to it but the deed which a like-minded neighbor or legislature gave him — him who thought only of its money value; whose presence perchance cursed all the shores; who exhausted the land around it, and would fain have exhausted the waters within it; who regretted only that it was not English hay or cranberry meadow — there was nothing to redeem it, forsooth, in his eyes — and would have drained and sold it for the mud at its bottom. It did not turn his mill, and it was no *privilege* to him to behold it. I respect not his labors, his farm where everything has its price, who would carry the landscape, who would carry his God, to market, if he could get anything for him; who goes to market *for* his god as it is; on whose farm nothing grows free, whose fields bear no crops, whose meadows no flowers, whose trees no fruits, but

dollars; who loves not the beauty of his fruits, whose fruits are not ripe for him till they are turned to dollars. Give me the poverty that enjoys true wealth. Farmers are respectable and interesting to me in proportion as they are poor — poor farmers. A model farm! where the house stands like a fungus in a muckheap, chambers for men, horses, oxen, and swine, cleansed and uncleansed, all contiguous to one another! Stocked with men! A great grease-spot, redolent of manures and buttermilk! Under a high state of cultivation, being manured with the hearts and brains of men! As if you were to raise your potatoes in the churchyard! Such is a model farm.

No, no; if the fairest features of the landscape are to be named after men, let them be the noblest and worthiest men alone. Let our lakes receive as true names at least as the Icarian Sea, where "still the shore" a "brave attempt resounds."

Goose Pond, of small extent, is on my way to Flint's; Fair Haven, an expansion of Concord River, said to contain some seventy acres, is a mile southwest; and White Pond, of about forty acres, is a mile and a half beyond Fair Haven. This is my lake country. These, with Concord River, are my water privileges; and night and day, year in year out, they grind such grist as I carry to them.

Since the wood-cutters, and the railroad, and I myself have profaned Walden, perhaps the most attractive, if not the most beautiful, of all our lakes, the gem of the woods, is White Pond; — a poor name from its commonness, whether derived from the remarkable purity of its waters or the color of its sands. In these as in other respects, however, it is a lesser twin of Walden. They are so much alike that you would say they must be connected under ground. It has the same stony shore, and its waters are of the same hue. As at Walden, in sultry dog-day weather, looking down through the woods on some of its bays which are not so deep but that the reflection from the bottom tinges them, its waters are of a misty bluish-green or glaucous color. Many years since I used to go there to collect the sand by cartloads, to make sandpaper with, and I have continued to visit it ever since. One who frequents it proposes to call it Virid Lake. Perhaps it might be called Yellow Pine Lake, from the following circumstance. About fifteen years ago you could see the

top of a pitch pine, of the kind called yellow pine hereabouts, though it is not a distinct species, projecting above the surface in deep water, many rods from the shore. It was even supposed by some that the pond had sunk, and this was one of the primitive forest that formerly stood there. I find that even so long ago as 1792, in a "Topographical Description of the Town of Concord," by one of its citizens, in the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the author, after speaking of Walden and White Ponds, adds, "In the middle of the latter may be seen, when the water is very low, a tree which appears as if it grew in the place where it now stands, although the roots are fifty feet below the surface of the water; the top of this tree is broken off, and at that place measures fourteen inches in diameter." In the spring of '49 I talked with the man who lives nearest the pond in Sudbury, who told me that it was he who got out this tree ten or fifteen years before. As near as he could remember, it stood twelve or fifteen rods from the shore, where the water was thirty or forty feet deep. It was in the winter, and he had been getting out ice in the forenoon, and had resolved that in the afternoon, with the aid of his neighbors, he would take out the old yellow pine. He sawed a channel in the ice toward the shore, and hauled it over and along and out on to the ice with oxen; but, before he had gone far in his work, he was surprised to find that it was wrong end upward, with the stumps of the branches pointing down, and the small end firmly fastened in the sandy bottom. It was about a foot in diameter at the big end, and he had expected to get a good saw-log, but it was so rotten as to be fit only for fuel, if for that. He had some of it in his shed then. There were marks of an axe and of woodpeckers on the butt. He thought that it might have been a dead tree on the shore, but was finally blown over into the pond, and after the top had become water-logged, while the butt-end was still dry and light, had drifted out and sunk wrong end up. His father, eighty years old, could not remember when it was not there. Several pretty large logs may still be seen lying on the bottom, where, owing to the undulation of the surface, they look like huge water snakes in motion.

This pond has rarely been profaned by a boat, for there is little in it to tempt a fisherman. Instead of the white lily, which requires mud, or the common sweet flag, the blue flag (*Iris versicolor*) grows thinly

in the pure water, rising from the stony bottom all around the shore, where it is visited by hummingbirds in June; and the color both of its bluish blades and its flowers and especially their reflections, is in singular harmony with the glaucous water.

White Pond and Walden are great crystals on the surface of the earth, Lakes of Light. If they were permanently congealed, and small enough to be clutched, they would, perchance, be carried off by slaves, like precious stones, to adorn the heads of emperors; but being liquid, and ample, and secured to us and our successors forever, we disregard them, and run after the diamond of Kohinoor. They are too pure to have a market value; they contain no muck. How much more beautiful than our lives, how much more transparent than our characters, are they! We never learned meanness of them. How much fairer than the pool before the farmer's door, in which his ducks swim! Hither the clean wild ducks come. Nature has no human inhabitant who appreciates her. The birds with their plumage and their notes are in harmony with the flowers, but what youth or maiden conspires with the wild luxuriant beauty of Nature? She flourishes most alone, far from the towns where they reside. Talk of heaven! ye disgrace earth.

Baker Farm

Sometimes I rambled to pine groves, standing like temples, or like fleets at sea, full-rigged, with wavy boughs, and rippling with light, so soft and green and shady that the Druids would have forsaken their oaks to worship in them; or to the cedar wood beyond Flint's Pond, where the trees, covered with hoary blue berries, spiring higher and higher, are fit to stand before Valhalla, and the creeping juniper covers the ground with wreaths full of fruit; or to swamps where the usnea lichen hangs in festoons from the white spruce trees, and toadstools, round tables of the swamp gods, cover the ground, and more beautiful fungi adorn the stumps, like butterflies or shells, vegetable winkles; where the swamp-pink and dogwood grow, the red alderberry glows like eyes of imps, the waxwork grooves and crushes the hardest woods in its folds, and the wild holly berries make the beholder forget his home with their beauty, and he is dazzled and tempted by nameless other wild forbidden fruits, too fair for mortal taste. Instead of calling on some scholar, I paid many a visit to particular trees, of kinds which are rare in this neighborhood, standing far away in the middle of some pasture, or in the depths of a wood or swamp, or on a hilltop; such as the black birch, of which we have some handsome specimens two feet in diameter; its cousin, the yellow birch, with its loose golden vest, perfumed like the first; the beech, which has so neat a bole and beautifully lichen-painted, perfect in all its details, of which, excepting scattered specimens, I know but one small grove of sizable trees left in the township, supposed by some to have been planted by the pigeons that were once baited with beechnuts near by; it is worth the while to see the silver grain sparkle when you split this wood; the bass; the hornbeam; the *Celtis occidentalis*, or false elm, of which we have but one well-grown; some taller mast of a pine, a shingle tree, or a more perfect hemlock than usual, standing like a pagoda in the midst of the woods; and many others I could mention. These were the shrines I visited both summer and winter.

Once it chanced that I stood in the very abutment of a rainbow's arch, which filled the lower stratum of the atmosphere, tinging the

grass and leaves around, and dazzling me as if I looked through colored crystal. It was a lake of rainbow light, in which, for a short while, I lived like a dolphin. If it had lasted longer it might have tinged my employments and life. As I walked on the railroad causeway, I used to wonder at the halo of light around my shadow, and would fain fancy myself one of the elect. One who visited me declared that the shadows of some Irishmen before him had no halo about them, that it was only natives that were so distinguished. Benvenuto Cellini tells us in his memoirs, that, after a certain terrible dream or vision which he had during his confinement in the castle of St. Angelo a resplendent light appeared over the shadow of his head at morning and evening, whether he was in Italy or France, and it was particularly conspicuous when the grass was moist with dew. This was probably the same phenomenon to which I have referred, which is especially observed in the morning, but also at other times, and even by moonlight. Though a constant one, it is not commonly noticed, and, in the case of an excitable imagination like Cellini's, it would be basis enough for superstition. Beside, he tells us that he showed it to very few. But are they not indeed distinguished who are conscious that they are regarded at all?

I set out one afternoon to go a-fishing to Fair Haven, through the woods, to eke out my scanty fare of vegetables. My way led through Pleasant Meadow, an adjunct of the Baker Farm, that retreat of which a poet has since sung, beginning, —

> "Thy entry is a pleasant field,
> Which some mossy fruit trees yield
> Partly to a ruddy brook,
> By gliding musquash undertook,
> And mercurial trout,
> Darting about."

I thought of living there before I went to Walden. I "hooked" the apples, leaped the brook, and scared the musquash and the trout. It was one of those afternoons which seem indefinitely long before one, in which many events may happen, a large portion of our natural life,

though it was already half spent when I started. By the way there came up a shower, which compelled me to stand half an hour under a pine, piling boughs over my head, and wearing my handkerchief for a shed; and when at length I had made one cast over the pickerelweed, standing up to my middle in water, I found myself suddenly in the shadow of a cloud, and the thunder began to rumble with such emphasis that I could do no more than listen to it. The gods must be proud, thought I, with such forked flashes to rout a poor unarmed fisherman. So I made haste for shelter to the nearest hut, which stood half a mile from any road, but so much the nearer to the pond, and had long been uninhabited: —

"And here a poet builded,
In the completed years,
For behold a trivial cabin
That to destruction steers."

So the Muse fables. But therein, as I found, dwelt now John Field, an Irishman, and his wife, and several children, from the broad-faced boy who assisted his father at his work, and now came running by his side from the bog to escape the rain, to the wrinkled, sibyl-like, cone-headed infant that sat upon its father's knee as in the palaces of nobles, and looked out from its home in the midst of wet and hunger inquisitively upon the stranger, with the privilege of infancy, not knowing but it was the last of a noble line, and the hope and cynosure of the world, instead of John Field's poor starveling brat. There we sat together under that part of the roof which leaked the least, while it showered and thundered without. I had sat there many times of old before the ship was built that floated his family to America. An honest, hard-working, but shiftless man plainly was John Field; and his wife, she too was brave to cook so many successive dinners in the recesses of that lofty stove; with round greasy face and bare breast, still thinking to improve her condition one day; with the never absent mop in one hand, and yet no effects of it visible anywhere. The chickens, which had also taken shelter here from the rain, stalked about the room like members of the family, too humanized, methought, to roast well. They stood and looked in my

eye or pecked at my shoe significantly. Meanwhile my host told me his story, how hard he worked "bogging" for a neighboring farmer, turning up a meadow with a spade or bog hoe at the rate of ten dollars an acre and the use of the land with manure for one year, and his little broad-faced son worked cheerfully at his father's side the while, not knowing how poor a bargain the latter had made. I tried to help him with my experience, telling him that he was one of my nearest neighbors, and that I too, who came a-fishing here, and looked like a loafer, was getting my living like himself; that I lived in a tight, light, and clean house, which hardly cost more than the annual rent of such a ruin as his commonly amounts to; and how, if he chose, he might in a month or two build himself a palace of his own; that I did not use tea, nor coffee, nor butter, nor milk, nor fresh meat, and so did not have to work to get them; again, as I did not work hard, I did not have to eat hard, and it cost me but a trifle for my food; but as he began with tea, and coffee, and butter, and milk, and beef, he had to work hard to pay for them, and when he had worked hard he had to eat hard again to repair the waste of his system — and so it was as broad as it was long, indeed it was broader than it was long, for he was discontented and wasted his life into the bargain; and yet he had rated it as a gain in coming to America, that here you could get tea, and coffee, and meat every day. But the only true America is that country where you are at liberty to pursue such a mode of life as may enable you to do without these, and where the state does not endeavor to compel you to sustain the slavery and war and other superfluous expenses which directly or indirectly result from the use of such things. For I purposely talked to him as if he were a philosopher, or desired to be one. I should be glad if all the meadows on the earth were left in a wild state, if that were the consequence of men's beginning to redeem themselves. A man will not need to study history to find out what is best for his own culture. But alas! the culture of an Irishman is an enterprise to be undertaken with a sort of moral bog hoe. I told him, that as he worked so hard at bogging, he required thick boots and stout clothing, which yet were soon soiled and worn out, but I wore light shoes and thin clothing, which cost not half so much, though he might think that I was dressed like a gentleman (which, however,

was not the case), and in an hour or two, without labor, but as a recreation, I could, if I wished, catch as many fish as I should want for two days, or earn enough money to support me a week. If he and his family would live simply, they might all go a-huckleberrying in the summer for their amusement. John heaved a sigh at this, and his wife stared with arms a-kimbo, and both appeared to be wondering if they had capital enough to begin such a course with, or arithmetic enough to carry it through. It was sailing by dead reckoning to them, and they saw not clearly how to make their port so; therefore I suppose they still take life bravely, after their fashion, face to face, giving it tooth and nail, not having skill to split its massive columns with any fine entering wedge, and rout it in detail; — thinking to deal with it roughly, as one should handle a thistle. But they fight at an overwhelming disadvantage — living, John Field, alas! without arithmetic, and failing so.

"Do you ever fish?" I asked. "Oh yes, I catch a mess now and then when I am lying by; good perch I catch."— "What's your bait?" "I catch shiners with fishworms, and bait the perch with them." "You'd better go now, John," said his wife, with glistening and hopeful face; but John demurred.

The shower was now over, and a rainbow above the eastern woods promised a fair evening; so I took my departure. When I had got without I asked for a drink, hoping to get a sight of the well bottom, to complete my survey of the premises; but there, alas! are shallows and quicksands, and rope broken withal, and bucket irrecoverable. Meanwhile the right culinary vessel was selected, water was seemingly distilled, and after consultation and long delay passed out to the thirsty one — not yet suffered to cool, not yet to settle. Such gruel sustains life here, I thought; so, shutting my eyes, and excluding the motes by a skilfully directed undercurrent, I drank to genuine hospitality the heartiest draught I could. I am not squeamish in such cases when manners are concerned.

As I was leaving the Irishman's roof after the rain, bending my steps again to the pond, my haste to catch pickerel, wading in retired meadows, in sloughs and bog-holes, in forlorn and savage places, appeared for an instant trivial to me who had been sent to school and college; but as I ran down the hill toward the reddening west, with

the rainbow over my shoulder, and some faint tinkling sounds borne to my ear through the cleansed air, from I know not what quarter, my Good Genius seemed to say — Go fish and hunt far and wide day by day — farther and wider — and rest thee by many brooks and hearth-sides without misgiving. Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. Rise free from care before the dawn, and seek adventures. Let the noon find thee by other lakes, and the night overtake thee everywhere at home. There are no larger fields than these, no worthier games than may here be played. Grow wild according to thy nature, like these sedges and brakes, which will never become English bay. Let the thunder rumble; what if it threaten ruin to farmers' crops? That is not its errand to thee. Take shelter under the cloud, while they flee to carts and sheds. Let not to get a living be thy trade, but thy sport. Enjoy the land, but own it not. Through want of enterprise and faith men are where they are, buying and selling, and spending their lives like serfs.

O Baker Farm!
"Landscape where the richest element
Is a little sunshine innocent."...

"No one runs to revel
On thy rail-fenced lea."...

"Debate with no man hast thou,
With questions art never perplexed,
As tame at the first sight as now,
In thy plain russet gabardine dressed."...

"Come ye who love,
And ye who hate,
Children of the Holy Dove,
And Guy Faux of the state,
And hang conspiracies
From the tough rafters of the trees!"

Men come tamely home at night only from the next field or street,

where their household echoes haunt, and their life pines because it breathes its own breath over again; their shadows, morning and evening, reach farther than their daily steps. We should come home from far, from adventures, and perils, and discoveries every day, with new experience and character.

Before I had reached the pond some fresh impulse had brought out John Field, with altered mind, letting go "bogging" ere this sunset. But he, poor man, disturbed only a couple of fins while I was catching a fair string, and he said it was his luck; but when we changed seats in the boat luck changed seats too. Poor John Field! — I trust he does not read this, unless he will improve by it — thinking to live by some derivative old-country mode in this primitive new country — to catch perch with shiners. It is good bait sometimes, I allow. With his horizon all his own, yet he a poor man, born to be poor, with his inherited Irish poverty or poor life, his Adam's grandmother and boggy ways, not to rise in this world, he nor his posterity, till their wading webbed bog-trotting feet get *talaria* to their heels.

Higher Laws

As I came home through the woods with my string of fish, trailing my pole, it being now quite dark, I caught a glimpse of a woodchuck stealing across my path, and felt a strange thrill of savage delight, and was strongly tempted to seize and devour him raw; not that I was hungry then, except for that wildness which he represented. Once or twice, however, while I lived at the pond, I found myself ranging the woods, like a half-starved hound, with a strange abandonment, seeking some kind of venison which I might devour, and no morsel could have been too savage for me. The wildest scenes had become unaccountably familiar. I found in myself, and still find, an instinct toward a higher, or, as it is named, spiritual life, as do most men, and another toward a primitive rank and savage one, and I reverence them both. I love the wild not less than the good. The wildness and adventure that are in fishing still recommended it to me. I like sometimes to take rank hold on life and spend my day more as the animals do. Perhaps I have owed to this employment and to hunting, when quite young, my closest acquaintance with Nature. They early introduce us to and detain us in scenery with which otherwise, at that age, we should have little acquaintance. Fishermen, hunters, woodchoppers, and others, spending their lives in the fields and woods, in a peculiar sense a part of Nature themselves, are often in a more favorable mood for observing her, in the intervals of their pursuits, than philosophers or poets even, who approach her with expectation. She is not afraid to exhibit herself to them. The traveller on the prairie is naturally a hunter, on the head waters of the Missouri and Columbia a trapper, and at the Falls of St. Mary a fisherman. He who is only a traveller learns things at second-hand and by the halves, and is poor authority. We are most interested when science reports what those men already know practically or instinctively, for that alone is a true *humanity*, or account of human experience.

They mistake who assert that the Yankee has few amusements, because he has not so many public holidays, and men and boys do not play so many games as they do in England, for here the more

primitive but solitary amusements of hunting, fishing, and the like have not yet given place to the former. Almost every New England boy among my contemporaries shouldered a fowling-piece between the ages of ten and fourteen; and his hunting and fishing grounds were not limited, like the preserves of an English nobleman, but were more boundless even than those of a savage. No wonder, then, that he did not oftener stay to play on the common. But already a change is taking place, owing, not to an increased humanity, but to an increased scarcity of game, for perhaps the hunter is the greatest friend of the animals hunted, not excepting the Humane Society.

Moreover, when at the pond, I wished sometimes to add fish to my fare for variety. I have actually fished from the same kind of necessity that the first fishers did. Whatever humanity I might conjure up against it was all factitious, and concerned my philosophy more than my feelings. I speak of fishing only now, for I had long felt differently about fowling, and sold my gun before I went to the woods. Not that I am less humane than others, but I did not perceive that my feelings were much affected. I did not pity the fishes nor the worms. This was habit. As for fowling, during the last years that I carried a gun my excuse was that I was studying ornithology, and sought only new or rare birds. But I confess that I am now inclined to think that there is a finer way of studying ornithology than this. It requires so much closer attention to the habits of the birds, that, if for that reason only, I have been willing to omit the gun. Yet notwithstanding the objection on the score of humanity, I am compelled to doubt if equally valuable sports are ever substituted for these; and when some of my friends have asked me anxiously about their boys, whether they should let them hunt, I have answered, yes — remembering that it was one of the best parts of my education — *make* them hunters, though sportsmen only at first, if possible, mighty hunters at last, so that they shall not find game large enough for them in this or any vegetable wilderness — hunters as well as fishers of men. Thus far I am of the opinion of Chaucer's nun, who

> "yave not of the text a pulled hen
> That saith that hunters ben not holy men."

There is a period in the history of the individual, as of the race, when the hunters are the "best men," as the Algonquins called them.

We cannot but pity the boy who has never fired a gun; he is no more humane, while his education has been sadly neglected. This was my answer with respect to those youths who were bent on this pursuit, trusting that they would soon outgrow it. No humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature which holds its life by the same tenure that he does. The hare in its extremity cries like a child. I warn you, mothers, that my sympathies do not always make the usual phil-*anthropic* distinctions.

Such is oftenest the young man's introduction to the forest, and the most original part of himself. He goes thither at first as a hunter and fisher, until at last, if he has the seeds of a better life in him, he distinguishes his proper objects, as a poet or naturalist it may be, and leaves the gun and fish-pole behind. The mass of men are still and always young in this respect. In some countries a hunting parson is no uncommon sight. Such a one might make a good shepherd's dog, but is far from being the Good Shepherd. I have been surprised to consider that the only obvious employment, except wood-chopping, ice-cutting, or the like business, which ever to my knowledge detained at Walden Pond for a whole half-day any of my fellow-citizens, whether fathers or children of the town, with just one exception, was fishing. Commonly they did not think that they were lucky, or well paid for their time, unless they got a long string of fish, though they had the opportunity of seeing the pond all the while. They might go there a thousand times before the sediment of fishing would sink to the bottom and leave their purpose pure; but no doubt such a clarifying process would be going on all the while. The Governor and his Council faintly remember the pond, for they went a-fishing there when they were boys; but now they are too old and dignified to go a-fishing, and so they know it no more forever. Yet even they expect to go to heaven at last. If the legislature regards it, it is chiefly to regulate the number of hooks to be used there; but they know nothing about the hook of hooks with which to angle for the pond itself, impaling the legislature for a bait. Thus, even in civilized communities, the embryo man passes through the hunter stage of development.

I have found repeatedly, of late years, that I cannot fish without falling a little in self-respect. I have tried it again and again. I have

skill at it, and, like many of my fellows, a certain instinct for it, which revives from time to time, but always when I have done I feel that it would have been better if I had not fished. I think that I do not mistake. It is a faint intimation, yet so are the first streaks of morning. There is unquestionably this instinct in me which belongs to the lower orders of creation; yet with every year I am less a fisherman, though without more humanity or even wisdom; at present I am no fisherman at all. But I see that if I were to live in a wilderness I should again be tempted to become a fisher and hunter in earnest. Beside, there is something essentially unclean about this diet and all flesh, and I began to see where housework commences, and whence the endeavor, which costs so much, to wear a tidy and respectable appearance each day, to keep the house sweet and free from all ill odors and sights. Having been my own butcher and scullion and cook, as well as the gentleman for whom the dishes were served up, I can speak from an unusually complete experience. The practical objection to animal food in my case was its uncleanness; and besides, when I had caught and cleaned and cooked and eaten my fish, they seemed not to have fed me essentially. It was insignificant and unnecessary, and cost more than it came to. A little bread or a few potatoes would have done as well, with less trouble and filth. Like many of my contemporaries, I had rarely for many years used animal food, or tea, or coffee, etc.; not so much because of any ill effects which I had traced to them, as because they were not agreeable to my imagination. The repugnance to animal food is not the effect of experience, but is an instinct. It appeared more beautiful to live low and fare hard in many respects; and though I never did so, I went far enough to please my imagination. I believe that every man who has ever been earnest to preserve his higher or poetic faculties in the best condition has been particularly inclined to abstain from animal food, and from much food of any kind. It is a significant fact, stated by entomologists — I find it in Kirby and Spence — that "some insects in their perfect state, though furnished with organs of feeding, make no use of them"; and they lay it down as "a general rule, that almost all insects in this state eat much less than in that of larvæ. The voracious caterpillar when transformed into a butterfly... and the gluttonous maggot when become a fly" content themselves

with a drop or two of honey or some other sweet liquid. The abdomen under the wings of the butterfly still represents the larva. This is the tidbit which tempts his insectivorous fate. The gross feeder is a man in the larva state; and there are whole nations in that condition, nations without fancy or imagination, whose vast abdomens betray them.

It is hard to provide and cook so simple and clean a diet as will not offend the imagination; but this, I think, is to be fed when we feed the body; they should both sit down at the same table. Yet perhaps this may be done. The fruits eaten temperately need not make us ashamed of our appetites, nor interrupt the worthiest pursuits. But put an extra condiment into your dish, and it will poison you. It is not worth the while to live by rich cookery. Most men would feel shame if caught preparing with their own hands precisely such a dinner, whether of animal or vegetable food, as is every day prepared for them by others. Yet till this is otherwise we are not civilized, and, if gentlemen and ladies, are not true men and women. This certainly suggests what change is to be made. It may be vain to ask why the imagination will not be reconciled to flesh and fat. I am satisfied that it is not. Is it not a reproach that man is a carnivorous animal? True, he can and does live, in a great measure, by preying on other animals; but this is a miserable way — as any one who will go to snaring rabbits, or slaughtering lambs, may learn — and he will be regarded as a benefactor of his race who shall teach man to confine himself to a more innocent and wholesome diet. Whatever my own practice may be, I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals, as surely as the savage tribes have left off eating each other when they came in contact with the more civilized.

If one listens to the faintest but constant suggestions of his genius, which are certainly true, he sees not to what extremes, or even insanity, it may lead him; and yet that way, as he grows more resolute and faithful, his road lies. The faintest assured objection which one healthy man feels will at length prevail over the arguments and customs of mankind. No man ever followed his genius till it misled him. Though the result were bodily weakness, yet perhaps no one can say that the consequences were to be

regretted, for these were a life in conformity to higher principles. If the day and the night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, is more elastic, more starry, more immortal — that is your success. All nature is your congratulation, and you have cause momentarily to bless yourself. The greatest gains and values are farthest from being appreciated. We easily come to doubt if they exist. We soon forget them. They are the highest reality. Perhaps the facts most astounding and most real are never communicated by man to man. The true harvest of my daily life is somewhat as intangible and indescribable as the tints of morning or evening. It is a little star-dust caught, a segment of the rainbow which I have clutched.

Yet, for my part, I was never unusually squeamish; I could sometimes eat a fried rat with a good relish, if it were necessary. I am glad to have drunk water so long, for the same reason that I prefer the natural sky to an opium-eater's heaven. I would fain keep sober always; and there are infinite degrees of drunkenness. I believe that water is the only drink for a wise man; wine is not so noble a liquor; and think of dashing the hopes of a morning with a cup of warm coffee, or of an evening with a dish of tea! Ah, how low I fall when I am tempted by them! Even music may be intoxicating. Such apparently slight causes destroyed Greece and Rome, and will destroy England and America. Of all ebriosity, who does not prefer to be intoxicated by the air he breathes? I have found it to be the most serious objection to coarse labors long continued, that they compelled me to eat and drink coarsely also. But to tell the truth, I find myself at present somewhat less particular in these respects. I carry less religion to the table, ask no blessing; not because I am wiser than I was, but, I am obliged to confess, because, however much it is to be regretted, with years I have grown more coarse and indifferent. Perhaps these questions are entertained only in youth, as most believe of poetry. My practice is "nowhere," my opinion is here. Nevertheless I am far from regarding myself as one of those privileged ones to whom the Ved refers when it says, that "he who has true faith in the Omnipresent Supreme Being may eat all that exists," that is, is not bound to inquire what is his food, or who prepares it; and even in their case it is to be observed, as a Hindoo

commentator has remarked, that the Vedant limits this privilege to "the time of distress."

Who has not sometimes derived an inexpressible satisfaction from his food in which appetite had no share? I have been thrilled to think that I owed a mental perception to the commonly gross sense of taste, that I have been inspired through the palate, that some berries which I had eaten on a hillside had fed my genius. "The soul not being mistress of herself," says Thseng-tseu, "one looks, and one does not see; one listens, and one does not hear; one eats, and one does not know the savor of food." He who distinguishes the true savor of his food can never be a glutton; he who does not cannot be otherwise. A puritan may go to his brown-bread crust with as gross an appetite as ever an alderman to his turtle. Not that food which entereth into the mouth defileth a man, but the appetite with which it is eaten. It is neither the quality nor the quantity, but the devotion to sensual savors; when that which is eaten is not a viand to sustain our animal, or inspire our spiritual life, but food for the worms that possess us. If the hunter has a taste for mud-turtles, muskrats, and other such savage tidbits, the fine lady indulges a taste for jelly made of a calf's foot, or for sardines from over the sea, and they are even. He goes to the mill-pond, she to her preserve-pot. The wonder is how they, how you and I, can live this slimy, beastly life, eating and drinking.

Our whole life is startlingly moral. There is never an instant's truce between virtue and vice. Goodness is the only investment that never fails. In the music of the harp which trembles round the world it is the insisting on this which thrills us. The harp is the travelling patterer for the Universe's Insurance Company, recommending its laws, and our little goodness is all the assessment that we pay. Though the youth at last grows indifferent, the laws of the universe are not indifferent, but are forever on the side of the most sensitive. Listen to every zephyr for some reproof, for it is surely there, and he is unfortunate who does not hear it. We cannot touch a string or move a stop but the charming moral transfixes us. Many an irksome noise, go a long way off, is heard as music, a proud, sweet satire on the meanness of our lives.

We are conscious of an animal in us, which awakens in proportion

as our higher nature slumbers. It is reptile and sensual, and perhaps cannot be wholly expelled; like the worms which, even in life and health, occupy our bodies. Possibly we may withdraw from it, but never change its nature. I fear that it may enjoy a certain health of its own; that we may be well, yet not pure. The other day I picked up the lower jaw of a hog, with white and sound teeth and tusks, which suggested that there was an animal health and vigor distinct from the spiritual. This creature succeeded by other means than temperance and purity. "That in which men differ from brute beasts," says Mencius, "is a thing very inconsiderable; the common herd lose it very soon; superior men preserve it carefully." Who knows what sort of life would result if we had attained to purity? If I knew so wise a man as could teach me purity I would go to seek him forthwith. "A command over our passions, and over the external senses of the body, and good acts, are declared by the Ved to be indispensable in the mind's approximation to God." Yet the spirit can for the time pervade and control every member and function of the body, and transmute what in form is the grossest sensuality into purity and devotion. The generative energy, which, when we are loose, dissipates and makes us unclean, when we are continent invigorates and inspires us. Chastity is the flowering of man; and what are called Genius, Heroism, Holiness, and the like, are but various fruits which succeed it. Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open. By turns our purity inspires and our impurity casts us down. He is blessed who is assured that the animal is dying out in him day by day, and the divine being established. Perhaps there is none but has cause for shame on account of the inferior and brutish nature to which he is allied. I fear that we are such gods or demigods only as fauns and satyrs, the divine allied to beasts, the creatures of appetite, and that, to some extent, our very life is our disgrace. —

"How happy's he who hath due place assigned
To his beasts and disafforested his mind!
. . . . . .
Can use this horse, goat, wolf, and ev'ry beast,
And is not ass himself to all the rest!
Else man not only is the herd of swine,

But he's those devils too which did incline
Them to a headlong rage, and made them worse."

All sensuality is one, though it takes many forms; all purity is one. It is the same whether a man eat, or drink, or cohabit, or sleep sensually. They are but one appetite, and we only need to see a person do any one of these things to know how great a sensualist he is. The impure can neither stand nor sit with purity. When the reptile is attacked at one mouth of his burrow, he shows himself at another. If you would be chaste, you must be temperate. What is chastity? How shall a man know if he is chaste? He shall not know it. We have heard of this virtue, but we know not what it is. We speak conformably to the rumor which we have heard. From exertion come wisdom and purity; from sloth ignorance and sensuality. In the student sensuality is a sluggish habit of mind. An unclean person is universally a slothful one, one who sits by a stove, whom the sun shines on prostrate, who reposes without being fatigued. If you would avoid uncleanness, and all the sins, work earnestly, though it be at cleaning a stable. Nature is hard to be overcome, but she must be overcome. What avails it that you are Christian, if you are not purer than the heathen, if you deny yourself no more, if you are not more religious? I know of many systems of religion esteemed heathenish whose precepts fill the reader with shame, and provoke him to new endeavors, though it be to the performance of rites merely.

I hesitate to say these things, but it is not because of the subject — I care not how obscene my *words* are — but because I cannot speak of them without betraying my impurity. We discourse freely without shame of one form of sensuality, and are silent about another. We are so degraded that we cannot speak simply of the necessary functions of human nature. In earlier ages, in some countries, every function was reverently spoken of and regulated by law. Nothing was too trivial for the Hindoo lawgiver, however offensive it may be to modern taste. He teaches how to eat, drink, cohabit, void excrement and urine, and the like, elevating what is mean, and does not falsely excuse himself by calling these things trifles.

Every man is the builder of a temple, called his body, to the god

he worships, after a style purely his own, nor can he get off by hammering marble instead. We are all sculptors and painters, and our material is our own flesh and blood and bones. Any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features, any meanness or sensuality to imbrute them.

John Farmer sat at his door one September evening, after a hard day's work, his mind still running on his labor more or less. Having bathed, he sat down to re-create his intellectual man. It was a rather cool evening, and some of his neighbors were apprehending a frost. He had not attended to the train of his thoughts long when he heard some one playing on a flute, and that sound harmonized with his mood. Still he thought of his work; but the burden of his thought was, that though this kept running in his head, and he found himself planning and contriving it against his will, yet it concerned him very little. It was no more than the scurf of his skin, which was constantly shuffled off. But the notes of the flute came home to his ears out of a different sphere from that he worked in, and suggested work for certain faculties which slumbered in him. They gently did away with the street, and the village, and the state in which he lived. A voice said to him — Why do you stay here and live this mean moiling life, when a glorious existence is possible for you? Those same stars twinkle over other fields than these. — But how to come out of this condition and actually migrate thither? All that he could think of was to practise some new austerity, to let his mind descend into his body and redeem it, and treat himself with ever increasing respect.

Brute Neighbors

Sometimes I had a companion in my fishing, who came through the village to my house from the other side of the town, and the catching of the dinner was as much a social exercise as the eating of it.

Hermit. I wonder what the world is doing now. I have not heard so much as a locust over the sweet-fern these three hours. The pigeons are all asleep upon their roosts — no flutter from them. Was that a farmer's noon horn which sounded from beyond the woods just now? The hands are coming in to boiled salt beef and cider and Indian bread. Why will men worry themselves so? He that does not eat need not work. I wonder how much they have reaped. Who would live there where a body can never think for the barking of Bose? And oh, the housekeeping! to keep bright the devil's door-knobs, and scour his tubs this bright day! Better not keep a house. Say, some hollow tree; and then for morning calls and dinner-parties! Only a woodpecker tapping. Oh, they swarm; the sun is too warm there; they are born too far into life for me. I have water from the spring, and a loaf of brown bread on the shelf. — Hark! I hear a rustling of the leaves. Is it some ill-fed village hound yielding to the instinct of the chase? or the lost pig which is said to be in these woods, whose tracks I saw after the rain? It comes on apace; my sumachs and sweetbriers tremble. — Eh, Mr. Poet, is it you? How do you like the world to-day?

Poet. See those clouds; how they hang! That's the greatest thing I have seen to-day. There's nothing like it in old paintings, nothing like it in foreign lands — unless when we were off the coast of Spain. That's a true Mediterranean sky. I thought, as I have my living to get, and have not eaten to-day, that I might go a-fishing. That's the true industry for poets. It is the only trade I have learned. Come, let's along.

Hermit. I cannot resist. My brown bread will soon be gone. I will go with you gladly soon, but I am just concluding a serious meditation. I think that I am near the end of it. Leave me alone, then, for a while. But that we may not be delayed, you shall be digging the bait meanwhile. Angleworms are rarely to be met with in these parts,

where the soil was never fattened with manure; the race is nearly extinct. The sport of digging the bait is nearly equal to that of catching the fish, when one's appetite is not too keen; and this you may have all to yourself today. I would advise you to set in the spade down yonder among the ground-nuts, where you see the johnswort waving. I think that I may warrant you one worm to every three sods you turn up, if you look well in among the roots of the grass, as if you were weeding. Or, if you choose to go farther, it will not be unwise, for I have found the increase of fair bait to be very nearly as the squares of the distances.

Hermit alone. Let me see; where was I? Methinks I was nearly in this frame of mind; the world lay about at this angle. Shall I go to heaven or a-fishing? If I should soon bring this meditation to an end, would another so sweet occasion be likely to offer? I was as near being resolved into the essence of things as ever I was in my life. I fear my thoughts will not come back to me. If it would do any good, I would whistle for them. When they make us an offer, is it wise to say, We will think of it? My thoughts have left no track, and I cannot find the path again. What was it that I was thinking of? It was a very hazy day. I will just try these three sentences of Confut-see; they may fetch that state about again. I know not whether it was the dumps or a budding ecstasy. Mem. There never is but one opportunity of a kind.

Poet. How now, Hermit, is it too soon? I have got just thirteen whole ones, beside several which are imperfect or undersized; but they will do for the smaller fry; they do not cover up the hook so much. Those village worms are quite too large; a shiner may make a meal off one without finding the skewer.

Hermit. Well, then, let's be off. Shall we to the Concord? There's good sport there if the water be not too high.

Why do precisely these objects which we behold make a world? Why has man just these species of animals for his neighbors; as if nothing but a mouse could have filled this crevice? I suspect that Pilpay & Co. have put animals to their best use, for they are all beasts of burden, in a sense, made to carry some portion of our thoughts.

The mice which haunted my house were not the common ones,

which are said to have been introduced into the country, but a wild native kind not found in the village. I sent one to a distinguished naturalist, and it interested him much. When I was building, one of these had its nest underneath the house, and before I had laid the second floor, and swept out the shavings, would come out regularly at lunch time and pick up the crumbs at my feet. It probably had never seen a man before; and it soon became quite familiar, and would run over my shoes and up my clothes. It could readily ascend the sides of the room by short impulses, like a squirrel, which it resembled in its motions. At length, as I leaned with my elbow on the bench one day, it ran up my clothes, and along my sleeve, and round and round the paper which held my dinner, while I kept the latter close, and dodged and played at bopeep with it; and when at last I held still a piece of cheese between my thumb and finger, it came and nibbled it, sitting in my hand, and afterward cleaned its face and paws, like a fly, and walked away.

A phœbe soon built in my shed, and a robin for protection in a pine which grew against the house. In June the partridge (*Tetrao umbellus*), which is so shy a bird, led her brood past my windows, from the woods in the rear to the front of my house, clucking and calling to them like a hen, and in all her behavior proving herself the hen of the woods. The young suddenly disperse on your approach, at a signal from the mother, as if a whirlwind had swept them away, and they so exactly resemble the dried leaves and twigs that many a traveler has placed his foot in the midst of a brood, and heard the whir of the old bird as she flew off, and her anxious calls and mewing, or seen her trail her wings to attract his attention, without suspecting their neighborhood. The parent will sometimes roll and spin round before you in such a dishabille, that you cannot, for a few moments, detect what kind of creature it is. The young squat still and flat, often running their heads under a leaf, and mind only their mother's directions given from a distance, nor will your approach make them run again and betray themselves. You may even tread on them, or have your eyes on them for a minute, without discovering them. I have held them in my open hand at such a time, and still their only care, obedient to their mother and their instinct, was to squat there without fear or trembling. So perfect is this instinct, that once,

when I had laid them on the leaves again, and one accidentally fell on its side, it was found with the rest in exactly the same position ten minutes afterward. They are not callow like the young of most birds, but more perfectly developed and precocious even than chickens. The remarkably adult yet innocent expression of their open and serene eyes is very memorable. All intelligence seems reflected in them. They suggest not merely the purity of infancy, but a wisdom clarified by experience. Such an eye was not born when the bird was, but is coeval with the sky it reflects. The woods do not yield another such a gem. The traveller does not often look into such a limpid well. The ignorant or reckless sportsman often shoots the parent at such a time, and leaves these innocents to fall a prey to some prowling beast or bird, or gradually mingle with the decaying leaves which they so much resemble. It is said that when hatched by a hen they will directly disperse on some alarm, and so are lost, for they never hear the mother's call which gathers them again. These were my hens and chickens.

It is remarkable how many creatures live wild and free though secret in the woods, and still sustain themselves in the neighborhood of towns, suspected by hunters only. How retired the otter manages to live here! He grows to be four feet long, as big as a small boy, perhaps without any human being getting a glimpse of him. I formerly saw the raccoon in the woods behind where my house is built, and probably still heard their whinnering at night. Commonly I rested an hour or two in the shade at noon, after planting, and ate my lunch, and read a little by a spring which was the source of a swamp and of a brook, oozing from under Brister's Hill, half a mile from my field. The approach to this was through a succession of descending grassy hollows, full of young pitch pines, into a larger wood about the swamp. There, in a very secluded and shaded spot, under a spreading white pine, there was yet a clean, firm sward to sit on. I had dug out the spring and made a well of clear gray water, where I could dip up a pailful without roiling it, and thither I went for this purpose almost every day in midsummer, when the pond was warmest. Thither, too, the woodcock led her brood, to probe the mud for worms, flying but a foot above them down the bank, while they ran in a troop beneath; but at last, spying me, she would leave her

young and circle round and round me, nearer and nearer till within four or five feet, pretending broken wings and legs, to attract my attention, and get off her young, who would already have taken up their march, with faint, wiry peep, single file through the swamp, as she directed. Or I heard the peep of the young when I could not see the parent bird. There too the turtle doves sat over the spring, or fluttered from bough to bough of the soft white pines over my head; or the red squirrel, coursing down the nearest bough, was particularly familiar and inquisitive. You only need sit still long enough in some attractive spot in the woods that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns.

I was witness to events of a less peaceful character. One day when I went out to my wood-pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long, and black, fiercely contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum*, but a *bellum*, a war between two races of ants, the red always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black. The legions of these Myrmidons covered all the hills and vales in my wood-yard, and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was the only battle which I have ever witnessed, the only battle-field I ever trod while the battle was raging; internecine war; the red republicans on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat, yet without any noise that I could hear, and human soldiers never fought so resolutely. I watched a couple that were fast locked in each other's embraces, in a little sunny valley amid the chips, now at noonday prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went out. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vice to his adversary's front, and through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board; while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side, and, as I saw on looking nearer, had already divested him of several of his members. They fought with more pertinacity than bulldogs. Neither manifested

the least disposition to retreat. It was evident that their battle-cry was "Conquer or die." In the meanwhile there came along a single red ant on the hillside of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had despatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs; whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. Or perchance he was some Achilles, who had nourished his wrath apart, and had now come to avenge or rescue his Patroclus. He saw this unequal combat from afar — for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the red — he drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants; then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior, and commenced his operations near the root of his right fore leg, leaving the foe to select among his own members; and so there were three united for life, as if a new kind of attraction had been invented which put all other locks and cements to shame. I should not have wondered by this time to find that they had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and playing their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants. I was myself excited somewhat even as if they had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference. And certainly there is not the fight recorded in Concord history, at least, if in the history of America, that will bear a moment's comparison with this, whether for the numbers engaged in it, or for the patriotism and heroism displayed. For numbers and for carnage it was an Austerlitz or Dresden. Concord Fight! Two killed on the patriots' side, and Luther Blanchard wounded! Why here every ant was a Buttrick— "Fire! for God's sake fire!" — and thousands shared the fate of Davis and Hosmer. There was not one hireling there. I have no doubt that it was a principle they fought for, as much as our ancestors, and not to avoid a three-penny tax on their tea; and the results of this battle will be as important and memorable to those whom it concerns as those of the battle of Bunker Hill, at least.

I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window-sill, in order to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously gnawing at the near fore leg of his enemy, having

severed his remaining feeler, his own breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breastplate was apparently too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite. They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddle-bow, still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished. I raised the glass, and he went off over the window-sill in that crippled state. Whether he finally survived that combat, and spent the remainder of his days in some Hotel des Invalides, I do not know; but I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter. I never learned which party was victorious, nor the cause of the war; but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door.

Kirby and Spence tell us that the battles of ants have long been celebrated and the date of them recorded, though they say that Huber is the only modern author who appears to have witnessed them. "Æneas Sylvius," say they, "after giving a very circumstantial account of one contested with great obstinacy by a great and small species on the trunk of a pear tree," adds that "this action was fought in the pontificate of Eugenius the Fourth, in the presence of Nicholas Pistoriensis, an eminent lawyer, who related the whole history of the battle with the greatest fidelity." A similar engagement between great and small ants is recorded by Olaus Magnus, in which the small ones, being victorious, are said to have buried the bodies of their own soldiers, but left those of their giant enemies a prey to the birds. This event happened previous to the expulsion of the tyrant Christiern the Second from Sweden. The battle which I witnessed took place in the Presidency of Polk, five years before the passage of Webster's Fugitive-Slave Bill.

Many a village Bose, fit only to course a mud-turtle in a

victualling cellar, sported his heavy quarters in the woods, without the knowledge of his master, and ineffectually smelled at old fox burrows and woodchucks' holes; led perchance by some slight cur which nimbly threaded the wood, and might still inspire a natural terror in its denizens; — now far behind his guide, barking like a canine bull toward some small squirrel which had treed itself for scrutiny, then, cantering off, bending the bushes with his weight, imagining that he is on the track of some stray member of the jerbilla family. Once I was surprised to see a cat walking along the stony shore of the pond, for they rarely wander so far from home. The surprise was mutual. Nevertheless the most domestic cat, which has lain on a rug all her days, appears quite at home in the woods, and, by her sly and stealthy behavior, proves herself more native there than the regular inhabitants. Once, when berrying, I met with a cat with young kittens in the woods, quite wild, and they all, like their mother, had their backs up and were fiercely spitting at me. A few years before I lived in the woods there was what was called a "winged cat" in one of the farm-houses in Lincoln nearest the pond, Mr. Gilian Baker's. When I called to see her in June, 1842, she was gone a-hunting in the woods, as was her wont (I am not sure whether it was a male or female, and so use the more common pronoun), but her mistress told me that she came into the neighborhood a little more than a year before, in April, and was finally taken into their house; that she was of a dark brownish-gray color, with a white spot on her throat, and white feet, and had a large bushy tail like a fox; that in the winter the fur grew thick and flatted out along her sides, forming stripes ten or twelve inches long by two and a half wide, and under her chin like a muff, the upper side loose, the under matted like felt, and in the spring these appendages dropped off. They gave me a pair of her "wings," which I keep still. There is no appearance of a membrane about them. Some thought it was part flying squirrel or some other wild animal, which is not impossible, for, according to naturalists, prolific hybrids have been produced by the union of the marten and domestic cat. This would have been the right kind of cat for me to keep, if I had kept any; for why should not a poet's cat be winged as well as his horse?

In the fall the loon (*Colymbus glacialis*) came, as usual, to moult

and bathe in the pond, making the woods ring with his wild laughter before I had risen. At rumor of his arrival all the Mill-dam sportsmen are on the alert, in gigs and on foot, two by two and three by three, with patent rifles and conical balls and spy-glasses. They come rustling through the woods like autumn leaves, at least ten men to one loon. Some station themselves on this side of the pond, some on that, for the poor bird cannot be omnipresent; if he dive here he must come up there. But now the kind October wind rises, rustling the leaves and rippling the surface of the water, so that no loon can be heard or seen, though his foes sweep the pond with spy-glasses, and make the woods resound with their discharges. The waves generously rise and dash angrily, taking sides with all water-fowl, and our sportsmen must beat a retreat to town and shop and unfinished jobs. But they were too often successful. When I went to get a pail of water early in the morning I frequently saw this stately bird sailing out of my cove within a few rods. If I endeavored to overtake him in a boat, in order to see how he would manoeuvre, he would dive and be completely lost, so that I did not discover him again, sometimes, till the latter part of the day. But I was more than a match for him on the surface. He commonly went off in a rain.

As I was paddling along the north shore one very calm October afternoon, for such days especially they settle on to the lakes, like the milkweed down, having looked in vain over the pond for a loon, suddenly one, sailing out from the shore toward the middle a few rods in front of me, set up his wild laugh and betrayed himself. I pursued with a paddle and he dived, but when he came up I was nearer than before. He dived again, but I miscalculated the direction he would take, and we were fifty rods apart when he came to the surface this time, for I had helped to widen the interval; and again he laughed long and loud, and with more reason than before. He manoeuvred so cunningly that I could not get within half a dozen rods of him. Each time, when he came to the surface, turning his head this way and that, he cooly surveyed the water and the land, and apparently chose his course so that he might come up where there was the widest expanse of water and at the greatest distance from the boat. It was surprising how quickly he made up his mind and put his resolve into execution. He led me at once to the widest part of the

pond, and could not be driven from it. While he was thinking one thing in his brain, I was endeavoring to divine his thought in mine. It was a pretty game, played on the smooth surface of the pond, a man against a loon. Suddenly your adversary's checker disappears beneath the board, and the problem is to place yours nearest to where his will appear again. Sometimes he would come up unexpectedly on the opposite side of me, having apparently passed directly under the boat. So long-winded was he and so unweariable, that when he had swum farthest he would immediately plunge again, nevertheless; and then no wit could divine where in the deep pond, beneath the smooth surface, he might be speeding his way like a fish, for he had time and ability to visit the bottom of the pond in its deepest part. It is said that loons have been caught in the New York lakes eighty feet beneath the surface, with hooks set for trout — though Walden is deeper than that. How surprised must the fishes be to see this ungainly visitor from another sphere speeding his way amid their schools! Yet he appeared to know his course as surely under water as on the surface, and swam much faster there. Once or twice I saw a ripple where he approached the surface, just put his head out to reconnoitre, and instantly dived again. I found that it was as well for me to rest on my oars and wait his reappearing as to endeavor to calculate where he would rise; for again and again, when I was straining my eyes over the surface one way, I would suddenly be startled by his unearthly laugh behind me. But why, after displaying so much cunning, did he invariably betray himself the moment he came up by that loud laugh? Did not his white breast enough betray him? He was indeed a silly loon, I thought. I could commonly hear the splash of the water when he came up, and so also detected him. But after an hour he seemed as fresh as ever, dived as willingly, and swam yet farther than at first. It was surprising to see how serenely he sailed off with unruffled breast when he came to the surface, doing all the work with his webbed feet beneath. His usual note was this demoniac laughter, yet somewhat like that of a water-fowl; but occasionally, when he had balked me most successfully and come up a long way off, he uttered a long-drawn unearthly howl, probably more like that of a wolf than any bird; as when a beast puts his muzzle to the ground and deliberately howls. This was his looning — perhaps the wildest sound that is ever

heard here, making the woods ring far and wide. I concluded that he laughed in derision of my efforts, confident of his own resources. Though the sky was by this time overcast, the pond was so smooth that I could see where he broke the surface when I did not hear him. His white breast, the stillness of the air, and the smoothness of the water were all against him. At length having come up fifty rods off, he uttered one of those prolonged howls, as if calling on the god of loons to aid him, and immediately there came a wind from the east and rippled the surface, and filled the whole air with misty rain, and I was impressed as if it were the prayer of the loon answered, and his god was angry with me; and so I left him disappearing far away on the tumultuous surface.

For hours, in fall days, I watched the ducks cunningly tack and veer and hold the middle of the pond, far from the sportsman; tricks which they will have less need to practise in Louisiana bayous. When compelled to rise they would sometimes circle round and round and over the pond at a considerable height, from which they could easily see to other ponds and the river, like black motes in the sky; and, when I thought they had gone off thither long since, they would settle down by a slanting flight of a quarter of a mile on to a distant part which was left free; but what beside safety they got by sailing in the middle of Walden I do not know, unless they love its water for the same reason that I do.

House-Warming

In October I went a-graping to the river meadows, and loaded myself with clusters more precious for their beauty and fragrance than for food. There, too, I admired, though I did not gather, the cranberries, small waxen gems, pendants of the meadow grass, pearly and red, which the farmer plucks with an ugly rake, leaving the smooth meadow in a snarl, heedlessly measuring them by the bushel and the dollar only, and sells the spoils of the meads to Boston and New York; destined to be *jammed*, to satisfy the tastes of lovers of Nature there. So butchers rake the tongues of bison out of the prairie grass, regardless of the torn and drooping plant. The barberry's brilliant fruit was likewise food for my eyes merely; but I collected a small store of wild apples for coddling, which the proprietor and travellers had overlooked. When chestnuts were ripe I laid up half a bushel for winter. It was very exciting at that season to roam the then boundless chestnut woods of Lincoln — they now sleep their long sleep under the railroad — with a bag on my shoulder, and a stick to open burs with in my hand, for I did not always wait for the frost, amid the rustling of leaves and the loud reproofs of the red squirrels and the jays, whose half-consumed nuts I sometimes stole, for the burs which they had selected were sure to contain sound ones. Occasionally I climbed and shook the trees. They grew also behind my house, and one large tree, which almost overshadowed it, was, when in flower, a bouquet which scented the whole neighborhood, but the squirrels and the jays got most of its fruit; the last coming in flocks early in the morning and picking the nuts out of the burs before they fell, I relinquished these trees to them and visited the more distant woods composed wholly of chestnut. These nuts, as far as they went, were a good substitute for bread. Many other substitutes might, perhaps, be found. Digging one day for fishworms, I discovered the ground-nut (*Apios tuberosa*) on its string, the potato of the aborigines, a sort of fabulous fruit, which I had begun to doubt if I had ever dug and eaten in childhood, as I had told, and had not dreamed it. I had often since seen its crumpled red velvety blossom supported by the stems of other plants without knowing it to be the same. Cultivation has well-

nigh exterminated it. It has a sweetish taste, much like that of a frost-bitten potato, and I found it better boiled than roasted. This tuber seemed like a faint promise of Nature to rear her own children and feed them simply here at some future period. In these days of fatted cattle and waving grain-fields this humble root, which was once the *totem* of an Indian tribe, is quite forgotten, or known only by its flowering vine; but let wild Nature reign here once more, and the tender and luxurious English grains will probably disappear before a myriad of foes, and without the care of man the crow may carry back even the last seed of corn to the great cornfield of the Indian's God in the southwest, whence he is said to have brought it; but the now almost exterminated ground-nut will perhaps revive and flourish in spite of frosts and wildness, prove itself indigenous, and resume its ancient importance and dignity as the diet of the hunter tribe. Some Indian Ceres or Minerva must have been the inventor and bestower of it; and when the reign of poetry commences here, its leaves and string of nuts may be represented on our works of art.

Already, by the first of September, I had seen two or three small maples turned scarlet across the pond, beneath where the white stems of three aspens diverged, at the point of a promontory, next the water. Ah, many a tale their color told! And gradually from week to week the character of each tree came out, and it admired itself reflected in the smooth mirror of the lake. Each morning the manager of this gallery substituted some new picture, distinguished by more brilliant or harmonious coloring, for the old upon the walls.

The wasps came by thousands to my lodge in October, as to winter quarters, and settled on my windows within and on the walls overhead, sometimes deterring visitors from entering. Each morning, when they were numbed with cold, I swept some of them out, but I did not trouble myself much to get rid of them; I even felt complimented by their regarding my house as a desirable shelter. They never molested me seriously, though they bedded with me; and they gradually disappeared, into what crevices I do not know, avoiding winter and unspeakable cold.

Like the wasps, before I finally went into winter quarters in November, I used to resort to the northeast side of Walden, which the sun, reflected from the pitch pine woods and the stony shore, made

the fireside of the pond; it is so much pleasanter and wholesomer to be warmed by the sun while you can be, than by an artificial fire. I thus warmed myself by the still glowing embers which the summer, like a departed hunter, had left.

When I came to build my chimney I studied masonry. My bricks, being second-hand ones, required to be cleaned with a trowel, so that I learned more than usual of the qualities of bricks and trowels. The mortar on them was fifty years old, and was said to be still growing harder; but this is one of those sayings which men love to repeat whether they are true or not. Such sayings themselves grow harder and adhere more firmly with age, and it would take many blows with a trowel to clean an old wiseacre of them. Many of the villages of Mesopotamia are built of second-hand bricks of a very good quality, obtained from the ruins of Babylon, and the cement on them is older and probably harder still. However that may be, I was struck by the peculiar toughness of the steel which bore so many violent blows without being worn out. As my bricks had been in a chimney before, though I did not read the name of Nebuchadnezzar on them, I picked out as many fireplace bricks as I could find, to save work and waste, and I filled the spaces between the bricks about the fireplace with stones from the pond shore, and also made my mortar with the white sand from the same place. I lingered most about the fireplace, as the most vital part of the house. Indeed, I worked so deliberately, that though I commenced at the ground in the morning, a course of bricks raised a few inches above the floor served for my pillow at night; yet I did not get a stiff neck for it that I remember; my stiff neck is of older date. I took a poet to board for a fortnight about those times, which caused me to be put to it for room. He brought his own knife, though I had two, and we used to scour them by thrusting them into the earth. He shared with me the labors of cooking. I was pleased to see my work rising so square and solid by degrees, and reflected, that, if it proceeded slowly, it was calculated to endure a long time. The chimney is to some extent an independent structure, standing on the ground, and rising through the house to the heavens; even after the house is burned it still stands sometimes, and its importance and independence are apparent. This was toward the end of summer. It

was now November.

The north wind had already begun to cool the pond, though it took many weeks of steady blowing to accomplish it, it is so deep. When I began to have a fire at evening, before I plastered my house, the chimney carried smoke particularly well, because of the numerous chinks between the boards. Yet I passed some cheerful evenings in that cool and airy apartment, surrounded by the rough brown boards full of knots, and rafters with the bark on high overhead. My house never pleased my eye so much after it was plastered, though I was obliged to confess that it was more comfortable. Should not every apartment in which man dwells be lofty enough to create some obscurity overhead, where flickering shadows may play at evening about the rafters? These forms are more agreeable to the fancy and imagination than fresco paintings or other the most expensive furniture. I now first began to inhabit my house, I may say, when I began to use it for warmth as well as shelter. I had got a couple of old fire-dogs to keep the wood from the hearth, and it did me good to see the soot form on the back of the chimney which I had built, and I poked the fire with more right and more satisfaction than usual. My dwelling was small, and I could hardly entertain an echo in it; but it seemed larger for being a single apartment and remote from neighbors. All the attractions of a house were concentrated in one room; it was kitchen, chamber, parlor, and keeping-room; and whatever satisfaction parent or child, master or servant, derive from living in a house, I enjoyed it all. Cato says, the master of a family (*patremfamilias*) must have in his rustic villa "cellam oleariam, vinariam, dolia multa, uti lubeat caritatem expectare, et rei, et virtuti, et gloriae erit," that is, "an oil and wine cellar, many casks, so that it may be pleasant to expect hard times; it will be for his advantage, and virtue, and glory." I had in my cellar a firkin of potatoes, about two quarts of peas with the weevil in them, and on my shelf a little rice, a jug of molasses, and of rye and Indian meal a peck each.

I sometimes dream of a larger and more populous house, standing in a golden age, of enduring materials, and without gingerbread work, which shall still consist of only one room, a vast, rude, substantial, primitive hall, without ceiling or plastering, with bare

rafters and purlins supporting a sort of lower heaven over one's head — useful to keep off rain and snow, where the king and queen posts stand out to receive your homage, when you have done reverence to the prostrate Saturn of an older dynasty on stepping over the sill; a cavernous house, wherein you must reach up a torch upon a pole to see the roof; where some may live in the fireplace, some in the recess of a window, and some on settles, some at one end of the hall, some at another, and some aloft on rafters with the spiders, if they choose; a house which you have got into when you have opened the outside door, and the ceremony is over; where the weary traveller may wash, and eat, and converse, and sleep, without further journey; such a shelter as you would be glad to reach in a tempestuous night, containing all the essentials of a house, and nothing for housekeeping; where you can see all the treasures of the house at one view, and everything hangs upon its peg, that a man should use; at once kitchen, pantry, parlor, chamber, storehouse, and garret; where you can see so necessary a thing, as a barrel or a ladder, so convenient a thing as a cupboard, and hear the pot boil, and pay your respects to the fire that cooks your dinner, and the oven that bakes your bread, and the necessary furniture and utensils are the chief ornaments; where the washing is not put out, nor the fire, nor the mistress, and perhaps you are sometimes requested to move from off the trap-door, when the cook would descend into the cellar, and so learn whether the ground is solid or hollow beneath you without stamping. A house whose inside is as open and manifest as a bird's nest, and you cannot go in at the front door and out at the back without seeing some of its inhabitants; where to be a guest is to be presented with the freedom of the house, and not to be carefully excluded from seven eighths of it, shut up in a particular cell, and told to make yourself at home there — in solitary confinement. Nowadays the host does not admit you to *his* hearth, but has got the mason to build one for yourself somewhere in his alley, and hospitality is the art of *keeping* you at the greatest distance. There is as much secrecy about the cooking as if he had a design to poison you. I am aware that I have been on many a man's premises, and might have been legally ordered off, but I am not aware that I have been in many men's houses. I might visit in my old clothes a king and queen who lived simply in such a house

as I have described, if I were going their way; but backing out of a modern palace will be all that I shall desire to learn, if ever I am caught in one.

It would seem as if the very language of our parlors would lose all its nerve and degenerate into *palaver* wholly, our lives pass at such remoteness from its symbols, and its metaphors and tropes are necessarily so far fetched, through slides and dumb-waiters, as it were; in other words, the parlor is so far from the kitchen and workshop. The dinner even is only the parable of a dinner, commonly. As if only the savage dwelt near enough to Nature and Truth to borrow a trope from them. How can the scholar, who dwells away in the North West Territory or the Isle of Man, tell what is parliamentary in the kitchen?

However, only one or two of my guests were ever bold enough to stay and eat a hasty-pudding with me; but when they saw that crisis approaching they beat a hasty retreat rather, as if it would shake the house to its foundations. Nevertheless, it stood through a great many hasty-puddings.

I did not plaster till it was freezing weather. I brought over some whiter and cleaner sand for this purpose from the opposite shore of the pond in a boat, a sort of conveyance which would have tempted me to go much farther if necessary. My house had in the meanwhile been shingled down to the ground on every side. In lathing I was pleased to be able to send home each nail with a single blow of the hammer, and it was my ambition to transfer the plaster from the board to the wall neatly and rapidly. I remembered the story of a conceited fellow, who, in fine clothes, was wont to lounge about the village once, giving advice to workmen. Venturing one day to substitute deeds for words, he turned up his cuffs, seized a plasterer's board, and having loaded his trowel without mishap, with a complacent look toward the lathing overhead, made a bold gesture thitherward; and straightway, to his complete discomfiture, received the whole contents in his ruffled bosom. I admired anew the economy and convenience of plastering, which so effectually shuts out the cold and takes a handsome finish, and I learned the various casualties to which the plasterer is liable. I was surprised to see how thirsty the bricks were which drank up all the moisture in my plaster before I

had smoothed it, and how many pailfuls of water it takes to christen a new hearth. I had the previous winter made a small quantity of lime by burning the shells of the *Unio fluviatilis*, which our river affords, for the sake of the experiment; so that I knew where my materials came from. I might have got good limestone within a mile or two and burned it myself, if I had cared to do so.

The pond had in the meanwhile skimmed over in the shadiest and shallowest coves, some days or even weeks before the general freezing. The first ice is especially interesting and perfect, being hard, dark, and transparent, and affords the best opportunity that ever offers for examining the bottom where it is shallow; for you can lie at your length on ice only an inch thick, like a skater insect on the surface of the water, and study the bottom at your leisure, only two or three inches distant, like a picture behind a glass, and the water is necessarily always smooth then. There are many furrows in the sand where some creature has travelled about and doubled on its tracks; and, for wrecks, it is strewn with the cases of caddis-worms made of minute grains of white quartz. Perhaps these have creased it, for you find some of their cases in the furrows, though they are deep and broad for them to make. But the ice itself is the object of most interest, though you must improve the earliest opportunity to study it. If you examine it closely the morning after it freezes, you find that the greater part of the bubbles, which at first appeared to be within it, are against its under surface, and that more are continually rising from the bottom; while the ice is as yet comparatively solid and dark, that is, you see the water through it. These bubbles are from an eightieth to an eighth of an inch in diameter, very clear and beautiful, and you see your face reflected in them through the ice. There may be thirty or forty of them to a square inch. There are also already within the ice narrow oblong perpendicular bubbles about half an inch long, sharp cones with the apex upward; or oftener, if the ice is quite fresh, minute spherical bubbles one directly above another, like a string of beads. But these within the ice are not so numerous nor obvious as those beneath. I sometimes used to cast on stones to try the strength of the ice, and those which broke through carried in air with them, which formed very large and conspicuous white bubbles

beneath. One day when I came to the same place forty-eight hours afterward, I found that those large bubbles were still perfect, though an inch more of ice had formed, as I could see distinctly by the seam in the edge of a cake. But as the last two days had been very warm, like an Indian summer, the ice was not now transparent, showing the dark green color of the water, and the bottom, but opaque and whitish or gray, and though twice as thick was hardly stronger than before, for the air bubbles had greatly expanded under this heat and run together, and lost their regularity; they were no longer one directly over another, but often like silvery coins poured from a bag, one overlapping another, or in thin flakes, as if occupying slight cleavages. The beauty of the ice was gone, and it was too late to study the bottom. Being curious to know what position my great bubbles occupied with regard to the new ice, I broke out a cake containing a middling sized one, and turned it bottom upward. The new ice had formed around and under the bubble, so that it was included between the two ices. It was wholly in the lower ice, but close against the upper, and was flattish, or perhaps slightly lenticular, with a rounded edge, a quarter of an inch deep by four inches in diameter; and I was surprised to find that directly under the bubble the ice was melted with great regularity in the form of a saucer reversed, to the height of five eighths of an inch in the middle, leaving a thin partition there between the water and the bubble, hardly an eighth of an inch thick; and in many places the small bubbles in this partition had burst out downward, and probably there was no ice at all under the largest bubbles, which were a foot in diameter. I inferred that the infinite number of minute bubbles which I had first seen against the under surface of the ice were now frozen in likewise, and that each, in its degree, had operated like a burning-glass on the ice beneath to melt and rot it. These are the little air-guns which contribute to make the ice crack and whoop.

At length the winter set in good earnest, just as I had finished plastering, and the wind began to howl around the house as if it had not had permission to do so till then. Night after night the geese came lumbering in the dark with a clangor and a whistling of wings, even after the ground was covered with snow, some to alight in Walden,

and some flying low over the woods toward Fair Haven, bound for Mexico. Several times, when returning from the village at ten or eleven o'clock at night, I heard the tread of a flock of geese, or else ducks, on the dry leaves in the woods by a pond-hole behind my dwelling, where they had come up to feed, and the faint honk or quack of their leader as they hurried off. In 1845 Walden froze entirely over for the first time on the night of the 22d of December, Flint's and other shallower ponds and the river having been frozen ten days or more; in '46, the 16th; in '49, about the 31st; and in '50, about the 27th of December; in '52, the 5th of January; in '53, the 31st of December. The snow had already covered the ground since the 25th of November, and surrounded me suddenly with the scenery of winter. I withdrew yet farther into my shell, and endeavored to keep a bright fire both within my house and within my breast. My employment out of doors now was to collect the dead wood in the forest, bringing it in my hands or on my shoulders, or sometimes trailing a dead pine tree under each arm to my shed. An old forest fence which had seen its best days was a great haul for me. I sacrificed it to Vulcan, for it was past serving the god Terminus. How much more interesting an event is that man's supper who has just been forth in the snow to hunt, nay, you might say, steal, the fuel to cook it with! His bread and meat are sweet. There are enough fagots and waste wood of all kinds in the forests of most of our towns to support many fires, but which at present warm none, and, some think, hinder the growth of the young wood. There was also the driftwood of the pond. In the course of the summer I had discovered a raft of pitch pine logs with the bark on, pinned together by the Irish when the railroad was built. This I hauled up partly on the shore. After soaking two years and then lying high six months it was perfectly sound, though waterlogged past drying. I amused myself one winter day with sliding this piecemeal across the pond, nearly half a mile, skating behind with one end of a log fifteen feet long on my shoulder, and the other on the ice; or I tied several logs together with a birch withe, and then, with a longer birch or alder which had a hook at the end, dragged them across. Though completely waterlogged and almost as heavy as lead, they not only burned long, but made a very hot fire; nay, I thought that they burned better for the

soaking, as if the pitch, being confined by the water, burned longer, as in a lamp.

Gilpin, in his account of the forest borderers of England, says that "the encroachments of trespassers, and the houses and fences thus raised on the borders of the forest," were "considered as great nuisances by the old forest law, and were severely punished under the name of *purprestures*, as tending *ad terrorem ferarum — ad nocumentum forestae*, etc.," to the frightening of the game and the detriment of the forest. But I was interested in the preservation of the venison and the vert more than the hunters or woodchoppers, and as much as though I had been the Lord Warden himself; and if any part was burned, though I burned it myself by accident, I grieved with a grief that lasted longer and was more inconsolable than that of the proprietors; nay, I grieved when it was cut down by the proprietors themselves. I would that our farmers when they cut down a forest felt some of that awe which the old Romans did when they came to thin, or let in the light to, a consecrated grove (*lucum conlucare*), that is, would believe that it is sacred to some god. The Roman made an expiatory offering, and prayed, Whatever god or goddess thou art to whom this grove is sacred, be propitious to me, my family, and children, etc.

It is remarkable what a value is still put upon wood even in this age and in this new country, a value more permanent and universal than that of gold. After all our discoveries and inventions no man will go by a pile of wood. It is as precious to us as it was to our Saxon and Norman ancestors. If they made their bows of it, we make our gun-stocks of it. Michaux, more than thirty years ago, says that the price of wood for fuel in New York and Philadelphia "nearly equals, and sometimes exceeds, that of the best wood in Paris, though this immense capital annually requires more than three hundred thousand cords, and is surrounded to the distance of three hundred miles by cultivated plains." In this town the price of wood rises almost steadily, and the only question is, how much higher it is to be this year than it was the last. Mechanics and tradesmen who come in person to the forest on no other errand, are sure to attend the wood auction, and even pay a high price for the privilege of gleaning after the woodchopper. It is now many years that men have resorted

to the forest for fuel and the materials of the arts: the New Englander and the New Hollander, the Parisian and the Celt, the farmer and Robin Hood, Goody Blake and Harry Gill; in most parts of the world the prince and the peasant, the scholar and the savage, equally require still a few sticks from the forest to warm them and cook their food. Neither could I do without them.

Every man looks at his wood-pile with a kind of affection. I love to have mine before my window, and the more chips the better to remind me of my pleasing work. I had an old axe which nobody claimed, with which by spells in winter days, on the sunny side of the house, I played about the stumps which I had got out of my bean-field. As my driver prophesied when I was plowing, they warmed me twice — once while I was splitting them, and again when they were on the fire, so that no fuel could give out more heat. As for the axe, I was advised to get the village blacksmith to "jump" it; but I jumped him, and, putting a hickory helve from the woods into it, made it do. If it was dull, it was at least hung true.

A few pieces of fat pine were a great treasure. It is interesting to remember how much of this food for fire is still concealed in the bowels of the earth. In previous years I had often gone prospecting over some bare hillside, where a pitch pine wood had formerly stood, and got out the fat pine roots. They are almost indestructible. Stumps thirty or forty years old, at least, will still be sound at the core, though the sapwood has all become vegetable mould, as appears by the scales of the thick bark forming a ring level with the earth four or five inches distant from the heart. With axe and shovel you explore this mine, and follow the marrowy store, yellow as beef tallow, or as if you had struck on a vein of gold, deep into the earth. But commonly I kindled my fire with the dry leaves of the forest, which I had stored up in my shed before the snow came. Green hickory finely split makes the woodchopper's kindlings, when he has a camp in the woods. Once in a while I got a little of this. When the villagers were lighting their fires beyond the horizon, I too gave notice to the various wild inhabitants of Walden vale, by a smoky streamer from my chimney, that I was awake. —

Light-winged Smoke, Icarian bird,

Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight,
Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,
Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;
Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form
Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts;
By night star-veiling, and by day
Darkening the light and blotting out the sun;
Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,
And ask the gods to pardon this clear flame.

Hard green wood just cut, though I used but little of that, answered my purpose better than any other. I sometimes left a good fire when I went to take a walk in a winter afternoon; and when I returned, three or four hours afterward, it would be still alive and glowing. My house was not empty though I was gone. It was as if I had left a cheerful housekeeper behind. It was I and Fire that lived there; and commonly my housekeeper proved trustworthy. One day, however, as I was splitting wood, I thought that I would just look in at the window and see if the house was not on fire; it was the only time I remember to have been particularly anxious on this score; so I looked and saw that a spark had caught my bed, and I went in and extinguished it when it had burned a place as big as my hand. But my house occupied so sunny and sheltered a position, and its roof was so low, that I could afford to let the fire go out in the middle of almost any winter day.

The moles nested in my cellar, nibbling every third potato, and making a snug bed even there of some hair left after plastering and of brown paper; for even the wildest animals love comfort and warmth as well as man, and they survive the winter only because they are so careful to secure them. Some of my friends spoke as if I was coming to the woods on purpose to freeze myself. The animal merely makes a bed, which he warms with his body, in a sheltered place; but man, having discovered fire, boxes up some air in a spacious apartment, and warms that, instead of robbing himself, makes that his bed, in which he can move about divested of more cumbrous clothing, maintain a kind of summer in the midst of winter, and by means of windows even admit the light, and with a lamp lengthen out the day.

Thus he goes a step or two beyond instinct, and saves a little time for the fine arts. Though, when I had been exposed to the rudest blasts a long time, my whole body began to grow torpid, when I reached the genial atmosphere of my house I soon recovered my faculties and prolonged my life. But the most luxuriously housed has little to boast of in this respect, nor need we trouble ourselves to speculate how the human race may be at last destroyed. It would be easy to cut their threads any time with a little sharper blast from the north. We go on dating from Cold Fridays and Great Snows; but a little colder Friday, or greater snow would put a period to man's existence on the globe.

The next winter I used a small cooking-stove for economy, since I did not own the forest; but it did not keep fire so well as the open fireplace. Cooking was then, for the most part, no longer a poetic, but merely a chemic process. It will soon be forgotten, in these days of stoves, that we used to roast potatoes in the ashes, after the Indian fashion. The stove not only took up room and scented the house, but it concealed the fire, and I felt as if I had lost a companion. You can always see a face in the fire. The laborer, looking into it at evening, purifies his thoughts of the dross and earthiness which they have accumulated during the day. But I could no longer sit and look into the fire, and the pertinent words of a poet recurred to me with new force. —

"Never, bright flame, may be denied to me
Thy dear, life imaging, close sympathy.
What but my hopes shot upward e'er so bright?
What but my fortunes sunk so low in night?
Why art thou banished from our hearth and hall,
Thou who art welcomed and beloved by all?
Was thy existence then too fanciful
For our life's common light, who are so dull?
Did thy bright gleam mysterious converse hold
With our congenial souls? secrets too bold?

Well, we are safe and strong, for now we sit
Beside a hearth where no dim shadows flit,
Where nothing cheers nor saddens, but a fire

Warms feet and hands — nor does to more aspire;
By whose compact utilitarian heap
The present may sit down and go to sleep,
Nor fear the ghosts who from the dim past walked,
And with us by the unequal light of the old wood fire talked.”

Former Inhabitants and Winter Visitors

I weathered some merry snow-storms, and spent some cheerful winter evenings by my fireside, while the snow whirled wildly without, and even the hooting of the owl was hushed. For many weeks I met no one in my walks but those who came occasionally to cut wood and sled it to the village. The elements, however, abetted me in making a path through the deepest snow in the woods, for when I had once gone through the wind blew the oak leaves into my tracks, where they lodged, and by absorbing the rays of the sun melted the snow, and so not only made a my bed for my feet, but in the night their dark line was my guide. For human society I was obliged to conjure up the former occupants of these woods. Within the memory of many of my townsmen the road near which my house stands resounded with the laugh and gossip of inhabitants, and the woods which border it were notched and dotted here and there with their little gardens and dwellings, though it was then much more shut in by the forest than now. In some places, within my own remembrance, the pines would scrape both sides of a chaise at once, and women and children who were compelled to go this way to Lincoln alone and on foot did it with fear, and often ran a good part of the distance. Though mainly but a humble route to neighboring villages, or for the woodman's team, it once amused the traveller more than now by its variety, and lingered longer in his memory. Where now firm open fields stretch from the village to the woods, it then ran through a maple swamp on a foundation of logs, the remnants of which, doubtless, still underlie the present dusty highway, from the Stratton, now the Alms-House Farm, to Brister's Hill.

East of my bean-field, across the road, lived Cato Ingraham, slave of Duncan Ingraham, Esquire, gentleman, of Concord village, who built his slave a house, and gave him permission to live in Walden Woods; — Cato, not Uticensis, but Concordiensis. Some say that he was a Guinea Negro. There are a few who remember his little patch among the walnuts, which he let grow up till he should be old and need them; but a younger and whiter speculator got them at last. He

too, however, occupies an equally narrow house at present. Cato's half-obliterated cellar-hole still remains, though known to few, being concealed from the traveller by a fringe of pines. It is now filled with the smooth sumach (*Rhus glabra*), and one of the earliest species of goldenrod (*Solidago stricta*) grows there luxuriantly.

Here, by the very corner of my field, still nearer to town, Zilpha, a colored woman, had her little house, where she spun linen for the townsfolk, making the Walden Woods ring with her shrill singing, for she had a loud and notable voice. At length, in the war of 1812, her dwelling was set on fire by English soldiers, prisoners on parole, when she was away, and her cat and dog and hens were all burned up together. She led a hard life, and somewhat inhumane. One old frequenter of these woods remembers, that as he passed her house one noon he heard her muttering to herself over her gurgling pot— "Ye are all bones, bones!" I have seen bricks amid the oak copse there.

Down the road, on the right hand, on Brister's Hill, lived Brister Freeman, "a handy Negro," slave of Squire Cummings once — there where grow still the apple trees which Brister planted and tended; large old trees now, but their fruit still wild and ciderish to my taste. Not long since I read his epitaph in the old Lincoln burying-ground, a little on one side, near the unmarked graves of some British grenadiers who fell in the retreat from Concord — where he is styled "Sippio Brister" — Scipio Africanus he had some title to be called— "a man of color," as if he were discolored. It also told me, with staring emphasis, when he died; which was but an indirect way of informing me that he ever lived. With him dwelt Fenda, his hospitable wife, who told fortunes, yet pleasantly — large, round, and black, blacker than any of the children of night, such a dusky orb as never rose on Concord before or since.

Farther down the hill, on the left, on the old road in the woods, are marks of some homestead of the Stratton family; whose orchard once covered all the slope of Brister's Hill, but was long since killed out by pitch pines, excepting a few stumps, whose old roots furnish still the wild stocks of many a thrifty village tree.

Nearer yet to town, you come to Breed's location, on the other side of the way, just on the edge of the wood; ground famous for the

pranks of a demon not distinctly named in old mythology, who has acted a prominent and astounding part in our New England life, and deserves, as much as any mythological character, to have his biography written one day; who first comes in the guise of a friend or hired man, and then robs and murders the whole family — New-England Rum. But history must not yet tell the tragedies enacted here; let time intervene in some measure to assuage and lend an azure tint to them. Here the most indistinct and dubious tradition says that once a tavern stood; the well the same, which tempered the traveller's beverage and refreshed his steed. Here then men saluted one another, and heard and told the news, and went their ways again.

Breed's hut was standing only a dozen years ago, though it had long been unoccupied. It was about the size of mine. It was set on fire by mischievous boys, one Election night, if I do not mistake. I lived on the edge of the village then, and had just lost myself over Davenant's "Gondibert," that winter that I labored with a lethargy — which, by the way, I never knew whether to regard as a family complaint, having an uncle who goes to sleep shaving himself, and is obliged to sprout potatoes in a cellar Sundays, in order to keep awake and keep the Sabbath, or as the consequence of my attempt to read Chalmers' collection of English poetry without skipping. It fairly overcame my Nervii. I had just sunk my head on this when the bells rung fire, and in hot haste the engines rolled that way, led by a straggling troop of men and boys, and I among the foremost, for I had leaped the brook. We thought it was far south over the woods — we who had run to fires before — barn, shop, or dwelling-house, or all together. "It's Baker's barn," cried one. "It is the Codman place," affirmed another. And then fresh sparks went up above the wood, as if the roof fell in, and we all shouted "Concord to the rescue!" Wagons shot past with furious speed and crushing loads, bearing, perchance, among the rest, the agent of the Insurance Company, who was bound to go however far; and ever and anon the engine bell tinkled behind, more slow and sure; and rearmost of all, as it was afterward whispered, came they who set the fire and gave the alarm. Thus we kept on like true idealists, rejecting the evidence of our senses, until at a turn in the road we heard the crackling and actually felt the heat of the fire from over the wall, and realized, alas! that we

were there. The very nearness of the fire but cooled our ardor. At first we thought to throw a frog-pond on to it; but concluded to let it burn, it was so far gone and so worthless. So we stood round our engine, jostled one another, expressed our sentiments through speaking-trumpets, or in lower tone referred to the great conflagrations which the world has witnessed, including Bascom's shop, and, between ourselves, we thought that, were we there in season with our "tub," and a full frog-pond by, we could turn that threatened last and universal one into another flood. We finally retreated without doing any mischief — returned to sleep and "Gondibert." But as for "Gondibert," I would except that passage in the preface about wit being the soul's powder— "but most of mankind are strangers to wit, as Indians are to powder."

It chanced that I walked that way across the fields the following night, about the same hour, and hearing a low moaning at this spot, I drew near in the dark, and discovered the only survivor of the family that I know, the heir of both its virtues and its vices, who alone was interested in this burning, lying on his stomach and looking over the cellar wall at the still smouldering cinders beneath, muttering to himself, as is his wont. He had been working far off in the river meadows all day, and had improved the first moments that he could call his own to visit the home of his fathers and his youth. He gazed into the cellar from all sides and points of view by turns, always lying down to it, as if there was some treasure, which he remembered, concealed between the stones, where there was absolutely nothing but a heap of bricks and ashes. The house being gone, he looked at what there was left. He was soothed by the sympathy which my mere presence implied, and showed me, as well as the darkness permitted, where the well was covered up; which, thank Heaven, could never be burned; and he groped long about the wall to find the well-sweep which his father had cut and mounted, feeling for the iron hook or staple by which a burden had been fastened to the heavy end — all that he could now cling to — to convince me that it was no common "rider." I felt it, and still remark it almost daily in my walks, for by it hangs the history of a family.

Once more, on the left, where are seen the well and lilac bushes by the wall, in the now open field, lived Nutting and Le Grosse. But

to return toward Lincoln.

Farther in the woods than any of these, where the road approaches nearest to the pond, Wyman the potter squatted, and furnished his townsmen with earthenware, and left descendants to succeed him. Neither were they rich in worldly goods, holding the land by sufferance while they lived; and there often the sheriff came in vain to collect the taxes, and "attached a chip," for form's sake, as I have read in his accounts, there being nothing else that he could lay his hands on. One day in midsummer, when I was hoeing, a man who was carrying a load of pottery to market stopped his horse against my field and inquired concerning Wyman the younger. He had long ago bought a potter's wheel of him, and wished to know what had become of him. I had read of the potter's clay and wheel in Scripture, but it had never occurred to me that the pots we use were not such as had come down unbroken from those days, or grown on trees like gourds somewhere, and I was pleased to hear that so fictile an art was ever practiced in my neighborhood.

The last inhabitant of these woods before me was an Irishman, Hugh Quoil (if I have spelt his name with coil enough), who occupied Wyman's tenement — Col. Quoil, he was called. Rumor said that he had been a soldier at Waterloo. If he had lived I should have made him fight his battles over again. His trade here was that of a ditcher. Napoleon went to St. Helena; Quoil came to Walden Woods. All I know of him is tragic. He was a man of manners, like one who had seen the world, and was capable of more civil speech than you could well attend to. He wore a greatcoat in midsummer, being affected with the trembling delirium, and his face was the color of carmine. He died in the road at the foot of Brister's Hill shortly after I came to the woods, so that I have not remembered him as a neighbor. Before his house was pulled down, when his comrades avoided it as "an unlucky castle," I visited it. There lay his old clothes curled up by use, as if they were himself, upon his raised plank bed. His pipe lay broken on the hearth, instead of a bowl broken at the fountain. The last could never have been the symbol of his death, for he confessed to me that, though he had heard of Brister's Spring, he had never seen it; and soiled cards, kings of diamonds, spades, and hearts, were scattered over the floor. One

black chicken which the administrator could not catch, black as night and as silent, not even croaking, awaiting Reynard, still went to roost in the next apartment. In the rear there was the dim outline of a garden, which had been planted but had never received its first hoeing, owing to those terrible shaking fits, though it was now harvest time. It was overrun with Roman wormwood and beggar-ticks, which last stuck to my clothes for all fruit. The skin of a woodchuck was freshly stretched upon the back of the house, a trophy of his last Waterloo; but no warm cap or mittens would he want more.

Now only a dent in the earth marks the site of these dwellings, with buried cellar stones, and strawberries, raspberries, thimble-berries, hazel-bushes, and sumachs growing in the sunny sward there; some pitch pine or gnarled oak occupies what was the chimney nook, and a sweet-scented black birch, perhaps, waves where the door-stone was. Sometimes the well dent is visible, where once a spring oozed; now dry and tearless grass; or it was covered deep — not to be discovered till some late day — with a flat stone under the sod, when the last of the race departed. What a sorrowful act must that be — the covering up of wells! coincident with the opening of wells of tears. These cellar dents, like deserted fox burrows, old holes, are all that is left where once were the stir and bustle of human life, and "fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute," in some form and dialect or other were by turns discussed. But all I can learn of their conclusions amounts to just this, that "Cato and Brister pulled wool"; which is about as edifying as the history of more famous schools of philosophy.

Still grows the vivacious lilac a generation after the door and lintel and the sill are gone, unfolding its sweet-scented flowers each spring, to be plucked by the musing traveller; planted and tended once by children's hands, in front-yard plots — now standing by wallsides in retired pastures, and giving place to new-rising forests; — the last of that stirp, sole survivor of that family. Little did the dusky children think that the puny slip with its two eyes only, which they stuck in the ground in the shadow of the house and daily watered, would root itself so, and outlive them, and house itself in the rear that shaded it, and grown man's garden and orchard, and tell

their story faintly to the lone wanderer a half-century after they had grown up and died — blossoming as fair, and smelling as sweet, as in that first spring. I mark its still tender, civil, cheerful lilac colors.

But this small village, germ of something more, why did it fail while Concord keeps its ground? Were there no natural advantages — no water privileges, forsooth? Ay, the deep Walden Pond and cool Brister's Spring — privilege to drink long and healthy draughts at these, all unimproved by these men but to dilute their glass. They were universally a thirsty race. Might not the basket, stable-broom, mat-making, corn-parching, linen-spinning, and pottery business have thrived here, making the wilderness to blossom like the rose, and a numerous posterity have inherited the land of their fathers? The sterile soil would at least have been proof against a low-land degeneracy. Alas! how little does the memory of these human inhabitants enhance the beauty of the landscape! Again, perhaps, Nature will try, with me for a first settler, and my house raised last spring to be the oldest in the hamlet.

I am not aware that any man has ever built on the spot which I occupy. Deliver me from a city built on the site of a more ancient city, whose materials are ruins, whose gardens cemeteries. The soil is blanched and accursed there, and before that becomes necessary the earth itself will be destroyed. With such reminiscences I repeopled the woods and lulled myself asleep.

At this season I seldom had a visitor. When the snow lay deepest no wanderer ventured near my house for a week or fortnight at a time, but there I lived as snug as a meadow mouse, or as cattle and poultry which are said to have survived for a long time buried in drifts, even without food; or like that early settler's family in the town of Sutton, in this State, whose cottage was completely covered by the great snow of 1717 when he was absent, and an Indian found it only by the hole which the chimney's breath made in the drift, and so relieved the family. But no friendly Indian concerned himself about me; nor needed he, for the master of the house was at home. The Great Snow! How cheerful it is to hear of! When the farmers could not get to the woods and swamps with their teams, and were obliged to cut down the shade trees before their houses, and, when

the crust was harder, cut off the trees in the swamps, ten feet from the ground, as it appeared the next spring.

In the deepest snows, the path which I used from the highway to my house, about half a mile long, might have been represented by a meandering dotted line, with wide intervals between the dots. For a week of even weather I took exactly the same number of steps, and of the same length, coming and going, stepping deliberately and with the precision of a pair of dividers in my own deep tracks — to such routine the winter reduces us — yet often they were filled with heaven's own blue. But no weather interfered fatally with my walks, or rather my going abroad, for I frequently tramped eight or ten miles through the deepest snow to keep an appointment with a beech tree, or a yellow birch, or an old acquaintance among the pines; when the ice and snow causing their limbs to droop, and so sharpening their tops, had changed the pines into fir trees; wading to the tops of the highest hills when the show was nearly two feet deep on a level, and shaking down another snow-storm on my head at every step; or sometimes creeping and floundering thither on my hands and knees, when the hunters had gone into winter quarters. One afternoon I amused myself by watching a barred owl (*Strix nebulosa*) sitting on one of the lower dead limbs of a white pine, close to the trunk, in broad daylight, I standing within a rod of him. He could hear me when I moved and cronched the snow with my feet, but could not plainly see me. When I made most noise he would stretch out his neck, and erect his neck feathers, and open his eyes wide; but their lids soon fell again, and he began to nod. I too felt a slumberous influence after watching him half an hour, as he sat thus with his eyes half open, like a cat, winged brother of the cat. There was only a narrow slit left between their lids, by which he preserved a peninsular relation to me; thus, with half-shut eyes, looking out from the land of dreams, and endeavoring to realize me, vague object or mote that interrupted his visions. At length, on some louder noise or my nearer approach, he would grow uneasy and sluggishly turn about on his perch, as if impatient at having his dreams disturbed; and when he launched himself off and flapped through the pines, spreading his wings to unexpected breadth, I could not hear the slightest sound from them. Thus, guided amid the pine boughs rather

by a delicate sense of their neighborhood than by sight, feeling his twilight way, as it were, with his sensitive pinions, he found a new perch, where he might in peace await the dawning of his day.

As I walked over the long causeway made for the railroad through the meadows, I encountered many a blustering and nipping wind, for nowhere has it freer play; and when the frost had smitten me on one cheek, heathen as I was, I turned to it the other also. Nor was it much better by the carriage road from Brister's Hill. For I came to town still, like a friendly Indian, when the contents of the broad open fields were all piled up between the walls of the Walden road, and half an hour sufficed to obliterate the tracks of the last traveller. And when I returned new drifts would have formed, through which I floundered, where the busy northwest wind had been depositing the powdery snow round a sharp angle in the road, and not a rabbit's track, nor even the fine print, the small type, of a meadow mouse was to be seen. Yet I rarely failed to find, even in midwinter, some warm and springly swamp where the grass and the skunk-cabbage still put forth with perennial verdure, and some hardier bird occasionally awaited the return of spring.

Sometimes, notwithstanding the snow, when I returned from my walk at evening I crossed the deep tracks of a woodchopper leading from my door, and found his pile of whittlings on the hearth, and my house filled with the odor of his pipe. Or on a Sunday afternoon, if I chanced to be at home, I heard the cronching of the snow made by the step of a long-headed farmer, who from far through the woods sought my house, to have a social "crack"; one of the few of his vocation who are "men on their farms"; who donned a frock instead of a professor's gown, and is as ready to extract the moral out of church or state as to haul a load of manure from his barn-yard. We talked of rude and simple times, when men sat about large fires in cold, bracing weather, with clear heads; and when other dessert failed, we tried our teeth on many a nut which wise squirrels have long since abandoned, for those which have the thickest shells are commonly empty.

The one who came from farthest to my lodge, through deepest snows and most dismal tempests, was a poet. A farmer, a hunter, a soldier, a reporter, even a philosopher, may be daunted; but nothing

can deter a poet, for he is actuated by pure love. Who can predict his comings and goings? His business calls him out at all hours, even when doctors sleep. We made that small house ring with boisterous mirth and resound with the murmur of much sober talk, making amends then to Walden vale for the long silences. Broadway was still and deserted in comparison. At suitable intervals there were regular salutes of laughter, which might have been referred indifferently to the last-uttered or the forth-coming jest. We made many a "bran new" theory of life over a thin dish of gruel, which combined the advantages of conviviality with the clear-headedness which philosophy requires.

I should not forget that during my last winter at the pond there was another welcome visitor, who at one time came through the village, through snow and rain and darkness, till he saw my lamp through the trees, and shared with me some long winter evenings. One of the last of the philosophers — Connecticut gave him to the world — he peddled first her wares, afterwards, as he declares, his brains. These he peddles still, prompting God and disgracing man, bearing for fruit his brain only, like the nut its kernel. I think that he must be the man of the most faith of any alive. His words and attitude always suppose a better state of things than other men are acquainted with, and he will be the last man to be disappointed as the ages revolve. He has no venture in the present. But though comparatively disregarded now, when his day comes, laws unsuspected by most will take effect, and masters of families and rulers will come to him for advice.

"How blind that cannot see serenity!"

A true friend of man; almost the only friend of human progress. An Old Mortality, say rather an Immortality, with unwearied patience and faith making plain the image engraven in men's bodies, the God of whom they are but defaced and leaning monuments. With his hospitable intellect he embraces children, beggars, insane, and scholars, and entertains the thought of all, adding to it commonly some breadth and elegance. I think that he should keep a caravansary on the world's highway, where philosophers of all nations might put up, and on his sign should be printed, "Entertainment for man, but not for his beast. Enter ye that have leisure and a quiet mind, who

earnestly seek the right road." He is perhaps the sanest man and has the fewest crotchets of any I chance to know; the same yesterday and tomorrow. Of yore we had sauntered and talked, and effectually put the world behind us; for he was pledged to no institution in it, freeborn, *ingenuus*. Whichever way we turned, it seemed that the heavens and the earth had met together, since he enhanced the beauty of the landscape. A blue-robed man, whose fittest roof is the overarching sky which reflects his serenity. I do not see how he can ever die; Nature cannot spare him.

Having each some shingles of thought well dried, we sat and whittled them, trying our knives, and admiring the clear yellowish grain of the pumpkin pine. We waded so gently and reverently, or we pulled together so smoothly, that the fishes of thought were not scared from the stream, nor feared any angler on the bank, but came and went grandly, like the clouds which float through the western sky, and the mother-o'-pearl flocks which sometimes form and dissolve there. There we worked, revising mythology, rounding a fable here and there, and building castles in the air for which earth offered no worthy foundation. Great Looker! Great Expecter! to converse with whom was a New England Night's Entertainment. Ah! such discourse we had, hermit and philosopher, and the old settler I have spoken of — we three — it expanded and racked my little house; I should not dare to say how many pounds' weight there was above the atmospheric pressure on every circular inch; it opened its seams so that they had to be calked with much dulness thereafter to stop the consequent leak; — but I had enough of that kind of oakum already picked.

There was one other with whom I had "solid seasons," long to be remembered, at his house in the village, and who looked in upon me from time to time; but I had no more for society there.

There too, as everywhere, I sometimes expected the Visitor who never comes. The Vishnu Purana says, "The house-holder is to remain at eventide in his courtyard as long as it takes to milk a cow, or longer if he pleases, to await the arrival of a guest." I often performed this duty of hospitality, waited long enough to milk a whole herd of cows, but did not see the man approaching from the town.

Winter Animals

When the ponds were firmly frozen, they afforded not only new and shorter routes to many points, but new views from their surfaces of the familiar landscape around them. When I crossed Flint's Pond, after it was covered with snow, though I had often paddled about and skated over it, it was so unexpectedly wide and so strange that I could think of nothing but Baffin's Bay. The Lincoln hills rose up around me at the extremity of a snowy plain, in which I did not remember to have stood before; and the fishermen, at an indeterminable distance over the ice, moving slowly about with their wolfish dogs, passed for sealers, or Esquimaux, or in misty weather loomed like fabulous creatures, and I did not know whether they were giants or pygmies. I took this course when I went to lecture in Lincoln in the evening, travelling in no road and passing no house between my own hut and the lecture room. In Goose Pond, which lay in my way, a colony of muskrats dwelt, and raised their cabins high above the ice, though none could be seen abroad when I crossed it. Walden, being like the rest usually bare of snow, or with only shallow and interrupted drifts on it, was my yard where I could walk freely when the snow was nearly two feet deep on a level elsewhere and the villagers were confined to their streets. There, far from the village street, and except at very long intervals, from the jingle of sleigh-bells, I slid and skated, as in a vast moose-yard well trodden, overhung by oak woods and solemn pines bent down with snow or bristling with icicles.

For sounds in winter nights, and often in winter days, I heard the forlorn but melodious note of a hooting owl indefinitely far; such a sound as the frozen earth would yield if struck with a suitable plectrum, the very *lingua vernacula* of Walden Wood, and quite familiar to me at last, though I never saw the bird while it was making it. I seldom opened my door in a winter evening without hearing it; *Hoo hoo hoo, hoorer, hoo,* sounded sonorously, and the first three syllables accented somewhat like *how der do*; or sometimes *hoo, hoo* only. One night in the beginning of winter, before the pond froze over, about nine o'clock, I was startled by the

loud honking of a goose, and, stepping to the door, heard the sound of their wings like a tempest in the woods as they flew low over my house. They passed over the pond toward Fair Haven, seemingly deterred from settling by my light, their commodore honking all the while with a regular beat. Suddenly an unmistakable cat-owl from very near me, with the most harsh and tremendous voice I ever heard from any inhabitant of the woods, responded at regular intervals to the goose, as if determined to expose and disgrace this intruder from Hudson's Bay by exhibiting a greater compass and volume of voice in a native, and *boo-hoo* him out of Concord horizon. What do you mean by alarming the citadel at this time of night consecrated to me? Do you think I am ever caught napping at such an hour, and that I have not got lungs and a larynx as well as yourself? *Boo-hoo, boo-hoo, boo-hoo!* It was one of the most thrilling discords I ever heard. And yet, if you had a discriminating ear, there were in it the elements of a concord such as these plains never saw nor heard.

I also heard the whooping of the ice in the pond, my great bed-fellow in that part of Concord, as if it were restless in its bed and would fain turn over, were troubled with flatulency and had dreams; or I was waked by the cracking of the ground by the frost, as if some one had driven a team against my door, and in the morning would find a crack in the earth a quarter of a mile long and a third of an inch wide.

Sometimes I heard the foxes as they ranged over the snow-crust, in moonlight nights, in search of a partridge or other game, barking raggedly and demoniacally like forest dogs, as if laboring with some anxiety, or seeking expression, struggling for light and to be dogs outright and run freely in the streets; for if we take the ages into our account, may there not be a civilization going on among brutes as well as men? They seemed to me to be rudimental, burrowing men, still standing on their defence, awaiting their transformation. Sometimes one came near to my window, attracted by my light, barked a vulpine curse at me, and then retreated.

Usually the red squirrel (*Sciurus Hudsonius*) waked me in the dawn, coursing over the roof and up and down the sides of the house, as if sent out of the woods for this purpose. In the course of the winter I threw out half a bushel of ears of sweet corn, which had not

got ripe, on to the snow-crust by my door, and was amused by watching the motions of the various animals which were baited by it. In the twilight and the night the rabbits came regularly and made a hearty meal. All day long the red squirrels came and went, and afforded me much entertainment by their manoeuvres. One would approach at first warily through the shrub oaks, running over the snow-crust by fits and starts like a leaf blown by the wind, now a few paces this way, with wonderful speed and waste of energy, making inconceivable haste with his "trotters," as if it were for a wager, and now as many paces that way, but never getting on more than half a rod at a time; and then suddenly pausing with a ludicrous expression and a gratuitous somerset, as if all the eyes in the universe were eyed on him — for all the motions of a squirrel, even in the most solitary recesses of the forest, imply spectators as much as those of a dancing girl — wasting more time in delay and circumspection than would have sufficed to walk the whole distance — I never saw one walk — and then suddenly, before you could say Jack Robinson, he would be in the top of a young pitch pine, winding up his clock and chiding all imaginary spectators, soliloquizing and talking to all the universe at the same time — for no reason that I could ever detect, or he himself was aware of, I suspect. At length he would reach the corn, and selecting a suitable ear, frisk about in the same uncertain trigonometrical way to the topmost stick of my wood-pile, before my window, where he looked me in the face, and there sit for hours, supplying himself with a new ear from time to time, nibbling at first voraciously and throwing the half-naked cobs about; till at length he grew more dainty still and played with his food, tasting only the inside of the kernel, and the ear, which was held balanced over the stick by one paw, slipped from his careless grasp and fell to the ground, when he would look over at it with a ludicrous expression of uncertainty, as if suspecting that it had life, with a mind not made up whether to get it again, or a new one, or be off; now thinking of corn, then listening to hear what was in the wind. So the little impudent fellow would waste many an ear in a forenoon; till at last, seizing some longer and plumper one, considerably bigger than himself, and skilfully balancing it, he would set out with it to the woods, like a tiger with a buffalo, by the same zig-zag course and frequent pauses,

scratching along with it as if it were too heavy for him and falling all the while, making its fall a diagonal between a perpendicular and horizontal, being determined to put it through at any rate; — a singularly frivolous and whimsical fellow; — and so he would get off with it to where he lived, perhaps carry it to the top of a pine tree forty or fifty rods distant, and I would afterwards find the cobs strewn about the woods in various directions.

At length the jays arrive, whose discordant screams were heard long before, as they were warily making their approach an eighth of a mile off, and in a stealthy and sneaking manner they flit from tree to tree, nearer and nearer, and pick up the kernels which the squirrels have dropped. Then, sitting on a pitch pine bough, they attempt to swallow in their haste a kernel which is too big for their throats and chokes them; and after great labor they disgorge it, and spend an hour in the endeavor to crack it by repeated blows with their bills. They were manifestly thieves, and I had not much respect for them; but the squirrels, though at first shy, went to work as if they were taking what was their own.

Meanwhile also came the chickadees in flocks, which, picking up the crumbs the squirrels had dropped, flew to the nearest twig and, placing them under their claws, hammered away at them with their little bills, as if it were an insect in the bark, till they were sufficiently reduced for their slender throats. A little flock of these titmice came daily to pick a dinner out of my woodpile, or the crumbs at my door, with faint flitting lisping notes, like the tinkling of icicles in the grass, or else with sprightly *day day day*, or more rarely, in spring-like days, a wiry summery *phe-be* from the woodside. They were so familiar that at length one alighted on an armful of wood which I was carrying in, and pecked at the sticks without fear. I once had a sparrow alight upon my shoulder for a moment while I was hoeing in a village garden, and I felt that I was more distinguished by that circumstance than I should have been by any epaulet I could have worn. The squirrels also grew at last to be quite familiar, and occasionally stepped upon my shoe, when that was the nearest way.

When the ground was not yet quite covered, and again near the end of winter, when the snow was melted on my south hillside and about my wood-pile, the partridges came out of the woods morning

and evening to feed there. Whichever side you walk in the woods the partridge bursts away on whirring wings, jarring the snow from the dry leaves and twigs on high, which comes sifting down in the sunbeams like golden dust, for this brave bird is not to be scared by winter. It is frequently covered up by drifts, and, it is said, "sometimes plunges from on wing into the soft snow, where it remains concealed for a day or two." I used to start them in the open land also, where they had come out of the woods at sunset to "bud" the wild apple trees. They will come regularly every evening to particular trees, where the cunning sportsman lies in wait for them, and the distant orchards next the woods suffer thus not a little. I am glad that the partridge gets fed, at any rate. It is Nature's own bird which lives on buds and diet drink.

In dark winter mornings, or in short winter afternoons, I sometimes heard a pack of hounds threading all the woods with hounding cry and yelp, unable to resist the instinct of the chase, and the note of the hunting-horn at intervals, proving that man was in the rear. The woods ring again, and yet no fox bursts forth on to the open level of the pond, nor following pack pursuing their Actæon. And perhaps at evening I see the hunters returning with a single brush trailing from their sleigh for a trophy, seeking their inn. They tell me that if the fox would remain in the bosom of the frozen earth he would be safe, or if he would run in a straight line away no foxhound could overtake him; but, having left his pursuers far behind, he stops to rest and listen till they come up, and when he runs he circles round to his old haunts, where the hunters await him. Sometimes, however, he will run upon a wall many rods, and then leap off far to one side, and he appears to know that water will not retain his scent. A hunter told me that he once saw a fox pursued by hounds burst out on to Walden when the ice was covered with shallow puddles, run part way across, and then return to the same shore. Ere long the hounds arrived, but here they lost the scent. Sometimes a pack hunting by themselves would pass my door, and circle round my house, and yelp and hound without regarding me, as if afflicted by a species of madness, so that nothing could divert them from the pursuit. Thus they circle until they fall upon the recent trail of a fox, for a wise hound will forsake everything else for this. One day a man came to

my hut from Lexington to inquire after his hound that made a large track, and had been hunting for a week by himself. But I fear that he was not the wiser for all I told him, for every time I attempted to answer his questions he interrupted me by asking, “What do you do here?” He had lost a dog, but found a man.

One old hunter who has a dry tongue, who used to come to bathe in Walden once every year when the water was warmest, and at such times looked in upon me, told me that many years ago he took his gun one afternoon and went out for a cruise in Walden Wood; and as he walked the Wayland road he heard the cry of hounds approaching, and ere long a fox leaped the wall into the road, and as quick as thought leaped the other wall out of the road, and his swift bullet had not touched him. Some way behind came an old hound and her three pups in full pursuit, hunting on their own account, and disappeared again in the woods. Late in the afternoon, as he was resting in the thick woods south of Walden, he heard the voice of the hounds far over toward Fair Haven still pursuing the fox; and on they came, their hounding cry which made all the woods ring sounding nearer and nearer, now from Well Meadow, now from the Baker Farm. For a long time he stood still and listened to their music, so sweet to a hunter’s ear, when suddenly the fox appeared, threading the solemn aisles with an easy coursing pace, whose sound was concealed by a sympathetic rustle of the leaves, swift and still, keeping the round, leaving his pursuers far behind; and, leaping upon a rock amid the woods, he sat erect and listening, with his back to the hunter. For a moment compassion restrained the latter’s arm; but that was a short-lived mood, and as quick as thought can follow thought his piece was levelled, and *whang!* — the fox, rolling over the rock, lay dead on the ground. The hunter still kept his place and listened to the hounds. Still on they came, and now the near woods resounded through all their aisles with their demoniac cry. At length the old hound burst into view with muzzle to the ground, and snapping the air as if possessed, and ran directly to the rock; but, spying the dead fox, she suddenly ceased her hounding as if struck dumb with amazement, and walked round and round him in silence; and one by one her pups arrived, and, like their mother, were sobered into silence by the mystery. Then the hunter came forward and stood in their midst, and

the mystery was solved. They waited in silence while he skinned the fox, then followed the brush a while, and at length turned off into the woods again. That evening a Weston squire came to the Concord hunter's cottage to inquire for his hounds, and told how for a week they had been hunting on their own account from Weston woods. The Concord hunter told him what he knew and offered him the skin; but the other declined it and departed. He did not find his hounds that night, but the next day learned that they had crossed the river and put up at a farmhouse for the night, whence, having been well fed, they took their departure early in the morning.

The hunter who told me this could remember one Sam Nutting, who used to hunt bears on Fair Haven Ledges, and exchange their skins for rum in Concord village; who told him, even, that he had seen a moose there. Nutting had a famous foxhound named Burgoyne — he pronounced it Bugine — which my informant used to borrow. In the "Wast Book" of an old trader of this town, who was also a captain, town-clerk, and representative, I find the following entry. Jan. 18th, 1742-3, "John Melven Cr. by 1 Grey Fox 0 — 2 — 3"; they are not now found here; and in his ledger, Feb, 7th, 1743, Hezekiah Stratton has credit "by 1/2 a Catt skin 0 — 1 — 4-1/2"; of course, a wild-cat, for Stratton was a sergeant in the old French war, and would not have got credit for hunting less noble game. Credit is given for deerskins also, and they were daily sold. One man still preserves the horns of the last deer that was killed in this vicinity, and another has told me the particulars of the hunt in which his uncle was engaged. The hunters were formerly a numerous and merry crew here. I remember well one gaunt Nimrod who would catch up a leaf by the roadside and play a strain on it wilder and more melodious, if my memory serves me, than any hunting-horn.

At midnight, when there was a moon, I sometimes met with hounds in my path prowling about the woods, which would skulk out of my way, as if afraid, and stand silent amid the bushes till I had passed.

Squirrels and wild mice disputed for my store of nuts. There were scores of pitch pines around my house, from one to four inches in diameter, which had been gnawed by mice the previous winter — a Norwegian winter for them, for the snow lay long and deep, and they

were obliged to mix a large proportion of pine bark with their other diet. These trees were alive and apparently flourishing at midsummer, and many of them had grown a foot, though completely girdled; but after another winter such were without exception dead. It is remarkable that a single mouse should thus be allowed a whole pine tree for its dinner, gnawing round instead of up and down it; but perhaps it is necessary in order to thin these trees, which are wont to grow up densely.

The hares (*Lepus Americanus*) were very familiar. One had her form under my house all winter, separated from me only by the flooring, and she startled me each morning by her hasty departure when I began to stir — thump, thump, thump, striking her head against the floor timbers in her hurry. They used to come round my door at dusk to nibble the potato parings which I had thrown out, and were so nearly the color of the ground that they could hardly be distinguished when still. Sometimes in the twilight I alternately lost and recovered sight of one sitting motionless under my window. When I opened my door in the evening, off they would go with a squeak and a bounce. Near at hand they only excited my pity. One evening one sat by my door two paces from me, at first trembling with fear, yet unwilling to move; a poor wee thing, lean and bony, with ragged ears and sharp nose, scant tail and slender paws. It looked as if Nature no longer contained the breed of nobler bloods, but stood on her last toes. Its large eyes appeared young and unhealthy, almost dropsical. I took a step, and lo, away it scud with an elastic spring over the snow-crust, straightening its body and its limbs into graceful length, and soon put the forest between me and itself — the wild free venison, asserting its vigor and the dignity of Nature. Not without reason was its slenderness. Such then was its nature. (*Lepus*, *levipes*, light-foot, some think.)

What is a country without rabbits and partridges? They are among the most simple and indigenous animal products; ancient and venerable families known to antiquity as to modern times; of the very hue and substance of Nature, nearest allied to leaves and to the ground — and to one another; it is either winged or it is legged. It is hardly as if you had seen a wild creature when a rabbit or a partridge bursts away, only a natural one, as much to be expected as rustling

leaves. The partridge and the rabbit are still sure to thrive, like true natives of the soil, whatever revolutions occur. If the forest is cut off, the sprouts and bushes which spring up afford them concealment, and they become more numerous than ever. That must be a poor country indeed that does not support a hare. Our woods teem with them both, and around every swamp may be seen the partridge or rabbit walk, beset with twiggy fences and horse-hair snares, which some cow-boy tends.

The Pond in Winter

After a still winter night I awoke with the impression that some question had been put to me, which I had been endeavoring in vain to answer in my sleep, as what — how — when — where? But there was dawning Nature, in whom all creatures live, looking in at my broad windows with serene and satisfied face, and no question on *her* lips. I awoke to an answered question, to Nature and daylight. The snow lying deep on the earth dotted with young pines, and the very slope of the hill on which my house is placed, seemed to say, Forward! Nature puts no question and answers none which we mortals ask. She has long ago taken her resolution. "O Prince, our eyes contemplate with admiration and transmit to the soul the wonderful and varied spectacle of this universe. The night veils without doubt a part of this glorious creation; but day comes to reveal to us this great work, which extends from earth even into the plains of the ether."

Then to my morning work. First I take an axe and pail and go in search of water, if that be not a dream. After a cold and snowy night it needed a divining-rod to find it. Every winter the liquid and trembling surface of the pond, which was so sensitive to every breath, and reflected every light and shadow, becomes solid to the depth of a foot or a foot and a half, so that it will support the heaviest teams, and perchance the snow covers it to an equal depth, and it is not to be distinguished from any level field. Like the marmots in the surrounding hills, it closes its eyelids and becomes dormant for three months or more. Standing on the snow-covered plain, as if in a pasture amid the hills, I cut my way first through a foot of snow, and then a foot of ice, and open a window under my feet, where, kneeling to drink, I look down into the quiet parlor of the fishes, pervaded by a softened light as through a window of ground glass, with its bright sanded floor the same as in summer; there a perennial waveless serenity reigns as in the amber twilight sky, corresponding to the cool and even temperament of the inhabitants. Heaven is under our feet is well as over our heads.

Early in the morning, while all things are crisp with frost, men

come with fishing-reels and slender lunch, and let down their fine lines through the snowy field to take pickerel and perch; wild men, who instinctively follow other fashions and trust other authorities than their townsmen, and by their goings and comings stitch towns together in parts where else they would be ripped. They sit and eat their luncheon in stout fear-naughts on the dry oak leaves on the shore, as wise in natural lore as the citizen is in artificial. They never consulted with books, and know and can tell much less than they have done. The things which they practice are said not yet to be known. Here is one fishing for pickerel with grown perch for bait. You look into his pail with wonder as into a summer pond, as if he kept summer locked up at home, or knew where she had retreated. How, pray, did he get these in midwinter? Oh, he got worms out of rotten logs since the ground froze, and so he caught them. His life itself passes deeper in nature than the studies of the naturalist penetrate; himself a subject for the naturalist. The latter raises the moss and bark gently with his knife in search of insects; the former lays open logs to their core with his axe, and moss and bark fly far and wide. He gets his living by barking trees. Such a man has some right to fish, and I love to see nature carried out in him. The perch swallows the grub-worm, the pickerel swallows the perch, and the fisher-man swallows the pickerel; and so all the chinks in the scale of being are filled.

When I strolled around the pond in misty weather I was sometimes amused by the primitive mode which some ruder fisherman had adopted. He would perhaps have placed alder branches over the narrow holes in the ice, which were four or five rods apart and an equal distance from the shore, and having fastened the end of the line to a stick to prevent its being pulled through, have passed the slack line over a twig of the alder, a foot or more above the ice, and tied a dry oak leaf to it, which, being pulled down, would show when he had a bite. These alders loomed through the mist at regular intervals as you walked half way round the pond.

Ah, the pickerel of Walden! when I see them lying on the ice, or in the well which the fisherman cuts in the ice, making a little hole to admit the water, I am always surprised by their rare beauty, as if they were fabulous fishes, they are so foreign to the streets, even to the

woods, foreign as Arabia to our Concord life. They possess a quite dazzling and transcendent beauty which separates them by a wide interval from the cadaverous cod and haddock whose fame is trumpeted in our streets. They are not green like the pines, nor gray like the stones, nor blue like the sky; but they have, to my eyes, if possible, yet rarer colors, like flowers and precious stones, as if they were the pearls, the animalized nuclei or crystals of the Walden water. They, of course, are Walden all over and all through; are themselves small Waldens in the animal kingdom, Waldenses. It is surprising that they are caught here — that in this deep and capacious spring, far beneath the rattling teams and chaises and tinkling sleighs that travel the Walden road, this great gold and emerald fish swims. I never chanced to see its kind in any market; it would be the cynosure of all eyes there. Easily, with a few convulsive quirks, they give up their watery ghosts, like a mortal translated before his time to the thin air of heaven.

As I was desirous to recover the long lost bottom of Walden Pond, I surveyed it carefully, before the ice broke up, early in ‘46, with compass and chain and sounding line. There have been many stories told about the bottom, or rather no bottom, of this pond, which certainly had no foundation for themselves. It is remarkable how long men will believe in the bottomlessness of a pond without taking the trouble to sound it. I have visited two such Bottomless Ponds in one walk in this neighborhood. Many have believed that Walden reached quite through to the other side of the globe. Some who have lain flat on the ice for a long time, looking down through the illusive medium, perchance with watery eyes into the bargain, and driven to hasty conclusions by the fear of catching cold in their breasts, have seen vast holes “into which a load of hay might be driven,” if there were anybody to drive it, the undoubted source of the Styx and entrance to the Infernal Regions from these parts. Others have gone down from the village with a “fifty-six” and a wagon load of inch rope, but yet have failed to find any bottom; for while the “fifty-six” was resting by the way, they were paying out the rope in the vain attempt to fathom their truly immeasurable capacity for marvellousness. But I can assure my readers that Walden has a

reasonably tight bottom at a not unreasonable, though at an unusual, depth. I fathomed it easily with a cod-line and a stone weighing about a pound and a half, and could tell accurately when the stone left the bottom, by having to pull so much harder before the water got underneath to help me. The greatest depth was exactly one hundred and two feet; to which may be added the five feet which it has risen since, making one hundred and seven. This is a remarkable depth for so small an area; yet not an inch of it can be spared by the imagination. What if all ponds were shallow? Would it not react on the minds of men? I am thankful that this pond was made deep and pure for a symbol. While men believe in the infinite some ponds will be thought to be bottomless.

A factory-owner, hearing what depth I had found, thought that it could not be true, for, judging from his acquaintance with dams, sand would not lie at so steep an angle. But the deepest ponds are not so deep in proportion to their area as most suppose, and, if drained, would not leave very remarkable valleys. They are not like cups between the hills; for this one, which is so unusually deep for its area, appears in a vertical section through its centre not deeper than a shallow plate. Most ponds, emptied, would leave a meadow no more hollow than we frequently see. William Gilpin, who is so admirable in all that relates to landscapes, and usually so correct, standing at the head of Loch Fyne, in Scotland, which he describes as "a bay of salt water, sixty or seventy fathoms deep, four miles in breadth," and about fifty miles long, surrounded by mountains, observes, "If we could have seen it immediately after the diluvian crash, or whatever convulsion of nature occasioned it, before the waters gushed in, what a horrid chasm must it have appeared!

> "So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
> Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
> Capacious bed of waters."

But if, using the shortest diameter of Loch Fyne, we apply these proportions to Walden, which, as we have seen, appears already in a vertical section only like a shallow plate, it will appear four times as shallow. So much for the increased horrors of the chasm of Loch

Fyne when emptied. No doubt many a smiling valley with its stretching cornfields occupies exactly such a "horrid chasm," from which the waters have receded, though it requires the insight and the far sight of the geologist to convince the unsuspecting inhabitants of this fact. Often an inquisitive eye may detect the shores of a primitive lake in the low horizon hills, and no subsequent elevation of the plain have been necessary to conceal their history. But it is easiest, as they who work on the highways know, to find the hollows by the puddles after a shower. The amount of it is, the imagination give it the least license, dives deeper and soars higher than Nature goes. So, probably, the depth of the ocean will be found to be very inconsiderable compared with its breadth.

As I sounded through the ice I could determine the shape of the bottom with greater accuracy than is possible in surveying harbors which do not freeze over, and I was surprised at its general regularity. In the deepest part there are several acres more level than almost any field which is exposed to the sun, wind, and plow. In one instance, on a line arbitrarily chosen, the depth did not vary more than one foot in thirty rods; and generally, near the middle, I could calculate the variation for each one hundred feet in any direction beforehand within three or four inches. Some are accustomed to speak of deep and dangerous holes even in quiet sandy ponds like this, but the effect of water under these circumstances is to level all inequalities. The regularity of the bottom and its conformity to the shores and the range of the neighboring hills were so perfect that a distant promontory betrayed itself in the soundings quite across the pond, and its direction could be determined by observing the opposite shore. Cape becomes bar, and plain shoal, and valley and gorge deep water and channel.

When I had mapped the pond by the scale of ten rods to an inch, and put down the soundings, more than a hundred in all, I observed this remarkable coincidence. Having noticed that the number indicating the greatest depth was apparently in the centre of the map, I laid a rule on the map lengthwise, and then breadthwise, and found, to my surprise, that the line of greatest length intersected the line of greatest breadth *exactly* at the point of greatest depth, notwithstanding that the middle is so nearly level, the outline of the

pond far from regular, and the extreme length and breadth were got by measuring into the coves; and I said to myself, Who knows but this hint would conduct to the deepest part of the ocean as well as of a pond or puddle? Is not this the rule also for the height of mountains, regarded as the opposite of valleys? We know that a hill is not highest at its narrowest part.

Of five coves, three, or all which had been sounded, were observed to have a bar quite across their mouths and deeper water within, so that the bay tended to be an expansion of water within the land not only horizontally but vertically, and to form a basin or independent pond, the direction of the two capes showing the course of the bar. Every harbor on the sea-coast, also, has its bar at its entrance. In proportion as the mouth of the cove was wider compared with its length, the water over the bar was deeper compared with that in the basin. Given, then, the length and breadth of the cove, and the character of the surrounding shore, and you have almost elements enough to make out a formula for all cases.

In order to see how nearly I could guess, with this experience, at the deepest point in a pond, by observing the outlines of a surface and the character of its shores alone, I made a plan of White Pond, which contains about forty-one acres, and, like this, has no island in it, nor any visible inlet or outlet; and as the line of greatest breadth fell very near the line of least breadth, where two opposite capes approached each other and two opposite bays receded, I ventured to mark a point a short distance from the latter line, but still on the line of greatest length, as the deepest. The deepest part was found to be within one hundred feet of this, still farther in the direction to which I had inclined, and was only one foot deeper, namely, sixty feet. Of course, a stream running through, or an island in the pond, would make the problem much more complicated.

If we knew all the laws of Nature, we should need only one fact, or the description of one actual phenomenon, to infer all the particular results at that point. Now we know only a few laws, and our result is vitiated, not, of course, by any confusion or irregularity in Nature, but by our ignorance of essential elements in the calculation. Our notions of law and harmony are commonly confined to those instances which we detect; but the harmony which results

from a far greater number of seemingly conflicting, but really concurring, laws, which we have not detected, is still more wonderful. The particular laws are as our points of view, as, to the traveller, a mountain outline varies with every step, and it has an infinite number of profiles, though absolutely but one form. Even when cleft or bored through it is not comprehended in its entireness.

What I have observed of the pond is no less true in ethics. It is the law of average. Such a rule of the two diameters not only guides us toward the sun in the system and the heart in man, but draws lines through the length and breadth of the aggregate of a man's particular daily behaviors and waves of life into his coves and inlets, and where they intersect will be the height or depth of his character. Perhaps we need only to know how his shores trend and his adjacent country or circumstances, to infer his depth and concealed bottom. If he is surrounded by mountainous circumstances, an Achillean shore, whose peaks overshadow and are reflected in his bosom, they suggest a corresponding depth in him. But a low and smooth shore proves him shallow on that side. In our bodies, a bold projecting brow falls off to and indicates a corresponding depth of thought. Also there is a bar across the entrance of our every cove, or particular inclination; each is our harbor for a season, in which we are detained and partially land-locked. These inclinations are not whimsical usually, but their form, size, and direction are determined by the promontories of the shore, the ancient axes of elevation. When this bar is gradually increased by storms, tides, or currents, or there is a subsidence of the waters, so that it reaches to the surface, that which was at first but an inclination in the shore in which a thought was harbored becomes an individual lake, cut off from the ocean, wherein the thought secures its own conditions — changes, perhaps, from salt to fresh, becomes a sweet sea, dead sea, or a marsh. At the advent of each individual into this life, may we not suppose that such a bar has risen to the surface somewhere? It is true, we are such poor navigators that our thoughts, for the most part, stand off and on upon a harborless coast, are conversant only with the bights of the bays of poesy, or steer for the public ports of entry, and go into the dry docks of science, where they merely refit for this world, and no natural currents concur to individualize them.

As for the inlet or outlet of Walden, I have not discovered any but rain and snow and evaporation, though perhaps, with a thermometer and a line, such places may be found, for where the water flows into the pond it will probably be coldest in summer and warmest in winter. When the ice-men were at work here in ‘46-7, the cakes sent to the shore were one day rejected by those who were stacking them up there, not being thick enough to lie side by side with the rest; and the cutters thus discovered that the ice over a small space was two or three inches thinner than elsewhere, which made them think that there was an inlet there. They also showed me in another place what they thought was a “leach-hole,” through which the pond leaked out under a hill into a neighboring meadow, pushing me out on a cake of ice to see it. It was a small cavity under ten feet of water; but I think that I can warrant the pond not to need soldering till they find a worse leak than that. One has suggested, that if such a “leach-hole” should be found, its connection with the meadow, if any existed, might be proved by conveying some colored powder or sawdust to the mouth of the hole, and then putting a strainer over the spring in the meadow, which would catch some of the particles carried through by the current.

While I was surveying, the ice, which was sixteen inches thick, undulated under a slight wind like water. It is well known that a level cannot be used on ice. At one rod from the shore its greatest fluctuation, when observed by means of a level on land directed toward a graduated staff on the ice, was three quarters of an inch, though the ice appeared firmly attached to the shore. It was probably greater in the middle. Who knows but if our instruments were delicate enough we might detect an undulation in the crust of the earth? When two legs of my level were on the shore and the third on the ice, and the sights were directed over the latter, a rise or fall of the ice of an almost infinitesimal amount made a difference of several feet on a tree across the pond. When I began to cut holes for sounding there were three or four inches of water on the ice under a deep snow which had sunk it thus far; but the water began immediately to run into these holes, and continued to run for two days in deep streams, which wore away the ice on every side, and contributed essentially, if not mainly, to dry the surface of the pond;

for, as the water ran in, it raised and floated the ice. This was somewhat like cutting a hole in the bottom of a ship to let the water out. When such holes freeze, and a rain succeeds, and finally a new freezing forms a fresh smooth ice over all, it is beautifully mottled internally by dark figures, shaped somewhat like a spider's web, what you may call ice rosettes, produced by the channels worn by the water flowing from all sides to a centre. Sometimes, also, when the ice was covered with shallow puddles, I saw a double shadow of myself, one standing on the head of the other, one on the ice, the other on the trees or hillside.

While yet it is cold January, and snow and ice are thick and solid, the prudent landlord comes from the village to get ice to cool his summer drink; impressively, even pathetically, wise, to foresee the heat and thirst of July now in January — wearing a thick coat and mittens! when so many things are not provided for. It may be that he lays up no treasures in this world which will cool his summer drink in the next. He cuts and saws the solid pond, unroofs the house of fishes, and carts off their very element and air, held fast by chains and stakes like corded wood, through the favoring winter air, to wintry cellars, to underlie the summer there. It looks like solidified azure, as, far off, it is drawn through the streets. These ice-cutters are a merry race, full of jest and sport, and when I went among them they were wont to invite me to saw pit-fashion with them, I standing underneath.

In the winter of '46-7 there came a hundred men of Hyperborean extraction swoop down on to our pond one morning, with many carloads of ungainly-looking farming tools — sleds, plows, drill-barrows, turf-knives, spades, saws, rakes, and each man was armed with a double-pointed pike-staff, such as is not described in the New-England Farmer or the Cultivator. I did not know whether they had come to sow a crop of winter rye, or some other kind of grain recently introduced from Iceland. As I saw no manure, I judged that they meant to skim the land, as I had done, thinking the soil was deep and had lain fallow long enough. They said that a gentleman farmer, who was behind the scenes, wanted to double his money, which, as I understood, amounted to half a million already; but in order to cover

each one of his dollars with another, he took off the only coat, ay, the skin itself, of Walden Pond in the midst of a hard winter. They went to work at once, plowing, barrowing, rolling, furrowing, in admirable order, as if they were bent on making this a model farm; but when I was looking sharp to see what kind of seed they dropped into the furrow, a gang of fellows by my side suddenly began to hook up the virgin mould itself, with a peculiar jerk, clean down to the sand, or rather the water — for it was a very springy soil — indeed all the *terra firma* there was — and haul it away on sleds, and then I guessed that they must be cutting peat in a bog. So they came and went every day, with a peculiar shriek from the locomotive, from and to some point of the polar regions, as it seemed to me, like a flock of arctic snow-birds. But sometimes Squaw Walden had her revenge, and a hired man, walking behind his team, slipped through a crack in the ground down toward Tartarus, and he who was so brave before suddenly became but the ninth part of a man, almost gave up his animal heat, and was glad to take refuge in my house, and acknowledged that there was some virtue in a stove; or sometimes the frozen soil took a piece of steel out of a plowshare, or a plow got set in the furrow and had to be cut out.

To speak literally, a hundred Irishmen, with Yankee overseers, came from Cambridge every day to get out the ice. They divided it into cakes by methods too well known to require description, and these, being sledded to the shore, were rapidly hauled off on to an ice platform, and raised by grappling irons and block and tackle, worked by horses, on to a stack, as surely as so many barrels of flour, and there placed evenly side by side, and row upon row, as if they formed the solid base of an obelisk designed to pierce the clouds. They told me that in a good day they could get out a thousand tons, which was the yield of about one acre. Deep ruts and "cradle-holes" were worn in the ice, as on *terra firma*, by the passage of the sleds over the same track, and the horses invariably ate their oats out of cakes of ice hollowed out like buckets. They stacked up the cakes thus in the open air in a pile thirty-five feet high on one side and six or seven rods square, putting hay between the outside layers to exclude the air; for when the wind, though never so cold, finds a passage through, it will wear large cavities, leaving slight supports or studs

only here and there, and finally topple it down. At first it looked like a vast blue fort or Valhalla; but when they began to tuck the coarse meadow hay into the crevices, and this became covered with rime and icicles, it looked like a venerable moss-grown and hoary ruin, built of azure-tinted marble, the abode of Winter, that old man we see in the almanac — his shanty, as if he had a design to estivate with us. They calculated that not twenty-five per cent of this would reach its destination, and that two or three per cent would be wasted in the cars. However, a still greater part of this heap had a different destiny from what was intended; for, either because the ice was found not to keep so well as was expected, containing more air than usual, or for some other reason, it never got to market. This heap, made in the winter of '46-7 and estimated to contain ten thousand tons, was finally covered with hay and boards; and though it was unroofed the following July, and a part of it carried off, the rest remaining exposed to the sun, it stood over that summer and the next winter, and was not quite melted till September, 1848. Thus the pond recovered the greater part.

Like the water, the Walden ice, seen near at hand, has a green tint, but at a distance is beautifully blue, and you can easily tell it from the white ice of the river, or the merely greenish ice of some ponds, a quarter of a mile off. Sometimes one of those great cakes slips from the ice-man's sled into the village street, and lies there for a week like a great emerald, an object of interest to all passers. I have noticed that a portion of Walden which in the state of water was green will often, when frozen, appear from the same point of view blue. So the hollows about this pond will, sometimes, in the winter, be filled with a greenish water somewhat like its own, but the next day will have frozen blue. Perhaps the blue color of water and ice is due to the light and air they contain, and the most transparent is the bluest. Ice is an interesting subject for contemplation. They told me that they had some in the ice-houses at Fresh Pond five years old which was as good as ever. Why is it that a bucket of water soon becomes putrid, but frozen remains sweet forever? It is commonly said that this is the difference between the affections and the intellect.

Thus for sixteen days I saw from my window a hundred men at work like busy husbandmen, with teams and horses and apparently

all the implements of farming, such a picture as we see on the first page of the almanac; and as often as I looked out I was reminded of the fable of the lark and the reapers, or the parable of the sower, and the like; and now they are all gone, and in thirty days more, probably, I shall look from the same window on the pure sea-green Walden water there, reflecting the clouds and the trees, and sending up its evaporations in solitude, and no traces will appear that a man has ever stood there. Perhaps I shall hear a solitary loon laugh as he dives and plumes himself, or shall see a lonely fisher in his boat, like a floating leaf, beholding his form reflected in the waves, where lately a hundred men securely labored.

Thus it appears that the sweltering inhabitants of Charleston and New Orleans, of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta, drink at my well. In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonal philosophy of the Bhagvat-Geeta, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions. I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! there I meet the servant of the Bramin, priest of Brahma and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water jug. I meet his servant come to draw water for his master, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges. With favoring winds it is wafted past the site of the fabulous islands of Atlantis and the Hesperides, makes the periplus of Hanno, and, floating by Ternate and Tidore and the mouth of the Persian Gulf, melts in the tropic gales of the Indian seas, and is landed in ports of which Alexander only heard the names.

Spring

The opening of large tracts by the ice-cutters commonly causes a pond to break up earlier; for the water, agitated by the wind, even in cold weather, wears away the surrounding ice. But such was not the effect on Walden that year, for she had soon got a thick new garment to take the place of the old. This pond never breaks up so soon as the others in this neighborhood, on account both of its greater depth and its having no stream passing through it to melt or wear away the ice. I never knew it to open in the course of a winter, not excepting that of '52-3, which gave the ponds so severe a trial. It commonly opens about the first of April, a week or ten days later than Flint's Pond and Fair Haven, beginning to melt on the north side and in the shallower parts where it began to freeze. It indicates better than any water hereabouts the absolute progress of the season, being least affected by transient changes of temperature. A severe cold of a few days' duration in March may very much retard the opening of the former ponds, while the temperature of Walden increases almost uninterruptedly. A thermometer thrust into the middle of Walden on the 6th of March, 1847, stood at 32°, or freezing point; near the shore at 33°; in the middle of Flint's Pond, the same day, at 32½°; at a dozen rods from the shore, in shallow water, under ice a foot thick, at 36°. This difference of three and a half degrees between the temperature of the deep water and the shallow in the latter pond, and the fact that a great proportion of it is comparatively shallow, show why it should break up so much sooner than Walden. The ice in the shallowest part was at this time several inches thinner than in the middle. In midwinter the middle had been the warmest and the ice thinnest there. So, also, every one who has waded about the shores of the pond in summer must have perceived how much warmer the water is close to the shore, where only three or four inches deep, than a little distance out, and on the surface where it is deep, than near the bottom. In spring the sun not only exerts an influence through the increased temperature of the air and earth, but its heat passes through ice a foot or more thick, and is reflected from the bottom in shallow water, and so also warms the water and melts the under side of the

ice, at the same time that it is melting it more directly above, making it uneven, and causing the air bubbles which it contains to extend themselves upward and downward until it is completely honeycombed, and at last disappears suddenly in a single spring rain. Ice has its grain as well as wood, and when a cake begins to rot or "comb," that is, assume the appearance of honeycomb, whatever may be its position, the air cells are at right angles with what was the water surface. Where there is a rock or a log rising near to the surface the ice over it is much thinner, and is frequently quite dissolved by this reflected heat; and I have been told that in the experiment at Cambridge to freeze water in a shallow wooden pond, though the cold air circulated underneath, and so had access to both sides, the reflection of the sun from the bottom more than counterbalanced this advantage. When a warm rain in the middle of the winter melts off the snow-ice from Walden, and leaves a hard dark or transparent ice on the middle, there will be a strip of rotten though thicker white ice, a rod or more wide, about the shores, created by this reflected heat. Also, as I have said, the bubbles themselves within the ice operate as burning-glasses to melt the ice beneath.

The phenomena of the year take place every day in a pond on a small scale. Every morning, generally speaking, the shallow water is being warmed more rapidly than the deep, though it may not be made so warm after all, and every evening it is being cooled more rapidly until the morning. The day is an epitome of the year. The night is the winter, the morning and evening are the spring and fall, and the noon is the summer. The cracking and booming of the ice indicate a change of temperature. One pleasant morning after a cold night, February 24th, 1850, having gone to Flint's Pond to spend the day, I noticed with surprise, that when I struck the ice with the head of my axe, it resounded like a gong for many rods around, or as if I had struck on a tight drum-head. The pond began to boom about an hour after sunrise, when it felt the influence of the sun's rays slanted upon it from over the hills; it stretched itself and yawned like a waking man with a gradually increasing tumult, which was kept up three or four hours. It took a short siesta at noon, and boomed once more toward night, as the sun was withdrawing his influence. In the right stage of the weather a pond fires its evening gun with great

regularity. But in the middle of the day, being full of cracks, and the air also being less elastic, it had completely lost its resonance, and probably fishes and muskrats could not then have been stunned by a blow on it. The fishermen say that the "thundering of the pond" scares the fishes and prevents their biting. The pond does not thunder every evening, and I cannot tell surely when to expect its thundering; but though I may perceive no difference in the weather, it does. Who would have suspected so large and cold and thick-skinned a thing to be so sensitive? Yet it has its law to which it thunders obedience when it should as surely as the buds expand in the spring. The earth is all alive and covered with papillae. The largest pond is as sensitive to atmospheric changes as the globule of mercury in its tube.

One attraction in coming to the woods to live was that I should have leisure and opportunity to see the Spring come in. The ice in the pond at length begins to be honeycombed, and I can set my heel in it as I walk. Fogs and rains and warmer suns are gradually melting the snow; the days have grown sensibly longer; and I see how I shall get through the winter without adding to my wood-pile, for large fires are no longer necessary. I am on the alert for the first signs of spring, to hear the chance note of some arriving bird, or the striped squirrel's chirp, for his stores must be now nearly exhausted, or see the woodchuck venture out of his winter quarters. On the 13th of March, after I had heard the bluebird, song sparrow, and red-wing, the ice was still nearly a foot thick. As the weather grew warmer it was not sensibly worn away by the water, nor broken up and floated off as in rivers, but, though it was completely melted for half a rod in width about the shore, the middle was merely honeycombed and saturated with water, so that you could put your foot through it when six inches thick; but by the next day evening, perhaps, after a warm rain followed by fog, it would have wholly disappeared, all gone off with the fog, spirited away. One year I went across the middle only five days before it disappeared entirely. In 1845 Walden was first completely open on the 1st of April; in '46, the 25th of March; in '47, the 8th of April; in '51, the 28th of March; in '52, the 18th of April; in '53, the 23d of March; in '54, about the 7th of April.

Every incident connected with the breaking up of the rivers and ponds and the settling of the weather is particularly interesting to us

who live in a climate of so great extremes. When the warmer days come, they who dwell near the river hear the ice crack at night with a startling whoop as loud as artillery, as if its icy fetters were rent from end to end, and within a few days see it rapidly going out. So the alligator comes out of the mud with quakings of the earth. One old man, who has been a close observer of Nature, and seems as thoroughly wise in regard to all her operations as if she had been put upon the stocks when he was a boy, and he had helped to lay her keel — who has come to his growth, and can hardly acquire more of natural lore if he should live to the age of Methuselah — told me — and I was surprised to hear him express wonder at any of Nature's operations, for I thought that there were no secrets between them — that one spring day he took his gun and boat, and thought that he would have a little sport with the ducks. There was ice still on the meadows, but it was all gone out of the river, and he dropped down without obstruction from Sudbury, where he lived, to Fair Haven Pond, which he found, unexpectedly, covered for the most part with a firm field of ice. It was a warm day, and he was surprised to see so great a body of ice remaining. Not seeing any ducks, he hid his boat on the north or back side of an island in the pond, and then concealed himself in the bushes on the south side, to await them. The ice was melted for three or four rods from the shore, and there was a smooth and warm sheet of water, with a muddy bottom, such as the ducks love, within, and he thought it likely that some would be along pretty soon. After he had lain still there about an hour he heard a low and seemingly very distant sound, but singularly grand and impressive, unlike anything he had ever heard, gradually swelling and increasing as if it would have a universal and memorable ending, a sullen rush and roar, which seemed to him all at once like the sound of a vast body of fowl coming in to settle there, and, seizing his gun, he started up in haste and excited; but he found, to his surprise, that the whole body of the ice had started while he lay there, and drifted in to the shore, and the sound he had heard was made by its edge grating on the shore — at first gently nibbled and crumbled off, but at length heaving up and scattering its wrecks along the island to a considerable height before it came to a standstill.

At length the sun's rays have attained the right angle, and warm

winds blow up mist and rain and melt the snowbanks, and the sun, dispersing the mist, smiles on a checkered landscape of russet and white smoking with incense, through which the traveller picks his way from islet to islet, cheered by the music of a thousand tinkling rills and rivulets whose veins are filled with the blood of winter which they are bearing off.

Few phenomena gave me more delight than to observe the forms which thawing sand and clay assume in flowing down the sides of a deep cut on the railroad through which I passed on my way to the village, a phenomenon not very common on so large a scale, though the number of freshly exposed banks of the right material must have been greatly multiplied since railroads were invented. The material was sand of every degree of fineness and of various rich colors, commonly mixed with a little clay. When the frost comes out in the spring, and even in a thawing day in the winter, the sand begins to flow down the slopes like lava, sometimes bursting out through the snow and overflowing it where no sand was to be seen before. Innumerable little streams overlap and interlace one with another, exhibiting a sort of hybrid product, which obeys half way the law of currents, and half way that of vegetation. As it flows it takes the forms of sappy leaves or vines, making heaps of pulpy sprays a foot or more in depth, and resembling, as you look down on them, the laciniated, lobed, and imbricated thalluses of some lichens; or you are reminded of coral, of leopard's paws or birds' feet, of brains or lungs or bowels, and excrements of all kinds. It is a truly *grotesque* vegetation, whose forms and color we see imitated in bronze, a sort of architectural foliage more ancient and typical than acanthus, chiccory, ivy, vine, or any vegetable leaves; destined perhaps, under some circumstances, to become a puzzle to future geologists. The whole cut impressed me as if it were a cave with its stalactites laid open to the light. The various shades of the sand are singularly rich and agreeable, embracing the different iron colors, brown, gray, yellowish, and reddish. When the flowing mass reaches the drain at the foot of the bank it spreads out flatter into *strands*, the separate streams losing their semi-cylindrical form and gradually becoming more flat and broad, running together as they are more moist, till they form an almost flat *sand*, still variously and beautifully shaded, but in

which you can trace the original forms of vegetation; till at length, in the water itself, they are converted into *banks*, like those formed off the mouths of rivers, and the forms of vegetation are lost in the ripple marks on the bottom.

The whole bank, which is from twenty to forty feet high, is sometimes overlaid with a mass of this kind of foliage, or sandy rupture, for a quarter of a mile on one or both sides, the produce of one spring day. What makes this sand foliage remarkable is its springing into existence thus suddenly. When I see on the one side the inert bank — for the sun acts on one side first — and on the other this luxuriant foliage, the creation of an hour, I am affected as if in a peculiar sense I stood in the laboratory of the Artist who made the world and me — had come to where he was still at work, sporting on this bank, and with excess of energy strewing his fresh designs about. I feel as if I were nearer to the vitals of the globe, for this sandy overflow is something such a foliaceous mass as the vitals of the animal body. You find thus in the very sands an anticipation of the vegetable leaf. No wonder that the earth expresses itself outwardly in leaves, it so labors with the idea inwardly. The atoms have already learned this law, and are pregnant by it. The overhanging leaf sees here its prototype. *Internally*, whether in the globe or animal body, it is a moist thick *lobe*, a word especially applicable to the liver and lungs and the leaves of fat (γείβω, *labor*, *lapsus*, to flow or slip downward, a lapsing; λοβός, *globus*, lobe, globe; also lap, flap, and many other words); *externally* a dry thin *leaf*, even as the *f* and *v* are a pressed and dried *b*. The radicals of *lobe* are *lb*, the soft mass of the *b* (single lobed, or B, double lobed), with the liquid *l* behind it pressing it forward. In globe, *glb*, the guttural *g* adds to the meaning the capacity of the throat. The feathers and wings of birds are still drier and thinner leaves. Thus, also, you pass from the lumpish grub in the earth to the airy and fluttering butterfly. The very globe continually transcends and translates itself, and becomes winged in its orbit. Even ice begins with delicate crystal leaves, as if it had flowed into moulds which the fronds of waterplants have impressed on the watery mirror. The whole tree itself is but one leaf, and rivers are still vaster leaves whose pulp is intervening earth, and towns and cities are the ova of insects in their

axils.

When the sun withdraws the sand ceases to flow, but in the morning the streams will start once more and branch and branch again into a myriad of others. You here see perchance how blood-vessels are formed. If you look closely you observe that first there pushes forward from the thawing mass a stream of softened sand with a drop-like point, like the ball of the finger, feeling its way slowly and blindly downward, until at last with more heat and moisture, as the sun gets higher, the most fluid portion, in its effort to obey the law to which the most inert also yields, separates from the latter and forms for itself a meandering channel or artery within that, in which is seen a little silvery stream glancing like lightning from one stage of pulpy leaves or branches to another, and ever and anon swallowed up in the sand. It is wonderful how rapidly yet perfectly the sand organizes itself as it flows, using the best material its mass affords to form the sharp edges of its channel. Such are the sources of rivers. In the silicious matter which the water deposits is perhaps the bony system, and in the still finer soil and organic matter the fleshy fibre or cellular tissue. What is man but a mass of thawing clay? The ball of the human finger is but a drop congealed. The fingers and toes flow to their extent from the thawing mass of the body. Who knows what the human body would expand and flow out to under a more genial heaven? Is not the hand a spreading *palm* leaf with its lobes and veins? The ear may be regarded, fancifully, as a lichen, *Umbilicaria*, on the side of the head, with its lobe or drop. The lip — *labium*, from *labor* (?) — laps or lapses from the sides of the cavernous mouth. The nose is a manifest congealed drop or stalactite. The chin is a still larger drop, the confluent dripping of the face. The cheeks are a slide from the brows into the valley of the face, opposed and diffused by the cheek bones. Each rounded lobe of the vegetable leaf, too, is a thick and now loitering drop, larger or smaller; the lobes are the fingers of the leaf; and as many lobes as it has, in so many directions it tends to flow, and more heat or other genial influences would have caused it to flow yet farther.

Thus it seemed that this one hillside illustrated the principle of all the operations of Nature. The Maker of this earth but patented a leaf. What Champollion will decipher this hieroglyphic for us, that we

may turn over a new leaf at last? This phenomenon is more exhilarating to me than the luxuriance and fertility of vineyards. True, it is somewhat excrementitious in its character, and there is no end to the heaps of liver, lights, and bowels, as if the globe were turned wrong side outward; but this suggests at least that Nature has some bowels, and there again is mother of humanity. This is the frost coming out of the ground; this is Spring. It precedes the green and flowery spring, as mythology precedes regular poetry. I know of nothing more purgative of winter fumes and indigestions. It convinces me that Earth is still in her swaddling-clothes, and stretches forth baby fingers on every side. Fresh curls spring from the baldest brow. There is nothing inorganic. These foliaceous heaps lie along the bank like the slag of a furnace, showing that Nature is "in full blast" within. The earth is not a mere fragment of dead history, stratum upon stratum like the leaves of a book, to be studied by geologists and antiquaries chiefly, but living poetry like the leaves of a tree, which precede flowers and fruit — not a fossil earth, but a living earth; compared with whose great central life all animal and vegetable life is merely parasitic. Its throes will heave our exuviae from their graves. You may melt your metals and cast them into the most beautiful moulds you can; they will never excite me like the forms which this molten earth flows out into. And not only it, but the institutions upon it are plastic like clay in the hands of the potter.

Ere long, not only on these banks, but on every hill and plain and in every hollow, the frost comes out of the ground like a dormant quadruped from its burrow, and seeks the sea with music, or migrates to other climes in clouds. Thaw with his gentle persuasion is more powerful than Thor with his hammer. The one melts, the other but breaks in pieces.

When the ground was partially bare of snow, and a few warm days had dried its surface somewhat, it was pleasant to compare the first tender signs of the infant year just peeping forth with the stately beauty of the withered vegetation which had withstood the winter — life-everlasting, goldenrods, pinweeds, and graceful wild grasses, more obvious and interesting frequently than in summer even, as if their beauty was not ripe till then; even cotton-grass, cat-tails, mulleins, johnswort, hard-hack, meadow-sweet, and other strong-

stemmed plants, those unexhausted granaries which entertain the earliest birds — decent weeds, at least, which widowed Nature wears. I am particularly attracted by the arching and sheaf-like top of the wool-grass; it brings back the summer to our winter memories, and is among the forms which art loves to copy, and which, in the vegetable kingdom, have the same relation to types already in the mind of man that astronomy has. It is an antique style, older than Greek or Egyptian. Many of the phenomena of Winter are suggestive of an inexpressible tenderness and fragile delicacy. We are accustomed to hear this king described as a rude and boisterous tyrant; but with the gentleness of a lover he adorns the tresses of Summer.

At the approach of spring the red squirrels got under my house, two at a time, directly under my feet as I sat reading or writing, and kept up the queerest chuckling and chirruping and vocal pirouetting and gurgling sounds that ever were heard; and when I stamped they only chirruped the louder, as if past all fear and respect in their mad pranks, defying humanity to stop them. No, you don't — chickaree — chickaree. They were wholly deaf to my arguments, or failed to perceive their force, and fell into a strain of invective that was irresistible.

The first sparrow of spring! The year beginning with younger hope than ever! The faint silvery warblings heard over the partially bare and moist fields from the bluebird, the song sparrow, and the red-wing, as if the last flakes of winter tinkled as they fell! What at such a time are histories, chronologies, traditions, and all written revelations? The brooks sing carols and glees to the spring. The marsh hawk, sailing low over the meadow, is already seeking the first slimy life that awakes. The sinking sound of melting snow is heard in all dells, and the ice dissolves apace in the ponds. The grass flames up on the hillsides like a spring fire— "et primitus oritur herba imbribus primoribus evocata" — as if the earth sent forth an inward heat to greet the returning sun; not yellow but green is the color of its flame; — the symbol of perpetual youth, the grass-blade, like a long green ribbon, streams from the sod into the summer, checked indeed by the frost, but anon pushing on again, lifting its spear of last year's hay with the fresh life below. It grows as steadily

as the rill oozes out of the ground. It is almost identical with that, for in the growing days of June, when the rills are dry, the grass-blades are their channels, and from year to year the herds drink at this perennial green stream, and the mower draws from it betimes their winter supply. So our human life but dies down to its root, and still puts forth its green blade to eternity.

Walden is melting apace. There is a canal two rods wide along the northerly and westerly sides, and wider still at the east end. A great field of ice has cracked off from the main body. I hear a song sparrow singing from the bushes on the shore, — *olit*, *olit*, *olit,* — *chip*, *chip*, *chip*, *che char*, — *che wiss*, *wiss*, *wiss*. He too is helping to crack it. How handsome the great sweeping curves in the edge of the ice, answering somewhat to those of the shore, but more regular! It is unusually hard, owing to the recent severe but transient cold, and all watered or waved like a palace floor. But the wind slides eastward over its opaque surface in vain, till it reaches the living surface beyond. It is glorious to behold this ribbon of water sparkling in the sun, the bare face of the pond full of glee and youth, as if it spoke the joy of the fishes within it, and of the sands on its shore — a silvery sheen as from the scales of a leuciscus, as it were all one active fish. Such is the contrast between winter and spring. Walden was dead and is alive again. But this spring it broke up more steadily, as I have said.

The change from storm and winter to serene and mild weather, from dark and sluggish hours to bright and elastic ones, is a memorable crisis which all things proclaim. It is seemingly instantaneous at last. Suddenly an influx of light filled my house, though the evening was at hand, and the clouds of winter still overhung it, and the eaves were dripping with sleety rain. I looked out the window, and lo! where yesterday was cold gray ice there lay the transparent pond already calm and full of hope as in a summer evening, reflecting a summer evening sky in its bosom, though none was visible overhead, as if it had intelligence with some remote horizon. I heard a robin in the distance, the first I had heard for many a thousand years, methought, whose note I shall not forget for many a thousand more — the same sweet and powerful song as of yore. O the evening robin, at the end of a New England summer day! If I

could ever find the twig he sits upon! I mean *he*; I mean the *twig*. This at least is not the *Turdus migratorius*. The pitch pines and shrub oaks about my house, which had so long drooped, suddenly resumed their several characters, looked brighter, greener, and more erect and alive, as if effectually cleansed and restored by the rain. I knew that it would not rain any more. You may tell by looking at any twig of the forest, ay, at your very wood-pile, whether its winter is past or not. As it grew darker, I was startled by the honking of geese flying low over the woods, like weary travellers getting in late from Southern lakes, and indulging at last in unrestrained complaint and mutual consolation. Standing at my door, I could hear the rush of their wings; when, driving toward my house, they suddenly spied my light, and with hushed clamor wheeled and settled in the pond. So I came in, and shut the door, and passed my first spring night in the woods.

In the morning I watched the geese from the door through the mist, sailing in the middle of the pond, fifty rods off, so large and tumultuous that Walden appeared like an artificial pond for their amusement. But when I stood on the shore they at once rose up with a great flapping of wings at the signal of their commander, and when they had got into rank circled about over my head, twenty-nine of them, and then steered straight to Canada, with a regular *honk* from the leader at intervals, trusting to break their fast in muddier pools. A "plump" of ducks rose at the same time and took the route to the north in the wake of their noisier cousins.

For a week I heard the circling, groping clangor of some solitary goose in the foggy mornings, seeking its companion, and still peopling the woods with the sound of a larger life than they could sustain. In April the pigeons were seen again flying express in small flocks, and in due time I heard the martins twittering over my clearing, though it had not seemed that the township contained so many that it could afford me any, and I fancied that they were peculiarly of the ancient race that dwelt in hollow trees ere white men came. In almost all climes the tortoise and the frog are among the precursors and heralds of this season, and birds fly with song and glancing plumage, and plants spring and bloom, and winds blow, to correct this slight oscillation of the poles and preserve the

equilibrium of nature.

As every season seems best to us in its turn, so the coming in of spring is like the creation of Cosmos out of Chaos and the realization of the Golden Age. —

> "Eurus ad Auroram Nabathaeaque regna recessit,
> Persidaque, et radiis juga subdita matutinis."

> "The East-Wind withdrew to Aurora and the Nabathæn kingdom,
> And the Persian, and the ridges placed under the morning rays.
> . . . . . .
> Man was born. Whether that Artificer of things,
> The origin of a better world, made him from the divine seed;
> Or the earth, being recent and lately sundered from the high
> Ether, retained some seeds of cognate heaven."

A single gentle rain makes the grass many shades greener. So our prospects brighten on the influx of better thoughts. We should be blessed if we lived in the present always, and took advantage of every accident that befell us, like the grass which confesses the influence of the slightest dew that falls on it; and did not spend our time in atoning for the neglect of past opportunities, which we call doing our duty. We loiter in winter while it is already spring. In a pleasant spring morning all men's sins are forgiven. Such a day is a truce to vice. While such a sun holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return. Through our own recovered innocence we discern the innocence of our neighbors. You may have known your neighbor yesterday for a thief, a drunkard, or a sensualist, and merely pitied or despised him, and despaired of the world; but the sun shines bright and warm this first spring morning, recreating the world, and you meet him at some serene work, and see how it is exhausted and debauched veins expand with still joy and bless the new day, feel the spring influence with the innocence of infancy, and all his faults are forgotten. There is not only an atmosphere of good will about him, but even a savor of holiness groping for expression, blindly and ineffectually perhaps, like a new-born instinct, and for a short hour the south hill-side echoes to no vulgar jest. You see some innocent

fair shoots preparing to burst from his gnarled rind and try another year's life, tender and fresh as the youngest plant. Even he has entered into the joy of his Lord. Why the jailer does not leave open his prison doors — why the judge does not dismis his case — why the preacher does not dismiss his congregation! It is because they do not obey the hint which God gives them, nor accept the pardon which he freely offers to all.

"A return to goodness produced each day in the tranquil and beneficent breath of the morning, causes that in respect to the love of virtue and the hatred of vice, one approaches a little the primitive nature of man, as the sprouts of the forest which has been felled. In like manner the evil which one does in the interval of a day prevents the germs of virtues which began to spring up again from developing themselves and destroys them.

"After the germs of virtue have thus been prevented many times from developing themselves, then the beneficent breath of evening does not suffice to preserve them. As soon as the breath of evening does not suffice longer to preserve them, then the nature of man does not differ much from that of the brute. Men seeing the nature of this man like that of the brute, think that he has never possessed the innate faculty of reason. Are those the true and natural sentiments of man?"

> "The Golden Age was first created, which without any avenger
> Spontaneously without law cherished fidelity and rectitude.
> Punishment and fear were not; nor were threatening words read
> On suspended brass; nor did the suppliant crowd fear
> The words of their judge; but were safe without an avenger.
> Not yet the pine felled on its mountains had descended
> To the liquid waves that it might see a foreign world,
> And mortals knew no shores but their own.
> . . . . . .
> There was eternal spring, and placid zephyrs with warm
> Blasts soothed the flowers born without seed."

On the 29th of April, as I was fishing from the bank of the river near the Nine-Acre-Corner bridge, standing on the quaking grass and

willow roots, where the muskrats lurk, I heard a singular rattling sound, somewhat like that of the sticks which boys play with their fingers, when, looking up, I observed a very slight and graceful hawk, like a nighthawk, alternately soaring like a ripple and tumbling a rod or two over and over, showing the under side of its wings, which gleamed like a satin ribbon in the sun, or like the pearly inside of a shell. This sight reminded me of falconry and what nobleness and poetry are associated with that sport. The Merlin it seemed to me it might be called: but I care not for its name. It was the most ethereal flight I had ever witnessed. It did not simply flutter like a butterfly, nor soar like the larger hawks, but it sported with proud reliance in the fields of air; mounting again and again with its strange chuckle, it repeated its free and beautiful fall, turning over and over like a kite, and then recovering from its lofty tumbling, as if it had never set its foot on *terra firma*. It appeared to have no companion in the universe — sporting there alone — and to need none but the morning and the ether with which it played. It was not lonely, but made all the earth lonely beneath it. Where was the parent which hatched it, its kindred, and its father in the heavens? The tenant of the air, it seemed related to the earth but by an egg hatched some time in the crevice of a crag; — or was its native nest made in the angle of a cloud, woven of the rainbow's trimmings and the sunset sky, and lined with some soft midsummer haze caught up from earth? Its eyry now some cliffy cloud.

Beside this I got a rare mess of golden and silver and bright cupreous fishes, which looked like a string of jewels. Ah! I have penetrated to those meadows on the morning of many a first spring day, jumping from hummock to hummock, from willow root to willow root, when the wild river valley and the woods were bathed in so pure and bright a light as would have waked the dead, if they had been slumbering in their graves, as some suppose. There needs no stronger proof of immortality. All things must live in such a light. O Death, where was thy sting? O Grave, where was thy victory, then?

Our village life would stagnate if it were not for the unexplored forests and meadows which surround it. We need the tonic of wildness — to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the

whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground. At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be infinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of nature. We must be refreshed by the sight of inexhaustible vigor, vast and titanic features, the sea-coast with its wrecks, the wilderness with its living and its decaying trees, the thunder-cloud, and the rain which lasts three weeks and produces freshets. We need to witness our own limits transgressed, and some life pasturing freely where we never wander. We are cheered when we observe the vulture feeding on the carrion which disgusts and disheartens us, and deriving health and strength from the repast. There was a dead horse in the hollow by the path to my house, which compelled me sometimes to go out of my way, especially in the night when the air was heavy, but the assurance it gave me of the strong appetite and inviolable health of Nature was my compensation for this. I love to see that Nature is so rife with life that myriads can be afforded to be sacrificed and suffered to prey on one another; that tender organizations can be so serenely squashed out of existence like pulp — tadpoles which herons gobble up, and tortoises and toads run over in the road; and that sometimes it has rained flesh and blood! With the liability to accident, we must see how little account is to be made of it. The impression made on a wise man is that of universal innocence. Poison is not poisonous after all, nor are any wounds fatal. Compassion is a very untenable ground. It must be expeditious. Its pleadings will not bear to be stereotyped.

Early in May, the oaks, hickories, maples, and other trees, just putting out amidst the pine woods around the pond, imparted a brightness like sunshine to the landscape, especially in cloudy days, as if the sun were breaking through mists and shining faintly on the hillsides here and there. On the third or fourth of May I saw a loon in the pond, and during the first week of the month I heard the whip-poor-will, the brown thrasher, the veery, the wood pewee, the chewink, and other birds. I had heard the wood thrush long before. The phœbe had already come once more and looked in at my door

and window, to see if my house was cavern-like enough for her, sustaining herself on humming wings with clinched talons, as if she held by the air, while she surveyed the premises. The sulphur-like pollen of the pitch pine soon covered the pond and the stones and rotten wood along the shore, so that you could have collected a barrelful. This is the "sulphur showers" we hear of. Even in Calidas' drama of Sacontala, we read of "rills dyed yellow with the golden dust of the lotus." And so the seasons went rolling on into summer, as one rambles into higher and higher grass.

Thus was my first year's life in the woods completed; and the second year was similar to it. I finally left Walden September 6th, 1847.

Conclusion

To the sick the doctors wisely recommend a change of air and scenery. Thank Heaven, here is not all the world. The buckeye does not grow in New England, and the mockingbird is rarely heard here. The wild goose is more of a cosmopolite than we; he breaks his fast in Canada, takes a luncheon in the Ohio, and plumes himself for the night in a southern bayou. Even the bison, to some extent, keeps pace with the seasons cropping the pastures of the Colorado only till a greener and sweeter grass awaits him by the Yellowstone. Yet we think that if rail fences are pulled down, and stone walls piled up on our farms, bounds are henceforth set to our lives and our fates decided. If you are chosen town clerk, forsooth, you cannot go to Tierra del Fuego this summer: but you may go to the land of infernal fire nevertheless. The universe is wider than our views of it.

Yet we should oftener look over the tafferel of our craft, like curious passengers, and not make the voyage like stupid sailors picking oakum. The other side of the globe is but the home of our correspondent. Our voyaging is only great-circle sailing, and the doctors prescribe for diseases of the skin merely. One hastens to southern Africa to chase the giraffe; but surely that is not the game he would be after. How long, pray, would a man hunt giraffes if he could? Snipes and woodcocks also may afford rare sport; but I trust it would be nobler game to shoot one's self. —

> "Direct your eye right inward, and you'll find
> A thousand regions in your mind
> Yet undiscovered. Travel them, and be
> Expert in home-cosmography."

What does Africa — what does the West stand for? Is not our own interior white on the chart? black though it may prove, like the coast, when discovered. Is it the source of the Nile, or the Niger, or the Mississippi, or a Northwest Passage around this continent, that we would find? Are these the problems which most concern mankind? Is Franklin the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest

to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is? Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clark and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes — with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary; and pile the empty cans sky-high for a sign. Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat merely? Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no self-respect, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay. Patriotism is a maggot in their heads. What was the meaning of that South-Sea Exploring Expedition, with all its parade and expense, but an indirect recognition of the fact that there are continents and seas in the moral world to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but that it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone.

"Erret, et extremos alter scrutetur Iberos.
Plus habet hic vitae, plus habet ille viae."

Let them wander and scrutinize the outlandish Australians.
I have more of God, they more of the road.

It is not worth the while to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar. Yet do this even till you can do better, and you may perhaps find some "Symmes' Hole" by which to get at the inside at last. England and France, Spain and Portugal, Gold Coast and Slave Coast, all front on this private sea; but no bark from them has ventured out of sight of land, though it is without doubt the direct way to India. If you would learn to speak all tongues and conform to the customs of all nations, if you would travel farther than all travellers, be naturalized in all climes, and cause the Sphinx to dash

her head against a stone, even obey the precept of the old philosopher, and Explore thyself. Herein are demanded the eye and the nerve. Only the defeated and deserters go to the wars, cowards that run away and enlist. Start now on that farthest western way, which does not pause at the Mississippi or the Pacific, nor conduct toward a worn-out China or Japan, but leads on direct, a tangent to this sphere, summer and winter, day and night, sun down, moon down, and at last earth down too.

It is said that Mirabeau took to highway robbery "to ascertain what degree of resolution was necessary in order to place one's self in formal opposition to the most sacred laws of society." He declared that "a soldier who fights in the ranks does not require half so much courage as a footpad"— "that honor and religion have never stood in the way of a well-considered and a firm resolve." This was manly, as the world goes; and yet it was idle, if not desperate. A saner man would have found himself often enough "in formal opposition" to what are deemed "the most sacred laws of society," through obedience to yet more sacred laws, and so have tested his resolution without going out of his way. It is not for a man to put himself in such an attitude to society, but to maintain himself in whatever attitude he find himself through obedience to the laws of his being, which will never be one of opposition to a just government, if he should chance to meet with such.

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves. I had not lived there a week before my feet wore a path from my door to the pond-side; and though it is five or six years since I trod it, it is still quite distinct. It is true, I fear, that others may have fallen into it, and so helped to keep it open. The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men; and so with the paths which the mind travels. How worn and dusty, then, must be the highways of the world, how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! I did not wish to take a cabin passage, but rather to go before the mast and on the deck of the world, for there I could best see the moonlight amid the mountains. I do not wish to go below

now.

I learned this, at least, by my experiment: that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours. He will put some things behind, will pass an invisible boundary; new, universal, and more liberal laws will begin to establish themselves around and within him; or the old laws be expanded, and interpreted in his favor in a more liberal sense, and he will live with the license of a higher order of beings. In proportion as he simplifies his life, the laws of the universe will appear less complex, and solitude will not be solitude, nor poverty poverty, nor weakness weakness. If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

It is a ridiculous demand which England and America make, that you shall speak so that they can understand you. Neither men nor toadstools grow so. As if that were important, and there were not enough to understand you without them. As if Nature could support but one order of understandings, could not sustain birds as well as quadrupeds, flying as well as creeping things, and *hush* and *whoa*, which Bright can understand, were the best English. As if there were safety in stupidity alone. I fear chiefly lest my expression may not be *extra-vagant* enough, may not wander far enough beyond the narrow limits of my daily experience, so as to be adequate to the truth of which I have been convinced. *Extra vagance!* it depends on how you are yarded. The migrating buffalo, which seeks new pastures in another latitude, is not extravagant like the cow which kicks over the pail, leaps the cowyard fence, and runs after her calf, in milking time. I desire to speak somewhere *without* bounds; like a man in a waking moment, to men in their waking moments; for I am convinced that I cannot exaggerate enough even to lay the foundation of a true expression. Who that has heard a strain of music feared then lest he should speak extravagantly any more forever? In view of the future or possible, we should live quite laxly and undefined in front, our outlines dim and misty on that side; as our shadows reveal an insensible perspiration toward the sun. The volatile truth of our words should continually betray the inadequacy of the residual

statement. Their truth is instantly *translated*; its literal monument alone remains. The words which express our faith and piety are not definite; yet they are significant and fragrant like frankincense to superior natures.

Why level downward to our dullest perception always, and praise that as common sense? The commonest sense is the sense of men asleep, which they express by snoring. Sometimes we are inclined to class those who are once-and-a-half-witted with the half-witted, because we appreciate only a third part of their wit. Some would find fault with the morning red, if they ever got up early enough. "They pretend," as I hear, "that the verses of Kabir have four different senses; illusion, spirit, intellect, and the exoteric doctrine of the Vedas"; but in this part of the world it is considered a ground for complaint if a man's writings admit of more than one interpretation. While England endeavors to cure the potato-rot, will not any endeavor to cure the brain-rot, which prevails so much more widely and fatally?

I do not suppose that I have attained to obscurity, but I should be proud if no more fatal fault were found with my pages on this score than was found with the Walden ice. Southern customers objected to its blue color, which is the evidence of its purity, as if it were muddy, and preferred the Cambridge ice, which is white, but tastes of weeds. The purity men love is like the mists which envelop the earth, and not like the azure ether beyond.

Some are dinning in our ears that we Americans, and moderns generally, are intellectual dwarfs compared with the ancients, or even the Elizabethan men. But what is that to the purpose? A living dog is better than a dead lion. Shall a man go and hang himself because he belongs to the race of pygmies, and not be the biggest pygmy that he can? Let every one mind his own business, and endeavor to be what he was made.

Why should we be in such desperate haste to succeed and in such desperate enterprises? If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. It is not important that he should mature as soon as an apple tree or an oak. Shall he turn his spring into summer? If the condition

of things which we were made for is not yet, what were any reality which we can substitute? We will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. Shall we with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over ourselves, though when it is done we shall be sure to gaze still at the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not?

There was an artist in the city of Kouroo who was disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to himself, It shall be perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in my life. He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material; and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but he grew not older by a moment. His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way, and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him. Before he had found a stock in all respects suitable the city of Kouroo was a hoary ruin, and he sat on one of its mounds to peel the stick. Before he had given it the proper shape the dynasty of the Candahars was at an end, and with the point of the stick he wrote the name of the last of that race in the sand, and then resumed his work. By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff Kalpa was no longer the pole-star; and ere he had put on the ferule and the head adorned with precious stones, Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times. But why do I stay to mention these things? When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new system in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions; in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places. And now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that, for him and his work, the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma to fall on and inflame the tinder of a mortal brain. The material was pure, and his art was

pure; how could the result be other than wonderful?

No face which we can give to a matter will stead us so well at last as the truth. This alone wears well. For the most part, we are not where we are, but in a false position. Through an infinity of our natures, we suppose a case, and put ourselves into it, and hence are in two cases at the same time, and it is doubly difficult to get out. In sane moments we regard only the facts, the case that is. Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe. Tom Hyde, the tinker, standing on the gallows, was asked if he had anything to say. "Tell the tailors," said he, "to remember to make a knot in their thread before they take the first stitch." His companion's prayer is forgotten.

However mean your life is, meet it and live it; do not shun it and call it hard names. It is not so bad as you are. It looks poorest when you are richest. The fault-finder will find faults even in paradise. Love your life, poor as it is. You may perhaps have some pleasant, thrilling, glorious hours, even in a poorhouse. The setting sun is reflected from the windows of the almshouse as brightly as from the rich man's abode; the snow melts before its door as early in the spring. I do not see but a quiet mind may live as contentedly there, and have as cheering thoughts, as in a palace. The town's poor seem to me often to live the most independent lives of any. Maybe they are simply great enough to receive without misgiving. Most think that they are above being supported by the town; but it oftener happens that they are not above supporting themselves by dishonest means, which should be more disreputable. Cultivate poverty like a garden herb, like sage. Do not trouble yourself much to get new things, whether clothes or friends. Turn the old; return to them. Things do not change; we change. Sell your clothes and keep your thoughts. God will see that you do not want society. If I were confined to a corner of a garret all my days, like a spider, the world would be just as large to me while I had my thoughts about me. The philosopher said: "From an army of three divisions one can take away its general, and put it in disorder; from the man the most abject and vulgar one cannot take away his thought." Do not seek so anxiously to be developed, to subject yourself to many influences to be played on; it is all dissipation. Humility like darkness reveals the heavenly lights.

The shadows of poverty and meanness gather around us, “and lo! creation widens to our view.” We are often reminded that if there were bestowed on us the wealth of Croesus, our aims must still be the same, and our means essentially the same. Moreover, if you are restricted in your range by poverty, if you cannot buy books and newspapers, for instance, you are but confined to the most significant and vital experiences; you are compelled to deal with the material which yields the most sugar and the most starch. It is life near the bone where it is sweetest. You are defended from being a trifler. No man loses ever on a lower level by magnanimity on a higher. Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul.

I live in the angle of a leaden wall, into whose composition was poured a little alloy of bell-metal. Often, in the repose of my mid-day, there reaches my ears a confused tintinnabulum from without. It is the noise of my contemporaries. My neighbors tell me of their adventures with famous gentlemen and ladies, what notabilities they met at the dinner-table; but I am no more interested in such things than in the contents of the Daily Times. The interest and the conversation are about costume and manners chiefly; but a goose is a goose still, dress it as you will. They tell me of California and Texas, of England and the Indies, of the Hon. Mr. —— of Georgia or of Massachusetts, all transient and fleeting phenomena, till I am ready to leap from their court-yard like the Mameluke bey. I delight to come to my bearings — not walk in procession with pomp and parade, in a conspicuous place, but to walk even with the Builder of the universe, if I may — not to live in this restless, nervous, bustling, trivial Nineteenth Century, but stand or sit thoughtfully while it goes by. What are men celebrating? They are all on a committee of arrangements, and hourly expect a speech from somebody. God is only the president of the day, and Webster is his orator. I love to weigh, to settle, to gravitate toward that which most strongly and rightfully attracts me — not hang by the beam of the scale and try to weigh less — not suppose a case, but take the case that is; to travel the only path I can, and that on which no power can resist me. It affords me no satisfaction to commerce to spring an arch before I have got a solid foundation. Let us not play at kittly-benders. There

is a solid bottom everywhere. We read that the traveller asked the boy if the swamp before him had a hard bottom. The boy replied that it had. But presently the traveller's horse sank in up to the girths, and he observed to the boy, "I thought you said that this bog had a hard bottom." "So it has," answered the latter, "but you have not got half way to it yet." So it is with the bogs and quicksands of society; but he is an old boy that knows it. Only what is thought, said, or done at a certain rare coincidence is good. I would not be one of those who will foolishly drive a nail into mere lath and plastering; such a deed would keep me awake nights. Give me a hammer, and let me feel for the furring. Do not depend on the putty. Drive a nail home and clinch it so faithfully that you can wake up in the night and think of your work with satisfaction — a work at which you would not be ashamed to invoke the Muse. So will help you God, and so only. Every nail driven should be as another rivet in the machine of the universe, you carrying on the work.

Rather than love, than money, than fame, give me truth. I sat at a table where were rich food and wine in abundance, and obsequious attendance, but sincerity and truth were not; and I went away hungry from the inhospitable board. The hospitality was as cold as the ices. I thought that there was no need of ice to freeze them. They talked to me of the age of the wine and the fame of the vintage; but I thought of an older, a newer, and purer wine, of a more glorious vintage, which they had not got, and could not buy. The style, the house and grounds and "entertainment" pass for nothing with me. I called on the king, but he made me wait in his hall, and conducted like a man incapacitated for hospitality. There was a man in my neighborhood who lived in a hollow tree. His manners were truly regal. I should have done better had I called on him.

How long shall we sit in our porticoes practising idle and musty virtues, which any work would make impertinent? As if one were to begin the day with long-suffering, and hire a man to hoe his potatoes; and in the afternoon go forth to practise Christian meekness and charity with goodness aforethought! Consider the China pride and stagnant self-complacency of mankind. This generation inclines a little to congratulate itself on being the last of an illustrious line; and in Boston and London and Paris and Rome, thinking of its long

descent, it speaks of its progress in art and science and literature with satisfaction. There are the Records of the Philosophical Societies, and the public Eulogies of Great Men! It is the good Adam contemplating his own virtue. "Yes, we have done great deeds, and sung divine songs, which shall never die" — that is, as long as we can remember them. The learned societies and great men of Assyria — where are they? What youthful philosophers and experimentalists we are! There is not one of my readers who has yet lived a whole human life. These may be but the spring months in the life of the race. If we have had the seven-years' itch, we have not seen the seventeen-year locust yet in Concord. We are acquainted with a mere pellicle of the globe on which we live. Most have not delved six feet beneath the surface, nor leaped as many above it. We know not where we are. Beside, we are sound asleep nearly half our time. Yet we esteem ourselves wise, and have an established order on the surface. Truly, we are deep thinkers, we are ambitious spirits! As I stand over the insect crawling amid the pine needles on the forest floor, and endeavoring to conceal itself from my sight, and ask myself why it will cherish those humble thoughts, and bide its head from me who might, perhaps, be its benefactor, and impart to its race some cheering information, I am reminded of the greater Benefactor and Intelligence that stands over me the human insect.

There is an incessant influx of novelty into the world, and yet we tolerate incredible dulness. I need only suggest what kind of sermons are still listened to in the most enlightened countries. There are such words as joy and sorrow, but they are only the burden of a psalm, sung with a nasal twang, while we believe in the ordinary and mean. We think that we can change our clothes only. It is said that the British Empire is very large and respectable, and that the United States are a first-rate power. We do not believe that a tide rises and falls behind every man which can float the British Empire like a chip, if he should ever harbor it in his mind. Who knows what sort of seventeen-year locust will next come out of the ground? The government of the world I live in was not framed, like that of Britain, in after-dinner conversations over the wine.

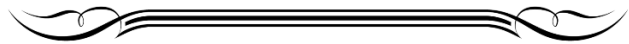
The life in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands;

even this may be the eventful year, which will drown out all our muskrats. It was not always dry land where we dwell. I see far inland the banks which the stream anciently washed, before science began to record its freshets. Every one has heard the story which has gone the rounds of New England, of a strong and beautiful bug which came out of the dry leaf of an old table of apple-tree wood, which had stood in a farmer's kitchen for sixty years, first in Connecticut, and afterward in Massachusetts — from an egg deposited in the living tree many years earlier still, as appeared by counting the annual layers beyond it; which was heard gnawing out for several weeks, hatched perchance by the heat of an urn. Who does not feel his faith in a resurrection and immortality strengthened by hearing of this? Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness in the dead dry life of society, deposited at first in the alburnum of the green and living tree, which has been gradually converted into the semblance of its well-seasoned tomb — heard perchance gnawing out now for years by the astonished family of man, as they sat round the festive board — may unexpectedly come forth from amidst society's most trivial and handselled furniture, to enjoy its perfect summer life at last!

I do not say that John or Jonathan will realize all this; but such is the character of that morrow which mere lapse of time can never make to dawn. The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star.

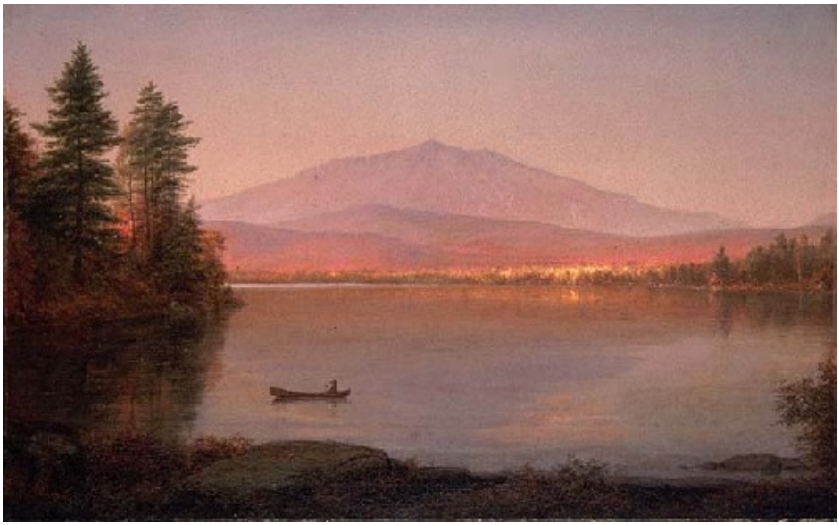
THE END

THE MAINE WOODS



In August 1846, Thoreau briefly left Walden to make a trip to Mount Katahdin in Maine, a journey which he later recorded in "Ktaadn," the first part of his 1864 book *The Maine Woods*. The book describes trips over an eleven year period and Thoreau worked on these essays a further fifteen years. *The Maine Woods* now exists as three essays, though if Thoreau had lived longer, he may have revised them into a more cohesive whole. The essays provide one of the author's most detailed accounts of the process of change in the American hinterland. As critic Paul Theroux explains, "Thoreau reveals how to write about nature; how to know more, how to observe, and even gives instructions on how to live. The book illustrates the powerful lesson of the truthfulness of dogged observation: that when the truth is told, the text is prophetic."

The essay "Allegash and the East Branch" provides a particularly useful excursion on which to examine Thoreau's wilderness ideology. It is one of the final works in the Thoreau corpus and presents his mature vision. On this trip he spent significant time in intimate contact with what he considered to be wild nature. He travelled in the company of Joe Polis, a Penobscot Indian, who was literate in white culture as well as an expert in his own culture's ways of being at home in nature. On the trip Thoreau employed Polis as both a guide through the woods and a mentor in Penobscot culture. "I told him," he explained, "that in this voyage I would tell him all I knew, and he should tell me all he knew, to which he readily agreed."



Mount Katahdin from Millinocket Camp, by Frederic Edwin Church, 1895



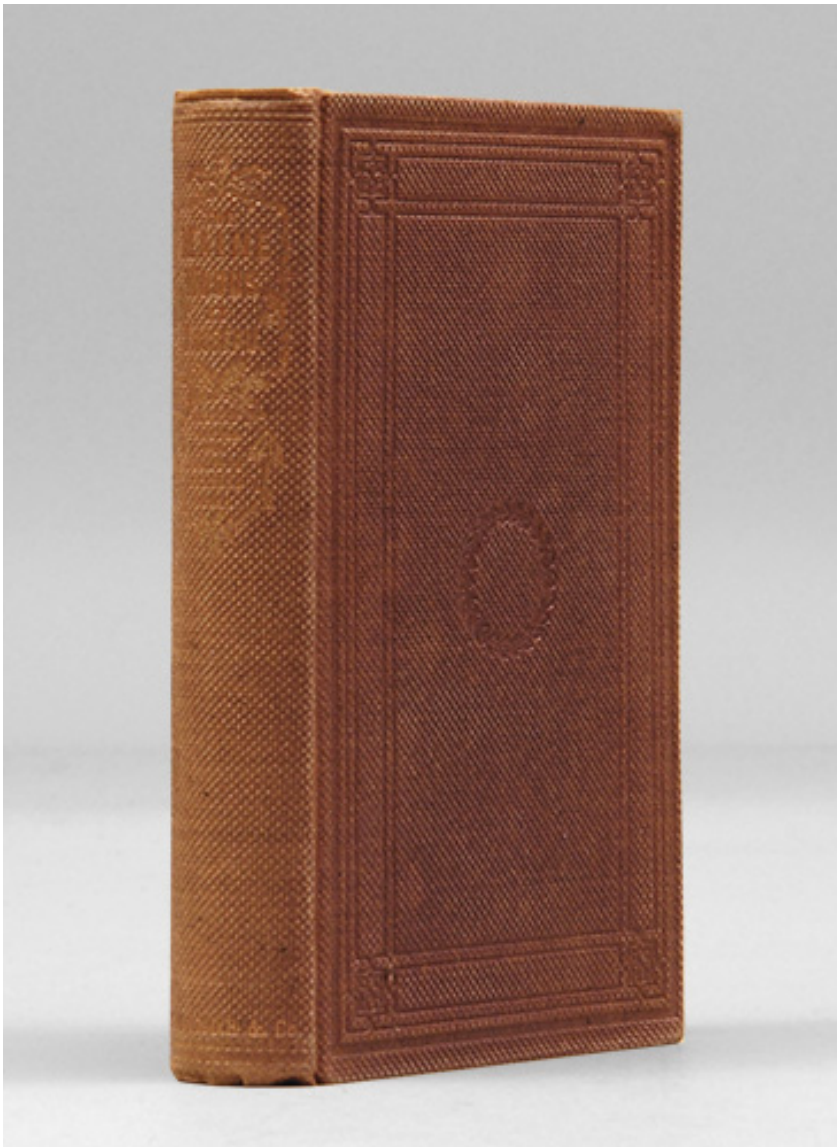
Mount Katahdin today

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Joe Polis, Thoreau's guide



The first edition

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Maine Woods was the second volume collected from his writings after Thoreau's death. Of the material which composed it, the first two divisions were already in print. "Ktaadn and the Maine Woods" was the title of a paper printed in 1848 in *The Union Magazine*, and "Chesuncook" was published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1858. The book was edited by his friend William Ellery Channing.

It was during his second summer at Walden that Thoreau made his first visit to the Maine woods. It was probably in response to a request from Horace Greeley that he wrote out the narrative from his journal, for Mr. Greeley had shown himself eager to help Thoreau in putting his wares on the market. In a letter to Emerson, January 12, 1848, Thoreau writes: "I read a part of the story of my excursion to Ktaadn to quite a large audience of men and boys, the other night, whom it interested. It contains many facts and some poetry." He offered the paper to Greeley at the end of March, and on the 17th of April Greeley responded: "I inclose you $25 for your article on Maine scenery, as promised. I know it is worth more, though I have not yet found time to read it; but I have tried once to sell it without success. It is rather long for my columns, and too fine for the million; but I consider it a cheap bargain, and shall print it myself if I do not dispose of it to better advantage. You will not, of course, consider yourself under any sort of obligation to me, for my offer was in the way of business, and I have got more than the worth of my money." But this generous, high-minded friend was thinking of Thoreau's business, not his own, for in October of the same year he writes, "I break a silence of some duration to inform you that I hope on Monday to receive payment for your glorious account of 'Ktaadn and the Maine Woods,' which I bought of you at a Jew's bargain and sold to *The Union Magazine*. I am to get $75 for it, and as I don't choose to *exploiter* you at such a rate, I shall insist on inclosing you $25 more in this letter, which will still leave me $25 to pay various charges and labors I have incurred in selling your articles and getting paid for them, — the latter by far the most difficult portion of the business."

The third of Thoreau's excursions in the Maine woods was made very largely for the purpose of studying Indian life and character in the person of his guide. He had all his life been interested in the Indians, and Mr. Sanborn tells us — what is also evident from his journal — that it was his purpose to expand his studies into a separate work on the subject, for which he had collected a considerable amount of material from books as well as from his own observations. After his return from the Allegash and East Branch he wrote as follows to Mr. Blake under date of August 18, 1857: "I have now returned, and think I have had a quite profitable journey, chiefly from associating with an intelligent Indian.... Having returned, I flatter myself that the world appears in some respects a little larger, and not as usual smaller and shallower for having extended my range. I have made a short excursion into the new world which the Indian dwells in, or is. He begins where we leave off. It is worth the while to detect new faculties in man, he is so much the more divine; and anything that fairly excites our admiration expands us. The Indian who can find his way so wonderfully in the woods possesses so much intelligence which the white man does not, and it increases my own capacity as well as faith to observe it. I rejoice to find that intelligence flows in other channels than I knew. It redeems for me portions of what seemed brutish before. It is a great satisfaction to find that your oldest convictions are permanent. With regard to essentials I have never had occasion to change my mind. The aspect of the world varies from year to year as the landscape is differently clothed, but I find that the *truth* is still *true*, and I never regret any emphasis which it may have inspired. Ktaadn is there still, but much more surely my old conviction is there, resting with more than mountain breadth and weight on the world, the source still of fertilizing streams, and affording glorious views from its summit if I can get up to it again."

KTAADN

On the 31st of August, 1846, I left Concord in Massachusetts for Bangor and the backwoods of Maine, by way of the railroad and steamboat, intending to accompany a relative of mine, engaged in the lumber trade in Bangor, as far as a dam on the West Branch of the Penobscot, in which property he was interested. From this place, which is about one hundred miles by the river above Bangor, thirty miles from the Houlton military road, and five miles beyond the last log hut, I proposed to make excursions to Mount Ktaadn, the second highest mountain in New England, about thirty miles distant, and to some of the lakes of the Penobscot, either alone or with such company as I might pick up there. It is unusual to find a camp so far in the woods at that season, when lumbering operations have ceased, and I was glad to avail myself of the circumstance of a gang of men being employed there at that time in repairing the injuries caused by the great freshet in the spring. The mountain may be approached more easily and directly on horseback and on foot from the northeast side, by the Aroostook road, and the Wassataquoik River; but in that case you see much less of the wilderness, none of the glorious river and lake scenery, and have no experience of the batteau and the boatman's life. I was fortunate also in the season of the year, for in the summer myriads of black flies, mosquitoes, and midges, or, as the Indians call them, "no-see-ems," make traveling in the woods almost impossible; but now their reign was nearly over.

Ktaadn, whose name is an Indian word signifying highest land, was first ascended by white men in 1804. It was visited by Professor J. W. Bailey of West Point in 1836; by Dr. Charles T. Jackson, the State Geologist, in 1837; and by two young men from Boston in 1845. All these have given accounts of their expeditions. Since I was there, two or three other parties have made the excursion, and told their stories. Besides these, very few, even among backwoodsmen and hunters, have ever climbed it, and it will be a long time before the tide of fashionable travel sets that way. The mountainous region of the State of Maine stretches from near the White Mountains, northeasterly one hundred and sixty miles, to the head of the

Aroostook River, and is about sixty miles wide. The wild or unsettled portion is far more extensive. So that some hours only of travel in this direction will carry the curious to the verge of a primitive forest, more interesting, perhaps, on all accounts, than they would reach by going a thousand miles westward.

The next forenoon, Tuesday, September 1, I started with my companion in a buggy from Bangor for "up river," expecting to be overtaken the next day night at Mattawamkeag Point, some sixty miles off, by two more Bangoreans, who had decided to join us in a trip to the mountain. We had each a knapsack or bag filled with such clothing and articles as were indispensable, and my companion carried his gun.

Within a dozen miles of Bangor we passed through the villages of Stillwater and Oldtown, built at the falls of the Penobscot, which furnish the principal power by which the Maine woods are converted into lumber. The mills are built directly over and across the river. Here is a close jam, a hard rub, at all seasons; and then the once green tree, long since white, I need not say as the driven snow, but as a driven log, becomes lumber merely. Here your inch, your two and your three inch stuff begin to be, and Mr. Sawyer marks off those spaces which decide the destiny of so many prostrate forests. Through this steel riddle, more or less coarse, is the arrowy Maine forest, from Ktaadn and Chesuncook, and the head-waters of the St. John, relentlessly sifted, till it comes out boards, clapboards, laths, and shingles such as the wind can take, still, perchance, to be slit and slit again, till men get a size that will suit. Think how stood the white pine tree on the shore of Chesuncook, its branches soughing with the four winds, and every individual needle trembling in the sunlight, — think how it stands with it now, — sold, perchance, to the New England Friction-Match Company! There were in 1837, as I read, two hundred and fifty sawmills on the Penobscot and its tributaries above Bangor, the greater part of them in this immediate neighborhood, and they sawed two hundred millions of feet of boards annually. To this is to be added the lumber of the Kennebec, Androscoggin, Saco, Passamaquoddy, and other streams. No wonder that we hear so often of vessels which are becalmed off our coast being surrounded a week at a time by floating lumber from the Maine

woods. The mission of men there seems to be, like so many busy demons, to drive the forest all out of the country, from every solitary beaver swamp and mountain-side, as soon as possible.

At Oldtown, we walked into a batteau-manufactory. The making of batteaux is quite a business here for the supply of the Penobscot River. We examined some on the stocks. They are light and shapely vessels, calculated for rapid and rocky streams, and to be carried over long portages on men's shoulders, from twenty to thirty feet long, and only four or four and a half wide, sharp at both ends like a canoe, though broadest forward on the bottom, and reaching seven or eight feet over the water, in order that they may slip over rocks as gently as possible. They are made very slight, only two boards to a side, commonly secured to a few light maple or other hard-wood knees, but inward are of the clearest and widest white pine stuff, of which there is a great waste on account of their form, for the bottom is left perfectly flat, not only from side to side, but from end to end. Sometimes they become "hogging" even, after long use, and the boatmen then turn them over and straighten them by a weight at each end. They told us that one wore out in two years, or often in a single trip, on the rocks, and sold for from fourteen to sixteen dollars. There was something refreshing and wildly musical to my ears in the very name of the white man's canoe, reminding me of Charlevoix and Canadian Voyageurs. The batteau is a sort of mongrel between the canoe and the boat, a fur-trader's boat.

The ferry here took us past the Indian island. As we left the shore, I observed a short, shabby, washerwoman-looking Indian, — they commonly have the woebegone look of the girl that cried for spilt milk, — just from "up river," land on the Oldtown side near a grocery, and, drawing up his canoe, take out a bundle of skins in one hand, and an empty keg or half-barrel in the other, and scramble up the bank with them. This picture will do to put before the Indian's history, that is, the history of his extinction. In 1837 there were three hundred and sixty-two souls left of this tribe. The island seemed deserted to-day, yet I observed some new houses among the weather-stained ones, as if the tribe had still a design upon life; but generally they have a very shabby, forlorn, and cheerless look, being all back side and woodshed, not homesteads, even Indian homesteads, but

instead of home or abroad-steads, for their life is *domi aut militiæ*, at home or at war, or now rather *venatus*, that is, a hunting, and most of the latter. The church is the only trim-looking building, but that is not Abenaki, that was Rome's doings. Good Canadian it may be, but it is poor Indian. These were once a powerful tribe. Politics are all the rage with them now. I even thought that a row of wigwams, with a dance of powwows, and a prisoner tortured at the stake, would be more respectable than this.

We landed in Milford, and rode along on the east side of the Penobscot, having a more or less constant view of the river, and the Indian islands in it, for they retain all the islands as far up as Nicketow, at the mouth of the East Branch. They are generally well-timbered, and are said to be better soil than the neighboring shores. The river seemed shallow and rocky, and interrupted by rapids, rippling and gleaming in the sun. We paused a moment to see a fish hawk dive for a fish down straight as an arrow, from a great height, but he missed his prey this time. It was the Houlton road on which we were now traveling, over which some troops were marched once towards Mars' Hill, though not to Mars' *field*, as it proved. It is the main, almost the only, road in these parts, as straight and well made, and kept in as good repair as almost any you will find anywhere. Everywhere we saw signs of the great freshet, — this house standing awry, and that where it was not founded, but where it was found, at any rate, the next day; and that other with a waterlogged look, as if it were still airing and drying its basement, and logs with everybody's marks upon them, and sometimes the marks of their having served as bridges, strewn along the road. We crossed the Sunkhaze, a summery Indian name, the Olemmon, Passadumkeag, and other streams, which make a greater show on the map than they now did on the road. At Passadumkeag we found anything but what the name implies, — earnest politicians, to wit, — white ones, I mean, — on the alert to know how the election was likely to go; men who talked rapidly, with subdued voice, and a sort of factitious earnestness you could not help believing, hardly waiting for an introduction, one on each side of your buggy, endeavoring to say much in little, for they see you hold the whip impatiently, but always saying little in much. Caucuses they have had, it seems, and caucuses they are to have again, —

victory and defeat. Somebody may be elected, somebody may not. One man, a total stranger, who stood by our carriage in the dusk, actually frightened the horse with his asseverations, growing more solemnly positive as there was less in him to be positive about. So Passadumkeag did not look on the map. At sundown, leaving the river road awhile for shortness, we went by way of Enfield, where we stopped for the night. This, like most of the localities bearing names on this road, was a place to name which, in the midst of the unnamed and unincorporated wilderness, was to make a distinction without a difference, it seemed to me. Here, however, I noticed quite an orchard of healthy and well-grown apple trees, in a bearing state, it being the oldest settler's house in this region, but all natural fruit and comparatively worthless for want of a grafter. And so it is generally, lower down the river. It would be a good speculation, as well as a favor conferred on the settlers, for a Massachusetts boy to go down there with a trunk full of choice scions, and his grafting apparatus, in the spring.

The next morning we drove along through a high and hilly country, in view of Cold-Stream Pond, a beautiful lake four or five miles long, and came into the Houlton road again, here called the military road, at Lincoln, forty-five miles from Bangor, where there is quite a village for this country, — the principal one above Oldtown. Learning that there were several wigwams here, on one of the Indian islands, we left our horse and wagon and walked through the forest half a mile to the river, to procure a guide to the mountain. It was not till after considerable search that we discovered their habitations, — small huts, in a retired place, where the scenery was unusually soft and beautiful, and the shore skirted with pleasant meadows and graceful elms. We paddled ourselves across to the island side in a canoe, which we found on the shore. Near where we landed sat an Indian girl, ten or twelve years old, on a rock in the water, in the sun, washing, and humming or moaning a song meanwhile. It was an aboriginal strain. A salmon-spear, made wholly of wood, lay on the shore, such as they might have used before white men came. It had an elastic piece of wood fastened to one side of its point, which slipped over and closed upon the fish, somewhat like the contrivance for holding a bucket at the end of a well-pole. As we

walked up to the nearest house, we were met by a sally of a dozen wolfish-looking dogs, which may have been lineal descendants from the ancient Indian dogs, which the first voyageurs describe as "their wolves." I suppose they were. The occupant soon appeared, with a long pole in his hand, with which he beat off the dogs, while he parleyed with us, — a stalwart, but dull and greasy-looking fellow, who told us, in his sluggish way, in answer to our questions, as if it were the first serious business he had to do that day, that there *were* Indians going "up river" — he and one other — to-day, before noon. And who was the other? Louis Neptune, who lives in the next house. Well, let us go over and see Louis together. The same doggish reception, and Louis Neptune makes his appearance, — a small, wiry man, with puckered and wrinkled face, yet he seemed the chief man of the two; the same, as I remembered, who had accompanied Jackson to the mountain in '37. The same questions were put to Louis, and the same information obtained, while the other Indian stood by. It appeared that they were going to start by noon, with two canoes, to go up to Chesuncook to hunt moose, — to be gone a month. "Well, Louis, suppose you get to the Point (to the Five Islands, just below Mattawamkeag) to camp, we walk on up the West Branch tomorrow, — four of us, — and wait for you at the dam, or this side. You overtake us to-morrow or next day, and take us into your canoes. We stop for you, you stop for us. We pay you for your trouble." "Ye'," replied Louis, "may be you carry some provision for all, — some pork, — some bread, — and so pay." He said, "Me sure get some moose;" and when I asked if he thought Pomola would let us go up, he answered that we must plant one bottle of rum on the top; he had planted good many; and when he looked again, the rum was all gone. He had been up two or three times; he had planted letter, — English, German, French, etc. These men were slightly clad in shirt and pantaloons, like laborers with us in warm weather. They did not invite us into their houses, but met us outside. So we left the Indians, thinking ourselves lucky to have secured such guides and companions.

There were very few houses along the road, yet they did not altogether fail, as if the law by which men are dispersed over the globe were a very stringent one, and not to be resisted with impunity

or for slight reasons. There were even the germs of one or two villages just beginning to expand. The beauty of the road itself was remarkable. The various evergreens, many of which are rare with us, — delicate and beautiful specimens of the larch, arbor-vitæ, ball-spruce, and fir-balsam, from a few inches to many feet in height, — lined its sides, in some places like a long front yard, springing up from the smooth grass-plots which uninterruptedly border it, and are made fertile by its wash; while it was but a step on either hand to the grim, untrodden wilderness, whose tangled labyrinth of living, fallen, and decaying trees only the deer and moose, the bear and wolf can easily penetrate. More perfect specimens than any front-yard plot can show grew there to grace the passage of the Houlton teams.

About noon we reached the Mattawamkeag, fifty-six miles from Bangor by the way we had come, and put up at a frequented house still on the Houlton road, where the Houlton stage stops. Here was a substantial covered bridge over the Mattawamkeag, built, I think they said, some seventeen years before. We had dinner, — where, by the way, and even at breakfast, as well as supper, at the public-houses on this road, the front rank is composed of various kinds of "sweet cakes," in a continuous line from one end of the table to the other. I think I may safely say that there was a row of ten or a dozen plates of this kind set before us two here. To account for which, they say that, when the lumberers come out of the woods, they have a craving for cakes and pies, and such sweet things, which there are almost unknown, and this is the *supply* to satisfy that *demand*. The supply is always equal to the demand, and these hungry men think a good deal of getting their money's worth. No doubt the balance of victuals is restored by the time they reach Bangor, — Mattawamkeag takes off the raw edge. Well, over this front rank, I say, you, coming from the "sweet cake" side, with a cheap philosophic indifference though it may be, have to assault what there is behind, which I do not by any means mean to insinuate is insufficient in quantity or quality to supply that other demand, of men, not from the woods but from the towns, for venison and strong country fare. After dinner we strolled down to the "Point," formed by the junction of the two rivers, which is said to be the scene of an ancient battle between the Eastern Indians and the Mohawks, and searched there carefully for

relics, though the men at the bar-room had never heard of such things; but we found only some flakes of arrowhead stone, some points of arrowheads, one small leaden bullet, and some colored beads, the last to be referred, perhaps, to early fur-trader days. The Mattawamkeag, though wide, was a mere river's bed, full of rocks and shallows at this time, so that you could cross it almost dry-shod in boots; and I could hardly believe my companion, when he told me that he had been fifty or sixty miles up it in a batteau, through distant and still uncut forests. A batteau could hardly find a harbor now at its mouth. Deer and caribou, or reindeer, are taken here in the winter, in sight of the house.

Before our companions arrived, we rode on up the Houlton road seven miles to Molunkus, where the Aroostook road comes into it, and where there is a spacious public house in the woods, called the "Molunkus House," kept by one Libbey, which looked as if it had its hall for dancing and for military drills. There was no other evidence of man but this huge shingle palace in this part of the world; but sometimes even this is filled with travelers. I looked off the piazza round the corner of the house up the Aroostook road, on which there was no clearing in sight. There was a man just adventuring upon it this evening in a rude, original, what you may call Aroostook wagon, — a mere seat, with a wagon swung under it, a few bags on it, and a dog asleep to watch them. He offered to carry a message for us to anybody in that country, cheerfully. I suspect that, if you should go to the end of the world, you would find somebody there going farther, as if just starting for home at sundown, and having a last word before he drove off. Here, too, *was* a small trader, whom I did not see at first, who kept a store, — but no great store, certainly, — in a small box over the way, behind the Molunkus sign-post. It looked like the balance-box of a patent hay-scales. As for his house, we could only conjecture where that was; he may have been a boarder in the Molunkus House. I saw him standing in his shop door, — his shop was so small, that, if a traveler should make demonstrations of entering in, *he* would have to go out by the back way, and confer with his customer through a window, about his goods in the cellar, or, more probably, bespoken, and yet on the way. I should have gone in, for I felt a real impulse to trade, if I had not

stopped to consider what would become of him. The day before, we had walked into a shop, over against an inn where we stopped, the puny beginning of trade, which would grow at last into a firm copartnership in the future town or city, — indeed, it was already "Somebody & Co.," I forget who. The woman came forward from the penetralia of the attached house, for "Somebody & Co." was in the burning, and she sold us percussion-caps, canalés and smooth, and knew their prices and qualities, and which the hunters preferred. Here was a little of everything in a small compass to satisfy the wants and the ambition of the woods, — a stock selected with what pains and care, and brought home in the wagon-box, or a corner of the Houlton team; but there seemed to me, as usual, a preponderance of children's toys, — dogs to bark, and cats to mew, and trumpets to blow, where natives there hardly are yet. As if a child born into the Maine woods, among the pine cones and cedar berries, could not do without such a sugar-man or skipping-jack as the young Rothschild has.

I think that there was not more than one house on the road to Molunkus, or for seven miles. At that place we got over the fence into a new field, planted with potatoes, where the logs were still burning between the hills; and, pulling up the vines, found good-sized potatoes, nearly ripe, growing like weeds, and turnips mixed with them. The mode of clearing and planting is to fell the trees, and burn once what will burn, then cut them up into suitable lengths, roll into heaps, and burn again; then, with a hoe, plant potatoes where you can come at the ground between the stumps and charred logs; for a first crop the ashes sufficing for manure, and no hoeing being necessary the first year. In the fall, cut, roll, and burn again, and so on, till the land is cleared; and soon it is ready for grain, and to be laid down. Let those talk of poverty and hard times who will in the towns and cities; cannot the emigrant who can pay his fare to New York or Boston pay five dollars more to get here, — I paid three, all told, for my passage from Boston to Bangor, two hundred and fifty miles, — and be as rich as he pleases, where land virtually costs nothing, and houses only the labor of building, and he may begin life as Adam did? If he will still remember the distinction of poor and rich, let him bespeak him a narrower house forthwith.

When we returned to the Mattawamkeag, the Houlton stage had already put up there; and a Province man was betraying his greenness to the Yankees by his questions. Why Province money won't pass here at par, when States' money is good at Fredericton, — though this, perhaps, was sensible enough. From what I saw then, it appears that the Province man was now the only real Jonathan, or raw country bumpkin, left so far behind by his enterprising neighbors that he didn't know enough to put a question to them. No people can long continue provincial in character who have the propensity for politics and whittling, and rapid traveling, which the Yankees have, and who are leaving the mother country behind in the variety of their notions and inventions. The possession and exercise of practical talent merely are a sure and rapid means of intellectual culture and independence.

The last edition of Greenleaf's Map of Maine hung on the wall here, and, as we had no pocket-map, we resolved to trace a map of the lake country. So, dipping a wad of tow into the lamp, we oiled a sheet of paper on the oiled table-cloth, and, in good faith, traced what we afterwards ascertained to be a labyrinth of errors, carefully following the outlines of the imaginary lakes which the map contains. The Map of the Public Lands of Maine and Massachusetts is the only one I have seen that at all deserves the name. It was while we were engaged in this operation that our companions arrived. They had seen the Indians' fire on the Five Islands, and so we concluded that all was right.

Early the next morning we had mounted our packs, and prepared for a tramp up the West Branch, my companion having turned his horse out to pasture for a week or ten days, thinking that a bite of fresh grass and a taste of running water would do him as much good as backwoods fare and new country influences his master. Leaping over a fence, we began to follow an obscure trail up the northern bank of the Penobscot. There was now no road further, the river being the only highway, and but half a dozen log huts, confined to its banks, to be met with for thirty miles. On either hand, and beyond, was a wholly uninhabited wilderness, stretching to Canada. Neither horse nor cow, nor vehicle of any kind, had ever passed over this ground; the cattle, and the few bulky articles which the loggers use,

being got up in the winter on the ice, and down again before it breaks up. The evergreen woods had a decidedly sweet and bracing fragrance; the air was a sort of diet-drink, and we walked on buoyantly in Indian file, stretching our legs. Occasionally there was a small opening on the bank, made for the purpose of log-rolling, where we got a sight of the river, — always a rocky and rippling stream. The roar of the rapids, the note of a whistler duck on the river, of the jay and chickadee around us, and of the pigeon woodpecker in the openings, were the sounds that we heard. This was what you might call a bran-new country; the only roads were of Nature's making, and the few houses were camps. Here, then, one could no longer accuse institutions and society, but must front the true source of evil.

There are three classes of inhabitants who either frequent or inhabit the country which we had now entered: first, the loggers, who, for a part of the year, the winter and spring, are far the most numerous, but in the summer, except a few explorers for timber, completely desert it; second, the few settlers I have named, the only permanent inhabitants, who live on the verge of it, and help raise supplies for the former; third, the hunters, mostly Indians, who range over it in their season.

At the end of three miles we came to the Mattaseunk stream and mill, where there was even a rude wooden railroad running down to the Penobscot, the last railroad we were to see. We crossed one tract, on the bank of the river, of more than a hundred acres of heavy timber, which had just been felled and burnt over, and was still smoking. Our trail lay through the midst of it, and was well-nigh blotted out. The trees lay at full length, four or five feet deep, and crossing each other in all directions, all black as charcoal, but perfectly sound within, still good for fuel or for timber; soon they would be cut into lengths and burnt again. Here were thousands of cords, enough to keep the poor of Boston and New York amply warm for a winter, which only cumbered the ground and were in the settler's way. And the whole of that solid and interminable forest is doomed to be gradually devoured thus by fire, like shavings, and no man be warmed by it. At Crocker's log-hut, at the mouth of Salmon River, seven miles from the Point, one of the party commenced

distributing a store of small, cent picture-books among the children, to teach them to read, and also newspapers, more or less recent, among the parents, than which nothing can be more acceptable to a backwoods people. It was really an important item in our outfit, and, at times, the only currency that would circulate. I walked through Salmon River with my shoes on, it being low water, but not without wetting my feet. A few miles farther we came to "Marm Howard's," at the end of an extensive clearing, where there were two or three log huts in sight at once, one on the opposite side of the river, and a few graves even, surrounded by a wooden paling, where already the rude forefathers of a hamlet lie, and a thousand years hence, perchance, some poet will write his "Elergy in a Country Churchyard." The "Village Hampdens," the "mute, inglorious Miltons," and Cromwells, "guiltless of" their "country's blood," were yet unborn.

"Perchance in this *wild* spot *there will be* laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre."

The next house was Fisk's, ten miles from the Point at the mouth of the East Branch, opposite to the island Nicketow, or the Forks, the last of the Indian islands. I am particular to give the names of the settlers and the distances, since every log hut in these woods is a public house, and such information is of no little consequence to those who may have occasion to travel this way. Our course here crossed the Penobscot, and followed the southern bank. One of the party, who entered the house in search of some one to set us over, reported a very neat dwelling, with plenty of books, and a new wife, just imported from Boston, wholly new to the woods. We found the East Branch a large and rapid stream at its mouth and much deeper than it appeared. Having with some difficulty discovered the trail again, we kept up the south side of the West Branch, or main river, passing by some rapids called Rock-Ebeeme, the roar of which we heard through the woods, and, shortly after, in the thickest of the wood, some empty loggers' camps, still new, which were occupied the previous winter. Though we saw a few more afterwards, I will

make one account serve for all. These were such houses as the lumberers of Maine spend the winter in, in the wilderness. There were the camps and the hovels for the cattle, hardly distinguishable, except that the latter had no chimney. These camps were about twenty feet long by fifteen wide, built of logs, — hemlock, cedar, spruce or yellow birch, — one kind alone, or all together, with the bark on; two or three large ones first, one directly above another, and notched together at the ends, to the height of three or four feet, then of smaller logs resting upon transverse ones at the ends, each of the last successively shorter than the other, to form the roof. The chimney was an oblong square hole in the middle, three or four feet in diameter, with a fence of logs as high as the ridge. The interstices were filled with moss, and the roof was shingled with long and handsome splints of cedar, or spruce, or pine, rifted with a sledge and cleaver. The fireplace, the most important place of all, was in shape and size like the chimney, and directly under it, defined by a log fence or fender on the ground, and a heap of ashes, a foot or two deep within, with solid benches of split logs running round it. Here the fire usually melts the snow, and dries the rain before it can descend to quench it. The faded beds of arbor-vitæ leaves extended under the eaves on either hand. There was the place for the water-pail, pork-barrel, and wash-basin, and generally a dingy pack of cards left on a log. Usually a good deal of whittling was expended on the latch, which was made of wood, in the form of an iron one. These houses are made comfortable by the huge fires, which can be afforded night and day. Usually the scenery about them is drear and savage enough; and the loggers' camp is as completely in the woods as a fungus at the foot of a pine in a swamp; no outlook but to the sky overhead; no more clearing than is made by cutting down the trees of which it is built, and those which are necessary for fuel. If only it be well sheltered and convenient to his work, and near a spring, he wastes no thought on the prospect. They are very proper forest houses, the stems of the trees collected together and piled up around a man to keep out wind and rain, — made of living green logs, hanging with moss and lichen, and with the curls and fringes of the yellow birch bark, and dripping with resin, fresh and moist, and redolent of swampy odors, with that sort of vigor and perennialness

even about them that toadstools suggest. The logger's fare consists of tea, molasses, flour, pork (sometimes beef), and beans. A great proportion of the beans raised in Massachusetts find their market here. On expeditions it is only hard bread and pork, often raw, slice upon slice, with tea or water, as the case may be.

The primitive wood is always and everywhere damp and mossy, so that I traveled constantly with the impression that I was in a swamp; and only when it was remarked that this or that tract, judging from the quality of the timber on it, would make a profitable clearing, was I reminded, that if the sun were let in it would make a dry field, like the few I had seen, at once. The best shod for the most part travel with wet feet. If the ground was so wet and spongy at this, the dryest part of a dry season, what must it be in the spring? The woods hereabouts abounded in beech and yellow birch, of which last there were some very large specimens; also spruce, cedar, fir, and hemlock; but we saw only the stumps of the white pine here, some of them of great size, these having been already culled out, being the only tree much sought after, even as low down as this. Only a little spruce and hemlock beside had been logged here. The Eastern wood which is sold for fuel in Massachusetts all comes from below Bangor. It was the pine alone, chiefly the white pine, that had tempted any but the hunter to precede us on this route.

Waite's farm, thirteen miles from the Point, is an extensive and elevated clearing, from which we got a fine view of the river, rippling and gleaming far beneath us. My companions had formerly had a good view of Ktaadn and the other mountains here, but to-day it was so smoky that we could see nothing of them. We could overlook an immense country of uninterrupted forest, stretching away up the East Branch toward Canada on the north and northwest, and toward the Aroostook valley on the northeast; and imagine what wild life was stirring in its midst. Here was quite a field of corn for this region, whose peculiar dry scent we perceived a third of a mile off, before we saw it.

Eighteen miles from the Point brought us in sight of McCauslin's, or "Uncle George's," as he was familiarly called by my companions, to whom he was well known, where we intended to break our long fast. His house was in the midst of an extensive clearing or intervale,

at the mouth of the Little Schoodic River, on the opposite or north bank of the Penobscot. So we collected on a point of the shore, that we might be seen, and fired our gun as a signal, which brought out his dogs forthwith, and thereafter their master, who in due time took us across in his batteau. This clearing was bounded abruptly, on all sides but the river, by the naked stems of the forest, as if you were to cut only a few feet square in the midst of a thousand acres of mowing, and set down a thimble therein. He had a whole heaven and horizon to himself, and the sun seemed to be journeying over his clearing only the livelong day. Here we concluded to spend the night, and wait for the Indians, as there was no stopping-place so convenient above. He had seen no Indians pass, and this did not often happen without his knowledge. He thought that his dogs sometimes gave notice of the approach of Indians half an hour before they arrived.

McCauslin was a Kennebec man, of Scotch descent, who had been a waterman twenty-two years, and had driven on the lakes and headwaters of the Penobscot five or six springs in succession, but was now settled here to raise supplies for the lumberers and for himself. He entertained us a day or two with true Scotch hospitality, and would accept no recompense for it. A man of a dry wit and shrewdness, and a general intelligence which I had not looked for in the back woods. In fact, the deeper you penetrate into the woods, the more intelligent, and, in one sense, less countrified do you find the inhabitants; for always the pioneer has been a traveler, and, to some extent, a man of the world; and, as the distances with which he is familiar are greater, so is his information more general and far reaching than the villager's. If I were to look for a narrow, uninformed, and countrified mind, as opposed to the intelligence and refinement which are thought to emanate from cities, it would be among the rusty inhabitants of an old-settled country, on farms all run out and gone to seed with life-everlasting, in the towns about Boston, even on the high-road in Concord, and not in the back woods of Maine.

Supper was got before our eyes in the ample kitchen, by a fire which would have roasted an ox; many whole logs, four feet long, were consumed to boil our tea-kettle, — birch, or beech, or maple,

the same summer and winter; and the dishes were soon smoking on the table, late the arm-chair, against the wall, from which one of the party was expelled. The arms of the chair formed the frame on which the table rested; and, when the round top was turned up against the wall, it formed the back of the chair, and was no more in the way than the wall itself. This, we noticed, was the prevailing fashion in these log houses, in order to economize in room. There were piping-hot wheaten cakes, the flour having been brought up the river in batteaux, — no Indian bread, for the upper part of Maine, it will be remembered, is a wheat country, — and ham, eggs, and potatoes, and milk and cheese, the produce of the farm; and also shad and salmon, tea sweetened with molasses, and sweet cakes, in contradistinction to the hot cakes not sweetened, the one white, the other yellow, to wind up with. Such we found was the prevailing fare, ordinary and extraordinary, along this river. Mountain cranberries (Vaccinium Vitis-Idæa), stewed and sweetened, were the common dessert. Everything here was in profusion, and the best of its kind. Butter was in such plenty that it was commonly used, before it was salted, to grease boots with.

In the night we were entertained by the sound of rain-drops on the cedar splints which covered the roof, and awaked the next morning with a drop or two in our eyes. It had set in for a storm, and we made up our minds not to forsake such comfortable quarters with this prospect, but wait for Indians and fair weather. It rained and drizzled and gleamed by turns, the livelong day. What we did there, how we killed the time would perhaps be idle to tell; how many times we buttered our boots, and how often a drowsy one was seen to sidle off to the bedroom. When it held up, I strolled up and down the bank, and gathered the harebell and cedar berries, which grew there; or else we tried by turns the long-handled axe on the logs before the door. The axe-helves here were made to chop standing on the log, — a primitive log of course, — and were, therefore, nearly a foot longer than with us. One while we walked over the farm and visited his well-filled barns with McCauslin. There were one other man and two women only here. He kept horses, cows, oxen, and sheep. I think he said that he was the first to bring a plow and a cow so far; and he might have added the last, with only two exceptions. The potato-rot

had found him out here, too, the previous year, and got half or two thirds of his crop, though the seed was of his own raising. Oats, grass, and potatoes were his staples; but he raised, also, a few carrots and turnips, and "a little corn for the hens," for this was all that he dared risk, for fear that it would not ripen. Melons, squashes, sweet corn, beans, tomatoes, and many other vegetables, could not be ripened there.

The very few settlers along this stream were obviously tempted by the cheapness of the land mainly. When I asked McCauslin why more settlers did not come in, he answered, that one reason was, they could not buy the land, it belonged to individuals or companies who were afraid that their wild lands would be settled, and so incorporated into towns, and they be taxed for them; but to settling on the State's land there was no such hindrance. For his own part, he wanted no neighbors, — he didn't wish to see any road by his house. Neighbors, even the best, were a trouble and expense, especially on the score of cattle and fences. They might live across the river, perhaps, but not on the same side.

The chickens here were protected by the dogs. As McCauslin said, "The old one took it up first, and she taught the pup, and now they had got it into their heads that it wouldn't do to have anything of the bird kind on the premises." A hawk hovering over was not allowed to alight, but barked off by the dogs circling underneath; and a pigeon, or a "yellow-hammer," as they called the pigeon woodpecker, on a dead limb or stump, was instantly expelled. It was the main business of their day, and kept them constantly coming and going. One would rush out of the house on the least alarm given by the other.

When it rained hardest, we returned to the house, and took down a tract from the shelf. There was the "Wandering Jew," cheap edition, and fine print, the "Criminal Calendar," and "Parish's Geography," and flash novels two or three. Under the pressure of circumstances, we read a little in these. With such aid, the press is not so feeble an engine, after all. This house, which was a fair specimen of those on this river, was built of huge logs, which peeped out everywhere, and were chinked with clay and moss. It contained four or five rooms. There were no sawed boards, or shingles, or clapboards, about it; and

scarcely any tool but the axe had been used in its construction. The partitions were made of long clapboard-like splints, of spruce or cedar, turned to a delicate salmon-color by the smoke. The roof and sides were covered with the same, instead of shingles and clapboards, and some of a much thicker and larger size were used for the floor. These were all so straight and smooth, that they answered the purpose admirably, and a careless observer would not have suspected that they were not sawed and planed. The chimney and hearth were of vast size, and made of stone. The broom was a few twigs of arbor-vitæ tied to a stick; and a pole was suspended over the hearth, close to the ceiling, to dry stockings and clothes on. I noticed that the floor was full of small, dingy holes, as if made with a gimlet, but which were, in fact, made by the spikes, nearly an inch long, which the lumberers wear in their boots to prevent their slipping on wet logs. Just above McCauslin's, there is a rocky rapid, where logs jam in the spring; and many "drivers" are there collected, who frequent his house for supplies; these were their tracks which I saw.

At sundown McCauslin pointed away over the forest, across the river, to signs of fair weather amid the clouds, — some evening redness there. For even there the points of compass held; and there was a quarter of the heavens appropriated to sunrise and another to sunset.

The next morning, the weather proving fair enough for our purpose, we prepared to start, and, the Indians having failed us, persuaded McCauslin, who was not unwilling to revisit the scenes of his driving, to accompany us in their stead, intending to engage one other boatman on the way. A strip of cotton cloth for a tent, a couple of blankets, which would suffice for the whole party, fifteen pounds of hard bread, ten pounds of "clear" pork, and a little tea, made up "Uncle George's" pack. The last three articles were calculated to be provision enough for six men for a week, with what we might pick up. A tea-kettle, a frying-pan, and an axe, to be obtained at the last house, would complete our outfit.

We were soon out of McCauslin's clearing, and in the evergreen woods again. The obscure trail made by the two settlers above, which even the woodman is sometimes puzzled to discern, ere long crossed a narrow, open strip in the woods overrun with weeds, called the

Burnt Land, where a fire had raged formerly, stretching northward nine or ten miles, to Millinocket Lake. At the end of three miles, we reached Shad Pond, or Noliseemack, an expansion of the river. Hodge, the Assistant State Geologist, who passed through this on the 25th of June, 1837, says, "We pushed our boat through an acre or more of buck-beans, which had taken root at the bottom, and bloomed above the surface in the greatest profusion and beauty." Thomas Fowler's house is four miles from McCauslin's, on the shore of the pond, at the mouth of the Millinocket River, and eight miles from the lake of the same name, on the latter stream. This lake affords a more direct course to Ktaadn, but we preferred to follow the Penobscot and the Pamadumcook lakes. Fowler was just completing a new log hut, and was sawing out a window through the logs, nearly two feet thick, when we arrived. He had begun to paper his house with spruce bark, turned inside out, which had a good effect, and was in keeping with the circumstances. Instead of water we got here a draught of beer, which, it was allowed, would be better; clear and thin, but strong and stringent as the cedar sap. It was as if we sucked at the very teats of Nature's pine-clad bosom in these parts, — the sap of all Millinocket botany commingled, — the topmost, most fantastic, and spiciest sprays of the primitive wood, and whatever invigorating and stringent gum or essence it afforded steeped and dissolved in it, — a lumberer's drink, which would acclimate and naturalize a man at once, — which would make him see green, and, if he slept, dream that he heard the wind sough among the pines. Here was a fife, praying to be played on, through which we breathed a few tuneful strains, — brought hither to tame wild beasts. As we stood upon the pile of chips by the door, fish hawks were sailing overhead; and here, over Shad Pond, might daily be witnessed the tyranny of the bald eagle over that bird. Tom pointed away over the lake to a bald eagle's nest, which was plainly visible more than a mile off, on a pine, high above the surrounding forest, and was frequented from year to year by the same pair, and held sacred by him. There were these two houses only there, his low hut and the eagles' airy cart-load of fagots. Thomas Fowler, too, was persuaded to join us, for two men were necessary to manage the batteau, which was soon to be our carriage, and these men needed to be cool and

skillful for the navigation of the Penobscot. Tom's pack was soon made, for he had not far to look for his waterman's boots, and a red flannel shirt. This is the favorite color with lumbermen; and red flannel is reputed to possess some mysterious virtues, to be most healthful and convenient in respect to perspiration. In every gang there will be a large proportion of red birds. We took here a poor and leaky batteau, and began to pole up the Millinocket two miles, to the elder Fowler's, in order to avoid the Grand Falls of the Penobscot, intending to exchange our batteau there for a better. The Millinocket is a small, shallow, and sandy stream, full of what I took to be lamprey-eels' or suckers' nests, and lined with musquash-cabins, but free from rapids, according to Fowler, excepting at its outlet from the lake. He was at this time engaged in cutting the native grass — rush-grass and meadow-clover, as he called it — on the meadows and small, low islands of this stream. We noticed flattened places in the grass on either side, where, he said, a moose had laid down the night before, adding, that there were thousands in these meadows.

Old Fowler's, on the Millinocket, six miles from McCauslin's, and twenty-four from the Point, is the last house. Gibson's, on the Sowadnehunk, is the only clearing above, but that had proved a failure, and was long since deserted. Fowler is the oldest inhabitant of these woods. He formerly lived a few miles from here, on the south side of the West Branch, where he built his house sixteen years ago, the first house built above the Five Islands. Here our new batteau was to be carried over the first portage of two miles, round the Grand Falls of the Penobscot, on a horse-sled made of saplings, to jump the numerous rocks in the way; but we had to wait a couple of hours for them to catch the horses, which were pastured at a distance, amid the stumps, and had wandered still farther off. The last of the salmon for this season had just been caught, and were still fresh in pickle, from which enough was extracted to fill our empty kettle, and so graduate our introduction to simpler forest fare. The week before they had lost nine sheep here out of their first flock, by the wolves. The surviving sheep came round the house, and seemed frightened, which induced them to go and look for the rest, when they found seven dead and lacerated, and two still alive. These last they carried to the house, and, as Mrs. Fowler said, they were merely

scratched in the throat, and had no more visible wound than would be produced by the prick of a pin. She sheared off the wool from their throats, and washed them, and put on some salve, and turned them out, but in a few moments they were missing, and had not been found since. In fact, they were all poisoned, and those that were found swelled up at once, so that they saved neither skin nor wool. This realized the old fables of the wolves and the sheep, and convinced me that that ancient hostility still existed. Verily, the shepherd-boy did not need to sound a false alarm this time. There were steel traps by the door, of various sizes, for wolves, otter, and bears, with large claws instead of teeth, to catch in their sinews. Wolves are frequently killed with poisoned bait.

At length, after we had dined here on the usual backwoods fare, the horses arrived, and we hauled our batteau out of the water, and lashed it to its wicker carriage, and, throwing in our packs, walked on before, leaving the boatmen and driver, who was Tom's brother, to manage the concern. The route, which led through the wild pasture where the sheep were killed, was in some places the roughest ever traveled by horses, over rocky hills, where the sled bounced and slid along, like a vessel pitching in a storm; and one man was as necessary to stand at the stern, to prevent the boat from being wrecked, as a helmsman in the roughest sea. The philosophy of our progress was something like this: when the runners struck a rock three or four feet high, the sled bounced back and upwards at the same time; but, as the horses never ceased pulling, it came down on the top of the rock, and so we got over. This portage probably followed the trail of an ancient Indian carry round these falls. By two o'clock we, who had walked on before, reached the river above the falls, not far from the outlet of Quakish Lake, and waited for the batteau to come up. We had been here but a short time, when a thunder-shower was seen coming up from the west, over the still invisible lakes, and that pleasant wilderness which we were so eager to become acquainted with; and soon the heavy drops began to patter on the leaves around us. I had just selected the prostrate trunk of a huge pine, five or six feet in diameter, and was crawling under it, when, luckily, the boat arrived. It would have amused a sheltered man to witness the manner in which it was unlashed, and whirled

over, while the first waterspout burst upon us. It was no sooner in the hands of the eager company than it was abandoned to the first revolutionary impulse, and to gravity, to adjust it; and they might have been seen all stooping to its shelter, and wriggling under like so many eels, before it was fairly deposited on the ground. When all were under, we propped up the lee side, and busied ourselves there whittling thole-pins for rowing, when we should reach the lakes; and made the woods ring, between the claps of thunder, with such boat-songs as we could remember. The horses stood sleek and shining with the rain, all drooping and crestfallen, while deluge after deluge washed over us; but the bottom of a boat may be relied on for a tight roof. At length, after two hours' delay at this place, a streak of fair weather appeared in the northwest, whither our course now lay, promising a serene evening for our voyage; and the driver returned with his horses, while we made haste to launch our boat, and commence our voyage in good earnest.

There were six of us, including the two boatmen. With our packs heaped up near the bows, and ourselves disposed as baggage to trim the boat, with instructions not to move in case we should strike a rock, more than so many barrels of pork, we pushed out into the first rapid, a slight specimen of the stream we had to navigate. With Uncle George in the stern, and Tom in the bows, each using a spruce pole about twelve feet long, pointed with iron, and poling on the same side, we shot up the rapids like a salmon, the water rushing and roaring around, so that only a practiced eye could distinguish a safe course, or tell what was deep water and what rocks, frequently grazing the latter on one or both sides, with a hundred as narrow escapes as ever the Argo had in passing through the Symplegades. I, who had had some experience in boating, had never experienced any half so exhilarating before. We were lucky to have exchanged our Indians, whom we did not know, for these men, who, together with Tom's brother, were reputed the best boatmen on the river, and were at once indispensable pilots and pleasant companions. The canoe is smaller, more easily upset, and sooner worn out; and the Indian is said not to be so skillful in the management of the batteau. He is, for the most part, less to be relied on, and more disposed to sulks and whims. The utmost familiarity with dead streams, or with the ocean,

would not prepare a man for this peculiar navigation; and the most skillful boatman anywhere else would here be obliged to take out his boat and carry round a hundred times, still with great risk, as well as delay, where the practiced batteau-man poles up with comparative ease and safety. The hardy "voyageur" pushes with incredible perseverance and success quite up to the foot of the falls, and then only carries round some perpendicular ledge, and launches again in

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to struggle with the boiling rapids above. The Indians say that the river once ran both ways, one half up and the other down, but that, since the white man came, it all runs down, and now they must laboriously pole their canoes against the stream, and carry them over numerous portages. In the summer, all stores — the grindstone and the plow of the pioneer, flour, pork, and utensils for the explorer — must be conveyed up the river in batteaux; and many a cargo and many a boatman is lost in these waters. In the winter, however, which is very equable and long, the ice is the great highway, and the loggers' team penetrates to Chesuncook Lake, and still higher up, even two hundred miles above Bangor. Imagine the solitary sled-track running far up into the snowy and evergreen wilderness, hemmed in closely for a hundred miles by the forest, and again stretching straight across the broad surfaces of concealed lakes!

We were soon in the smooth water of the Quakish Lake, and took our turns at rowing and paddling across it. It is a small, irregular, but handsome lake, shut in on all sides by the forest, and showing no traces of man but some low boom in a distant cove, reserved for spring use. The spruce and cedar on its shores, hung with gray lichens, looked at a distance like the ghosts of trees. Ducks were sailing here and there on its surface, and a solitary loon, like a more living wave, — a vital spot on the lake's surface, — laughed and frolicked, and showed its straight leg, for our amusement. Joe Merry Mountain appeared in the northwest, as if it were looking down on this lake especially; and we had our first, but a partial view of Ktaadn, its summit veiled in clouds, like a dark isthmus in that quarter, connecting the heavens with the earth. After two miles of smooth rowing across this lake, we found ourselves in the river again, which was a continuous rapid for one mile, to the dam,

requiring all the strength and skill of our boatmen to pole up it.

This dam is a quite important and expensive work for this country, whither cattle and horses cannot penetrate in the summer, raising the whole river ten feet, and flooding, as they said, some sixty square miles by means of the innumerable lakes with which the river connects. It is a lofty and solid structure, with sloping piers, some distance above, made of frames of logs filled with stones, to break the ice. Here every log pays toll as it passes through the sluices.

We filed into the rude loggers' camp at this place, such as I have described, without ceremony, and the cook, at that moment the sole occupant, at once set about preparing tea for his visitors. His fireplace, which the rain had converted into a mud-puddle, was soon blazing again, and we sat down on the log benches around it to dry us. On the well-flattened and somewhat faded beds of arbor-vitæ leaves, which stretched on either hand under the eaves behind us, lay an odd leaf of the Bible, some genealogical chapter out of the Old Testament; and, half buried by the leaves, we found Emerson's Address on West India Emancipation, which had been left here formerly by one of our company, and *had made two converts to the Liberty party* here, as I was told; also, an odd number of the *Westminster Review*, for 1834, and a pamphlet entitled "History of the Erection of the Monument on the Grave of Myron Holly." This was the readable or reading matter in a lumberer's camp in the Maine woods, thirty miles from a road, which would be given up to the bears in a fortnight. These things were well thumbed and soiled. This gang was headed by one John Morrison, a good specimen of a Yankee; and was necessarily composed of men not bred to the business of dam-building, but who were jacks-at-all-trades, handy with the axe, and other simple implements, and well skilled in wood and water craft. We had hot cakes for our supper even here, white as snowballs, but without butter, and the never-failing sweet cakes, with which we filled our pockets, foreseeing that we should not soon meet with the like again. Such delicate puffballs seemed a singular diet for backwoodsmen. There was also tea without milk, sweetened with molasses. And so, exchanging a word with John Morrison and his gang when we had returned to the shore, and also exchanging our batteau for a better still, we made haste to improve the little daylight

that remained. This camp, exactly twenty-nine miles from Mattawamkeag Point by the way we had come, and about one hundred from Bangor by the river, was the last human habitation of any kind in this direction. Beyond, there was no trail, and the river and lakes, by batteaux and canoes, was considered the only practicable route. We were about thirty miles by the river from the summit of Ktaadn, which was in sight, though not more than twenty, perhaps, in a straight line.

It being about the full of the moon, and a warm and pleasant evening, we decided to row five miles by moonlight to the head of the North Twin Lake, lest the wind should rise on the morrow. After one mile of river, or what the boatmen call "thoroughfare," — for the river becomes at length only the connecting link between the lakes, — and some slight rapid which had been mostly made smooth water by the dam, we entered the North Twin Lake just after sundown, and steered across for the river "thoroughfare," four miles distant. This is a noble sheet of water, where one may get the impression which a new country and a "lake of the woods" are fitted to create. There was the smoke of no log hut nor camp of any kind to greet us, still less was any lover of nature or musing traveler watching our batteau from the distant hills; not even the Indian hunter was there, for he rarely climbs them, but hugs the river like ourselves. No face welcomed us but the fine fantastic sprays of free and happy evergreen trees, waving one above another in their ancient home. At first the red clouds hung over the western shore as gorgeously as if over a city, and the lake lay open to the light with even a civilized aspect, as if expecting trade and commerce, and towns and villas. We could distinguish the inlet to the South Twin, which is said to be the larger, where the shore was misty and blue, and it was worth the while to look thus through a narrow opening across the entire expanse of a concealed lake to its own yet more dim and distant shore. The shores rose gently to ranges of low hills covered with forests; and though, in fact, the most valuable white-pine timber, even about this lake, had been culled out, this would never have been suspected by the voyager. The impression, which indeed corresponded with the fact, was, as if we were upon a high table-land between the States and Canada, the northern side of which is drained by the St. John and

Chaudière, the southern by the Penobscot and Kennebec. There was no bold, mountainous shore, as we might have expected, but only isolated hills and mountains rising here and there from the plateau. The country is an archipelago of lakes, — the lake-country of New England. Their levels vary but a few feet, and the boatmen, by short portages, or by none at all, pass easily from one to another. They say that at very high water the Penobscot and the Kennebec flow into each other, or at any rate, that you may lie with your face in the one and your toes in the other. Even the Penobscot and St. John have been connected by a canal, so that the lumber of the Allegash, instead of going down the St. John, comes down the Penobscot; and the Indian's tradition, that the Penobscot once ran both ways for his convenience, is, in one sense, partially realized to-day.

None of our party but McCauslin had been above this lake, so we trusted to him to pilot us, and we could not but confess the importance of a pilot on these waters. While it is river, you will not easily forget which way is up-stream; but when you enter a lake, the river is completely lost, and you scan the distant shores in vain to find where it comes in. A stranger is, for the time at least, lost, and must set about a voyage of discovery first of all to find the river. To follow the windings of the shore when the lake is ten miles, or even more, in length, and of an irregularity which will not soon be mapped, is a wearisome voyage, and will spend his time and his provisions. They tell a story of a gang of experienced woodmen sent to a location on this stream, who were thus lost in the wilderness of lakes. They cut their way through thickets, and carried their baggage and their boats over from lake to lake, sometimes several miles. They carried into Millinocket Lake, which is on another stream, and is ten miles square, and contains a hundred islands. They explored its shores thoroughly, and then carried into another, and another, and it was a week of toil and anxiety before they found the Penobscot River again, and then their provisions were exhausted, and they were obliged to return.

While Uncle George steered for a small island near the head of the lake, now just visible, like a speck on the water, we rowed by turns swiftly over its surface, singing such boat songs as we could remember. The shores seemed at an indefinite distance in the

moonlight. Occasionally we paused in our singing and rested on our oars, while we listened to hear if the wolves howled, for this is a common serenade, and my companions affirmed that it was the most dismal and unearthly of sounds; but we heard none this time. If we did not *hear*, however, we did *listen*, not without a reasonable expectation; that at least I have to tell, — only some utterly uncivilized, big-throated owl hooted loud and dismally in the drear and boughy wilderness, plainly not nervous about his solitary life, nor afraid to hear the echoes of his voice there. We remembered also that possibly moose were silently watching us from the distant coves, or some surly bear or timid caribou had been startled by our singing. It was with new emphasis that we sang there the Canadian boat song, —

"Row, brothers, row, the stream runs fast,
The rapids are near and the daylight's past!"

which describes precisely our own adventure, and was inspired by the experience of a similar kind of life, — for the rapids were ever near, and the daylight long past; the woods on shore looked dim, and many an Utawas' tide here emptied into the lake.

"Why should we yet our sail unfurl?
There is not a breath the blue wave to curl!
But, when the wind blows off the shore,
Oh, sweetly we'll rest our weary oar."
"Utawas' tide! this trembling moon
Shall see us float o'er thy surges soon."

At last we glided past the "green isle," which had been our landmark, all joining in the chorus; as if by the watery links of rivers and of lakes we were about to float over unmeasured zones of earth, bound on unimaginable adventures, —

"Saint of this green isle! hear our prayers,
Oh, grant us cool heavens and favoring airs!"

About nine o'clock we reached the river, and ran our boat into a natural haven between some rocks, and drew her out on the sand. This camping-ground McCauslin had been familiar with in his lumbering days, and he now struck it unerringly in the moonlight, and we heard the sound of the rill which would supply us with cool water emptying into the lake. The first business was to make a fire, an operation which was a little delayed by the wetness of the fuel and the ground, owing to the heavy showers of the afternoon. The fire is the main comfort of the camp, whether in summer or winter, and is about as ample at one season as at another. It is as well for cheerfulness as for warmth and dryness. It forms one side of the camp; one bright side at any rate. Some were dispersed to fetch in dead trees and boughs, while Uncle George felled the birches and beeches which stood convenient, and soon we had a fire some ten feet long by three or four high, which rapidly dried the sand before it. This was calculated to burn all night. We next proceeded to pitch our tent; which operation was performed by sticking our two spike-poles into the ground in a slanting direction, about ten feet apart, for rafters, and then drawing our cotton cloth over them, and tying it down at the ends, leaving it open in front, shed-fashion. But this evening the wind carried the sparks on to the tent and burned it. So we hastily drew up the batteau just within the edge of the woods before the fire, and propping up one side three or four feet high, spread the tent on the ground to lie on; and with the corner of a blanket, or what more or less we could get to put over us, lay down with our heads and bodies under the boat, and our feet and legs on the sand toward the fire. At first we lay awake, talking of our course, and finding ourselves in so convenient a posture for studying the heavens, with the moon and stars shining in our faces, our conversation naturally turned upon astronomy, and we recounted by turns the most interesting discoveries in that science. But at length we composed ourselves seriously to sleep. It was interesting, when awakened at midnight, to watch the grotesque and fiend-like forms and motions of some one of the party, who, not being able to sleep, had got up silently to arouse the fire, and add fresh fuel, for a change; now stealthily lugging a dead tree from out the dark, and heaving it on, now stirring up the embers with his fork, or tiptoeing about to

observe the stars, watched, perchance, by half the prostrate party in breathless silence; so much the more intense because they were awake, while each supposed his neighbor sound asleep. Thus aroused, I, too, brought fresh fuel to the fire, and then rambled along the sandy shore in the moonlight, hoping to meet a moose come down to drink, or else a wolf. The little rill tinkled the louder, and peopled all the wilderness for me; and the glassy smoothness of the sleeping lake, laving the shores of a new world, with the dark, fantastic rocks rising here and there from its surface, made a scene not easily described. It has left such an impression of stern, yet gentle, wildness on my memory as will not soon be effaced. Not far from midnight we were one after another awakened by rain falling on our extremities; and as each was made aware of the fact by cold or wet, he drew a long sigh and then drew up his legs, until gradually we had all sidled round from lying at right angles with the boat, till our bodies formed an acute angle with it, and were wholly protected. When next we awoke, the moon and stars were shining again, and there were signs of dawn in the east. I have been thus particular in order to convey some idea of a night in the woods.

We had soon launched and loaded our boat, and, leaving our fire blazing, were off again before breakfast. The lumberers rarely trouble themselves to put out their fires, such is the dampness of the primitive forest; and this is one cause, no doubt, of the frequent fires in Maine, of which we hear so much on smoky days in Massachusetts. The forests are held cheap after the white pine has been culled out; and the explorers and hunters pray for rain only to clear the atmosphere of smoke. The woods were so wet to-day, however, that there was no danger of our fire spreading. After poling up half a mile of river, or thoroughfare, we rowed a mile across the foot of Pamadumcook Lake, which is the name given on the map to this whole chain of lakes, as if there was but one, though they are, in each instance, distinctly separated by a reach of the river, with its narrow and rocky channel and its rapids. This lake, which is one of the largest, stretched northwest ten miles, to hills and mountains in the distance. McCauslin pointed to some distant, and as yet inaccessible, forests of white pine, on the sides of a mountain in that direction. The Joe Merry Lakes, which lay between us and

Moosehead, on the west, were recently, if they are not still, "surrounded by some of the best timbered land in the State." By another thoroughfare we passed into Deep Cove, a part of the same lake, which makes up two miles, toward the northeast, and rowing two miles across this, by another short thoroughfare, entered Ambejijis Lake.

At the entrance to a lake we sometimes observed what is technically called "fencing-stuff," or the unhewn timbers of which booms are formed, either secured together in the water, or laid up on the rocks and lashed to trees, for spring use. But it was always startling to discover so plain a trail of civilized man there. I remember that I was strangely affected, when we were returning, by the sight of a ring-bolt well drilled into a rock, and fastened with lead, at the head of this solitary Ambejijis Lake.

It was easy to see that driving logs must be an exciting as well as arduous and dangerous business. All winter long the logger goes on piling up the trees which he has trimmed and hauled in some dry ravine at the head of a stream, and then in the spring he stands on the bank and whistles for Rain and Thaw, ready to wring the perspiration out of his shirt to swell the tide, till suddenly, with a whoop and halloo from him, shutting his eyes, as if to bid farewell to the existing state of things, a fair proportion of his winter's work goes scrambling down the country, followed by his faithful dogs, Thaw and Rain and Freshet and Wind, the whole pack in full cry, toward the Orono Mills. Every log is marked with the owner's name, cut in the sapwood with an axe or bored with an auger, so deep as not to be worn off in the driving, and yet not so as to injure the timber; and it requires considerable ingenuity to invent new and simple marks where there are so many owners. They have quite an alphabet of their own, which only the practiced can read. One of my companions read off from his memorandum book some marks of his own logs, among which there were crosses, belts, crow's feet, girdles, etc., as, "Y — girdle — crowfoot," and various other devices. When the logs have run the gauntlet of innumerable rapids and falls, each on its own account, with more or less jamming and bruising, those bearing various owners' marks being mixed up together, — since all must take advantage of the same freshet, — they are collected together at

the heads of the lakes, and surrounded by a boom fence of floating logs, to prevent their being dispersed by the wind, and are thus towed all together, like a flock of sheep, across the lake, where there is no current, by a windlass, or boom-head, such as we sometimes saw standing on an island or headland, and, if circumstances permit, with the aid of sails and oars. Sometimes, notwithstanding, the logs are dispersed over many miles of lake surface in a few hours by winds and freshets, and thrown up on distant shores, where the driver can pick up only one or two at a time, and return with them to the thoroughfare; and before he gets his flock well through Ambejijis or Pamadumcook, he makes many a wet and uncomfortable camp on the shore. He must be able to navigate a log as if it were a canoe, and be as indifferent to cold and wet as a muskrat. He uses a few efficient tools, — a lever commonly of rock maple, six or seven feet long, with a stout spike in it, strongly ferruled on, and a long spike-pole, with a screw at the end of the spike to make it hold. The boys along shore learn to walk on floating logs as city boys on sidewalks. Sometimes the logs are thrown up on rocks in such positions as to be irrecoverable but by another freshet as high, or they jam together at rapids and falls, and accumulate in vast piles, which the driver must start at the risk of his life. Such is the lumber business, which depends on many accidents, as the early freezing of the rivers, that the teams may get up in season, a sufficient freshet in the spring, to fetch the logs down, and many others. I quote Michaux on Lumbering on the Kennebec, then the source of the best white pine lumber carried to England. “The persons engaged in this branch of industry are generally emigrants from New Hampshire.... In the summer they unite in small companies, and traverse these vast solitudes in every direction, to ascertain the places in which the pines abound. After cutting the grass and converting it into hay for the nourishment of the cattle to be employed in their labor, they return home. In the beginning of the winter they enter the forests again, establish themselves in huts covered with the bark of the canoe-birch, or the arbor-vitæ; and, though the cold is so intense that the mercury sometimes remains for several weeks from 40° to 50° [Fahr.] below the point of congelation, they persevere, with unabated courage, in their work.” According to Springer, the company consists of

choppers, swampers, — who make roads, — barker and loader, teamster, and cook. “When the trees are felled, they cut them into logs from fourteen to eighteen feet long, and, by means of their cattle, which they employ with great dexterity, drag them to the river, and, after stamping on them a mark of property, roll them on its frozen bosom. At the breaking of the ice, in the spring, they float down with the current.... The logs that are not drawn the first year,” adds Michaux, “are attacked by large worms, which form holes about two lines in diameter, in every direction; but, if stripped of their bark, they will remain uninjured for thirty years.”

Ambejijis, this quiet Sunday morning, struck me as the most beautiful lake we had seen. It is said to be one of the deepest. We had the fairest view of Joe Merry, Double Top, and Ktaadn, from its surface. The summit of the latter had a singularly flat, table-land appearance, like a short highway, where a demigod might be let down to take a turn or two in an afternoon, to settle his dinner. We rowed a mile and a half to near the head of the lake, and, pushing through a field of lily-pads, landed, to cook our breakfast, by the side of a large rock, known to McCauslin. Our breakfast consisted of tea, with hard-bread and pork, and fried salmon, which we ate with forks neatly whittled from alder twigs, which grew there, off strips of birch-bark for plates. The tea was black tea, without milk to color or sugar to sweeten it, and two tin dippers were our tea cups. This beverage is as indispensable to the loggers as to any gossiping old women in the land, and they, no doubt, derive great comfort from it. Here was the site of an old logger’s camp, remembered by McCauslin, now overgrown with weeds and bushes. In the midst of a dense underwood we noticed a whole brick, on a rock, in a small run, clean and red and square as in a brick-yard, which had been brought thus far formerly for tamping. Some of us afterward regretted that we had not carried this on with us to the top of the mountain, to be left there for our mark. It would certainly have been a simple evidence of civilized man. McCauslin said that large wooden crosses, made of oak, still sound, were sometimes found standing in this wilderness, which were set up by the first Catholic missionaries who came through to the Kennebec.

In the next nine miles, which were the extent of our voyage, and

which it took us the rest of the day to get over, we rowed across several small lakes, poled up numerous rapids and thoroughfares, and carried over four portages. I will give the names and distances, for the benefit of future tourists. First, after leaving Ambejijis Lake, we had a quarter of a mile of rapids to the portage, or carry of ninety rods around Ambejijis Falls; then a mile and a half through Passamagamet Lake, which is narrow and river-like, to the falls of the same name, — Ambejijis stream coming in on the right; then two miles through Katepskonegan Lake to the portage of ninety rods around Katepskonegan Falls, which name signifies "carrying-place," — Passamagamet stream coming in on the left; then three miles through Pockwockomus Lake, a slight expansion of the river, to the portage of forty rods around the falls of the same name, — Katepskonegan stream coming in on the left; then three quarters of a mile through Aboljacarmegus Lake, similar to the last, to the portage of forty rods around the falls of the same name; then half a mile of rapid water to the Sowadnehunk deadwater, and the Aboljacknagesic stream.

This is generally the order of names as you ascend the river: First, the lake, or, if there is no expansion, the deadwater; then the falls; then the stream emptying into the lake, or river above, all of the same name. First we came to Passamagamet Lake, then to Passamagamet Falls, then to Passamagamet Stream, emptying in. This order and identity of names, it will be perceived, is quite philosophical, since the deadwater or lake is always at least partially produced by the stream emptying in above; and the first fall below, which is the outlet of that lake, and where that tributary water makes its first plunge, also naturally bears the same name.

At the portage around Ambejijis Falls I observed a pork-barrel on the shore, with a hole eight or nine inches square cut in one side, which was set against an upright rock; but the bears, without turning or upsetting the barrel, had gnawed a hole in the opposite side, which looked exactly like an enormous rat-hole, big enough to put their heads in; and at the bottom of the barrel were still left a few mangled and slabbered slices of pork. It is usual for the lumberers to leave such supplies as they cannot conveniently carry along with them at carries or camps, to which the next comers do not scruple to help

themselves, they being the property, commonly, not of an individual, but a company, who can afford to deal liberally.

I will describe particularly how we got over some of these portages and rapids, in order that the reader may get an idea of the boatman's life. At Ambejijis Falls, for instance, there was the roughest path imaginable cut through the woods; at first up hill, at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees, over rocks and logs without end. This was the manner of the portage. We first carried over our baggage, and deposited it on the shore at the other end; then, returning to the batteau, we dragged it up the hill by the painter, and onward, with frequent pauses, over half the portage. But this was a bungling way, and would soon have worn out the boat. Commonly, three men walk over with a batteau weighing from three to five or six hundred pounds on their heads and shoulders, the tallest standing under the middle of the boat, which is turned over, and one at each end, or else there are two at the bows. More cannot well take hold at once. But this requires some practice, as well as strength, and is in any case extremely laborious, and wearing to the constitution, to follow. We were, on the whole, rather an invalid party, and could render our boatmen but little assistance. Our two men at length took the batteau upon their shoulders, and, while two of us steadied it, to prevent it from rocking and wearing into their shoulders, on which they placed their hats folded, walked bravely over the remaining distance, with two or three pauses. In the same manner they accomplished the other portages. With this crushing weight they must climb and stumble along over fallen trees and slippery rocks of all sizes, where those who walked by the sides were continually brushed off, such was the narrowness of the path. But we were fortunate not to have to cut our path in the first place. Before we launched our boat, we scraped the bottom smooth again, with our knives, where it had rubbed on the rocks, to save friction.

To avoid the difficulties of the portage, our men determined to "warp up" the Passamagamet Falls; so while the rest walked over the portage with the baggage, I remained in the batteau, to assist in warping up. We were soon in the midst of the rapids, which were more swift and tumultuous than any we had poled up, and had turned to the side of the stream for the purpose of warping, when the

boatmen, who felt some pride in their skill, and were ambitious to do something more than usual, for my benefit, as I surmised, took one more view of the rapids, or rather the falls; and, in answer to our question, whether we couldn't get up there, the other answered that he guessed he'd try it. So we pushed again into the midst of the stream, and began to struggle with the current. I sat in the middle of the boat to trim it, moving slightly to the right or left as it grazed a rock. With an uncertain and wavering motion we wound and bolted our way up, until the bow was actually raised two feet above the stern at the steepest pitch; and then, when everything depended upon his exertions, the bowman's pole snapped in two; but before he had time to take the spare one, which I reached him, he had saved himself with the fragment upon a rock; and so we got up by a hair's breadth; and Uncle George exclaimed that that was never done before, and he had not tried it if he had not known whom he had got in the bow, nor he in the bow, if he had not known him in the stern. At this place there was a regular portage cut through the woods, and our boatmen had never known a batteau to ascend the falls. As near as I can remember, there was a perpendicular fall here, at the worst place of the whole Penobscot River, two or three feet at least. I could not sufficiently admire the skill and coolness with which they performed this feat, never speaking to each other. The bowman, not looking behind, but knowing exactly what the other is about, works as if he worked alone. Now sounding in vain for a bottom in fifteen feet of water, while the boat falls back several rods, held straight only with the greatest skill and exertion; or, while the sternman obstinately holds his ground, like a turtle, the bowman springs from side to side with wonderful suppleness and dexterity, scanning the rapids and the rocks with a thousand eyes; and now, having got a bite at last, with a lusty shove, which makes his pole bend and quiver, and the whole boat tremble, he gains a few feet upon the river. To add to the danger, the poles are liable at any time to be caught between the rocks, and wrenched out of their hands, leaving them at the mercy of the rapids, — the rocks, as it were, lying in wait, like so many alligators, to catch them in their teeth, and jerk them from your hands, before you have stolen an effectual shove against their palates. The pole is set close to the boat, and the prow is made to overshoot,

and just turn the corners of the rocks, in the very teeth of the rapids. Nothing but the length and lightness, and the slight draught of the batteau, enables them to make any headway. The bowman must quickly choose his course; there is no time to deliberate. Frequently the boat is shoved between rocks where both sides touch, and the waters on either hand are a perfect maelstrom.

Half a mile above this two of us tried our hands at poling up a slight rapid; and we were just surmounting the last difficulty, when an unlucky rock confounded our calculations; and while the batteau was sweeping round irrecoverably amid the whirlpool, we were obliged to resign the poles to more skillful hands.

Katepskonegan is one of the shallowest and weediest of the lakes, and looked as if it might abound in pickerel. The falls of the same name, where we stopped to dine, are considerable and quite picturesque. Here Uncle George had seen trout caught by the barrelful; but they would not rise to our bait at this hour. Halfway over this carry, thus far in the Maine wilderness on its way to the Provinces, we noticed a large, flaming, Oak Hall handbill, about two feet long, wrapped round the trunk of a pine, from which the bark had been stripped, and to which it was fast glued by the pitch. This should be recorded among the advantages of this mode of advertising, that so, possibly, even the bears and wolves, moose, deer, otter, and beaver, not to mention the Indian, may learn where they can fit themselves according to the latest fashion, or, at least, recover some of their own lost garments. We christened this the Oak Hall carry.

The forenoon was as serene and placid on this wild stream in the woods, as we are apt to imagine that Sunday in summer usually is in Massachusetts. We were occasionally startled by the scream of a bald eagle, sailing over the stream in front of our batteau; or of the fish hawks on whom he levies his contributions. There were, at intervals, small meadows of a few acres on the sides of the stream, waving with uncut grass, which attracted the attention of our boatmen, who regretted that they were not nearer to their clearings, and calculated how many stacks they might cut. Two or three men sometimes spend the summer by themselves, cutting the grass in these meadows, to sell to the loggers in the winter, since it will fetch a higher price on

the spot than in any market in the State. On a small isle, covered with this kind of rush, or cut-grass, on which we landed to consult about our further course, we noticed the recent track of a moose, a large, roundish hole in the soft, wet ground, evincing the great size and weight of the animal that made it. They are fond of the water, and visit all these island meadows, swimming as easily from island to island as they make their way through the thickets on land. Now and then we passed what McCauslin called a pokelogan, an Indian term for what the drivers might have reason to call a poke-logs-in, an inlet that leads nowhere. If you get in, you have got to get out again the same way. These, and the frequent "runrounds" which come into the river again, would embarrass an inexperienced voyager not a little.

The carry around Pockwockomus Falls was exceedingly rough and rocky, the batteau having to be lifted directly from the water up four or five feet on to a rock, and launched again down a similar bank. The rocks on this portage were covered with the *dents* made by the spikes in the lumberers' boots while staggering over under the weight of their batteaux; and you could see where the surface of some large rocks on which they had rested their batteaux was worn quite smooth with use. As it was, we had carried over but half the usual portage at this place for this stage of the water, and launched our boat in the smooth wave just curving to the fall, prepared to struggle with the most violent rapid we had to encounter. The rest of the party walked over the remainder of the portage, while I remained with the boatmen to assist in warping up. One had to hold the boat while the others got in to prevent it from going over the falls. When we had pushed up the rapids as far as possible, keeping close to the shore, Tom seized the painter and leaped out upon a rock just visible in the water, but he lost his footing, notwithstanding his spiked boots, and was instantly amid the rapids; but recovering himself by good luck, and reaching another rock, he passed the painter to me, who had followed him, and took his place again in the bows. Leaping from rock to rock in the shoal water, close to the shore, and now and then getting a bite with the rope round an upright one, I held the boat while one reset his pole, and then all three forced it upward against any rapid. This was "warping up." When a part of us walked round at such a place, we generally took the precaution to take out the most

valuable part of the baggage for fear of being swamped.

As we poled up a swift rapid for half a mile above Aboljacarmegus Falls, some of the party read their own marks on the huge logs which lay piled up high and dry on the rocks on either hand, the relics probably of a jam which had taken place here in the Great Freshet in the spring. Many of these would have to wait for another great freshet, perchance, if they lasted so long, before they could be got off. It was singular enough to meet with property of theirs which they had never seen, and where they had never been before, thus detained by freshets and rocks when on its way to them. Methinks that must be where all my property lies, cast up on the rocks on some distant and unexplored stream, and waiting for an unheard-of freshet to fetch it down. O make haste, ye gods, with your winds and rains, and start the jam before it rots!

The last half mile carried us to the Sowadnehunk Deadwater, so called from the stream of the same name, signifying "running between mountains," an important tributary which comes in a mile above. Here we decided to camp, about twenty miles from the Dam, at the mouth of Murch Brook and the Aboljacknagesic, mountain streams, broad off from Ktaadn, and about a dozen miles from its summit, having made fifteen miles this day.

We had been told by McCauslin that we should here find trout enough; so, while some prepared the camp, the rest fell to fishing. Seizing the birch poles which some party of Indians, or white hunters, had left on the shore, and baiting our hooks with pork, and with trout, as soon as they were caught, we cast our lines into the mouth of the Aboljacknagesic, a clear, swift, shallow stream, which came in from Ktaadn. Instantly a shoal of white chivin (*Leuciscus pulchellus*), silvery roaches, cousin-trout, or what not, large and small, prowling thereabouts, fell upon our bait, and one after another were landed amidst the bushes. Anon their cousins, the true trout, took their turn, and alternately the speckled trout, and the silvery roaches, swallowed the bait as fast as we could throw in; and the finest specimens of both that I have ever seen, the largest one weighing three pounds, were heaved upon the shore, though at first in vain, to wriggle down into the water again, for we stood in the boat; but soon we learned to remedy this evil; for one, who had lost

his hook, stood on shore to catch them as they fell in a perfect shower around him, — sometimes, wet and slippery, full in his face and bosom, as his arms were outstretched to receive them. While yet alive, before their tints had faded, they glistened like the fairest flowers, the product of primitive rivers; and he could hardly trust his senses, as he stood over them, that these jewels should have swam away in that Aboljacknagesic water for so long, so many dark ages; — these bright fluviatile flowers, seen of Indians only, made beautiful, the Lord only knows why, to swim there! I could understand better for this, the truth of mythology, the fables of Proteus, and all those beautiful sea-monsters, — how all history, indeed, put to a terrestrial use, is mere history; but put to a celestial, is mythology always.

But there is the rough voice of Uncle George, who commands at the frying-pan, to send over what you've got, and then you may stay till morning. The pork sizzles and cries for fish. Luckily for the foolish race, and this particularly foolish generation of trout, the night shut down at last, not a little deepened by the dark side of Ktaadn, which, like a permanent shadow, reared itself from the eastern bank. Lescarbot, writing in 1609, tells us that the Sieur Champdoré, who, with one of the people of the Sieur de Monts, ascended some fifty leagues up the St. John in 1608, found the fish so plenty, "qu'en mettant la chaudière sur le feu ils en avoient pris suffisamment pour eux disner avant que l'eau fust chaude." Their descendants here are no less numerous. So we accompanied Tom into the woods to cut cedar twigs for our bed. While he went ahead with the axe and lopped off the smallest twigs of the flat-leaved cedar, the arbor-vitæ of the gardens, we gathered them up, and returned with them to the boat, until it was loaded. Our bed was made with as much care and skill as a roof is shingled; beginning at the foot, and laying the twig end of the cedar upward, we advanced to the head, a course at a time, thus successively covering the stub-ends, and producing a soft and level bed. For us six it was about ten feet long by six in breadth. This time we lay under our tent, having pitched it more prudently with reference to the wind and the flame, and the usual huge fire blazed in front. Supper was eaten off a large log, which some freshet had thrown up. This night we had a dish of

arbor-vitæ or cedar tea, which the lumberer sometimes uses when other herbs fail, —

"A quart of arbor-vitæ,
To make him strong and mighty," —

but I had no wish to repeat the experiment. It had too medicinal a taste for my palate. There was the skeleton of a moose here, whose bones some Indian hunters had picked on this very spot.

In the night I dreamed of trout-fishing; and, when at length I awoke, it seemed a fable that this painted fish swam there so near my couch, and rose to our hooks the last evening, and I doubted if I had not dreamed it all. So I arose before dawn to test its truth, while my companions were still sleeping. There stood Ktaadn with distinct and cloudless outline in the moonlight; and the rippling of the rapids was the only sound to break the stillness. Standing on the shore, I once more cast my line into the stream, and found the dream to be real and the fable true. The speckled trout and silvery roach, like flying-fish, sped swiftly through the moonlight air, describing bright arcs on the dark side of Ktaadn, until moonlight, now fading into daylight, brought satiety to my mind, and the minds of my companions, who had joined me.

By six o'clock, having mounted our packs and a good blanketful of trout, ready dressed, and swung up such baggage and provision as we wished to leave behind upon the tops of saplings, to be out of the reach of bears, we started for the summit of the mountain, distant, as Uncle George said the boatmen called it, about four miles, but as I judged, and as it proved, nearer fourteen. He had never been any nearer the mountain than this, and there was not the slightest trace of man to guide us farther in this direction. At first, pushing a few rods up the Aboljacknagesic, or "open-land stream," we fastened our batteau to a tree, and traveled up the north side, through burnt lands, now partially overgrown with young aspens and other shrubbery; but soon, recrossing this stream, where it was about fifty or sixty feet wide, upon a jam of logs and rocks, — and you could cross it by this means almost anywhere, — we struck at once for the highest peak, over a mile or more of comparatively open land, still very gradually ascending the while. Here it fell to my lot, as the oldest mountain-climber, to take the lead. So, scanning the woody side of the

mountain, which lay still at an indefinite distance, stretched out some seven or eight miles in length before us, we determined to steer directly for the base of the highest peak, leaving a large slide, by which, as I have since learned, some of our predecessors ascended, on our left. This course would lead us parallel to a dark seam in the forest, which marked the bed of a torrent, and over a slight spur, which extended southward from the main mountain, from whose bare summit we could get an outlook over the country, and climb directly up the peak, which would then be close at hand. Seen from this point, a bare ridge at the extremity of the open land, Ktaadn presented a different aspect from any mountain I have seen, there being a greater proportion of naked rock rising abruptly from the forest; and we looked up at this blue barrier as if it were some fragment of a wall which anciently bounded the earth in that direction. Setting the compass for a northeast course, which was the bearing of the southern base of the highest peak, we were soon buried in the woods.

We soon began to meet with traces of bears and moose, and those of rabbits were everywhere visible. The tracks of moose, more or less recent, to speak literally, covered every square rod on the sides of the mountain; and these animals are probably more numerous there now than ever before, being driven into this wilderness, from all sides, by the settlements. The track of a full-grown moose is like that of a cow, or larger, and of the young, like that of a calf. Sometimes we found ourselves traveling in faint paths, which they had made, like cow-paths in the woods, only far more indistinct, being rather openings, affording imperfect vistas through the dense underwood, than trodden paths; and everywhere the twigs had been browsed by them, clipped as smoothly as if by a knife. The bark of trees was stripped up by them to the height of eight or nine feet, in long, narrow strips, an inch wide, still showing the distinct marks of their teeth. We expected nothing less than to meet a herd of them every moment, and our Nimrod held his shooting-iron in readiness; but we did not go out of our way to look for them, and, though numerous, they are so wary that the unskillful hunter might range the forest a long time before he could get sight of one. They are sometimes dangerous to encounter, and will not turn out for the hunter, but furiously rush upon him and

trample him to death, unless he is lucky enough to avoid them by dodging round a tree. The largest are nearly as large as a horse, and weigh sometimes one thousand pounds; and it is said that they can step over a five-foot gate in their ordinary walk. They are described as exceedingly awkward-looking animals, with their long legs and short bodies, making a ludicrous figure when in full run, but making great headway, nevertheless. It seemed a mystery to us how they could thread these woods, which it required all our suppleness to accomplish, — climbing, stooping, and winding, alternately. They are said to drop their long and branching horns, which usually spread five or six feet, on their backs, and make their way easily by the weight of their bodies. Our boatmen said, but I know not with how much truth, that their horns are apt to be gnawed away by vermin while they sleep. Their flesh, which is more like beef than venison, is common in Bangor market.

We had proceeded on thus seven or eight miles, till about noon, with frequent pauses to refresh the weary ones, crossing a considerable mountain stream, which we conjectured to be Murch Brook, at whose mouth we had camped, all the time in woods, without having once seen the summit, and rising very gradually, when the boatmen beginning to despair a little, and fearing that we were leaving the mountain on one side of us, for they had not entire faith in the compass, McCauslin climbed a tree, from the top of which he could see the peak, when it appeared that we had not swerved from a right line, the compass down below still ranging with his arm, which pointed to the summit. By the side of a cool mountain rill, amid the woods, where the water began to partake of the purity and transparency of the air, we stopped to cook some of our fishes, which we had brought thus far in order to save our hard-bread and pork, in the use of which we had put ourselves on short allowance. We soon had a fire blazing, and stood around it, under the damp and sombre forest of firs and birches, each with a sharpened stick, three or four feet in length, upon which he had spitted his trout, or roach, previously well gashed and salted, our sticks radiating like the spokes of a wheel from one centre, and each crowding his particular fish into the most desirable exposure, not with the truest regard always to his neighbor's rights. Thus we regaled ourselves, drinking

meanwhile at the spring, till one man's pack, at least, was considerably lightened, when we again took up our line of march.

At length we reached an elevation sufficiently bare to afford a view of the summit, still distant and blue, almost as if retreating from us. A torrent, which proved to be the same we had crossed, was seen tumbling down in front, literally from out of the clouds. But this glimpse at our whereabouts was soon lost, and we were buried in the woods again. The wood was chiefly yellow birch, spruce, fir, mountain-ash, or round-wood, as the Maine people call it, and moose-wood. It was the worst kind of traveling; sometimes like the densest scrub oak patches with us. The cornel, or bunch-berries, were very abundant, as well as Solomon's-seal and moose-berries. Blueberries were distributed along our whole route; and in one place the bushes were drooping with the weight of the fruit, still as fresh as ever. It was the 7th of September. Such patches afforded a grateful repast, and served to bait the tired party forward. When any lagged behind, the cry of "blueberries" was most effectual to bring them up. Even at this elevation we passed through a moose-yard, formed by a large flat rock, four or five rods square, where they tread down the snow in winter. At length, fearing that if we held the direct course to the summit, we should not find any water near our camping-ground, we gradually swerved to the west, till, at four o'clock, we struck again the torrent which I have mentioned, and here, in view of the summit, the weary party decided to camp that night.

While my companions were seeking a suitable spot for this purpose, I improved the little daylight that was left in climbing the mountain alone. We were in a deep and narrow ravine, sloping up to the clouds, at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees, and hemmed in by walls of rock, which were at first covered with low trees, then with impenetrable thickets of scraggy birches and spruce trees, and with moss, but at last bare of all vegetation but lichens, and almost continually draped in clouds. Following up the course of the torrent which occupied this, — and I mean to lay some emphasis on this word *up*, — pulling myself up by the side of perpendicular falls of twenty or thirty feet, by the roots of firs and birches, and then, perhaps, walking a level rod or two in the thin stream, for it took up the whole road, ascending by huge steps, as it were, a giant's

stairway, down which a river flowed, I had soon cleared the trees, and paused on the successive shelves, to look back over the country. The torrent was from fifteen to thirty feet wide, without a tributary, and seemingly not diminishing in breadth as I advanced; but still it came rushing and roaring down, with a copious tide, over and amidst masses of bare rock, from the very clouds, as though a waterspout had just burst over the mountain. Leaving this at last, I began to work my way, scarcely less arduous than Satan's anciently through Chaos, up the nearest though not the highest peak. At first scrambling on all fours over the tops of ancient black spruce trees (*Abies nigra*), old as the flood, from two to ten or twelve feet in height, their tops flat and spreading, and their foliage blue, and nipped with cold, as if for centuries they had ceased growing upward against the bleak sky, the solid cold. I walked some good rods erect upon the tops of these trees, which were overgrown with moss and mountain cranberries. It seemed that in the course of time they had filled up the intervals between the huge rocks, and the cold wind had uniformly leveled all over. Here the principle of vegetation was hard put to it. There was apparently a belt of this kind running quite round the mountain, though, perhaps, nowhere so remarkable as here. Once, slumping through, I looked down ten feet, into a dark and cavernous region, and saw the stem of a spruce, on whose top I stood, as on a mass of coarse basket-work, fully nine inches in diameter at the ground. These holes were bears' dens, and the bears were even then at home. This was the sort of garden I made my way *over*, for an eighth of a mile, at the risk, it is true, of treading on some of the plants, not seeing any path *through* it, — certainly the most treacherous and porous country I ever traveled.

"Nigh foundered on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying,"

But nothing could exceed the toughness of the twigs, — not one snapped under my weight, for they had slowly grown. Having slumped, scrambled, rolled, bounced, and walked, by turns, over this scraggy country, I arrived upon a side-hill, or rather side-mountain, where rocks, gray, silent rocks, were the flocks and herds that pastured, chewing a rocky cud at sunset. They looked at me with

hard gray eyes, without a bleat or a low. This brought me to the skirt of a cloud, and bounded my walk that night. But I had already seen that Maine country when I turned about, waving, flowing, rippling, down below.

When I returned to my companions, they had selected a camping-ground on the torrent's edge, and were resting on the ground; one was on the sick list, rolled in a blanket, on a damp shelf of rock. It was a savage and dreary scenery enough, so wildly rough, that they looked long to find a level and open space for the tent. We could not well camp higher, for want of fuel; and the trees here seemed so evergreen and sappy, that we almost doubted if they would acknowledge the influence of fire; but fire prevailed at last, and blazed here, too, like a good citizen of the world. Even at this height we met with frequent traces of moose, as well as of bears. As here was no cedar, we made our bed of coarser feathered spruce; but at any rate the feathers were plucked from the live tree. It was, perhaps, even a more grand and desolate place for a night's lodging than the summit would have been, being in the neighborhood of those wild trees, and of the torrent. Some more aërial and finer-spirited winds rushed and roared through the ravine all night, from time to time arousing our fire, and dispersing the embers about. It was as if we lay in the very nest of a young whirlwind. At midnight, one of my bed-fellows, being startled in his dreams by the sudden blazing up to its top of a fir tree, whose green boughs were dried by the heat, sprang up, with a cry, from his bed, thinking the world on fire, and drew the whole camp after him.

In the morning, after whetting our appetite on some raw pork, a wafer of hard-bread, and a dipper of condensed cloud or waterspout, we all together began to make our way up the falls, which I have described; this time choosing the right hand, or highest peak, which was not the one I had approached before. But soon my companions were lost to my sight behind the mountain ridge in my rear, which still seemed ever retreating before me, and I climbed alone over huge rocks, loosely poised, a mile or more, still edging toward the clouds; for though the day was clear elsewhere, the summit was concealed by mist. The mountain seemed a vast aggregation of loose rocks, as if some time it had rained rocks, and they lay as they fell on the

mountain sides, nowhere fairly at rest, but leaning on each other, all rocking stones, with cavities between, but scarcely any soil or smoother shelf. They were the raw materials of a planet dropped from an unseen quarry, which the vast chemistry of nature would anon work up, or work down, into the smiling and verdant plains and valleys of earth. This was an undone extremity of the globe; as in lignite we see coal in the process of formation.

At length I entered within the skirts of the cloud which seemed forever drifting over the summit, and yet would never be gone, but was generated out of that pure air as fast as it flowed away; and when, a quarter of a mile farther, I reached the summit of the ridge, which those who have seen in clearer weather say is about five miles long, and contains a thousand acres of table-land, I was deep within the hostile ranks of clouds, and all objects were obscured by them. Now the wind would blow me out a yard of clear sunlight, wherein I stood; then a gray, dawning light was all it could accomplish, the cloud-line ever rising and falling with the wind's intensity. Sometimes it seemed as if the summit would be cleared in a few moments, and smile in sunshine; but what was gained on one side was lost on another. It was like sitting in a chimney and waiting for the smoke to blow away. It was, in fact, a cloud-factory, — these were the cloud-works, and the wind turned them off done from the cool, bare rocks. Occasionally, when the windy columns broke in to me, I caught sight of a dark, damp crag to the right or left; the mist driving ceaselessly between it and me. It reminded me of the creations of the old epic and dramatic poets, of Atlas, Vulcan, the Cyclops, and Prometheus. Such was Caucasus and the rock where Prometheus was bound. Æschylus had no doubt visited such scenery as this. It was vast, Titanic, and such as man never inhabits. Some part of the beholder, even some vital part, seems to escape through the loose grating of his ribs as he ascends. He is more lone than you can imagine. There is less of substantial thought and fair understanding in him than in the plains where men inhabit. His reason is dispersed and shadowy, more thin and subtile, like the air. Vast, Titanic, inhuman Nature has got him at disadvantage, caught him alone, and pilfers him of some of his divine faculty. She does not smile on him as in the plains. She seems to say sternly, Why

came ye here before your time. This ground is not prepared for you. Is it not enough that I smile in the valleys? I have never made this soil for thy feet, this air for thy breathing, these rocks for thy neighbors. I cannot pity nor fondle thee here, but forever relentlessly drive thee hence to where I *am* kind. Why seek me where I have not called thee, and then complain because you find me but a stepmother? Shouldst thou freeze or starve, or shudder thy life away, here is no shrine, nor altar, nor any access to my ear.

"Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm, but ...
. . . . . as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light."

The tops of mountains are among the unfinished parts of the globe, whither it is a slight insult to the gods to climb and pry into their secrets, and try their effect on our humanity. Only daring and insolent men, perchance, go there. Simple races, as savages, do not climb mountains, — their tops are sacred and mysterious tracts never visited by them. Pomola is always angry with those who climb to the summit of Ktaadn.

According to Jackson, who, in his capacity of geological surveyor of the State, has accurately measured it, the altitude of Ktaadn is 5300 feet, or a little more than one mile above the level of the sea, and he adds, "It is then evidently the highest point in the State of Maine, and is the most abrupt granite mountain in New England." The peculiarities of that spacious table-land on which I was standing, as well as the remarkable semicircular precipice or basin on the eastern side, were all concealed by the mist. I had brought my whole pack to the top, not knowing but I should have to make my descent to the river, and possibly to the settled portion of the State alone, and by some other route, and wishing to have a complete outfit with me. But at length fearing that my companions would be anxious to reach the river before night, and knowing that the clouds might rest on the mountain for days, I was compelled to descend. Occasionally, as I came down, the wind would blow me a vista open, through which I

could see the country eastward, boundless forests, and lakes, and streams, gleaming in the sun, some of them emptying into the East Branch. There were also new mountains in sight in that direction. Now and then some small bird of the sparrow family would flit away before me, unable to command its course, like a fragment of the gray rock blown off by the wind.

I found my companions where I had left them, on the side of the peak, gathering the mountain cranberries, which filled every crevice between the rocks, together with blueberries, which had a spicier flavor the higher up they grew, but were not the less agreeable to our palates. When the country is settled, and roads are made, these cranberries will perhaps become an article of commerce. From this elevation, just on the skirts of the clouds, we could overlook the country, west and south, for a hundred miles. There it was, the State of Maine, which we had seen on the map, but not much like that, — immeasurable forest for the sun to shine on, that eastern *stuff* we hear of in Massachusetts. No clearing, no house. It did not look as if a solitary traveler had cut so much as a walking-stick there. Countless lakes, — Moosehead in the southwest, forty miles long by ten wide, like a gleaming silver platter at the end of the table; Chesuncook, eighteen long by three wide, without an island; Millinocket, on the south, with its hundred islands; and a hundred others without a name; and mountains, also, whose names, for the most part, are known only to the Indians. The forest looked like a firm grass sward, and the effect of these lakes in its midst has been well compared, by one who has since visited this same spot, to that of a "mirror broken into a thousand fragments, and wildly scattered over the grass, reflecting the full blaze of the sun." It was a large farm for somebody, when cleared. According to the Gazetteer, which was printed before the boundary question was settled, this single Penobscot County, in which we were, was larger than the whole State of Vermont, with its fourteen counties; and this was only a part of the wild lands of Maine. We are concerned now, however, about natural, not political limits. We were about eighty miles, as the bird flies, from Bangor, or one hundred and fifteen, as we had ridden, and walked, and paddled. We had to console ourselves with the reflection that this view was probably as good as that from the peak, as far as it went; and what

were a mountain without its attendant clouds and mists? Like ourselves, neither Bailey nor Jackson had obtained a clear view from the summit.

Setting out on our return to the river, still at an early hour in the day, we decided to follow the course of the torrent, which we supposed to be Murch Brook, as long as it would not lead us too far out of our way. We thus traveled about four miles in the very torrent itself, continually crossing and recrossing it, leaping from rock to rock, and jumping with the stream down falls of seven or eight feet, or sometimes sliding down on our backs in a thin sheet of water. This ravine had been the scene of an extraordinary freshet in the spring, apparently accompanied by a slide from the mountain. It must have been filled with a stream of stones and water, at least twenty feet above the present level of the torrent. For a rod or two, on either side of its channel, the trees were barked and splintered up to their tops, the birches bent over, twisted, and sometimes finely split, like a stable-broom; some, a foot in diameter, snapped off, and whole clumps of trees bent over with the weight of rocks piled on them. In one place we noticed a rock, two or three feet in diameter, lodged nearly twenty feet high in the crotch of a tree. For the whole four miles we saw but one rill emptying in, and the volume of water did not seem to be increased from the first. We traveled thus very rapidly with a downward impetus, and grew remarkably expert at leaping from rock to rock, for leap we must, and leap we did, whether there was any rock at the right distance or not. It was a pleasant picture when the foremost turned about and looked up the winding ravine, walled in with rocks and the green forest, to see, at intervals of a rod or two, a red-shirted or green-jacketed mountaineer against the white torrent, leaping down the channel with his pack on his back, or pausing upon a convenient rock in the midst of the torrent to mend a rent in his clothes, or unstrap the dipper at his belt to take a draught of the water. At one place we were startled by seeing, on a little sandy shelf by the side of the stream, the fresh print of a man's foot, and for a moment realized how Robinson Crusoe felt in a similar case; but at last we remembered that we had struck this stream on our way up, though we could not have told where, and one had descended into the ravine for a drink. The cool air above and the

continual bathing of our bodies in mountain water, alternate foot, sitz, douche, and plunge baths, made this walk exceedingly refreshing, and we had traveled only a mile or two, after leaving the torrent, before every thread of our clothes was as dry as usual, owing perhaps to a peculiar quality in the atmosphere.

After leaving the torrent, being in doubt about our course, Tom threw down his pack at the foot of the loftiest spruce tree at hand, and shinned up the bare trunk some twenty feet, and then climbed through the green tower, lost to our sight, until he held the topmost spray in his hand. McCauslin, in his younger days, had marched through the wilderness with a body of troops, under General Somebody, and with one other man did all the scouting and spying service. The General's word was, "Throw down the top of that tree," and there was no tree in the Maine woods so high that it did not lose its top in such a case. I have heard a story of two men being lost once in these woods, nearer to the settlements than this, who climbed the loftiest pine they could find, some six feet in diameter at the ground, from whose top they discovered a solitary clearing and its smoke. When at this height, some two hundred feet from the ground, one of them became dizzy, and fainted in his companion's arms, and the latter had to accomplish the descent with him, alternately fainting and reviving, as best he could. To Tom we cried, "Where away does the summit bear? where the burnt lands?" The last he could only conjecture; he descried, however, a little meadow and pond, lying probably in our course, which we concluded to steer for. On reaching this secluded meadow, we found fresh tracks of moose on the shore of the pond, and the water was still unsettled as if they had fled before us. A little farther, in a dense thicket, we seemed to be still on their trail. It was a small meadow, of a few acres, on the mountain-side, concealed by the forest, and perhaps never seen by a white man before, where one would think that the moose might browse and bathe, and rest in peace. Pursuing this course, we soon reached the open land, which went sloping down some miles toward the Penobscot.

Perhaps I most fully realized that this was primeval, untamed, and forever untamable *Nature*, or whatever else men call it, while coming down this part of the mountain. We were passing over "Burnt

Lands," burnt by lightning, perchance, though they showed no recent marks of fire, hardly so much as a charred stump, but looked rather like a natural pasture for the moose and deer, exceedingly wild and desolate, with occasional strips of timber crossing them, and low poplars springing up, and patches of blueberries here and there. I found myself traversing them familiarly, like some pasture run to waste, or partially reclaimed by man; but when I reflected what man, what brother or sister or kinsman of our race made it and claimed it, I expected the proprietor to rise up and dispute my passage. It is difficult to conceive of a region uninhabited by man. We habitually presume his presence and influence everywhere. And yet we have not seen pure Nature, unless we have seen her thus vast and drear and inhuman, though in the midst of cities. Nature was here something savage and awful, though beautiful. I looked with awe at the ground I trod on, to see what the Powers had made there, the form and fashion and material of their work. This was that Earth of which we have heard, made out of Chaos and Old Night. Here was no man's garden, but the unhandseled globe. It was not lawn, nor pasture, nor mead, nor woodland, nor lea, nor arable, nor waste land. It was the fresh and natural surface of the planet Earth, as it was made forever and ever, — to be the dwelling of man, we say, — so Nature made it, and man may use it if he can. Man was not to be associated with it. It was Matter, vast, terrific, — not his Mother Earth that we have heard of, not for him to tread on, or be buried in, — no, it were being too familiar even to let his bones lie there, — the home, this, of Necessity and Fate. There was clearly felt the presence of a force not bound to be kind to man. It was a place for heathenism and superstitious rites, — to be inhabited by men nearer of kin to the rocks and to wild animals than we. We walked over it with a certain awe, stopping, from time to time, to pick the blueberries which grew there, and had a smart and spicy taste. Perchance where *our* wild pines stand, and leaves lie on their forest floor, in Concord, there were once reapers, and husbandmen planted grain; but here not even the surface had been scarred by man, but it was a specimen of what God saw fit to make this world. What is it to be admitted to a museum, to see a myriad of particular things, compared with being shown some star's surface, some hard matter in its home! I stand in

awe of my body, this matter to which I am bound has become so strange to me. I fear not spirits, ghosts, of which I am one, — *that* my body might, — but I fear bodies, I tremble to meet them. What is this Titan that has possession of me? Talk of mysteries! Think of our life in nature, — daily to be shown matter, to come in contact with it, — rocks, trees, wind on our cheeks! the *solid* earth! the *actual* world! the common sense! Contact! Contact! Who are we? *where* are we?

Erelong we recognized some rocks and other features in the landscape which we had purposely impressed on our memories, and, quickening our pace, by two o'clock we reached the batteau. Here we had expected to dine on trout, but in this glaring sunlight they were slow to take the bait, so we were compelled to make the most of the crumbs of our hard-bread and our pork, which were both nearly exhausted. Meanwhile we deliberated whether we should go up the river a mile farther, to Gibson's clearing, on the Sowadnehunk, where there was a deserted log hut, in order to get a half-inch auger, to mend one of our spike-poles with. There were young spruce trees enough around us, and we had a spare spike, but nothing to make a hole with. But as it was uncertain whether we should find any tools left there, we patched up the broken pole, as well as we could, for the downward voyage, in which there would be but little use for it. Moreover, we were unwilling to lose any time in this expedition, lest the wind should rise before we reached the larger lakes, and detain us; for a moderate wind produces quite a sea on these waters, in which a batteau will not live for a moment; and on one occasion McCauslin had been delayed a week at the head of the North Twin, which is only four miles across. We were nearly out of provisions, and ill prepared in this respect for what might possibly prove a week's journey round by the shore, fording innumerable streams, and threading a trackless forest, should any accident happen to our boat.

It was with regret that we turned our backs on Chesuncook, which McCauslin had formerly logged on, and the Allegash lakes. There were still longer rapids and portages above; among the last the Ripogenus Portage, which he described as the most difficult on the river, and three miles long. The whole length of the Penobscot is two hundred and seventy-five miles, and we are still nearly one hundred miles from its source. Hodge, the Assistant State Geologist, passed

up this river in 1837, and by a portage of only one mile and three quarters crossed over into the Allegash, and so went down that into the St. John, and up the Madawaska to the Grand Portage across to the St. Lawrence. His is the only account that I know of an expedition through to Canada in this direction. He thus describes his first sight of the latter river, which, to compare small things with great, is like Balboa's first sight of the Pacific from the mountains of the Isthmus of Darien. "When we first came in sight of the St. Lawrence," he says, "from the top of a high hill, the view was most striking, and much more interesting to me from having been shut up in the woods for the two previous months. Directly before us lay the broad river, extending across nine or ten miles, its surface broken by a few islands and reefs, and two ships riding at anchor near the shore. Beyond, extended ranges of uncultivated hills, parallel with the river. The sun was just going down behind them, and gilding the whole scene with its parting rays."

About four o'clock, the same afternoon, we commenced our return voyage, which would require but little if any poling. In shooting rapids the boatmen use large and broad paddles, instead of poles, to guide the boat with. Though we glided so swiftly, and often smoothly, down, where it had cost us no slight effort to get up, our present voyage was attended with far more danger; for if we once fairly struck one of the thousand rocks by which we were surrounded, the boat would be swamped in an instant. When a boat is swamped under these circumstances, the boatmen commonly find no difficulty in keeping afloat at first, for the current keeps both them and their cargo up for a long way down the stream; and if they can swim, they have only to work their way gradually to the shore. The greatest danger is of being caught in an eddy behind some larger rock, where the water rushes up stream faster than elsewhere it does down, and being carried round and round under the surface till they are drowned. McCauslin pointed out some rocks which had been the scene of a fatal accident of this kind. Sometimes the body is not thrown out for several hours. He himself had performed such a circuit once, only his legs being visible to his companions; but he was fortunately thrown out in season to recover his breath. In shooting the rapids, the boatman has this problem to solve: to choose

a circuitous and safe course amid a thousand sunken rocks, scattered over a quarter or half a mile, at the same time that he is moving steadily on at the rate of fifteen miles an hour. Stop he cannot; the only question is, where will he go? The bowman chooses the course with all his eyes about him, striking broad off with his paddle, and drawing the boat by main force into her course. The sternman faithfully follows the bow.

We were soon at the Aboljacarmegus Falls. Anxious to avoid the delay, as well as the labor, of the portage here, our boatmen went forward first to reconnoitre, and concluded to let the batteau down the falls, carrying the baggage only over the portage. Jumping from rock to rock until nearly in the middle of the stream, we were ready to receive the boat and let her down over the first fall, some six or seven feet perpendicular. The boatmen stand upon the edge of a shelf of rock, where the fall is perhaps nine or ten feet perpendicular, in from one to two feet of rapid water, one on each side of the boat, and let it slide gently over, till the bow is run out ten or twelve feet in the air; then, letting it drop squarely, while one holds the painter, the other leaps in, and his companion following, they are whirled down the rapids to a new fall or to smooth water. In a very few minutes they had accomplished a passage in safety, which would be as foolhardy for the unskillful to attempt as the descent of Niagara itself. It seemed as if it needed only a little familiarity, and a little more skill, to navigate down such falls as Niagara itself with safety. At any rate, I should not despair of such men in the rapids above Table Rock, until I saw them actually go over the falls, so cool, so collected, so fertile in resources are they. One might have thought that these were falls, and that falls were not to be waded through with impunity, like a mud-puddle. There was really danger of their losing their sublimity in losing their power to harm us. Familiarity breeds contempt. The boatman pauses, perchance, on some shelf beneath a table-rock under the fall, standing in some cove of backwater two feet deep, and you hear his rough voice come up through the spray, coolly giving directions how to launch the boat this time.

Having carried round Pockwockomus Falls, our oars soon brought us to the Katepskonegan, or Oak Hall carry, where we decided to camp half-way over, leaving our batteau to be carried over in the

morning on fresh shoulders. One shoulder of each of the boatmen showed a red spot as large as one's hand, worn by the batteau on this expedition; and this shoulder, as it did all the work, was perceptibly lower than its fellow, from long service. Such toil soon wears out the strongest constitution. The drivers are accustomed to work in the cold water in the spring, rarely ever dry; and if one falls in all over he rarely changes his clothes till night, if then, even. One who takes this precaution is called by a particular nickname, or is turned off. None can lead this life who are not almost amphibious. McCauslin said soberly, what is at any rate a good story to tell, that he had seen where six men were wholly under water at once, at a jam, with their shoulders to handspikes. If the log did not start, then they had to put out their heads to breathe. The driver works as long as he can see, from dark to dark, and at night has not time to eat his supper and dry his clothes fairly, before he is asleep on his cedar bed. We lay that night on the very bed made by such a party, stretching our tent over the poles which were still standing, but re-shingling the damp and faded bed with fresh leaves.

In the morning we carried our boat over and launched it, making haste lest the wind should rise. The boatmen ran down Passamagamet, and soon after Ambejijis Falls, while we walked round with the baggage. We made a hasty breakfast at the head of Ambejijis Lake on the remainder of our pork, and were soon rowing across its smooth surface again, under a pleasant sky, the mountain being now clear of clouds in the northeast. Taking turns at the oars, we shot rapidly across Deep Cove, the foot of Pamadumcook, and the North Twin, at the rate of six miles an hour, the wind not being high enough to disturb us, and reached the Dam at noon. The boatmen went through one of the log sluices in the batteau, where the fall was ten feet at the bottom, and took us in below. Here was the longest rapid in our voyage, and perhaps the running this was as dangerous and arduous a task as any. Shooting down sometimes at the rate, as we judged, of fifteen miles an hour, if we struck a rock we were split from end to end in an instant. Now like a bait bobbing for some river monster, amid the eddies, now darting to this side of the stream, now to that, gliding swift and smooth near to our destruction, or striking broad off with the paddle and drawing the

boat to right or left with all our might, in order to avoid a rock. I suppose that it was like running the rapids of the Sault Sainte Marie, at the outlet of Lake Superior, and our boatmen probably displayed no less dexterity than the Indians there do. We soon ran through this mile, and floated in Quakish Lake.

After such a voyage, the troubled and angry waters, which once had seemed terrible and not to be trifled with, appeared tamed and subdued; they had been bearded and worried in their channels, pricked and whipped into submission with the spike-pole and paddle, gone through and through with impunity, and all their spirit and their danger taken out of them, and the most swollen and impetuous rivers seemed but playthings henceforth. I began, at length, to understand the boatman's familiarity with, and contempt for, the rapids. "Those Fowler boys," said Mrs. McCauslin, "are perfect ducks for the water." They had run down to Lincoln, according to her, thirty or forty miles, in a batteau, in the night, for a doctor, when it was so dark that they could not see a rod before them, and the river was swollen so as to be almost a continuous rapid, so that the doctor *cried*, when they brought him up by daylight, "Why, Tom, how did you see to steer?" "We didn't steer much, — only kept her straight." And yet they met with no accident. It is true, the more difficult rapids are higher up than this.

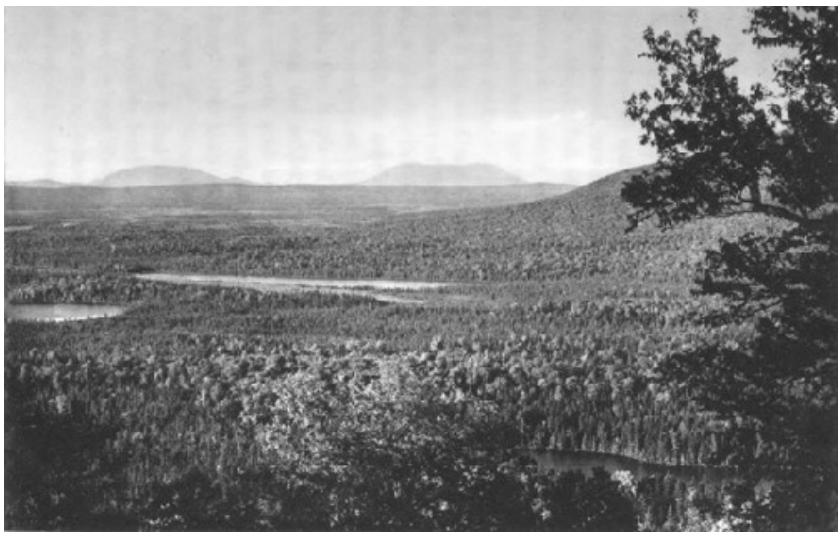
When we reached the Millinocket opposite to Tom's house, and were waiting for his folks to set us over, — for we had left our batteau above the Grand Falls, — we discovered two canoes, with two men in each, turning up this stream from Shad Pond, one keeping the opposite side of a small island before us, while the other approached the side where we were standing, examining the banks carefully for muskrats as they came along. The last proved to be Louis Neptune and his companion, now, at last, on their way up to Chesuncook after moose, but they were so disguised that we hardly knew them. At a little distance they might have been taken for Quakers, with their broad-brimmed hats and overcoats with broad capes, the spoils of Bangor, seeking a settlement in this Sylvania, — or, nearer at hand, for fashionable gentlemen the morning after a spree. Met face to face, these Indians in their native woods looked like the sinister and slouching fellows whom you meet picking up

strings and paper in the streets of a city. There is, in fact, a remarkable and unexpected resemblance between the degraded savage and the lowest classes in a great city. The one is no more a child of nature than the other. In the progress of degradation the distinction of races is soon lost. Neptune at first was only anxious to know what we "kill," seeing some partridges in the hands of one of the party, but we had assumed too much anger to permit of a reply. We thought Indians had some honor before. But— "Me been sick. Oh, me unwell now. You make bargain, then me go." They had in fact been delayed so long by a drunken frolic at the Five Islands, and they had not yet recovered from its effects. They had some young musquash in their canoes, which they dug out of the banks with a hoe, for food, not for their skins, for musquash are their principal food on these expeditions. So they went on up the Millinocket, and we kept down the bank of the Penobscot, after recruiting ourselves with a draught of Tom's beer, leaving Tom at his home.

Thus a man shall lead his life away here on the edge of the wilderness, on Indian Millinocket Stream, in a new world, far in the dark of a continent, and have a flute to play at evening here, while his strains echo to the stars, amid the howling of wolves; shall live, as it were, in the primitive age of the world, a primitive man. Yet he shall spend a sunny day, and in this century be my contemporary; perchance shall read some scattered leaves of literature, and sometimes talk with me. Why read history, then, if the ages and the generations are now? He lives three thousand years deep into time, an age not yet described by poets. Can you well go further back in history than this? Ay! ay! — for there turns up but now into the mouth of Millinocket Stream a still more ancient and primitive man, whose history is not brought down even to the former. In a bark vessel sewn with the roots of the spruce, with horn-beam paddles, he dips his way along. He is but dim and misty to me, obscured by the æons that lie between the bark canoe and the batteau. He builds no house of logs, but a wigwam of skins. He eats no hot bread and sweet cake, but musquash and moose meat and the fat of bears. He glides up the Millinocket and is lost to my sight, as a more distant and misty cloud is seen flitting by behind a nearer, and is lost in space. So he goes about his destiny, the red face of man.

After having passed the night, and buttered our boots for the last time, at Uncle George's, whose dogs almost devoured him for joy at his return, we kept on down the river the next day, about eight miles on foot, and then took a batteau, with a man to pole it, to Mattawamkeag, ten more. At the middle of that very night, to make a swift conclusion to a long story, we dropped our buggy over the half-finished bridge at Oldtown, where we heard the confused din and clink of a hundred saws, which never rest, and at six o'clock the next morning one of the party was steaming his way to Massachusetts.

* * * * *



Maine Wilderness

What is most striking in the Maine wilderness is the continuousness of the forest, with fewer open intervals or glades than you had imagined. Except the few burnt lands, the narrow intervals on the rivers, the bare tops of the high mountains, and the lakes and streams, the forest is uninterrupted. It is even more grim and wild than you had anticipated, a damp and intricate wilderness, in the spring everywhere wet and miry. The aspect of the country, indeed, is universally stern and savage, excepting the distant views of the forest from hills, and the lake prospects, which are mild and civilizing in a degree. The lakes are something which you are unprepared for; they lie up so high, exposed to the light, and the forest is diminished to a fine fringe on their edges, with here and

there a blue mountain, like amethyst jewels set around some jewel of the first water, — so anterior, so superior, to all the changes that are to take place on their shores, even now civil and refined, and fair as they can ever be. These are not the artificial forests of an English king, — a royal preserve merely. Here prevail no forest laws but those of nature. The aborigines have never been dispossessed, nor nature disforested.

It is a country full of evergreen trees, of mossy silver birches and watery maples, the ground dotted with insipid small, red berries, and strewn with damp and moss-grown rocks, — a country diversified with innumerable lakes and rapid streams, peopled with trout and various species of *leucisci*, with salmon, shad, and pickerel, and other fishes; the forest resounding at rare intervals with the note of the chickadee, the blue jay, and the woodpecker, the scream of the fish hawk and the eagle, the laugh of the loon, and the whistle of ducks along the solitary streams; at night, with the hooting of owls and howling of wolves; in summer, swarming with myriads of black flies and mosquitoes, more formidable than wolves to the white man. Such is the home of the moose, the bear, the caribou, the wolf, the beaver, and the Indian. Who shall describe the inexpressible tenderness and immortal life of the grim forest, where Nature, though it be midwinter, is ever in her spring, where the moss-grown and decaying trees are not old, but seem to enjoy a perpetual youth; and blissful, innocent Nature, like a serene infant, is too happy to make a noise, except by a few tinkling, lisping birds and trickling rills?

What a place to live, what a place to die and be buried in! There certainly men would live forever, and laugh at death and the grave. There they could have no such thoughts as are associated with the village graveyard, — that make a grave out of one of those moist evergreen hummocks!

Die and be buried who will,
I mean to live here still;
My nature grows ever more young
The primitive pines among.

I am reminded by my journey how exceedingly new this country still is. You have only to travel for a few days into the interior and back parts even of many of the old States, to come to that very

America which the Northmen, and Cabot, and Gosnold, and Smith, and Raleigh visited. If Columbus was the first to discover the islands, Americus Vespucius and Cabot, and the Puritans, and we their descendants, have discovered only the shores of America. While the Republic has already acquired a history world-wide, America is still unsettled and unexplored. Like the English in New Holland, we live only on the shores of a continent even yet, and hardly know where the rivers come from which float our navy. The very timber and boards and shingles of which our houses are made grew but yesterday in a wilderness where the Indian still hunts and the moose runs wild. New York has her wilderness within her own borders; and though the sailors of Europe are familiar with the soundings of her Hudson, and Fulton long since invented the steamboat on its waters, an Indian is still necessary to guide her scientific men to its headwaters in the Adirondack country.

Have we even so much as discovered and settled the shores? Let a man travel on foot along the coast, from the Passamaquoddy to the Sabine, or to the Rio Bravo, or to wherever the end is now, if he is swift enough to overtake it, faithfully following the windings of every inlet and of every cape, and stepping to the music of the surf, — with a desolate fishing town once a week, and a city's port once a month to cheer him, and putting up at the lighthouses, when there are any, — and tell me if it looks like a discovered and settled country, and not rather, for the most part, like a desolate island, and No-Man's Land.

We have advanced by leaps to the Pacific, and left many a lesser Oregon and California unexplored behind us. Though the railroad and the telegraph have been established on the shores of Maine, the Indian still looks out from her interior mountains over all these to the sea. There stands the city of Bangor, fifty miles up the Penobscot, at the head of navigation for vessels of the largest class, the principal lumber depot on this continent, with a population of twelve thousand, like a star on the edge of night, still hewing at the forests of which it is built, already overflowing with the luxuries and refinement of Europe, and sending its vessels to Spain, to England, and to the West Indies for its groceries, — and yet only a few axemen have gone "up river," into the howling wilderness which feeds it. The bear and deer

are still found within its limits; and the moose, as he swims the Penobscot, is entangled amid its shipping, and taken by foreign sailors in its harbor. Twelve miles in the rear, twelve miles of railroad, are Orono and the Indian Island, the home of the Penobscot tribe, and then commence the batteau and the canoe, and the military road; and sixty miles above, the country is virtually unmapped and unexplored, and there still waves the virgin forest of the New World.

CHESUNCOOK

At five P. M., September 13, 1853, I left Boston, in the steamer, for Bangor, by the outside course. It was a warm and still night, — warmer, probably, on the water than on the land, — and the sea was as smooth as a small lake in summer, merely rippled. The passengers went singing on the deck, as in a parlor, till ten o'clock. We passed a vessel on her beam-ends on a rock just outside the islands, and some of us thought that she was the "rapt ship" which ran

"on her side so low
That she drank water, and her keel ploughed air,"

not considering that there was no wind, and that she was under bare poles. Now we have left the islands behind and are off Nahant. We behold those features which the discoverers saw, apparently unchanged. Now we see the Cape Ann lights, and now pass near a small village-like fleet of mackerel fishers at anchor, probably off Gloucester. They salute us with a shout from their low decks; but I understand their "Good-evening" to mean, "Don't run against me, sir." From the wonders of the deep we go below to yet deeper sleep. And then the absurdity of being waked up in the night by a man who wants the job of blacking your boots! It is more inevitable than seasickness, and may have something to do with it. It is like the ducking you get on crossing the line the first time. I trusted that these old customs were abolished. They might with the same propriety insist on blacking your face. I heard of one man who complained that somebody had stolen his boots in the night; and when he found them, he wanted to know what they had done to them, — they had spoiled them, — he never put that stuff on them; and the bootblack narrowly escaped paying damages.

Anxious to get out of the whale's belly, I rose early, and joined some old salts, who were smoking by a dim light on a sheltered part of the deck. We were just getting into the river. They knew all about it, of course. I was proud to find that I had stood the voyage so well, and was not in the least digested. We brushed up and watched the first signs of dawn through an open port; but the day seemed to hang fire. We inquired the time; none of my companions had a

chronometer. At length an African prince rushed by, observing, "Twelve o'clock, gentlemen!" and blew out the light. It was moonrise. So I slunk down into the monster's bowels again.

The first land we make is Monhegan Island, before dawn, and next St. George's Islands, seeing two or three lights. Whitehead, with its bare rocks and funereal bell, is interesting. Next I remember that the Camden Hills attracted my eyes, and afterward the hills about Frankfort. We reached Bangor about noon.

When I arrived, my companion that was to be had gone up river, and engaged an Indian, Joe Aitteon, a son of the Governor, to go with us to Chesuncook Lake. Joe had conducted two white men a-moose-hunting in the same direction the year before. He arrived by cars at Bangor that evening, with his canoe and a companion, Sabattis Solomon, who was going to leave Bangor the following Monday with Joe's father, by way of the Penobscot, and join Joe in moose-hunting at Chesuncook when we had done with him. They took supper at my friend's house and lodged in his barn, saying that they should fare worse than that in the woods. They only made Watch bark a little, when they came to the door in the night for water, for he does not like Indians.

The next morning Joe and his canoe were put on board the stage for Moosehead Lake, sixty and odd miles distant, an hour before we started in an open wagon. We carried hard-bread, pork, smoked beef, tea, sugar, etc., seemingly enough for a regiment; the sight of which brought together reminded me by what ignoble means we had maintained our ground hitherto. We went by the Avenue Road, which is quite straight and very good, northwestward toward Moosehead Lake, through more than a dozen flourishing towns, with almost every one its academy, — not one of which, however, is on my General Atlas, published, alas! in 1824; so much are they before the age, or I behind it! The earth must have been considerably lighter to the shoulders of General Atlas then.

It rained all this day and till the middle of the next forenoon, concealing the landscape almost entirely; but we had hardly got out of the streets of Bangor before I began to be exhilarated by the sight of the wild fir and spruce tops, and those of other primitive evergreens, peering through the mist in the horizon. It was like the

sight and odor of cake to a schoolboy. He who rides and keeps the beaten track studies the fences chiefly. Near Bangor, the fence-posts, on account of the frost's heaving them in the clayey soil, were not planted in the ground, but were mortised into a transverse horizontal beam lying on the surface. Afterwards, the prevailing fences were log ones, with sometimes a Virginia fence, or else rails slanted over crossed stakes; and these zigzagged or played leap-frog all the way to the lake, keeping just ahead of us. After getting out of the Penobscot valley, the country was unexpectedly level, or consisted of very even and equal swells, for twenty or thirty miles, never rising above the general level, but affording, it is said, a very good prospect in clear weather, with frequent views of Ktaadn, — straight roads and long hills. The houses were far apart, commonly small and of one story, but framed. There was very little land under cultivation, yet the forest did not often border the road. The stumps were frequently as high as one's head, showing the depth of the snows. The white hay-caps, drawn over small stacks of beans or corn in the fields on account of the rain, were a novel sight to me. We saw large flocks of pigeons, and several times came within a rod or two of partridges in the road. My companion said that in one journey out of Bangor he and his son had shot sixty partridges from his buggy. The mountain-ash was now very handsome, as also the wayfarer's-tree or hobble-bush, with its ripe purple berries mixed with red. The Canada thistle, an introduced plant, was the prevailing weed all the way to the lake, the roadside in many places, and fields not long cleared, being densely filled with it as with a crop, to the exclusion of everything else. There were also whole fields full of ferns, now rusty and withering, which in older countries are commonly confined to wet ground. There were very few flowers, even allowing for the lateness of the season. It chanced that I saw no asters in bloom along the road for fifty miles, though they were so abundant then in Massachusetts, — except in one place one or two of the *Aster acuminatus*, — and no golden-rods till within twenty miles of Monson, where I saw a three-ribbed one. There were many late buttercups, however, and the two fire-weeds, erechthites and epilobium, commonly where there had been a burning, and at last the pearly everlasting. I noticed occasionally very long troughs which supplied the road with water, and my companion said that

three dollars annually were granted by the State to one man in each school-district, who provided and maintained a suitable water-trough by the roadside, for the use of travelers, — a piece of intelligence as refreshing to me as the water itself. That legislature did not sit in vain. It was an Oriental act, which made me wish that I was still farther down East, — another Maine law, which I hope we may get in Massachusetts. That State is banishing bar-rooms from its highways, and conducting the mountain springs thither.

The country was first decidedly mountainous in Garland, Sangerville, and onwards, twenty-five or thirty miles from Bangor. At Sangerville, where we stopped at mid-afternoon to warm and dry ourselves, the landlord told us that he had found a wilderness where we found him. At a fork in the road between Abbot and Monson, about twenty miles from Moosehead Lake, I saw a guide-post surmounted by a pair of moose horns, spreading four or five feet, with the word "Monson" painted on one blade, and the name of some other town on the other. They are sometimes used for ornamental hat-trees, together with deer's horns, in front entries; but, after the experience which I shall relate, I trust that I shall have a better excuse for killing a moose than that I may hang my hat on his horns. We reached Monson, fifty miles from Bangor, and thirteen from the lake, after dark.

At four o'clock the next morning, in the dark, and still in the rain, we pursued our journey. Close to the academy in this town they have erected a sort of gallows for the pupils to practice on. I thought that they might as well hang at once all who need to go through such exercises in so new a country, where there is nothing to hinder their living an outdoor life. Better omit Blair, and take the air. The country about the south end of the lake is quite mountainous, and the road began to feel the effects of it. There is one hill which, it is calculated, it takes twenty-five minutes to ascend. In many places the road was in that condition called *repaired*, having just been whittled into the required semicylindrical form with the shovel and scraper, with all the softest inequalities in the middle, like a hog's back with the bristles up, and Jehu was expected to keep astride of the spine. As you looked off each side of the bare sphere into the horizon, the ditches were awful to behold, — a vast hollowness, like that between

Saturn and his ring. At a tavern hereabouts the hostler greeted our horse as an old acquaintance, though he did not remember the driver. He said that he had taken care of that little mare for a short time, a year or two before, at the Mount Kineo House, and thought she was not in as good condition as then. Every man to his trade. I am not acquainted with a single horse in the world, not even the one that kicked me.

Already we had thought that we saw Moosehead Lake from a hilltop, where an extensive fog filled the distant lowlands, but we were mistaken. It was not till we were within a mile or two of its south end that we got our first view of it, — a suitably wild-looking sheet of water, sprinkled with small, low islands, which were covered with shaggy spruce and other wild wood, — seen over the infant port of Greenville with mountains on each side and far in the north, and a steamer's smoke-pipe rising above a roof. A pair of moose-horns ornamented a corner of the public house where we left our horse, and a few rods distant lay the small steamer Moosehead, Captain King. There was no village, and no summer road any farther in this direction, but a winter road, that is, one passable only when deep snow covers its inequalities, from Greenville up the east side of the lake to Lily Bay, about twelve miles.

I was here first introduced to Joe. He had ridden all the way on the outside of the stage, the day before, in the rain, giving way to ladies, and was well wetted. As it still rained, he asked if we were going to "put it through." He was a good-looking Indian, twenty-four years old, apparently of unmixed blood, short and stout, with a broad face and reddish complexion, and eyes, methinks, narrower and more turned up at the outer corners than ours, answering to the description of his race. Besides his underclothing, he wore a red flannel shirt, woolen pants, and a black Kossuth hat, the ordinary dress of the lumberman, and, to a considerable extent, of the Penobscot Indian. When, afterward, he had occasion to take off his shoes and stockings, I was struck with the smallness of his feet. He had worked a good deal as a lumberman, and appeared to identify himself with that class. He was the only one of the party who possessed an india-rubber jacket. The top strip or edge of his canoe was worn nearly through by friction on the stage.

At eight o'clock the steamer, with her bell and whistle, scaring the moose, summoned us on board. She was a well-appointed little boat, commanded by a gentlemanly captain, with patent life-seats and metallic life-boat, and dinner on board, if you wish. She is chiefly used by lumberers for the transportation of themselves, their boats, and supplies, but also by hunters and tourists. There was another steamer, named Amphitrite, laid up close by; but, apparently, her name was not more trite than her hull. There were also two or three large sailboats in port. These beginnings of commerce on a lake in the wilderness are very interesting, — these larger white birds that come to keep company with the gulls. There were but few passengers, and not one female among them: a St. Francis Indian, with his canoe and moose-hides; two explorers for lumber; three men who landed at Sandbar Island, and a gentleman who lives on Deer Island, eleven miles up the lake, and owns also Sugar Island, between which and the former the steamer runs; these, I think, were all beside ourselves. In the saloon was some kind of musical instrument — cherubim or seraphim — to soothe the angry waves; and there, very properly, was tacked up the map of the public lands of Maine and Massachusetts, a copy of which I had in my pocket.

The heavy rain confining us to the saloon awhile, I discoursed with the proprietor of Sugar Island on the condition of the world in Old Testament times. But at length, leaving this subject as fresh as we found it, he told me that he had lived about this lake twenty or thirty years, and yet had not been to the head of it for twenty-one years. He faces the other way. The explorers had a fine new birch on board, larger than ours, in which they had come up the Piscataquis from Howland, and they had had several messes of trout already. They were going to the neighborhood of Eagle and Chamberlain lakes, or the head-waters of the St. John, and offered to keep us company as far as we went. The lake to-day was rougher than I found the ocean, either going or returning, and Joe remarked that it would swamp his birch. Off Lily Bay it is a dozen miles wide, but it is much broken by islands. The scenery is not merely wild, but varied and interesting; mountains were seen, farther or nearer, on all sides but the northwest, their summits now lost in the clouds; but Mount Kineo is the principal feature of the lake, and more exclusively

belongs to it. After leaving Greenville, at the foot, which is the nucleus of a town some eight or ten years old, you see but three or four houses for the whole length of the lake, or about forty miles, three of them the public houses at which the steamer is advertised to stop, and the shore is an unbroken wilderness. The prevailing wood seemed to be spruce, fir, birch, and rock maple. You could easily distinguish the hard wood from the soft, or "black growth," as it is called, at a great distance, the former being smooth, round-topped, and light green, with a bowery and cultivated look.

Mount Kineo, at which the boat touched, is a peninsula with a narrow neck, about midway the lake on the east side. The celebrated precipice is on the east or land side of this, and is so high and perpendicular that you can jump from the top, many hundred feet, into the water, which makes up behind the point. A man on board told us that an anchor had been sunk ninety fathoms at its base before reaching bottom! Probably it will be discovered ere long that some Indian maiden jumped off it for love once, for true love never could have found a path more to its mind. We passed quite close to the rock here, since it is a very bold shore, and I observed marks of a rise of four or five feet on it. The St. Francis Indian expected to take in his boy here, but he was not at the landing. The father's sharp eyes, however, detected a canoe with his boy in it far away under the mountain, though no one else could see it. "Where is the canoe?" asked the captain, "I don't see it;" but he held on, nevertheless, and by and by it hove in sight.

We reached the head of the lake about noon. The weather had, in the meanwhile, cleared up, though the mountains were still capped with clouds. Seen from this point, Mount Kineo, and two other allied mountains ranging with it northeasterly, presented a very strong family likeness, as if all cast in one mould. The steamer here approached a long pier projecting from the northern wilderness, and built of some of its logs, and whistled, where not a cabin nor a mortal was to be seen. The shore was quite low, with flat rocks on it, overhung with black ash, arbor-vitæ, etc., which at first looked as if they did not care a whistle for us. There was not a single cabman to cry "Coach!" or inveigle us to the United States Hotel. At length a Mr. Hinckley, who has a camp at the other end of the "carry,"

appeared with a truck drawn by an ox and a horse over a rude log-railway through the woods. The next thing was to get our canoe and effects over the carry from this lake, one of the heads of the Kennebec, into the Penobscot River. This railway from the lake to the river occupied the middle of a clearing two or three rods wide and perfectly straight through the forest. We walked across while our baggage was drawn behind. My companion went ahead to be ready for partridges, while I followed, looking at the plants.

This was an interesting botanical locality for one coming from the south to commence with; for many plants which are rather rare, and one or two which are not found at all, in the eastern part of Massachusetts, grew abundantly between the rails, — as Labrador-tea, *Kalmia glauca*, Canada blueberry (which was still in fruit, and a second time in bloom), *Clintonia* and *Linnæa borealis*, which last a lumberer called *moxon*, creeping snowberry, painted trillium, large-flowered bellwort, etc. I fancied that the *Aster Radula*, *Diplopappus umbellatus*, *Solidago lanceolata*, red trumpet-weed, and many others which were conspicuously in bloom on the shore of the lake and on the carry, had a peculiarly wild and primitive look there. The spruce and fir trees crowded to the track on each side to welcome us, the arbor-vitæ, with its changing leaves, prompted us to make haste, and the sight of the canoe birch gave us spirits to do so. Sometimes an evergreen just fallen lay across the track with its rich burden of cones, looking, still, fuller of life than our trees in the most favorable positions. You did not expect to find such *spruce* trees in the wild woods, but they evidently attend to their toilets each morning even there. Through such a front yard did we enter that wilderness.

There was a very slight rise above the lake, — the country appearing like, and perhaps being partly a swamp, — and at length a gradual descent to the Penobscot, which I was surprised to find here a large stream, from twelve to fifteen rods wide, flowing from west to east, or at right angles with the lake, and not more than two and a half miles from it. The distance is nearly twice too great on the Map of the Public Lands, and on Colton's Map of Maine, and Russell Stream is placed too far down. Jackson makes Moosehead Lake to be nine hundred and sixty feet above high water in Portland harbor. It is higher than Chesuncook, for the lumberers consider the Penobscot,

where we struck it, twenty-five feet lower than Moosehead, though eight miles above it is said to be the highest, so that the water can be made to flow either way, and the river falls a good deal between here and Chesuncook. The carry-man called this about one hundred and forty miles above Bangor by the river, or two hundred from the ocean, and fifty-five miles below Hilton's, on the Canada road, the first clearing above, which is four and a half miles from the source of the Penobscot.

At the north end of the carry, in the midst of a clearing of sixty acres or more, there was a log camp of the usual construction, with something more like a house adjoining, for the accommodation of the carry-man's family and passing lumberers. The bed of withered fir twigs smelled very sweet, though really very dirty. There was also a store-house on the bank of the river, containing pork, flour, iron, batteaux, and birches, locked up.

We now proceeded to get our dinner, which always turned out to be tea, and to pitch canoes, for which purpose a large iron pot lay permanently on the bank. This we did in company with the explorers. Both Indians and whites use a mixture of rosin and grease for this purpose, that is, for the pitching, not the dinner. Joe took a small brand from the fire and blew the heat and flame against the pitch on his birch, and so melted and spread it. Sometimes he put his mouth over the suspected spot and sucked, to see if it admitted air; and at one place, where we stopped, he set his canoe high on crossed stakes, and poured water into it. I narrowly watched his motions, and listened attentively to his observations, for we had employed an Indian mainly that I might have an opportunity to study his ways. I heard him swear once, mildly, during this operation, about his knife being as dull as a hoe, — an accomplishment which he owed to his intercourse with the whites; and he remarked, "We ought to have some tea before we start; we shall be hungry before we kill that moose."

At mid-afternoon we embarked on the Penobscot. Our birch was nineteen and a half feet long by two and a half at the widest part, and fourteen inches deep within, both ends alike, and painted green, which Joe thought affected the pitch and made it leak. This, I think, was a middling-sized one. That of the explorers was much larger,

though probably not much longer. This carried us three with our baggage, weighing in all between five hundred and fifty and six hundred pounds. We had two heavy, though slender, rock-maple paddles, one of them of bird's-eye maple. Joe placed birch-bark on the bottom for us to sit on, and slanted cedar splints against the cross-bars to protect our backs, while he himself sat upon a cross-bar in the stern. The baggage occupied the middle or widest part of the canoe. We also paddled by turns in the bows, now sitting with our legs extended, now sitting upon our legs, and now rising upon our knees; but I found none of these positions endurable, and was reminded of the complaints of the old Jesuit missionaries of the torture they endured from long confinement in constrained positions in canoes, in their long voyages from Quebec to the Huron country; but afterwards I sat on the cross-bars, or stood up, and experienced no inconvenience.

It was deadwater for a couple of miles. The river had been raised about two feet by the rain, and lumberers were hoping for a flood sufficient to bring down the logs that were left in the spring. Its banks were seven or eight feet high, and densely covered with white and black spruce, — which, I think, must be the commonest trees thereabouts, — fir, arbor-vitæ, canoe, yellow and black birch, rock, mountain, and a few red maples, beech, black and mountain ash, the large-toothed aspen, many civil-looking elms, now imbrowned, along the stream, and at first a few hemlocks also. We had not gone far before I was startled by seeing what I thought was an Indian encampment, covered with a red flag, on the bank, and exclaimed, "Camp!" to my comrades. I was slow to discover that it was a red maple changed by the frost. The immediate shores were also densely covered with the speckled alder, red osier, shrubby willows or sallows, and the like. There were a few yellow lily pads still left, half-drowned, along the sides, and sometimes a white one. Many fresh tracks of moose were visible where the water was shallow, and on the shore, the lily stems were freshly bitten off by them.

After paddling about two miles, we parted company with the explorers, and turned up Lobster Stream, which comes in on the right, from the southeast. This was six or eight rods wide, and appeared to run nearly parallel with the Penobscot. Joe said that it

was so called from small fresh-water lobsters found in it. It is the Matahumkeag of the maps. My companion wished to look for moose signs, and intended, if it proved worth the while, to camp up that way, since the Indian advised it. On account of the rise of the Penobscot, the water ran up this stream to the pond of the same name, one or two miles. The Spencer Mountains, east of the north end of Moosehead Lake, were now in plain sight in front of us. The kingfisher flew before us, the pigeon woodpecker was seen and heard, and nuthatches and chickadees close at hand. Joe said that they called the chickadee *kecunnilessu* in his language. I will not vouch for the spelling of what possibly was never spelt before, but I pronounced after him till he said it would do. We passed close to a woodcock, which stood perfectly still on the shore, with feathers puffed up, as if sick. This Joe said they called *nipsquecohossus*. The kingfisher was *skuscumonsuck*; bear was *wassus*; Indian devil, *lunxus*; the mountain-ash, *upahsis*. This was very abundant and beautiful. Moose tracks were not so fresh along this stream, except in a small creek about a mile up it, where a large log had lodged in the spring, marked "W-cross-girdle-crow-foot." We saw a pair of moose-horns on the shore, and I asked Joe if a moose had shed them; but he said there was a head attached to them, and I knew that they did not shed their heads more than once in their lives.

After ascending about a mile and a half, to within a short distance of Lobster Lake, we returned to the Penobscot. Just below the mouth of the Lobster we found quick water, and the river expanded to twenty or thirty rods in width. The moose-tracks were quite numerous and fresh here. We noticed in a great many places narrow and well-trodden paths by which they had come down to the river, and where they had slid on the steep and clayey bank. Their tracks were either close to the edge of the stream, those of the calves distinguishable from the others, or in shallow water; the holes made by their feet in the soft bottom being visible for a long time. They were particularly numerous where there was a small bay, or pokelogan, as it is called, bordered by a strip of meadow, or separated from the river by a low peninsula covered with coarse grass, wool-grass, etc., wherein they had waded back and forth and eaten the pads. We detected the remains of one in such a spot. At one

place, where we landed to pick up a summer duck, which my companion had shot, Joe peeled a canoe birch for bark for his hunting-horn. He then asked if we were not going to get the other duck, for his sharp eyes had seen another fall in the bushes a little farther along, and my companion obtained it. I now began to notice the bright red berries of the tree-cranberry, which grows eight or ten feet high, mingled with the alders and cornel along the shore. There was less hard wood than at first.

After proceeding a mile and three quarters below the mouth of the Lobster, we reached, about sundown, a small island at the head of what Joe called the Moosehorn Deadwater (the Moosehorn, in which he was going to hunt that night, coming in about three miles below), and on the upper end of this we decided to camp. On a point at the lower end lay the carcass of a moose killed a month or more before. We concluded merely to prepare our camp, and leave our baggage here, that all might be ready when we returned from moose-hunting. Though I had not come a-hunting, and felt some compunctions about accompanying the hunters, I wished to see a moose near at hand, and was not sorry to learn how the Indian managed to kill one. I went as reporter or chaplain to the hunters, — and the chaplain has been known to carry a gun himself. After clearing a small space amid the dense spruce and fir trees, we covered the damp ground with a shingling of fir twigs, and, while Joe was preparing his birch horn and pitching his canoe, — for this had to be done whenever we stopped long enough to build a fire, and was the principal labor which he took upon himself at such times, — we collected fuel for the night, large, wet, and rotting logs, which had lodged at the head of the island, for our hatchet was too small for effective chopping; but we did not kindle a fire, lest the moose should smell it. Joe set up a couple of forked stakes, and prepared half a dozen poles, ready to cast one of our blankets over in case it rained in the night, which precaution, however, was omitted the next night. We also plucked the ducks which had been killed for breakfast.

While we were thus engaged in the twilight, we heard faintly, from far down the stream, what sounded like two strokes of a woodchopper's axe, echoing dully through the grim solitude. We are wont to liken many sounds, heard at a distance in the forest, to the

stroke of an axe, because they resemble each other under those circumstances, and that is the one we commonly hear there. When we told Joe of this, he exclaimed, “By George, I’ll bet that was a moose! They make a noise like that.” These sounds affected us strangely, and by their very resemblance to a familiar one, where they probably had so different an origin, enhanced the impression of solitude and wildness.

At starlight we dropped down the stream, which was a deadwater for three miles, or as far as the Moosehorn; Joe telling us that we must be very silent, and he himself making no noise with his paddle, while he urged the canoe along with effective impulses. It was a still night, and suitable for this purpose, — for if there is wind, the moose will smell you, — and Joe was very confident that he should get some. The Harvest Moon had just risen, and its level rays began to light up the forest on our right, while we glided downward in the shade on the same side, against the little breeze that was stirring. The lofty, spiring tops of the spruce and fir were very black against the sky, and more distinct than by day, close bordering this broad avenue on each side; and the beauty of the scene, as the moon rose above the forest, it would not be easy to describe. A bat flew over our heads, and we heard a few faint notes of birds from time to time, perhaps the myrtle-bird for one, or the sudden plunge of a musquash, or saw one crossing the stream before us, or heard the sound of a rill emptying in, swollen by the recent rain. About a mile below the island, when the solitude seemed to be growing more complete every moment, we suddenly saw the light and heard the crackling of a fire on the bank, and discovered the camp of the two explorers; they standing before it in their red shirts, and talking aloud of the adventures and profits of the day. They were just then speaking of a bargain, in which, as I understood, somebody had cleared twenty-five dollars. We glided by without speaking, close under the bank, within a couple of rods of them; and Joe, taking his horn, imitated the call of the moose, till we suggested that they might fire on us. This was the last we saw of them, and we never knew whether they detected or suspected us.

I have often wished since that I was with them. They search for timber over a given section, climbing hills and often high trees to

look off; explore the streams by which it is to be driven, and the like; spend five or six weeks in the woods, they two alone, a hundred miles or more from any town, roaming about, and sleeping on the ground where night overtakes them, depending chiefly on the provisions they carry with them, though they do not decline what game they come across; and then in the fall they return and make report to their employers, determining the number of teams that will be required the following winter. Experienced men get three or four dollars a day for this work. It is a solitary and adventurous life, and comes nearest to that of the trapper of the West, perhaps. They work ever with a gun as well as an axe, let their beards grow, and live without neighbors, not on an open plain, but far within a wilderness.

This discovery accounted for the sounds which we had heard, and destroyed the prospect of seeing moose yet awhile. At length, when we had left the explorers far behind, Joe laid down his paddle, drew forth his birch horn, — a straight one, about fifteen inches long and three or four wide at the mouth, tied round with strips of the same bark, — and, standing up, imitated the call of the moose, — ugh-ugh-ugh*, or* oo-oo-oo-oo*, and then a prolonged* oo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o, and listened attentively for several minutes. We asked him what kind of noise he expected to hear. He said that if a moose heard it, he guessed we should find out; we should hear him coming half a mile off; he would come close to, perhaps into, the water, and my companion must wait till he got fair sight, and then aim just behind the shoulder.

The moose venture out to the riverside to feed and drink at night. Earlier in the season the hunters do not use a horn to call them out, but steal upon them as they are feeding along the sides of the stream, and often the first notice they have of one is the sound of the water dropping from its muzzle. An Indian whom I heard imitate the voice of the moose, and also that of the caribou and the deer, using a much longer horn than Joe's, told me that the first could be heard eight or ten miles, sometimes; it was a loud sort of bellowing sound, clearer and more sonorous than the lowing of cattle, the caribou's a sort of snort, and the small deer's like that of a lamb.

At length we turned up the Moosehorn, where the Indians at the carry had told us that they killed a moose the night before. This is a

very meandering stream, only a rod or two in width, but comparatively deep, coming in on the right, fitly enough named Moosehorn, whether from its windings or its inhabitants. It was bordered here and there by narrow meadows between the stream and the endless forest, affording favorable places for the moose to feed, and to call them out on. We proceeded half a mile up this as through a narrow, winding canal, where the tall, dark spruce and firs and arbor-vitæ towered on both sides in the moonlight, forming a perpendicular forest-edge of great height, like the spires of a Venice in the forest. In two places stood a small stack of hay on the bank, ready for the lumberer's use in the winter, looking strange enough there. We thought of the day when this might be a brook winding through smooth-shaven meadows on some gentleman's grounds; and seen by moonlight then, excepting the forest that now hems it in, how little changed it would appear!

Again and again Joe called the moose, placing the canoe close by some favorable point of meadow for them to come out on, but listened in vain to hear one come rushing through the woods, and concluded that they had been hunted too much thereabouts. We saw, many times, what to our imaginations looked like a gigantic moose, with his horns peering from out the forest edge; but we saw the forest only, and not its inhabitants, that night. So at last we turned about. There was now a little fog on the water, though it was a fine, clear night above. There were very few sounds to break the stillness of the forest. Several times we heard the hooting of a great horned owl, as at home, and told Joe that he would call out the moose for him, for he made a sound considerably like the horn; but Joe answered, that the moose had heard that sound a thousand times, and knew better; and oftener still we were startled by the plunge of a musquash. Once, when Joe had called again, and we were listening for moose, we heard, come faintly echoing, or creeping from far through the moss-clad aisles, a dull, dry, rushing sound with a solid core to it, yet as if half smothered under the grasp of the luxuriant and fungus-like forest, like the shutting of a door in some distant entry of the damp and shaggy wilderness. If we had not been there, no mortal had heard it. When we asked Joe in a whisper what it was, he answered, "Tree fall." There is something singularly grand and impressive in the

sound of a tree falling in a perfectly calm night like this, as if the agencies which overthrow it did not need to be excited, but worked with a subtle, deliberate, and conscious force, like a boa-constrictor, and more effectively then than even in a windy day. If there is any such difference, perhaps it is because trees with the dews of the night on them are heavier than by day.

Having reached the camp, about ten o'clock, we kindled our fire and went to bed. Each of us had a blanket, in which he lay on the fir twigs, with his extremities toward the fire, but nothing over his head. It was worth the while to lie down in a country where you could afford such great fires; that was one whole side, and the bright side, of our world. We had first rolled up a large log some eighteen inches through and ten feet long, for a backlog, to last all night, and then piled on the trees to the height of three or four feet, no matter how green or damp. In fact, we burned as much wood that night as would, with economy and an air-tight stove, last a poor family in one of our cities all winter. It was very agreeable, as well as independent, thus lying in the open air, and the fire kept our uncovered extremities warm enough. The Jesuit missionaries used to say, that, in their journeys with the Indians in Canada, they lay on a bed which had never been shaken up since the creation, unless by earthquakes. It is surprising with what impunity and comfort one who has always lain in a warm bed in a close apartment, and studiously avoided drafts of air, can lie down on the ground without a shelter, roll himself in a blanket, and sleep before a fire, in a frosty autumn night, just after a long rain-storm, and even come soon to enjoy and value the fresh air.

I lay awake awhile, watching the ascent of the sparks through the firs, and sometimes their descent in half-extinguished cinders on my blanket. They were as interesting as fireworks, going up in endless, successive crowds, each after an explosion, in an eager, serpentine course, some to five or six rods above the tree-tops before they went out. We do not suspect how much our chimneys have concealed; and now air-tight stoves have come to conceal all the rest. In the course of the night, I got up once or twice and put fresh logs on the fire, making my companions curl up their legs.

When we awoke in the morning (Saturday, September 17), there was considerable frost whitening the leaves. We heard the sound of

the chickadee, and a few faintly lisping birds, and also of ducks in the water about the island. I took a botanical account of stock of our domains before the dew was off, and found that the ground-hemlock, or American yew, was the prevailing undershrub. We breakfasted on tea, hard-bread, and ducks.

Before the fog had fairly cleared away we paddled down the stream again, and were soon past the mouth of the Moosehorn. These twenty miles of the Penobscot, between Moosehead and Chesuncook lakes, are comparatively smooth, and a great part deadwater; but from time to time it is shallow and rapid, with rocks or gravel beds, where you can wade across. There is no expanse of water, and no break in the forest, and the meadow is a mere edging here and there. There are no hills near the river nor within sight, except one or two distant mountains seen in a few places. The banks are from six to ten feet high, but once or twice rise gently to higher ground. In many places the forest on the bank was but a thin strip, letting the light through from some alder swamp or meadow behind. The conspicuous berry-bearing bushes and trees along the shore were the red osier, with its whitish fruit, hobble-bush, mountain-ash, tree-cranberry, choke-cherry, now ripe, alternate cornel, and naked viburnum. Following Joe's example, I ate the fruit of the last, and also of the hobble-bush, but found them rather insipid and seedy. I looked very narrowly at the vegetation, as we glided along close to the shore, and frequently made Joe turn aside for me to pluck a plant, that I might see by comparison what was primitive about my native river. Horehound, horse-mint, and the sensitive fern grew close to the edge, under the willows and alders, and wool-grass on the islands, as along the Assabet River in Concord. It was too late for flowers, except a few asters, goldenrods, etc. In several places we noticed the slight frame of a camp, such as we had prepared to set up, amid the forest by the riverside, where some lumberers or hunters had passed a night, and sometimes steps cut in the muddy or clayey bank in front of it.

We stopped to fish for trout at the mouth of a small stream called Ragmuff, which came in from the west, about two miles below the Moosehorn. Here were the ruins of an old lumbering-camp, and a small space, which had formerly been cleared and burned over, was

now densely overgrown with the red cherry and raspberries. While we were trying for trout, Joe, Indian-like, wandered off up the Ragmuff on his own errands, and when we were ready to start was far beyond call. So we were compelled to make a fire and get our dinner here, not to lose time. Some dark reddish birds, with grayer females (perhaps purple finches), and myrtle-birds in their summer dress, hopped within six or eight feet of us and our smoke. Perhaps they smelled the frying pork. The latter bird, or both, made the lisping notes which I had heard in the forest. They suggested that the few small birds found in the wilderness are on more familiar terms with the lumberman and hunter than those of the orchard and clearing with the farmer. I have since found the Canada jay, and partridges, both the black and the common, equally tame there, as if they had not yet learned to mistrust man entirely. The chickadee, which is at home alike in the primitive woods and in our wood-lots, still retains its confidence in the towns to a remarkable degree.

Joe at length returned, after an hour and a half, and said that he had been two miles up the stream exploring, and had seen a moose, but, not having the gun, he did not get him. We made no complaint, but concluded to look out for Joe the next time. However, this may have been a mere mistake, for we had no reason to complain of him afterwards. As we continued down the stream, I was surprised to hear him whistling "O Susanna" and several other such airs, while his paddle urged us along. Once he said, "Yes, sir-ee." His common word was "Sartain." He paddled, as usual, on one side only, giving the birch an impulse by using the side as a fulcrum. I asked him how the ribs were fastened to the side rails. He answered, "I don't know, I never noticed." Talking with him about subsisting wholly on what the woods yielded, — game, fish, berries, etc., — I suggested that his ancestors did so; but he answered that he had been brought up in such a way that he could not do it. "Yes," said he, "that's the way they got a living, like wild fellows, wild as bears. By George! I shan't go into the woods without provision, — hard-bread, pork, etc." He had brought on a barrel of hard-bread and stored it at the carry for his hunting. However, though he was a Governor's son, he had not learned to read.

At one place below this, on the east side, where the bank was

higher and drier than usual, rising gently from the shore to a slight elevation, some one had felled the trees over twenty or thirty acres, and left them drying in order to burn. This was the only preparation for a house between the Moosehead Carry and Chesuncook, but there was no hut nor inhabitants there yet. The pioneer thus selects a site for his house, which will, perhaps, prove the germ of a town.

My eyes were all the while on the trees, distinguishing between the black and white spruce and the fir. You paddle along in a narrow canal through an endless forest, and the vision I have in my mind's eye, still, is of the small, dark, and sharp tops of tall fir and spruce trees, and pagoda-like arbor-vitæs, crowded together on each side, with various hard woods intermixed. Some of the arbor-vitæs were at least sixty feet high. The hard woods, occasionally occurring exclusively, were less wild to my eye. I fancied them ornamental grounds, with farmhouses in the rear. The canoe and yellow birch, beech, maple, and elm are Saxon and Norman, but the spruce and fir, and pines generally, are Indian. The soft engravings which adorn the annuals give no idea of a stream in such a wilderness as this. The rough sketches in Jackson's Reports on the Geology of Maine answer much better. At one place we saw a small grove of slender sapling white pines, the only collection of pines that I saw on this voyage. Here and there, however, was a full-grown, tall, and slender, but defective one, what lumbermen call a *konchus* tree, which they ascertain with their axes, or by the knots. I did not learn whether this word was Indian or English. It reminded me of the Greek κόγχη, a conch or shell, and I amused myself with fancying that it might signify the dead sound which the trees yield when struck. All the rest of the pines had been driven off.

How far men go for the material of their houses! The inhabitants of the most civilized cities, in all ages, send into far, primitive forests, beyond the bounds of their civilization, where the moose and bear and savage dwell, for their pine boards for ordinary use. And, on the other hand, the savage soon receives from cities iron arrow-points, hatchets, and guns, to point his savageness with.

The solid and well-defined fir-tops, like sharp and regular spearheads, black against the sky, gave a peculiar, dark, and sombre look to the forest. The spruce-tops have a similar but more ragged

outline, their shafts also merely feathered below. The firs were somewhat oftener regular and dense pyramids. I was struck by this universal spiring upward of the forest evergreens. The tendency is to slender, spiring tops, while they are narrower below. Not only the spruce and fir, but even the arbor-vitæ and white pine, unlike the soft, spreading second-growth, of which I saw none, all spire upwards, lifting a dense spearhead of cones to the light and air, at any rate, while their branches straggle after as they may; as Indians lift the ball over the heads of the crowd in their desperate game. In this they resemble grasses, as also palms somewhat. The hemlock is commonly a tent-like pyramid from the ground to its summit.

After passing through some long rips, and by a large island, we reached an interesting part of the river called the Pine Stream Deadwater, about six miles below Ragmuff, where the river expanded to thirty rods in width and had many islands in it, with elms and canoe-birches, now yellowing, along the shore, and we got our first sight of Ktaadn.

Here, about two o'clock, we turned up a small branch three or four rods wide, which comes in on the right from the south, called Pine Stream, to look for moose signs. We had gone but a few rods before we saw very recent signs along the water's edge, the mud lifted up by their feet being quite fresh, and Joe declared that they had gone along there but a short time before. We soon reached a small meadow on the east side, at an angle in the stream, which was, for the most part, densely covered with alders. As we were advancing along the edge of this, rather more quietly than usual, perhaps, on account of the freshness of the signs, — the design being to camp up this stream, if it promised well, — I heard a slight crackling of twigs deep in the alders, and turned Joe's attention to it; whereupon he began to push the canoe back rapidly; and we had receded thus half a dozen rods, when we suddenly spied two moose standing just on the edge of the open part of the meadow which we had passed, not more than six or seven rods distant, looking round the alders at us. They made me think of great frightened rabbits, with their long ears and half-inquisitive, half-frightened looks; the true denizens of the forest (I saw at once), filling a vacuum which now first I discovered had not been filled for me, — *moose*-men, wood-eaters, the word is said to

mean, — clad in a sort of Vermont gray, or homespun. Our Nimrod, owing to the retrograde movement, was now the farthest from the game; but being warned of its neighborhood, he hastily stood up, and, while we ducked, fired over our heads one barrel at the foremost, which alone he saw, though he did not know what kind of creature it was; whereupon this one dashed across the meadow and up a high bank on the northeast, so rapidly as to leave but an indistinct impression of its outlines on my mind. At the same instant, the other, a young one, but as tall as a horse, leaped out into the stream, in full sight, and there stood cowering for a moment, or rather its disproportionate lowness behind gave it that appearance, and uttering two or three trumpeting squeaks. I have an indistinct recollection of seeing the old one pause an instant on the top of the bank in the woods, look toward its shivering young, and then dash away again. The second barrel was leveled at the calf, and when we expected to see it drop in the water, after a little hesitation, it, too, got out of the water, and dashed up the hill, though in a somewhat different direction. All this was the work of a few seconds, and our hunter, having never seen a moose before, did not know but they were deer, for they stood partly in the water, nor whether he had fired at the same one twice or not. From the style in which they went off, and the fact that he was not used to standing up and firing from a canoe, I judged that we should not see anything more of them. The Indian said that they were a cow and her calf, — a yearling, or perhaps two years old, for they accompany their dams so long; but, for my part, I had not noticed much difference in their size. It was but two or three rods across the meadow to the foot of the bank, which, like all the world thereabouts, was densely wooded; but I was surprised to notice, that, as soon as the moose had passed behind the veil of the woods, there was no sound of footsteps to be heard from the soft, damp moss which carpets that forest, and long before we landed, perfect silence reigned. Joe said, “If you wound ‘em moose, me sure get ‘em.”

We all landed at once. My companion reloaded; the Indian fastened his birch, threw off his hat, adjusted his waistband, seized the hatchet, and set out. He told me afterward, casually, that before we landed he had seen a drop of blood on the bank, when it was two

or three rods off. He proceeded rapidly up the bank and through the woods, with a peculiar, elastic, noiseless, and stealthy tread, looking to right and left on the ground, and stepping in the faint tracks of the wounded moose, now and then pointing in silence to a single drop of blood on the handsome, shining leaves of the *Clintonia borealis*, which, on every side, covered the ground, or to a dry fern stem freshly broken, all the while chewing some leaf or else the spruce gum. I followed, watching his motions more than the trail of the moose. After following the trail about forty rods in a pretty direct course, stepping over fallen trees and winding between standing ones, he at length lost it, for there were many other moose-tracks there, and, returning once more to the last blood-stain, traced it a little way and lost it again, and, too soon, I thought, for a good hunter, gave it up entirely. He traced a few steps, also, the tracks of the calf; but, seeing no blood, soon relinquished the search.

I observed, while he was tracking the moose, a certain reticence or moderation in him. He did not communicate several observations of interest which he made, as a white man would have done, though they may have leaked out afterward. At another time, when we heard a slight crackling of twigs and he landed to reconnoitre, he stepped lightly and gracefully, stealing through the bushes with the least possible noise, in a way in which no white man does, — as it were, finding a place for his foot each time.

About half an hour after seeing the moose, we pursued our voyage up Pine Stream, and soon, coming to a part which was very shoal and also rapid, we took out the baggage, and proceeded to carry it round, while Joe got up with the canoe alone. We were just completing our portage and I was absorbed in the plants, admiring the leaves of the *Aster macrophyllus*, ten inches wide, and plucking the seeds of the great round-leaved orchis, when Joe exclaimed from the stream that he had killed a moose. He had found the cow moose lying dead, but quite warm, in the middle of the stream, which was so shallow that it rested on the bottom, with hardly a third of its body above water. It was about an hour after it was shot, and it was swollen with water. It had run about a hundred rods and sought the stream again, cutting off a slight bend. No doubt a better hunter would have tracked it to this spot at once. I was surprised at its great size, horse-like, but Joe said

it was not a large cow moose. My companion went in search of the calf again. I took hold of the ears of the moose, while Joe pushed his canoe down-stream toward a favorable shore, and so we made out, though with some difficulty, its long nose frequently sticking in the bottom, to drag it into still shallower water. It was a brownish-black, or perhaps a dark iron-gray, on the back and sides, but lighter beneath and in front. I took the cord which served for the canoe's painter, and with Joe's assistance measured it carefully, the greatest distances first, making a knot each time. The painter being wanted, I reduced these measures that night with equal care to lengths and fractions of my umbrella, beginning with the smallest measures, and untying the knots as I proceeded; and when we arrived at Chesuncook the next day, finding a two-foot rule there, I reduced the last to feet and inches; and, moreover, I made myself a two-foot rule of a thin and narrow strip of black ash, which would fold up conveniently to six inches. All this pains I took because I did not wish to be obliged to say merely that the moose was very large. Of the various dimensions which I obtained I will mention only two. The distance from the tips of the hoofs of the fore feet, stretched out, to the top of the back between the shoulders, was seven feet and five inches. I can hardly believe my own measure, for this is about two feet greater than the height of a tall horse. (Indeed, I am now satisfied that this measurement was incorrect, but the other measures given here I can warrant to be correct, having proved them in a more recent visit to those woods.) The extreme length was eight feet and two inches. Another cow moose, which I have since measured in those woods with a tape, was just six feet from the tip of the hoof to the shoulders, and eight feet long as she lay.

When afterward I asked an Indian at the carry how much taller the male was, he answered, "Eighteen inches," and made me observe the height of a cross-stake over the fire, more than four feet from the ground, to give me some idea of the depth of his chest. Another Indian, at Oldtown, told me that they were nine feet high to the top of the back, and that one which he tried weighed eight hundred pounds. The length of the spinal projections between the shoulders is very great. A white hunter, who was the best authority among hunters that I could have, told me that the male was not eighteen inches taller

than the female; yet he agreed that he was sometimes nine feet high to the top of the back, and weighed a thousand pounds. Only the male has horns, and they rise two feet or more above the shoulders, — spreading three or four, and sometimes six feet, — which would make him in all, sometimes, eleven feet high! According to this calculation, the moose is as tall, though it may not be as large, as the great Irish elk, *Megaceros Hibernicus*, of a former period, of which Mantell says that it "very far exceeded in magnitude any living species, the skeleton" being "upward of ten feet high from the ground to the highest point of the antlers." Joe said, that, though the moose shed the whole horn annually, each new horn has an additional prong; but I have noticed that they sometimes have more prongs on one side than on the other. I was struck with the delicacy and tenderness of the hoofs, which divide very far up, and the one half could be pressed very much behind the other, thus probably making the animal surer-footed on the uneven ground and slippery moss-covered logs of the primitive forest. They were very unlike the stiff and battered feet of our horses and oxen. The bare, horny part of the fore foot was just six inches long, and the two portions could be separated four inches at the extremities.

The moose is singularly grotesque and awkward to look at. Why should it stand so high at the shoulders? Why have so long a head? Why have no tail to speak of? for in my examination I overlooked it entirely. Naturalists say it is an inch and a half long. It reminded me at once of the camelopard, high before and low behind, — and no wonder, for, like it, it is fitted to browse on trees. The upper lip projected two inches beyond the lower for this purpose. This was the kind of man that was at home there; for, as near as I can learn, that has never been the residence, but rather the hunting-ground of the Indian. The moose will, perhaps, one day become extinct; but how naturally then, when it exists only as a fossil relic, and unseen as that, may the poet or sculptor invent a fabulous animal with similar branching and leafy horns, — a sort of fucus or lichen in bone, — to be the inhabitant of such a forest as this!

Here, just at the head of the murmuring rapids, Joe now proceeded to skin the moose with a pocket-knife, while I looked on; and a tragical business it was, — to see that still warm and palpitating body

pierced with a knife, to see the warm milk stream from the rent udder, and the ghastly naked red carcass appearing from within its seemly robe, which was made to hide it. The ball had passed through the shoulder-blade diagonally and lodged under the skin on the opposite side, and was partially flattened. My companion keeps it to show to his grandchildren. He has the shanks of another moose which he has since shot, skinned and stuffed, ready to be made into boots by putting in a thick leather sole. Joe said, if a moose stood fronting you, you must not fire, but advance toward him, for he will turn slowly and give you a fair shot. In the bed of this narrow, wild, and rocky stream, between two lofty walls of spruce and firs, a mere cleft in the forest which the stream had made, this work went on. At length Joe had stripped off the hide and dragged it trailing to the shore, declaring that it weighed a hundred pounds, though probably fifty would have been nearer the truth. He cut off a large mass of the meat to carry along, and another, together with the tongue and nose, he put with the hide on the shore to lie there all night, or till we returned. I was surprised that he thought of leaving this meat thus exposed by the side of the carcass, as the simplest course, not fearing that any creature would touch it; but nothing did. This could hardly have happened on the bank of one of our rivers in the eastern part of Massachusetts; but I suspect that fewer small wild animals are prowling there than with us. Twice, however, in this excursion, I had a glimpse of a species of large mouse.

This stream was so withdrawn, and the moose-tracks were so fresh, that my companions, still bent on hunting, concluded to go farther up it and camp, and then hunt up or down at night. Half a mile above this, at a place where I saw the *Aster puniceus* and the beaked hazel, as we paddled along, Joe, hearing a slight rustling amid the alders, and seeing something black about two rods off, jumped up and whispered, "Bear!" but before the hunter had discharged his piece, he corrected himself to "Beaver!"—"Hedgehog!" The bullet killed a large hedgehog more than two feet and eight inches long. The quills were rayed out and flattened on the hinder part of its back, even as if it had lain on that part, but were erect and long between this and the tail. Their points, closely examined, were seen to be finely bearded or barbed, and shaped like

an awl, that is, a little concave, to give the barbs effect. After about a mile of still water, we prepared our camp on the right side, just at the foot of a considerable fall. Little chopping was done that night, for fear of scaring the moose. We had moose meat fried for supper. It tasted like tender beef, with perhaps more flavor, — sometimes like veal.

After supper, the moon having risen, we proceeded to hunt a mile up this stream, first "carrying" about the falls. We made a picturesque sight, wending single file along the shore, climbing over rocks and logs, Joe, who brought up the rear, twirling his canoe in his hands as if it were a feather, in places where it was difficult to get along without a burden. We launched the canoe again from the ledge over which the stream fell, but after half a mile of still water, suitable for hunting, it became rapid again, and we were compelled to make our way along the shore, while Joe endeavored to get up in the birch alone, though it was still very difficult for him to pick his way amid the rocks in the night. We on the shore found the worst of walking, a perfect chaos of fallen and drifted trees, and of bushes projecting far over the water, and now and then we made our way across the mouth of a small tributary on a kind of network of alders. So we went tumbling on in the dark, being on the shady side, effectually scaring all the moose and bears that might be thereabouts. At length we came to a standstill, and Joe went forward to reconnoitre; but he reported that it was still a continuous rapid as far as he went, or half a mile, with no prospect of improvement, as if it were coming down from a mountain. So we turned about, hunting back to the camp through the still water. It was a splendid moonlight night, and I, getting sleepy as it grew late, — for I had nothing to do, — found it difficult to realize where I was. This stream was much more unfrequented than the main one, lumbering operations being no longer carried on in this quarter. It was only three or four rods wide, but the firs and spruce through which it trickled seemed yet taller by contrast. Being in this dreamy state, which the moonlight enhanced, I did not clearly discern the shore, but seemed, most of the time, to be floating through ornamental grounds, — for I associated the fir-tops with such scenes; — very high up some Broadway, and beneath or between their tops, I thought I saw an endless succession of porticoes and columns,

cornices and façades, verandas and churches. I did not merely fancy this, but in my drowsy state such was the illusion. I fairly lost myself in sleep several times, still dreaming of that architecture and the nobility that dwelt behind and might issue from it: but all at once I would be aroused and brought back to a sense of my actual position by the sound of Joe's birch horn in the midst of all this silence calling the moose, *ugh*, *ugh*, oo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oo, and I prepared to hear a furious moose come rushing and crashing through the forest, and see him burst out on to the little strip of meadow by our side.

But, on more accounts than one, I had had enough of moose-hunting. I had not come to the woods for this purpose, nor had I foreseen it, though I had been willing to learn how the Indian manœuvred; but one moose killed was as good, if not as bad, as a dozen. The afternoon's tragedy, and my share in it, as it affected the innocence, destroyed the pleasure of my adventure. It is true, I came as near as is possible to come to being a hunter and miss it, myself; and as it is, I think that I could spend a year in the woods, fishing and hunting just enough to sustain myself, with satisfaction. This would be next to living like a philosopher on the fruits of the earth which you had raised, which also attracts me. But this hunting of the moose merely for the satisfaction of killing him, — not even for the sake of his hide, — without making any extraordinary exertion or running any risk yourself, is too much like going out by night to some wood-side pasture and shooting your neighbor's horses. These are God's own horses, poor, timid creatures, that will run fast enough as soon as they smell you, though they are nine feet high. Joe told us of some hunters who a year or two before had shot down several oxen by night, somewhere in the Maine woods, mistaking them for moose. And so might any of the hunters; and what is the difference in the sport, but the name? In the former case, having killed one of God's and *your own* oxen, you strip off its hide, — because that is the common trophy, and, moreover, you have heard that it may be sold for moccasins, — cut a steak from its haunches, and leave the huge carcass to smell to heaven for you. It is no better, at least, than to assist at a slaughter-house.

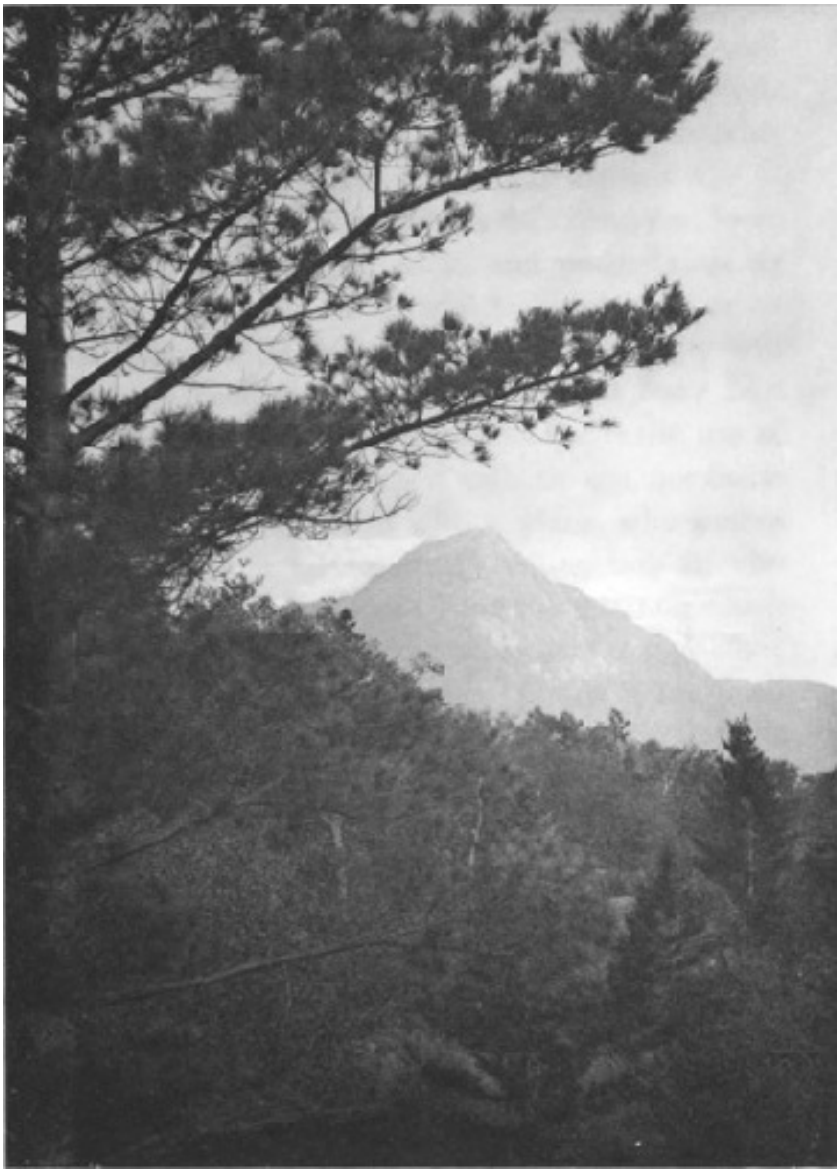
This afternoon's experience suggested to me how base or coarse are the motives which commonly carry men into the wilderness. The

explorers and lumberers generally are all hirelings, paid so much a day for their labor, and as such they have no more love for wild nature than wood-sawyers have for forests. Other white men and Indians who come here are for the most part hunters, whose object is to slay as many moose and other wild animals as possible. But, pray, could not one spend some weeks or years in the solitude of this vast wilderness with other employments than these, — employments perfectly sweet and innocent and ennobling? For one that comes with a pencil to sketch or sing, a thousand come with an axe or rifle. What a coarse and imperfect use Indians and hunters make of nature! No wonder that their race is so soon exterminated. I already, and for weeks afterward, felt my nature the coarser for this part of my woodland experience, and was reminded that our life should be lived as tenderly and daintily as one would pluck a flower.

With these thoughts, when we reached our camping-ground, I decided to leave my companions to continue moose-hunting down the stream, while I prepared the camp, though they requested me not to chop much nor make a large fire, for fear I should scare their game. In the midst of the damp fir wood, high on the mossy bank, about nine o'clock of this bright moonlight night, I kindled a fire, when they were gone, and, sitting on the fir twigs, within sound of the falls, examined by its light the botanical specimens which I had collected that afternoon, and wrote down some of the reflections which I have here expanded; or I walked along the shore and gazed up the stream, where the whole space above the falls was filled with mellow light. As I sat before the fire on my fir-twig seat, without walls above or around me, I remembered how far on every hand that wilderness stretched, before you came to cleared or cultivated fields, and wondered if any bear or moose was watching the light of my fire; for Nature looked sternly upon me on account of the murder of the moose.

Strange that so few ever come to the woods to see how the pine lives and grows and spires, lifting its evergreen arms to the light, — to see its perfect success; but most are content to behold it in the shape of many broad boards brought to market, and deem *that* its true success! But the pine is no more lumber than man is, and to be made into boards and houses is no more its true and highest use than

the truest use of a man is to be cut down and made into manure. There is a higher law affecting our relation to pines as well as to men. A pine cut down, a dead pine, is no more a pine than a dead human carcass is a man. Can he who has discovered only some of the values of whalebone and whale oil be said to have discovered the true use of the whale? Can he who slays the elephant for his ivory be said to have "seen the elephant"? These are petty and accidental uses; just as if a stronger race were to kill us in order to make buttons and flageolets of our bones; for everything may serve a lower as well as a higher use. Every creature is better alive than dead, men and moose and pine trees, and he who understands it aright will rather preserve its life than destroy it.



Tree, Boar Mountain

Is it the lumberman, then, who is the friend and lover of the pine, stands nearest to it, and understands its nature best? Is it the tanner who has barked it, or he who has boxed it for turpentine, whom posterity will fable to have been changed into a pine at last? No! no! it is the poet; he it is who makes the truest use of the pine, who does

not fondle it with an axe, nor tickle it with a saw, nor stroke it with a plane, who knows whether its heart is false without cutting into it, who has not bought the stumpage of the township on which it stands. All the pines shudder and heave a sigh when that man steps on the forest floor. No, it is the poet, who loves them as his own shadow in the air, and lets them stand. I have been into the lumber-yard, and the carpenter's shop, and the tannery, and the lampblack factory, and the turpentine clearing; but when at length I saw the tops of the pines waving and reflecting the light at a distance high over all the rest of the forest, I realized that the former were not the highest use of the pine. It is not their bones or hide or tallow that I love most. It is the living spirit of the tree, not its spirit of turpentine, with which I sympathize, and which heals my cuts. It is as immortal as I am, and perchance will go to as high a heaven, there to tower above me still.

Ere long, the hunters returned, not having seen a moose, but, in consequence of my suggestions, bringing a quarter of the dead one, which, with ourselves, made quite a load for the canoe.

After breakfasting on moose meat, we returned down Pine Stream on our way to Chesuncook Lake, which was about five miles distant. We could see the red carcass of the moose lying in Pine Stream when nearly half a mile off. Just below the mouth of this stream were the most considerable rapids between the two lakes, called Pine Stream Falls, where were large flat rocks washed smooth, and at this time you could easily wade across above them. Joe ran down alone while we walked over the portage, my companion collecting spruce gum for his friends at home, and I looking for flowers. Near the lake, which we were approaching with as much expectation as if it had been a university, — for it is not often that the stream of our life opens into such expansions, — were islands, and a low and meadowy shore with scattered trees, birches, white and yellow, slanted over the water, and maples, — many of the white birches killed, apparently by inundations. There was considerable native grass; and even a few cattle — whose movements we heard, though we did not see them, mistaking them at first for moose — were pastured there.

On entering the lake, where the stream runs southeasterly, and for some time before, we had a view of the mountains about Ktaadn

(*Katahdinauquoh* one says they are called), like a cluster of blue fungi of rank growth, apparently twenty-five or thirty miles distant, in a southeast direction, their summits concealed by clouds. Joe called some of them the Sowadnehunk Mountains. This is the name of a stream there, which another Indian told us meant "running between mountains." Though some lower summits were afterward uncovered, we got no more complete view of Ktaadn while we were in the woods. The clearing to which we were bound was on the right of the mouth of the river, and was reached by going round a low point, where the water was shallow to a great distance from the shore. Chesuncook Lake extends northwest and southeast, and is called eighteen miles long and three wide, without an island. We had entered the northwest corner of it, and when near the shore could see only part way down it. The principal mountains visible from the land here were those already mentioned, between southeast and east, and a few summits a little west of north, but generally the north and northwest horizon about the St. John and the British boundary was comparatively level.

Ansell Smith's, the oldest and principal clearing about this lake, appeared to be quite a harbor for batteaux and canoes; seven or eight of the former were lying about, and there was a small scow for hay, and a capstan on a platform, now high and dry, ready to be floated and anchored to tow rafts with. It was a very primitive kind of harbor, where boats were drawn up amid the stumps, — such a one, methought, as the Argo might have been launched in. There were five other huts with small clearings on the opposite side of the lake, all at this end and visible from this point. One of the Smiths told me that it was so far cleared that they came here to live and built the present house four years before, though the family had been here but a few months.

I was interested to see how a pioneer lived on this side of the country. His life is in some respects more adventurous than that of his brother in the West; for he contends with winter as well as the wilderness, and there is a greater interval of time at least between him and the army which is to follow. Here immigration is a tide which may ebb when it has swept away the pines; there it is not a tide, but an inundation, and roads and other improvements come

steadily rushing after.

As we approached the log house, a dozen rods from the lake, and considerably elevated above it, the projecting ends of the logs lapping over each other irregularly several feet at the corners gave it a very rich and picturesque look, far removed from the meanness of weather-boards. It was a very spacious, low building, about eighty feet long, with many large apartments. The walls were well clayed between the logs, which were large and round, except on the upper and under sides, and as visible inside as out, successive bulging cheeks gradually lessening upwards and tuned to each other with the axe, like Pandean pipes. Probably the musical forest gods had not yet cast them aside; they never do till they are split or the bark is gone. It was a style of architecture not described by Vitruvius, I suspect, though possibly hinted at in the biography of Orpheus; none of your frilled or fluted columns, which have cut such a false swell, and support nothing but a gable end and their builder's pretensions, — that is, with the multitude; and as for "ornamentation," one of those words with a dead tail which architects very properly use to describe their flourishes, there were the lichens and mosses and fringes of bark, which nobody troubled himself about. We certainly leave the handsomest paint and clapboards behind in the woods, when we strip off the bark and poison ourselves with white-lead in the towns. We get but half the spoils of the forest. For beauty, give me trees with the fur on. This house was designed and constructed with the freedom of stroke of a forester's axe, without other compass and square than Nature uses. Wherever the logs were cut off by a window or door, that is, were not kept in place by alternate overlapping, they were held one upon another by very large pins, driven in diagonally on each side, where branches might have been, and then cut off so close up and down as not to project beyond the bulge of the log, as if the logs clasped each other in their arms. These logs were posts, studs, boards, clapboards, laths, plaster, and nails, all in one. Where the citizen uses a mere sliver or board, the pioneer uses the whole trunk of a tree. The house had large stone chimneys, and was roofed with spruce-bark. The windows were imported, all but the casings. One end was a regular logger's camp, for the boarders, with the usual fir floor and log benches. Thus this house was but a slight departure

from the hollow tree, which the bear still inhabits, — being a hollow made with trees piled up, with a coating of bark like its original.

The cellar was a separate building, like an ice-house, and it answered for a refrigerator at this season, our moose meat being kept there. It was a potato hole with a permanent roof. Each structure and institution here was so primitive that you could at once refer it to its source; but our buildings commonly suggest neither their origin nor their purpose. There was a large, and what farmers would call handsome, barn, part of whose boards had been sawed by a whip-saw; and the saw-pit, with its great pile of dust, remained before the house. The long split shingles on a portion of the barn were laid a foot to the weather, suggesting what kind of weather they have there. Grant's barn at Caribou Lake was said to be still larger, the biggest ox-nest in the woods, fifty feet by a hundred. Think of a monster barn in that primitive forest lifting its gray back above the tree-tops! Man makes very much such a nest for his domestic animals, of withered grass and fodder, as the squirrels and many other wild creatures do for themselves.

There was also a blacksmith's shop, where plainly a good deal of work was done. The oxen and horses used in lumbering operations were shod, and all the iron-work of sleds, etc., was repaired or made here. I saw them load a batteau at the Moosehead Carry, the next Tuesday, with about thirteen hundredweight of bar iron for this shop. This reminded me how primitive and honorable a trade was Vulcan's. I do not hear that there was any carpenter or tailor among the gods. The smith seems to have preceded these and every other mechanic at Chesuncook as well as on Olympus, and his family is the most widely dispersed, whether he be christened John or Ansell.

Smith owned two miles down the lake by half a mile in width. There were about one hundred acres cleared here. He cut seventy tons of English hay this year on this ground, and twenty more on another clearing, and he uses it all himself in lumbering operations. The barn was crowded with pressed hay, and a machine to press it. There was a large garden full of roots, — turnips, beets, carrots, potatoes, etc., all of great size. They said that they were worth as much here as in New York. I suggested some currants for sauce, especially as they had no apple trees set out, and showed how easily

they could be obtained.

There was the usual long-handled axe of the primitive woods by the door, three and a half feet long, — for my new black-ash rule was in constant use, — and a large, shaggy dog, whose nose, report said, was full of porcupine quills. I can testify that he looked very sober. This is the usual fortune of pioneer dogs, for they have to face the brunt of the battle for their race, and act the part of Arnold Winkelried without intending it. If he should invite one of his town friends up this way, suggesting moose meat and unlimited freedom, the latter might pertinently inquire, "What is that sticking in your nose?" When a generation or two have used up all the enemies' darts, their successors lead a comparatively easy life. We owe to our fathers analogous blessings. Many old people receive pensions for no other reason, it seems to me, but as a compensation for having lived a long time ago. No doubt our town dogs still talk, in a snuffling way, about the days that tried dogs' noses. How they got a cat up there I do not know, for they are as shy as my aunt about entering a canoe. I wondered that she did not run up a tree on the way; but perhaps she was bewildered by the very crowd of opportunities.

Twenty or thirty lumberers, Yankee and Canadian, were coming and going, — Aleck among the rest, — and from time to time an Indian touched here. In the winter there are sometimes a hundred men lodged here at once. The most interesting piece of news that circulated among them appeared to be, that four horses belonging to Smith, worth seven hundred dollars, had passed by farther into the woods a week before.

The white pine tree was at the bottom or farther end of all this. It is a war against the pines, the only real Aroostook or Penobscot war. I have no doubt that they lived pretty much the same sort of life in the Homeric age, for men have always thought more of eating than of fighting; then, as now, their minds ran chiefly on the "hot bread and sweet cakes;" and the fur and lumber trade is an old story to Asia and Europe. I doubt if men ever made a trade of heroism. In the days of Achilles, even, they delighted in big barns, and perchance in pressed hay, and he who possessed the most valuable team was the best fellow.

We had designed to go on at evening up the Caucomgomoc,

whose mouth was a mile or two distant, to the lake of the same name, about ten miles off; but some Indians of Joe's acquaintance, who were making canoes on the Caucomgomoc, came over from that side, and gave so poor an account of the moose-hunting, so many had been killed there lately, that my companions concluded not to go there. Joe spent this Sunday and the night with his acquaintances. The lumberers told me that there were many moose hereabouts, but no caribou or deer. A man from Oldtown had killed ten or twelve moose, within a year, so near the house that they heard all his guns. His name may have been Hercules, for aught I know, though I should rather have expected to hear the rattling of his club; but, no doubt, he keeps pace with the improvements of the age, and uses a Sharp's rifle now; probably he gets all his armor made and repaired at Smith's shop. One moose had been killed and another shot at within sight of the house within two years. I do not know whether Smith has yet got a poet to look after the cattle, which, on account of the early breaking up of the ice, are compelled to summer in the woods, but I would suggest this office to such of my acquaintances as love to write verses and go a-gunning.

After a dinner at which apple-sauce was the greatest luxury to me, but our moose meat was oftenest called for by the lumberers, I walked across the clearing into the forest, southward, returning along the shore. For my dessert, I helped myself to a large slice of the Chesuncook woods, and took a hearty draught of its waters with all my senses. The woods were as fresh and full of vegetable life as a lichen in wet weather, and contained many interesting plants; but unless they are of white pine, they are treated with as little respect here as a mildew, and in the other case they are only the more quickly cut down. The shore was of coarse, flat, slate rocks, often in slabs, with the surf beating on it. The rocks and bleached drift-logs, extending some way into the shaggy woods, showed a rise and fall of six or eight feet, caused partly by the dam at the outlet. They said that in winter the snow was three feet deep on a level here, and sometimes four or five, — that the ice on the lake was two feet thick, clear, and four feet including the snow-ice. Ice had already formed in vessels.

We lodged here this Sunday night in a comfortable bedroom,

apparently the best one; and all that I noticed unusual in the night — for I still kept taking notes, like a spy in the camp — was the creaking of the thin split boards, when any of our neighbors stirred.

Such were the first rude beginnings of a town. They spoke of the practicability of a winter road to the Moosehead Carry, which would not cost much, and would connect them with steam and staging and all the busy world. I almost doubted if the lake would be there, — the self-same lake, — preserve its form and identity, when the shores should be cleared and settled; as if these lakes and streams which explorers report never awaited the advent of the citizen.

The sight of one of these frontier houses, built of these great logs, whose inhabitants have unflinchingly maintained their ground many summers and winters in the wilderness, reminds me of famous forts, like Ticonderoga or Crown Point, which have sustained memorable sieges. They are especially winter-quarters, and at this season this one had a partially deserted look, as if the siege were raised a little, the snowbanks being melted from before it, and its garrison accordingly reduced. I think of their daily food as rations, — it is called "supplies;" a Bible and a greatcoat are munitions of war, and a single man seen about the premises is a sentinel on duty. You expect that he will require the countersign, and will perchance take you for Ethan Allen, come to demand the surrender of his fort in the name of the Continental Congress. It is a sort of ranger service. Arnold's expedition is a daily experience with these settlers. They can prove that they were out at almost any time; and I think that all the first generation of them deserve a pension more than any that went to the Mexican war.

Early the next morning we started on our return up the Penobscot, my companion wishing to go about twenty-five miles above the Moosehead Carry to a camp near the junction of the two forks, and look for moose there. Our host allowed us something for the quarter of the moose which we had brought, and which he was glad to get. Two explorers from Chamberlain Lake started at the same time that we did. Red flannel shirts should be worn in the woods, if only for the fine contrast which this color makes with the evergreens and the water. Thus I thought when I saw the forms of the explorers in their birch, poling up the rapids before us, far off against the forest. It is

the surveyor's color also, most distinctly seen under all circumstances. We stopped to dine at Ragmuff, as before. My companion it was who wandered up the stream to look for moose this time, while Joe went to sleep on the bank, so that we felt sure of him; and I improved the opportunity to botanize and bathe. Soon after starting again, while Joe was gone back in the canoe for the frying-pan, which had been left, we picked a couple of quarts of tree-cranberries for a sauce.

I was surprised by Joe's asking me how far it was to the Moosehorn. He was pretty well acquainted with this stream, but he had noticed that I was curious about distances, and had several maps. He and Indians generally, with whom I have talked, are not able to describe dimensions or distances in our measures with any accuracy. He could tell, perhaps, at what time we should arrive, but not how far it was. We saw a few wood ducks, sheldrakes, and black ducks, but they were not so numerous there at that season as on our river at home. We scared the same family of wood ducks before us, going and returning. We also heard the note of one fish hawk, somewhat like that of a pigeon woodpecker, and soon after saw him perched near the top of a dead white pine against the island where we had first camped, while a company of peetweets were twittering and teetering about over the carcass of a moose on a low sandy spit just beneath. We drove the fish hawk from perch to perch, each time eliciting a scream or whistle, for many miles before us. Our course being up-stream, we were obliged to work much harder than before, and had frequent use for a pole. Sometimes all three of us paddled together, standing up, small and heavily laden as the canoe was. About six miles from Moosehead, we began to see the mountains east of the north end of the lake, and at four o'clock we reached the carry.

The Indians were still encamped here. There were three, including the St. Francis Indian who had come in the steamer with us. One of the others was called Sabattis. Joe and the St. Francis Indian were plainly clear Indian, the other two apparently mixed Indian and white; but the difference was confined to their features and complexion, for all that I could see. We here cooked the tongue of the moose for supper, — having left the nose, which is esteemed the

choicest part, at Chesuncook, boiling, it being a good deal of trouble to prepare it. We also stewed our tree-cranberries (*Viburnum opulus*), sweetening them with sugar. The lumberers sometimes cook them with molasses. They were used in Arnold's expedition. This sauce was very grateful to us who had been confined to hard-bread, pork, and moose meat, and, notwithstanding their seeds, we all three pronounced them equal to the common cranberry; but perhaps some allowance is to be made for our forest appetites. It would be worth the while to cultivate them, both for beauty and for food. I afterward saw them in a garden in Bangor. Joe said that they were called *ebeemenar*.

While we were getting supper, Joe commenced curing the moose-hide, on which I had sat a good part of the voyage, he having already cut most of the hair off with his knife at the Caucomgomoc. He set up two stout forked poles on the bank, seven or eight feet high, and as much asunder east and west, and having cut slits eight or ten inches long, and the same distance apart, close to the edge, on the sides of the hide, he threaded poles through them, and then, placing one of the poles on the forked stakes, tied the other down tightly at the bottom. The two ends also were tied with cedar bark, their usual string, to the upright poles, through small holes at short intervals. The hide, thus stretched, and slanted a little to the north, to expose its flesh side to the sun, measured, in the extreme, eight feet long by six high. Where any flesh still adhered, Joe boldly scored it with his knife to lay it open to the sun. It now appeared somewhat spotted and injured by the duck shot. You may see the old frames on which hides have been stretched at many camping-places in these woods.

For some reason or other, the going to the forks of the Penobscot was given up, and we decided to stop here, my companion intending to hunt down the stream at night. The Indians invited us to lodge with them, but my companion inclined to go to the log camp on the carry. This camp was close and dirty, and had an ill smell, and I preferred to accept the Indians' offer, if we did not make a camp for ourselves; for, though they were dirty, too, they were more in the open air, and were much more agreeable, and even refined company, than the lumberers. The most interesting question entertained at the lumberers' camp was, which man could "handle" any other on the

carry; and, for the most part, they possessed no qualities which you could not lay hands on. So we went to the Indians' camp or wigwam.

It was rather windy, and therefore Joe concluded to hunt after midnight, if the wind went down, which the other Indians thought it would not do, because it was from the south. The two mixed-bloods, however, went off up the river for moose at dark, before we arrived at their camp. This Indian camp was a slight, patched-up affair, which had stood there several weeks, built shed-fashion, open to the fire on the west. If the wind changed, they could turn it round. It was formed by two forked stakes and a cross-bar, with rafters slanted from this to the ground. The covering was partly an old sail, partly birch-bark, quite imperfect, but securely tied on, and coming down to the ground on the sides. A large log was rolled up at the back side for a headboard, and two or three moose-hides were spread on the ground with the hair up. Various articles of their wardrobe were tucked around the sides and corners, or under the roof. They were smoking moose meat on just such a crate as is represented by With, in De Bry's "Collectio Peregrinationum," published in 1588, and which the natives of Brazil called *boucan* (whence buccaneer), on which were frequently shown pieces of human flesh drying along with the rest. It was erected in front of the camp over the usual large fire, in the form of an oblong square. Two stout forked stakes, four or five feet apart and five feet high, were driven into the ground at each end, and then two poles ten feet long were stretched across over the fire, and smaller ones laid transversely on these a foot apart. On the last hung large, thin slices of moose meat smoking and drying, a space being left open over the centre of the fire. There was the whole heart, black as a thirty-two pound ball, hanging at one corner. They said that it took three or four days to cure this meat, and it would keep a year or more. Refuse pieces lay about on the ground in different stages of decay, and some pieces also in the fire, half buried and sizzling in the ashes, as black and dirty as an old shoe. These last I at first thought were thrown away, but afterwards found that they were being cooked. Also a tremendous rib-piece was roasting before the fire, being impaled on an upright stake forced in and out between the ribs. There was a moose-hide stretched and curing on poles like ours, and quite a pile of cured skins close by. They had killed

twenty-two moose within two months, but, as they could use but very little of the meat, they left the carcases on the ground. Altogether it was about as savage a sight as was ever witnessed, and I was carried back at once three hundred years. There were many torches of birch-bark, shaped like straight tin horns, lying ready for use on a stump outside.

For fear of dirt, we spread our blankets over their hides, so as not to touch them anywhere. The St. Francis Indian and Joe alone were there at first, and we lay on our backs talking with them till midnight. They were very sociable, and, when they did not talk with us, kept up a steady chatting in their own language. We heard a small bird just after dark, which, Joe said, sang at a certain hour in the night, — at ten o'clock, he believed. We also heard the hylodes and tree-toads, and the lumberers singing in their camp a quarter of a mile off. I told them that I had seen pictured in old books pieces of human flesh drying on these crates; whereupon they repeated some tradition about the Mohawks eating human flesh, what parts they preferred, etc., and also of a battle with the Mohawks near Moosehead, in which many of the latter were killed; but I found that they knew but little of the history of their race, and could be entertained by stories about their ancestors as readily as any way. At first I was nearly roasted out, for I lay against one side of the camp, and felt the heat reflected not only from the birch-bark above, but from the side; and again I remembered the sufferings of the Jesuit missionaries, and what extremes of heat and cold the Indians were said to endure. I struggled long between my desire to remain and talk with them and my impulse to rush out and stretch myself on the cool grass; and when I was about to take the last step, Joe, hearing my murmurs, or else being uncomfortable himself, got up and partially dispersed the fire. I suppose that that is Indian manners, — to defend yourself.

While lying there listening to the Indians, I amused myself with trying to guess at their subject by their gestures, or some proper name introduced. There can be no more startling evidence of their being a distinct and comparatively aboriginal race than to hear this unaltered Indian language, which the white man cannot speak nor understand. We may suspect change and deterioration in almost every other particular but the language which is so wholly

unintelligible to us. It took me by surprise, though I had found so many arrowheads, and convinced me that the Indian was not the invention of historians and poets. It was a purely wild and primitive American sound, as much as the barking of a chickaree, and I could not understand a syllable of it; but Paugus, had he been there, would have understood it. These Abenakis gossiped, laughed, and jested, in the language in which Eliot's Indian Bible is written, the language which has been spoken in New England who shall say how long? These were the sounds that issued from the wigwams of this country before Columbus was born; they have not yet died away; and, with remarkably few exceptions, the language of their forefathers is still copious enough for them. I felt that I stood, or rather lay, as near to the primitive man of America, that night, as any of its discoverers ever did.

In the midst of their conversation, Joe suddenly appealed to me to know how long Moosehead Lake was.

Meanwhile, as we lay there, Joe was making and trying his horn, to be ready for hunting after midnight. The St. Francis Indian also amused himself with sounding it, or rather calling through it; for the sound is made with the voice, and not by blowing through the horn. The latter appeared to be a speculator in moose-hides. He bought my companion's for two dollars and a quarter, green. Joe said that it was worth two and a half at Oldtown. Its chief use is for moccasins. One or two of these Indians wore them. I was told that, by a recent law of Maine, foreigners are not allowed to kill moose there at any season; white Americans can kill them only at a particular season, but the Indians of Maine at all seasons. The St. Francis Indian accordingly asked my companion for a *wighiggin*, or bill, to show, since he was a foreigner. He lived near Sorel. I found that he could write his name very well, Tahmunt Swasen. One Ellis, an old white man of Guilford, a town through which we passed, not far from the south end of Moosehead, was the most celebrated moose-hunter of those parts. Indians and whites spoke with equal respect of him. Tahmunt said that there were more moose here than in the Adirondack country in New York, where he had hunted; that three years before there were a great many about, and there were a great many now in the woods, but they did not come out to the water. It was of no use to

hunt them at midnight, — they would not come out then. I asked Sabattis, after he came home, if the moose never attacked him. He answered that you must not fire many times, so as to mad him. "I fire once and hit him in the right place, and in the morning I find him. He won't go far. But if you keep firing, you mad him. I fired once five bullets, every one through the heart, and he did not mind 'em at all; it only made him more mad." I asked him if they did not hunt them with dogs. He said that they did so in winter, but never in the summer, for then it was of no use; they would run right off straight and swiftly a hundred miles.

Another Indian said that the moose, once scared, would run all day. A dog will hang to their lips, and be carried along till he is swung against a tree and drops off. They cannot run on a "glaze," though they can run in snow four feet deep; but the caribou can run on ice. They commonly find two or three moose together. They cover themselves with water, all but their noses, to escape flies. He had the horns of what he called "the black moose that goes in low lands." These spread three or four feet. The "red moose" was another kind, "running on mountains," and had horns which spread six feet. Such were his distinctions. Both can move their horns. The broad flat blades are covered with hair, and are so soft, when the animal is alive, that you can run a knife through them. They regard it as a good or bad sign, if the horns turn this way or that. His caribou horns had been gnawed by mice in his wigwam, but he thought that the horns neither of the moose nor of the caribou were ever gnawed while the creature was alive, as some have asserted. An Indian, whom I met after this at Oldtown, who had carried about a bear and other animals of Maine to exhibit, told me that thirty years ago there were not so many moose in Maine as now; also, that the moose were very easily tamed, and would come back when once fed, and so would deer, but not caribou. The Indians of this neighborhood are about as familiar with the moose as we are with the ox, having associated with them for so many generations. Father Rasles, in his Dictionary of the Abenaki Language, gives not only a word for the male moose (*aianbé*), and another for the female (*hèrar*), but for the bone which is in the middle of the heart of the moose (!), and for his left hind leg.

There were none of the small deer up there; they are more

common about the settlements. One ran into the city of Bangor two years before, and jumped through a window of costly plate glass, and then into a mirror, where it thought it recognized one of its kind, and out again, and so on, leaping over the heads of the crowd, until it was captured. This the inhabitants speak of as the deer that went a-shopping. The last-mentioned Indian spoke of the *lunxus* or Indian devil (which I take to be the cougar, and not the *Gulo luscus*), as the only animal in Maine which man need fear; it would follow a man, and did not mind a fire. He also said that beavers were getting to be pretty numerous again, where we went, but their skins brought so little now that it was not profitable to hunt them.

I had put the ears of our moose, which were ten inches long, to dry along with the moose meat over the fire, wishing to preserve them; but Sabattis told me that I must skin and cure them, else the hair would all come off. He observed that they made tobacco pouches of the skins of their ears, putting the two together inside to inside. I asked him how he got fire; and he produced a little cylindrical box of friction matches. He also had flints and steel, and some punk, which was not dry; I think it was from the yellow birch. "But suppose you upset, and all these and your powder get wet." "Then," said he, "we wait till we get to where there is some fire." I produced from my pocket a little vial, containing matches, stoppled water-tight, and told him, that, though we were upset, we should still have some dry matches; at which he stared without saying a word.

We lay awake thus a long while talking, and they gave us the meaning of many Indian names of lakes and streams in the vicinity, — especially Tahmunt. I asked the Indian name of Moosehead Lake. Joe answered *Sebamook*; Tahmunt pronounced it *Sebemook*. When I asked what it meant, they answered, Moosehead Lake. At length, getting my meaning, they alternately repeated the word over to themselves, as a philologist might, — *Sebamook*, — *Sebamook*, — now and then comparing notes in Indian; for there was a slight difference in their dialects; and finally Tahmunt said, "Ugh! I know," — and he rose up partly on the moose-hide,— "like as here is a place, and there is a place," pointing to different parts of the hide, "and you take water from there and fill this, and it stays here; that is *Sebamook*." I understood him to mean that it was a reservoir of water

which did not run away, the river coming in on one side and passing out again near the same place, leaving a permanent bay. Another Indian said, that it meant Large Bay Lake, and that *Sebago* and *Sebec*, the names of other lakes, were kindred words, meaning large open water. Joe said that *Seboois* meant Little River. I observed their inability, often described, to convey an abstract idea. Having got the idea, though indistinctly, they groped about in vain for words with which to express it. Tahmunt thought that the whites called it Moosehead Lake, because Mount Kineo, which commands it, is shaped like a moose's head, and that Moose River was so called "because the mountain points right across the lake to its mouth." John Josselyn, writing about 1673, says, "Twelve miles from Casco Bay, and passable for men and horses, is a lake, called by the Indians Sebug. On the brink thereof, at one end, is the famous rock, shaped like a moose deer or helk, diaphanous, and called the Moose Rock." He appears to have confounded Sebamook with Sebago, which is nearer, but has no "diaphanous" rock on its shore.

I give more of their definitions, for what they are worth, — partly *because* they differ sometimes from the commonly received ones. They never analyzed these words before. After long deliberation and repeating of the word, — for it gave much trouble, — Tahmunt said that *Chesuncook* meant a place where many streams emptied in (?), and he enumerated them, — Penobscot, Umbazookskus, Cusabesex, Red Brook, etc. "*Caucomgomoc*, — what does that mean?" "What are those large white birds?" he asked. "Gulls," said I. "Ugh! Gull Lake." *Pammadumcook*, Joe thought, meant the Lake with Gravelly Bottom or Bed. *Kenduskeag*, Tahmunt concluded at last, after asking if birches went up it, — for he said that he was not much acquainted with it, — meant something like this: "You go up Penobscot till you come to *Kenduskeag*, and you go by, you don't turn up there. That is *Kenduskeag*." (?) Another Indian, however, who knew the river better, told us afterward that it meant Little Eel River. *Mattawamkeag* was a place where two rivers meet. (?) *Penobscot* was Rocky River. One writer says that this was "originally the name of only a section of the main channel, from the head of the tide-water to a short distance above Oldtown."

A very intelligent Indian, whom we afterward met, son-in-law of

Neptune, gave us also these other definitions: *Umbazookskus*, Meadow Stream; *Millinoket*, Place of Islands; *Aboljacarmegus*, Smooth-Ledge Falls (and Deadwater); *Aboljacarmeguscook*, the stream emptying in (the last was the word he gave when I asked about *Aboljacknagesic*, which he did not recognize); *Mattahumkeag*, Sand-Creek Pond; *Piscataquis*, Branch of a River.

I asked our hosts what *Musketaquid*, the Indian name of Concord, Massachusetts, meant; but they changed it to *Musketicook*, and repeated that, and Tahmunt said that it meant Dead Stream, which is probably true. *Cook* appears to mean stream, and perhaps *quid* signifies the place or ground. When I asked the meaning of the names of two of our hills, they answered that they were another language. As Tahmunt said that he traded at Quebec, my companion inquired the meaning of the word *Quebec*, about which there has been so much question. He did not know, but began to conjecture. He asked what those great ships were called that carried soldiers. "Men-of-war," we answered. "Well," he said, "when the English ships came up the river, they could not go any farther, it was so narrow there; they must go back, — go-back, — that's Que-bec." I mention this to show the value of his authority in the other cases.

Late at night the other two Indians came home from moose-hunting, not having been successful, aroused the fire again, lighted their pipes, smoked awhile, took something strong to drink, and ate some moose meat, and, finding what room they could, lay down on the moose-hides; and thus we passed the night, two white men and four Indians, side by side.

When I awoke in the morning the weather was drizzling. One of the Indians was lying outside, rolled in his blanket, on the opposite side of the fire, for want of room. Joe had neglected to awake my companion, and he had done no hunting that night. Tahmunt was making a cross-bar for his canoe with a singularly shaped knife, such as I have since seen other Indians using. The blade was thin, about three quarters of an inch wide, and eight or nine inches long, but curved out of its plane into a hook, which he said made it more convenient to shave with. As the Indians very far north and northwest use the same kind of knife, I suspect that it was made according to an aboriginal pattern, though some white artisans may

use a similar one. The Indians baked a loaf of flour bread in a spider on its edge before the fire for their breakfast; and while my companion was making tea, I caught a dozen sizable fishes in the Penobscot, two kinds of sucker and one trout. After we had breakfasted by ourselves, one of our bed-fellows, who had also breakfasted, came along, and, being invited, took a cup of tea, and finally, taking up the common platter, licked it clean. But he was nothing to a white fellow, a lumberer, who was continually stuffing himself with the Indians' moose meat, and was the butt of his companions accordingly. He seems to have thought that it was a feast "to eat all." It is commonly said that the white man finally surpasses the Indian on his own ground, and it was proved true in this case. I cannot swear to his employment during the hours of darkness, but I saw him at it again as soon as it was light, though he came a quarter of a mile to his work.

The rain prevented our continuing any longer in the woods; so, giving some of our provisions and utensils to the Indians, we took leave of them. This being the steamer's day, I set out for the lake at once.

I walked over the carry alone and waited at the head of the lake. An eagle, or some other large bird, flew screaming away from its perch by the shore at my approach. For an hour after I reached the shore there was not a human being to be seen, and I had all that wide prospect to myself. I thought that I heard the sound of the steamer before she came in sight on the open lake. I noticed at the landing, when the steamer came in, one of our bed-fellows, who had been a-moose-hunting the night before, now very sprucely dressed in a clean white shirt and fine black pants, a true Indian dandy, who had evidently come over the carry to show himself to any arrivers on the north shore of Moosehead Lake, just as New York dandies take a turn up Broadway and stand on the steps of a hotel.

Midway the lake we took on board two manly-looking middle-aged men, with their batteau, who had been exploring for six weeks as far as the Canada line, and had let their beards grow. They had the skin of a beaver, which they had recently caught, stretched on an oval hoop, though the fur was not good at that season. I talked with one of them, telling him that I had come all this distance partly to see

where the white pine, the Eastern stuff of which our houses are built, grew, but that on this and a previous excursion into another part of Maine I had found it a scarce tree; and I asked him where I must look for it. With a smile, he answered that he could hardly tell me. However, he said that he had found enough to employ two teams the next winter in a place where there was thought to be none left. What was considered a "tip-top" tree now was not looked at twenty years ago, when he first went into the business; but they succeeded very well now with what was considered quite inferior timber then. The explorer used to cut into a tree higher and higher up, to see if it was false-hearted, and if there was a rotten heart as big as his arm, he let it alone; but now they cut such a tree and sawed it all around the rot, and it made the very best of boards, for in such a case they were never shaky.

One connected with lumbering operations at Bangor told me that the largest pine belonging to his firm, cut the previous winter, "scaled" in the woods four thousand five hundred feet, and was worth ninety dollars in the log at the Bangor boom in Oldtown. They cut a road three and a half miles long for this tree alone. He thought that the principal locality for the white pine that came down the Penobscot now was at the head of the East Branch and the Allegash, about Webster Stream and Eagle and Chamberlain lakes. Much timber has been stolen from the public lands. (Pray, what kind of forest-warden is the Public itself?) I heard of one man who, having discovered some particularly fine trees just within the boundaries of the public lands, and not daring to employ an accomplice, cut them down, and by means of block and tackle, without cattle, tumbled them into a stream, and so succeeded in getting off with them without the least assistance. Surely, stealing pine trees in this way is not so mean as robbing hen-roosts.

We reached Monson that night, and the next day rode to Bangor, all the way in the rain again, varying our route a little. Some of the taverns on this road, which were particularly dirty, were plainly in a transition state from the camp to the house.

* * * * *

The next forenoon we went to Oldtown. One slender old Indian on the Oldtown shore, who recognized my companion, was full of mirth

and gestures, like a Frenchman. A Catholic priest crossed to the island in the same batteau with us. The Indian houses are framed, mostly of one story, and in rows one behind another, at the south end of the island, with a few scattered ones. I counted about forty, not including the church and what my companion called the council-house. The last, which I suppose is their town-house, was regularly framed and shingled like the rest. There were several of two stories, quite neat, with front yards inclosed, and one at least had green blinds. Here and there were moose-hides stretched and drying about them. There were no cart-paths, nor tracks of horses, but footpaths; very little land cultivated, but an abundance of weeds, indigenous and naturalized; more introduced weeds than useful vegetables, as the Indian is said to cultivate the vices rather than the virtues of the white man. Yet this village was cleaner than I expected, far cleaner than such Irish villages as I have seen. The children were not particularly ragged nor dirty. The little boys met us with bow in hand and arrow on string, and cried, "Put up a cent." Verily, the Indian has but a feeble hold on his bow now; but the curiosity of the white man is insatiable, and from the first he has been eager to witness this forest accomplishment. That elastic piece of wood with its feathered dart, so sure to be unstrung by contact with civilization, will serve for the type, the coat-of-arms of the savage. Alas for the Hunter Race! the white man has driven off their game, and substituted a cent in its place. I saw an Indian woman washing at the water's edge. She stood on a rock, and, after dipping the clothes in the stream, laid them on the rock, and beat them with a short club. In the graveyard, which was crowded with graves, and overrun with weeds, I noticed an inscription in Indian, painted on a wooden grave-board. There was a large wooden cross on the island.

Since my companion knew him, we called on Governor Neptune, who lived in a little "ten-footer," one of the humblest of them all. Personalities are allowable in speaking of public men, therefore I will give the particulars of our visit. He was abed. When we entered the room, which was one half of the house, he was sitting on the side of the bed. There was a clock hanging in one corner. He had on a black frock coat, and black pants, much worn, white cotton shirt, socks, a red silk handkerchief about his neck, and a straw hat. His black hair

was only slightly grayed. He had very broad cheeks, and his features were decidedly and refreshingly different from those of any of the upstart Native American party whom I have seen. He was no darker than many old white men. He told me that he was eighty-nine; but he was going a-moose-hunting that fall, as he had been the previous one. Probably his companions did the hunting. We saw various squaws dodging about. One sat on the bed by his side and helped him out with his stories. They were remarkably corpulent, with smooth, round faces, apparently full of good-humor. Certainly our much-abused climate had not dried up their adipose substance. While we were there, — for we stayed a good while, — one went over to Oldtown, returned and cut out a dress, which she had bought, on another bed in the room. The Governor said that "he could remember when the moose were much larger; that they did not use to be in the woods, but came out of the water, as all deer did. Moose was whale once. Away down Merrimack way, a whale came ashore in a shallow bay. Sea went out and left him, and he came up on land a moose. What made them know he was a whale was, that at first, before he began to run in bushes, he had no bowels inside, but" — and then the squaw who sat on the bed by his side, as the Governor's aid, and had been putting in a word now and then and confirming the story, asked me what we called that soft thing we find along the seashore. "Jelly-fish," I suggested. "Yes," said he, "no bowels, but jelly-fish."

There may be some truth in what he said about the moose growing larger formerly; for the quaint John Josselyn, a physician who spent many years in this very district of Maine in the seventeenth century, says that the tips of their horns "are sometimes found to be two fathoms asunder," — and he is particular to tell us that a fathom is six feet,— "and [they are] in height, from the toe of the fore foot to the pitch of the shoulder, twelve foot, both which hath been taken by some of my sceptique readers to be monstrous lies;" and he adds, "There are certain transcendentia in every creature, which are the indelible character of God, and which discover God." This is a greater dilemma to be caught in than is presented by the cranium of the young Bechuana ox, apparently another of the *transcendentia*, in the collection of Thomas Steel, Upper Brook Street, London, whose "entire length of horn, from tip

to tip, along the curve, is 13 ft. 5 in.; distance (straight) between the tips of the horns, 8 ft. 8½ in." However, the size both of the moose and the cougar, as I have found, is generally rather underrated than overrated, and I should be inclined to add to the popular estimate a part of what I subtracted from Josselyn's.

But we talked mostly with the Governor's son-in-law, a very sensible Indian; and the Governor, being so old and deaf, permitted himself to be ignored, while we asked questions about him. The former said that there were two political parties among them, — one in favor of schools, and the other opposed to them, or rather they did not wish to resist the priest, who was opposed to them. The first had just prevailed at the election and sent their man to the legislature. Neptune and Aitteon and he himself were in favor of schools. He said, "If Indians got learning, they would keep their money." When we asked where Joe's father, Aitteon, was, he knew that he must be at Lincoln, though he was about going a-moose-hunting, for a messenger had just gone to him there to get his signature to some papers. I asked Neptune if they had any of the old breed of dogs yet. He answered, "Yes." "But that," said I, pointing to one that had just come in, "is a Yankee dog." He assented. I said that he did not look like a good one. "Oh, yes!" he said, and he told, with much gusto, how, the year before, he had caught and held by the throat a wolf. A very small black puppy rushed into the room and made at the Governor's feet, as he sat in his stockings with his legs dangling from the bedside. The Governor rubbed his hands and dared him to come on, entering into the sport with spirit. Nothing more that was significant transpired, to my knowledge, during this interview. This was the first time that I ever called on a governor, but, as I did not ask for an office, I can speak of it with the more freedom.

An Indian who was making canoes behind a house, looking up pleasantly from his work, — for he knew my companion, — said that his name was Old John Pennyweight. I had heard of him long before, and I inquired after one of his contemporaries, Joe Four-pence-ha'penny; but alas! he no longer circulates. I made a faithful study of canoe-building, and I thought that I should like to serve an apprenticeship at that trade for one season, going into the woods for bark with my "boss," making the canoe there, and returning in it at

last.

While the batteau was coming over to take us off, I picked up some fragments of arrowheads on the shore, and one broken stone chisel, which were greater novelties to the Indians than to me. After this, on Old Fort Hill, at the bend of the Penobscot, three miles above Bangor, looking for the site of an Indian town which some think stood thereabouts, I found more arrowheads, and two little dark and crumbling fragments of Indian earthenware, in the ashes of their fires. The Indians on the island appeared to live quite happily and to be well treated by the inhabitants of Oldtown.

We visited Veazie's mills, just below the island, where were sixteen sets of saws, — some gang saws, sixteen in a gang, not to mention circular saws. On one side, they were hauling the logs up an inclined plane by water-power; on the other, passing out the boards, planks, and sawed timber, and forming them into rafts. The trees were literally drawn and quartered there. In forming the rafts, they use the lower three feet of hard-wood saplings, which have a crooked and knobbed butt-end, for bolts, passing them up through holes bored in the corners and sides of the rafts, and keying them. In another apartment they were making fence-slats, such as stand all over New England, out of odds and ends; and it may be that I saw where the picket-fence behind which I dwell at home came from. I was surprised to find a boy collecting the long edgings of boards as fast as cut off, and thrusting them down a hopper, where they were ground up beneath the mill, that they might be out of the way; otherwise they accumulate in vast piles by the side of the building, increasing the danger from fire, or, floating off, they obstruct the river. This was not only a sawmill, but a gristmill, then. The inhabitants of Oldtown, Stillwater, and Bangor cannot suffer for want of kindling stuff, surely. Some get their living exclusively by picking up the driftwood and selling it by the cord in the winter. In one place I saw where an Irishman, who keeps a team and a man for the purpose, had covered the shore for a long distance with regular piles, and I was told that he had sold twelve hundred dollars' worth in a year. Another, who lived by the shore, told me that he got all the material of his outbuildings and fences from the river; and in that neighborhood I perceived that this refuse wood was frequently used

instead of sand to fill hollows with, being apparently cheaper than dirt.

I got my first clear view of Ktaadn, on this excursion, from a hill about two miles northwest of Bangor, whither I went for this purpose. After this I was ready to return to Massachusetts.

* * * * *

Humboldt has written an interesting chapter on the primitive forest, but no one has yet described for me the difference between that wild forest which once occupied our oldest townships, and the tame one which I find there to-day. It is a difference which would be worth attending to. The civilized man not only clears the land permanently to a great extent, and cultivates open fields, but he tames and cultivates to a certain extent the forest itself. By his mere presence, almost, he changes the nature of the trees as no other creature does. The sun and air, and perhaps fire, have been introduced, and grain raised where it stands. It has lost its wild, damp, and shaggy look; the countless fallen and decaying trees are gone, and consequently that thick coat of moss which lived on them is gone too. The earth is comparatively bare and smooth and dry. The most primitive places left with us are the swamps, where the spruce still grows shaggy with usnea. The surface of the ground in the Maine woods is everywhere spongy and saturated with moisture. I noticed that the plants which cover the forest floor there are such as are commonly confined to swamps with us, — the *Clintonia borealis*, orchises, creeping snowberry, and others; and the prevailing aster there is the *Aster acuminatus*, which with us grows in damp and shady woods. The asters *cordifolius* and *macrophyllus* also are common, asters of little or no color, and sometimes without petals. I saw no soft, spreading, second-growth white pines, with smooth bark, acknowledging the presence of the woodchopper, but even the young white pines were all tall and slender rough-barked trees.

Those Maine woods differ essentially from ours. There you are never reminded that the wilderness which you are threading is, after all, some villager's familiar wood-lot, some widow's thirds, from which her ancestors have sledded fuel for generations, minutely described in some old deed which is recorded, of which the owner has got a plan, too, and old bound-marks may be found every forty

rods, if you will search. 'Tis true, the map may inform you that you stand on land granted by the State to some academy, or on Bingham's purchase; but these names do not impose on you, for you see nothing to remind you of the academy or of Bingham. What were the "forests" of England to these? One writer relates of the Isle of Wight, that in Charles the Second's time "there were woods in the island so complete and extensive, that it is said a squirrel might have traveled in several parts many leagues together on the top of the trees." If it were not for the rivers (and he might go round their heads), a squirrel could here travel thus the whole breadth of the country.

We have as yet had no adequate account of a primitive pine forest. I have noticed that in a physical atlas lately published in Massachusetts, and used in our schools, the "wood land" of North America is limited almost solely to the valleys of the Ohio and some of the Great Lakes, and the great pine forests of the globe are not represented. In our vicinity, for instance, New Brunswick and Maine are exhibited as bare as Greenland. It may be that the children of Greenville, at the foot of Moosehead Lake, who surely are not likely to be scared by an owl, are referred to the valley of the Ohio to get an idea of a forest; but they would not know what to do with their moose, bear, caribou, beaver, etc., there. Shall we leave it to an Englishman to inform us, that "in North America, both in the United States and Canada, are the most extensive pine forests in the world"? The greater part of New Brunswick, the northern half of Maine, and adjacent parts of Canada, not to mention the northeastern part of New York and other tracts farther off, are still covered with an almost unbroken pine forest.

But Maine, perhaps, will soon be where Massachusetts is. A good part of her territory is already as bare and commonplace as much of our neighborhood, and her villages generally are not so well shaded as ours. We seem to think that the earth must go through the ordeal of sheep-pasturage before it is habitable by man. Consider Nahant, the resort of all the fashion of Boston, — which peninsula I saw but indistinctly in the twilight, when I steamed by it, and thought that it was unchanged since the discovery. John Smith described it in 1614 as "the Mattahunts, two pleasant isles of groves, gardens, and

cornfields;" and others tell us that it was once well wooded, and even furnished timber to build the wharves of Boston. Now it is difficult to make a tree grow there, and the visitor comes away with a vision of Mr. Tudor's ugly fences, a rod high, designed to protect a few pear shrubs. And what are we coming to in our Middlesex towns? A bald, staring town-house, or meeting-house, and a bare liberty-pole, as leafless as it is fruitless, for all I can see. We shall be obliged to import the timber for the last, hereafter, or splice such sticks as we have. And our ideas of liberty are equally mean with these. The very willow-rows lopped every three years for fuel or powder, and every sizable pine and oak, or other forest tree, cut down within the memory of man! As if individual speculators were to be allowed to export the clouds out of the sky, or the stars out of the firmament, one by one. We shall be reduced to gnaw the very crust of the earth for nutriment.

They have even descended to smaller game. They have lately, as I hear, invented a machine for chopping up huckleberry bushes fine, and so converting them into fuel! — bushes which, for fruit alone, are worth all the pear trees in the country many times over. (I can give you a list of the three best kinds, if you want it.) At this rate, we shall all be obliged to let our beards grow at least, if only to hide the nakedness of the land and make a sylvan appearance. The farmer sometimes talks of "brushing up," simply as if bare ground looked better than clothed ground, than that which wears its natural vesture, — as if the wild hedges, which, perhaps, are more to his children than his whole farm beside, were dirt. I know of one who deserves to be called the Tree-hater, and, perhaps, to leave this for a new patronymic to his children. You would think that he had been warned by an oracle that he would be killed by the fall of a tree, and so was resolved to anticipate them. The journalists think that they cannot say too much in favor of such "improvements" in husbandry; it is a safe theme, like piety; but as for the beauty of one of these "model farms," I would as lief see a patent churn and a man turning it. They are, commonly, places merely where somebody is making money, it may be counterfeiting. The virtue of making two blades of grass grow where only one grew before does not begin to be superhuman.

Nevertheless, it was a relief to get back to our smooth but still

varied landscape. For a permanent residence, it seemed to me that there could be no comparison between this and the wilderness, necessary as the latter is for a resource and a background, the raw material of all our civilization. The wilderness is simple, almost to barrenness. The partially cultivated country it is which chiefly has inspired, and will continue to inspire, the strains of poets, such as compose the mass of any literature. Our woods are sylvan, and their inhabitants woodmen and rustics; that is *selvaggia*, and the inhabitants are *salvages*. A civilized man, using the word in the ordinary sense, with his ideas and associations, must at length pine there, like a cultivated plant, which clasps its fibres about a crude and undissolved mass of peat. At the extreme north, the voyagers are obliged to dance and act plays for employment. Perhaps our own woods and fields, — in the best wooded towns, where we need not quarrel about the huckleberries, — with the primitive swamps scattered here and there in their midst, but not prevailing over them, are the perfection of parks and groves, gardens, arbors, paths, vistas, and landscapes. They are the natural consequence of what art and refinement we as a people have, — the common which each village possesses, its true paradise, in comparison with which all elaborately and willfully wealth-constructed parks and gardens are paltry imitations. Or, I would rather say, such *were* our groves twenty years ago. The poet's, commonly, is not a logger's path, but a woodman's. The logger and pioneer have preceded him, like John the Baptist; eaten the wild honey, it may be, but the locusts also; banished decaying wood and the spongy mosses which feed on it, and built hearths and humanized Nature for him.

But there are spirits of a yet more liberal culture, to whom no simplicity is barren. There are not only stately pines, but fragile flowers, like the orchises, commonly described as too delicate for cultivation, which derive their nutriment from the crudest mass of peat. These remind us, that, not only for strength, but for beauty, the poet must, from time to time, travel the logger's path and the Indian's trail, to drink at some new and more bracing fountain of the Muses, far in the recesses of the wilderness.

The kings of England formerly had their forests "to hold the king's game," for sport or food, sometimes destroying villages to

create or extend them; and I think that they were impelled by a true instinct. Why should not we, who have renounced the king's authority, have our national preserves, where no villages need be destroyed, in which the bear and panther, and some even of the hunter race, may still exist, and not be "civilized off the face of the earth," — our forests, not to hold the king's game merely, but to hold and preserve the king himself also, the lord of creation, — not for idle sport or food, but for inspiration and our own true recreation? or shall we, like the villains, grub them all up, poaching on our own national domains?

THE ALLEGASH AND EAST BRANCH

I started on my third excursion to the Maine woods Monday, July 20, 1857, with one companion, arriving at Bangor the next day at noon. We had hardly left the steamer, when we passed Molly Molasses in the street. As long as she lives, the Penobscots may be considered extant as a tribe. The succeeding morning, a relative of mine, who is well acquainted with the Penobscot Indians, and who had been my companion in my two previous excursions into the Maine woods, took me in his wagon to Oldtown, to assist me in obtaining an Indian for this expedition. We were ferried across to the Indian Island in a batteau. The ferryman's boy had got the key to it, but the father, who was a blacksmith, after a little hesitation cut the chain with a cold-chisel on the rock. He told me that the Indians were nearly all gone to the seaboard and to Massachusetts, partly on account of the smallpox — of which they are very much afraid — having broken out in Oldtown, and it was doubtful whether we should find a suitable one at home. The old chief Neptune, however, was there still. The first man we saw on the island was an Indian named Joseph Polis, whom my relative had known from a boy, and now addressed familiarly as "Joe." He was dressing a deer-skin in his yard. The skin was spread over a slanting log, and he was scraping it with a stick held by both hands. He was stoutly built, perhaps a little above the middle height, with a broad face, and, as others said, perfect Indian features and complexion. His house was a two-story white one, with blinds, the best-looking that I noticed there, and as good as an average one on a New England village street. It was surrounded by a garden and fruit-trees, single cornstalks standing thinly amid the beans. We asked him if he knew any good Indian who would like to go into the woods with us, that is, to the Allegash Lakes, by way of Moosehead, and return by the East Branch of the Penobscot, or vary from this as we pleased. To which he answered, out of that strange remoteness in which the Indian ever dwells to the white man, "Me like to go myself; me wants to get some moose;" and kept on scraping the skin. His brother had been into the woods with my relative only a year or two before, and the Indian now inquired what the latter had done to

him, that he did not come back, for he had not seen nor heard from him since.

At length we got round to the more interesting topic again. The ferryman had told us that all the best Indians were gone except Polis, who was one of the aristocracy. He to be sure would be the best man we could have, but if he went at all would want a great price; so we did not expect to get him. Polis asked at first two dollars a day, but agreed to go for a dollar and a half, and fifty cents a week for his canoe. He would come to Bangor with his canoe by the seven o'clock train that evening, — we might depend on him. We thought ourselves lucky to secure the services of this man, who was known to be particularly steady and trustworthy.

I spent the afternoon with my companion, who had remained in Bangor, in preparing for our expedition, purchasing provisions, hard-bread, pork, coffee, sugar, etc., and some india-rubber clothing.

We had at first thought of exploring the St. John from its source to its mouth, or else to go up the Penobscot by its East Branch to the lakes of the St. John, and return by way of Chesuncook and Moosehead. We had finally inclined to the last route, only reversing the order of it, going by way of Moosehead, and returning by the Penobscot, otherwise it would have been all the way upstream and taken twice as long.

At evening the Indian arrived in the cars, and I led the way while he followed me three quarters of a mile to my friend's house, with the canoe on his head. I did not know the exact route myself, but steered by the lay of the land, as I do in Boston, and I tried to enter into conversation with him, but as he was puffing under the weight of his canoe, not having the usual apparatus for carrying it, but, above all, was an Indian, I might as well have been thumping on the bottom of his birch the while. In answer to the various observations which I made by way of breaking the ice, he only grunted vaguely from beneath his canoe once or twice, so that I knew he was there.

Early the next morning (July 23) the stage called for us, the Indian having breakfasted with us, and already placed the baggage in the canoe to see how it would go. My companion and I had each a large knapsack as full as it would hold, and we had two large india-rubber bags which held our provision and utensils. As for the Indian, all the

baggage he had, beside his axe and gun, was a blanket, which he brought loose in his hand. However, he had laid in a store of tobacco and a new pipe for the excursion. The canoe was securely lashed diagonally across the top of the stage, with bits of carpet tucked under the edge to prevent its chafing. The very accommodating driver appeared as much accustomed to carrying canoes in this way as bandboxes.

At the Bangor House we took in four men bound on a hunting excursion, one of the men going as cook. They had a dog, a middling-sized brindled cur, which ran by the side of the stage, his master showing his head and whistling from time to time; but after we had gone about three miles the dog was suddenly missing, and two of the party went back for him, while the stage, which was full of passengers, waited. I suggested that he had taken the back track for the Bangor House. At length one man came back, while the other kept on. This whole party of hunters declared their intention to stop till the dog was found; but the very obliging driver was ready to wait a spell longer. He was evidently unwilling to lose so many passengers, who would have taken a private conveyance, or perhaps the other line of stages, the next day. Such progress did we make, with a journey of over sixty miles to be accomplished that day, and a rain-storm just setting in. We discussed the subject of dogs and their instincts till it was threadbare, while we waited there, and the scenery of the suburbs of Bangor is still distinctly impressed on my memory. After full half an hour the man returned, leading the dog by a rope. He had overtaken him just as he was entering the Bangor House. He was then tied on the top of the stage, but being wet and cold, several times in the course of the journey he jumped off, and I saw him dangling by his neck. This dog was depended on to stop bears with. He had already stopped one somewhere in New Hampshire, and I can testify that he stopped a stage in Maine. This party of four probably paid nothing for the dog's ride, nor for his run, while our party of three paid two dollars — and were charged four — for the light canoe which lay still on the top.

It soon began to rain, and grew more and more stormy as the day advanced. This was the third time that I had passed over this route, and it rained steadily each time all day. We accordingly saw but little

of the country. The stage was crowded all the way, and I attended the more to my fellow-travelers. If you had looked inside this coach you would have thought that we were prepared to run the gauntlet of a band of robbers, for there were four or five guns on the front seat, the Indian's included, and one or two on the back one, each man holding his darling in his arms. One had a gun which carried twelve to a pound. It appeared that this party of hunters was going our way, but much farther, — down the Allegash and St. John, and thence up some other stream, and across to the Restigouche and the Bay of Chaleur, to be gone six weeks. They had canoes, axes, and supplies deposited some distance along the route. They carried flour, and were to have new bread made every day. Their leader was a handsome man about thirty years old, of good height, but not apparently robust, of gentlemanly address and faultless toilet; such a one as you might expect to meet on Broadway. In fact, in the popular sense of the word, he was the most "gentlemanly" appearing man in the stage, or that we saw on the road. He had a fair white complexion, as if he had always lived in the shade, and an intellectual face, and with his quiet manners might have passed for a divinity student who had seen something of the world. I was surprised to find, on talking with him in the course of the day's journey, that he was a hunter at all, — for his gun was not much exposed, — and yet more to find that he was probably the chief white hunter of Maine, and was known all along the road. He had also hunted in some of the States farther south and west. I afterwards heard him spoken of as one who could endure a great deal of exposure and fatigue without showing the effect of it; and he could not only use guns, but make them, being himself a gunsmith. In the spring, he had saved a stage-driver and two passengers from drowning in the backwater of the Piscataquis in Foxcroft on this road, having swum ashore in the freezing water and made a raft and got them off, — though the horses were drowned, — at great risk to himself, while the only other man who could swim withdrew to the nearest house to prevent freezing. He could now ride over this road for nothing. He knew our man, and remarked that we had a good Indian there, a good hunter; adding that he was said to be worth $6000. The Indian also knew him, and said to me, "the great hunter."

The former told me that he practiced a kind of still-hunting, new or uncommon in those parts; that the caribou, for instance, fed round and round the same meadow, returning on the same path, and he lay in wait for them.

The Indian sat on the front seat, saying nothing to anybody, with a stolid expression of face, as if barely awake to what was going on. Again I was struck by the peculiar vagueness of his replies when addressed in the stage, or at the taverns. He really never said anything on such occasions. He was merely stirred up, like a wild beast, and passively muttered some insignificant response. His answer, in such cases, was never the consequence of a positive mental energy, but vague as a puff of smoke, suggesting no *responsibility*, and if you considered it, you would find that you had got nothing out of him. This was instead of the conventional palaver and smartness of the white man, and equally profitable. Most get no more than this out of the Indian, and pronounce him stolid accordingly. I was surprised to see what a foolish and impertinent style a Maine man, a passenger, used in addressing him, as if he were a child, which only made his eyes glisten a little. A tipsy Canadian asked him at a tavern, in a drawling tone, if he smoked, to which he answered with an indefinite "Yes." "Won't you lend me your pipe a little while?" asked the other. He replied, looking straight by the man's head, with a face singularly vacant to all neighboring interests, "Me got no pipe;" yet I had seen him put a new one, with a supply of tobacco, into his pocket that morning.

Our little canoe, so neat and strong, drew a favorable criticism from all the wiseacres among the tavern loungers along the road. By the roadside, close to the wheels, I noticed a splendid great purple fringed orchis with a spike as big as an epilobium, which I would fain have stopped the stage to pluck, but as this had never been known to stop a bear, like the cur on the stage, the driver would probably have thought it a waste of time.

When we reached the lake, about half past eight in the evening, it was still steadily raining, and harder than before; and, in that fresh, cool atmosphere, the hylodes were peeping and the toads ringing about the lake universally, as in the spring with us. It was as if the season had revolved backward two or three months, or I had arrived

at the abode of perpetual spring.

We had expected to go upon the lake at once, and, after paddling up two or three miles, to camp on one of its islands; but on account of the steady and increasing rain, we decided to go to one of the taverns for the night, though, for my own part, I should have preferred to camp out.

About four o'clock the next morning (July 24), though it was quite cloudy, accompanied by the landlord to the water's edge, in the twilight, we launched our canoe from a rock on the Moosehead Lake. When I was there four years before, we had a rather small canoe for three persons, and I had thought that this time I would get a larger one, but the present one was even smaller than that. It was 18¼ feet long by 2 feet 6½ inches wide in the middle, and one foot deep within, so I found by measurement, and I judged that it would weigh not far from eighty pounds. The Indian had recently made it himself, and its smallness was partly compensated for by its newness, as well as stanchness and solidity, it being made of very thick bark and ribs. Our baggage weighed about 166 pounds, so that the canoe carried about 600 pounds in all, or the weight of four men. The principal part of the baggage was, as usual, placed in the middle of the broadest part, while we stowed ourselves in the chinks and crannies that were left before and behind it, where there was no room to extend our legs, the loose articles being tucked into the ends. The canoe was thus as closely packed as a market-basket, and might possibly have been upset without spilling any of its contents. The Indian sat on a cross-bar in the stern, but we flat on the bottom, with a splint or chip behind our backs, to protect them from the cross-bar, and one of us commonly paddled with the Indian. He foresaw that we should not want a pole till we reached the Umbazookskus River, it being either deadwater or down-stream so far, and he was prepared to make a sail of his blanket in the bows if the wind should be fair; but we never used it.

It had rained more or less the four previous days, so that we thought we might count on some fair weather. The wind was at first southwesterly.

Paddling along the eastern side of the lake in the still of the morning, we soon saw a few sheldrakes, which the Indian called

Shecorways, and some peetweets, *Naramekechus*, on the rocky shore; we also saw and heard loons, *Medawisla*, which he said was a sign of wind. It was inspiriting to hear the regular dip of the paddles, as if they were our fins or flippers, and to realize that we were at length fairly embarked. We who had felt strangely as stage-passengers and tavern-lodgers were suddenly naturalized there and presented with the freedom of the lakes and the woods. Having passed the small rocky isles within two or three miles of the foot of the lake, we had a short consultation respecting our course, and inclined to the western shore for the sake of its lee; for otherwise, if the wind should rise, it would be impossible for us to reach Mount Kineo, which is about midway up the lake on the east side, but at its narrowest part, where probably we could recross if we took the western side. The wind is the chief obstacle to crossing the lakes, especially in so small a canoe. The Indian remarked several times that he did not like to cross the lakes "in littlum canoe," but nevertheless, "just as we say, it made no odds to him." He sometimes took a straight course up the middle of the lake between Sugar and Deer islands, when there was no wind.

Measured on the map, Moosehead Lake is twelve miles wide at the widest place, and thirty miles long in a direct line, but longer as it lies. The captain of the steamer called it thirty-eight miles as he steered. We should probably go about forty. The Indian said that it was called "*Mspame*, because large water." Squaw Mountain rose darkly on our left, near the outlet of the Kennebec, and what the Indian called Spencer Bay Mountain, on the east, and already we saw Mount Kineo before us in the north.

Paddling near the shore, we frequently heard the pe-pe of the olive-sided flycatcher, also the wood pewee, and the kingfisher, thus early in the morning. The Indian reminding us that he could not work without eating, we stopped to breakfast on the main shore, southwest of Deer Island, at a spot where the *Mimulus ringens* grew abundantly. We took out our bags, and the Indian made a fire under a very large bleached log, using white pine bark from a stump, though he said that hemlock was better, and kindling with canoe birch bark. Our table was a large piece of freshly peeled birch bark, laid wrong side up, and our breakfast consisted of hard-bread, fried pork, and

strong coffee, well sweetened, in which we did not miss the milk.

While we were getting breakfast, a brood of twelve black dippers, half grown, came paddling by within three or four rods, not at all alarmed; and they loitered about as long as we stayed, now huddled close together, within a circle of eighteen inches in diameter, now moving off in a long line, very cunningly. Yet they bore a certain proportion to the great Moosehead Lake on whose bosom they floated, and I felt as if they were under its protection.

Looking northward from this place it appeared as if we were entering a large bay, and we did not know whether we should be obliged to diverge from our course and keep outside a point which we saw, or should find a passage between this and the mainland. I consulted my map and used my glass, and the Indian did the same, but we could not find our place exactly on the map, nor could we detect any break in the shore. When I asked the Indian the way, he answered, "I don't know," which I thought remarkable, since he had said that he was familiar with the lake; but it appeared that he had never been up this side. It was misty dog-day weather, and we had already penetrated a smaller bay of the same kind, and knocked the bottom out of it, though we had been obliged to pass over a small bar, between an island and the shore, where there was but just breadth and depth enough to float the canoe, and the Indian had observed, "Very easy makum bridge here," but now it seemed that, if we held on, we should be fairly embayed. Presently, however, though we had not stirred, the mist lifted somewhat, and revealed a break in the shore northward, showing that the point was a portion of Deer Island, and that our course lay westward of it. Where it had seemed a continuous shore even through a glass, one portion was now seen by the naked eye to be much more distant than the other which overlapped it, merely by the greater thickness of the mist which still rested on it, while the nearer or island portion was comparatively bare and green. The line of separation was very distinct, and the Indian immediately remarked, "I guess you and I go there, — I guess there's room for my canoe there." This was his common expression instead of saying "we." He never addressed us by our names, though curious to know how they were spelled and what they meant, while we called him Polis. He had already guessed

very accurately at our ages, and said that he was forty-eight.



Squaw Mountain, Moosehead Lake

After breakfast I emptied the melted pork that was left into the lake, making what sailors call a "slick," and watching to see how much it spread over and smoothed the agitated surface. The Indian looked at it a moment and said, "That make hard paddlum thro'; hold 'em canoe. So say old times."

We hastily reloaded, putting the dishes loose in the bows, that they might be at hand when wanted, and set out again. The western shore, near which we paddled along, rose gently to a considerable height, and was everywhere densely covered with the forest, in which was a large proportion of hard wood to enliven and relieve the fir and spruce.

The Indian said that the usnea lichen which we saw hanging from the trees was called *chorchorque*. We asked him the names of several small birds which we heard this morning. The wood thrush, which was quite common, and whose note he imitated, he said was called *Adelungquamooktum*; but sometimes he could not tell the name of some small bird which I heard and knew, but he said, "I tell all the birds about here, — this country; can't tell littlum noise, but I see 'em, then I can tell."

I observed that I should like to go to school to him to learn his

language, living on the Indian island the while; could not that be done? "Oh, yer," he replied, "good many do so." I asked how long he thought it would take. He said one week. I told him that in this voyage I would tell him all I knew, and he should tell me all he knew, to which he readily agreed.

The birds sang quite as in our woods, — the red-eye, redstart, veery, wood pewee, etc., but we saw no bluebirds in all our journey, and several told me in Bangor that they had not the bluebird there. Mount Kineo, which was generally visible, though occasionally concealed by islands or the mainland in front, had a level bar of cloud concealing its summit, and all the mountain-tops about the lake were cut off at the same height. Ducks of various kinds — sheldrake, summer ducks, etc. — were quite common, and ran over the water before us as fast as a horse trots. Thus they were soon out of sight.

The Indian asked the meaning of *reality*, as near as I could make out the word, which he said one of us had used; also of "*interrent*," that is, intelligent. I observed that he could rarely sound the letter r, but used l, as also r for l sometimes; as *load* for road, *pickelel* for pickerel, *Soogle* Island for Sugar Island, *lock* for rock, etc. Yet he trilled the *r* pretty well after me.

He generally added the syllable *um* to his words when he could, — as paddl*um*, etc. I have once heard a Chippeway lecture, who made his audience laugh unintentionally by putting *m* after the word *too*, which word he brought in continually and unnecessarily, accenting and prolonging this sound into m-ah sonorously, as if it were necessary to bring in so much of his vernacular as a relief to his organs, a compensation for twisting his jaws about, and putting his tongue into every corner of his mouth, as he complained that he was obliged to do when he spoke English. There was so much of the Indian accent resounding through his English, so much of the "bow-arrow tang" as my neighbor calls it, and I have no doubt that word seemed to him the best pronounced. It was a wild and refreshing sound, like that of the wind among the pines, or the booming of the surf on the shore.

I asked him the meaning of the word *Musketicook*, the Indian name of Concord River. He pronounced it *Muskéeticook*, emphasizing the second syllable with a peculiar guttural sound, and

said that it meant “deadwater,” which it is, and in this definition he agreed exactly with the St. Francis Indian with whom I talked in 1853.

On a point on the mainland some miles southwest of Sand-bar Island, where we landed to stretch our legs and look at the vegetation, going inland a few steps, I discovered a fire still glowing beneath its ashes, where somebody had breakfasted, and a bed of twigs prepared for the following night. So I knew not only that they had just left, but that they designed to return, and by the breadth of the bed that there was more than one in the party. You might have gone within six feet of these signs without seeing them. There grew the beaked hazel, the only hazel which I saw on this journey, the diervilla, rue seven feet high, which was very abundant on all the lake and river shores, and *Cornus stolonifera*, or red osier, whose bark, the Indian said, was good to smoke, and was called *maquoxigill*, “tobacco before white people came to this country, Indian tobacco.”

The Indian was always very careful in approaching the shore, lest he should injure his canoe on the rocks, letting it swing round slowly sidewise, and was still more particular that we should not step into it on shore, nor till it floated free, and then should step gently lest we should open its seams, or make a hole in the bottom. He said that he would tell us when to jump.

Soon after leaving this point we passed the Kennebec, or outlet of the lake, and heard the falls at the dam there, for even Moosehead Lake is dammed. After passing Deer Island, we saw the little steamer from Greenville, far east in the middle of the lake, and she appeared nearly stationary. Sometimes we could hardly tell her from an island which had a few trees on it. Here we were exposed to the wind from over the whole breadth of the lake, and ran a little risk of being swamped. While I had my eye fixed on the spot where a large fish had leaped, we took in a gallon or two of water, which filled my lap; but we soon reached the shore and took the canoe over the bar, at Sand-bar Island, a few feet wide only, and so saved a considerable distance. One landed first at a more sheltered place, and walking round caught the canoe by the prow, to prevent it being injured against the shore.

Again we crossed a broad bay opposite the mouth of Moose River, before reaching the narrow strait at Mount Kineo, made what the voyageurs call a *traverse*, and found the water quite rough. A very little wind on these broad lakes raises a sea which will swamp a canoe. Looking off from the shore, the surface may appear to be very little agitated, almost smooth, a mile distant, or if you see a few white crests they appear nearly level with the rest of the lake; but when you get out so far, you may find quite a sea running, and ere long, before you think of it, a wave will gently creep up the side of the canoe and fill your lap, like a monster deliberately covering you with its slime before it swallows you, or it will strike the canoe violently, and break into it. The same thing may happen when the wind rises suddenly, though it were perfectly calm and smooth there a few minutes before; so that nothing can save you, unless you can swim ashore, for it is impossible to get into a canoe again when it is upset. Since you sit flat on the bottom, though the danger should not be imminent, a little water is a great inconvenience, not to mention the wetting of your provisions. We rarely crossed even a bay directly, from point to point, when there was wind, but made a slight curve corresponding somewhat to the shore, that we might the sooner reach it if the wind increased.

When the wind is aft, and not too strong, the Indian makes a spritsail of his blanket. He thus easily skims over the whole length of this lake in a day.

The Indian paddled on one side, and one of us on the other, to keep the canoe steady, and when he wanted to change hands he would say, "T' other side." He asserted, in answer to our questions, that he had never upset a canoe himself, though he may have been upset by others.

Think of our little eggshell of a canoe tossing across that great lake, a mere black speck to the eagle soaring above it!

My companion trailed for trout as we paddled along, but the Indian warning him that a big fish might upset us, for there are some very large ones there, he agreed to pass the line quickly to him in the stern if he had a bite. Besides trout, I heard of cusk, whitefish, etc., as found in this lake.

While we were crossing this bay, where Mount Kineo rose dark

before us, within two or three miles, the Indian repeated the tradition respecting this mountain's having anciently been a cow moose, — how a mighty Indian hunter, whose name I forget, succeeded in killing this queen of the moose tribe with great difficulty, while her calf was killed somewhere among the islands in Penobscot Bay, and, to his eyes, this mountain had still the form of the moose in a reclining posture, its precipitous side presenting the outline of her head. He told this at some length, though it did not amount to much, and with apparent good faith, and asked us how we supposed the hunter could have killed such a mighty moose as that, — how we could do it. Whereupon a man-of-war to fire broadsides into her was suggested, etc. An Indian tells such a story as if he thought it deserved to have a good deal said about it, only he has not got it to say, and so he makes up for the deficiency by a drawling tone, long-windedness, and a dumb wonder which he hopes will be contagious.

We approached the land again through pretty rough water, and then steered directly across the lake, at its narrowest part, to the eastern side, and were soon partly under the lee of the mountain, about a mile north of the Kineo House, having paddled about twenty miles. It was now about noon.

We designed to stop there that afternoon and night, and spent half an hour looking along the shore northward for a suitable place to camp. We took out all our baggage at one place in vain, it being too rocky and uneven, and while engaged in this search we made our first acquaintance with the moose-fly. At length, half a mile farther north, by going half a dozen rods into the dense spruce and fir wood on the side of the mountain, almost as dark as a cellar, we found a place sufficiently clear and level to lie down on, after cutting away a few bushes. We required a space only seven feet by six for our bed, the fire being four or five feet in front, though it made no odds how rough the hearth was; but it was not always easy to find this in those woods. The Indian first cleared a path to it from the shore with his axe, and we then carried up all our baggage, pitched our tent, and made our bed, in order to be ready for foul weather, which then threatened us, and for the night. He gathered a large armful of fir twigs, breaking them off, which he said were the best for our bed, partly, I thought, because they were the largest and could be most

rapidly collected. It had been raining more or less for four or five days, and the wood was even damper than usual, but he got dry bark for the fire from the under side of a dead leaning hemlock, which, he said, he could always do.

This noon his mind was occupied with a law question, and I referred him to my companion, who was a lawyer. It appeared that he had been buying land lately (I think it was a hundred acres), but there was probably an incumbrance to it, somebody else claiming to have bought some grass on it for this year. He wished to know to whom the grass belonged, and was told that if the other man could prove that he bought the grass before he, Polis, bought the land, the former could take it, whether the latter knew it or not. To which he only answered, "Strange!" He went over this several times, fairly sat down to it, with his back to a tree, as if he meant to confine us to this topic henceforth; but as he made no headway, only reached the jumping-off place of his wonder at white men's institutions after each explanation, we let the subject die.

He said that he had fifty acres of grass, potatoes, etc., somewhere above Oldtown, besides some about his house; that he hired a good deal of his work, hoeing, etc., and preferred white men to Indians, because "they keep steady, and know how."

After dinner we returned southward along the shore, in the canoe, on account of the difficulty of climbing over the rocks and fallen trees, and began to ascend the mountain along the edge of the precipice. But a smart shower coming up just then, the Indian crept under his canoe, while we, being protected by our rubber coats, proceeded to botanize. So we sent him back to the camp for shelter, agreeing that he should come there for us with his canoe toward night. It had rained a little in the forenoon, and we trusted that this would be the clearing-up shower, which it proved; but our feet and legs were thoroughly wet by the bushes. The clouds breaking away a little, we had a glorious wild view, as we ascended, of the broad lake with its fluctuating surface and numerous forest-clad islands, extending beyond our sight both north and south, and the boundless forest undulating away from its shores on every side, as densely packed as a rye-field, and enveloping nameless mountains in succession; but above all, looking westward over a large island, was

visible a very distant part of the lake, though we did not then suspect it to be Moosehead, — at first a mere broken white line seen through the tops of the island trees, like hay-caps, but spreading to a lake when we got higher. Beyond this we saw what appears to be called Bald Mountain on the map, some twenty-five miles distant, near the sources of the Penobscot. It was a perfect lake of the woods. But this was only a transient gleam, for the rain was not quite over.

Looking southward, the heavens were completely overcast, the mountains capped with clouds, and the lake generally wore a dark and stormy appearance, but from its surface just north of Sugar Island, six or eight miles distant, there was reflected upward to us through the misty air a bright blue tinge from the distant unseen sky of another latitude beyond. They probably had a clear sky then at Greenville, the south end of the lake. Standing on a mountain in the midst of a lake, where would you look for the first sign of approaching fair weather? Not into the heavens, it seems, but into the lake.

Again we mistook a little rocky islet seen through the "drisk," with some taller bare trunks or stumps on it, for the steamer with its smoke-pipes, but as it had not changed its position after half an hour, we were undeceived. So much do the works of man resemble the works of nature. A moose might mistake a steamer for a floating isle, and not be scared till he heard its puffing or its whistle.

If I wished to see a mountain or other scenery under the most favorable auspices, I would go to it in foul weather, so as to be there when it cleared up; we are then in the most suitable mood, and nature is most fresh and inspiring. There is no serenity so fair as that which is just established in a tearful eye.

Jackson, in his Report on the Geology of Maine, in 1838, says of this mountain: "Hornstone, which will answer for flints, occurs in various parts of the State, where trap-rocks have acted upon silicious slate. The largest mass of this stone known in the world is Mount Kineo, upon Moosehead Lake, which appears to be entirely composed of it, and rises seven hundred feet above the lake level. This variety of hornstone I have seen in every part of New England in the form of Indian arrowheads, hatchets, chisels, etc., which were probably obtained from this mountain by the aboriginal inhabitants

of the country." I have myself found hundreds of arrowheads made of the same material. It is generally slate-colored, with white specks, becoming a uniform white where exposed to the light and air, and it breaks with a conchoidal fracture, producing a ragged cutting edge. I noticed some conchoidal hollows more than a foot in diameter. I picked up a small thin piece which had so sharp an edge that I used it as a dull knife, and to see what I could do, fairly cut off an aspen one inch thick with it, by bending it and making many cuts; though I cut my fingers badly with the back of it in the meanwhile.



Moosehead Lake, from Mount Kineo

From the summit of the precipice which forms the southern and eastern sides of this mountain peninsula, and is its most remarkable feature, being described as five or six hundred feet high, we looked, and probably might have jumped, down to the water, or to the seemingly dwarfish trees on the narrow neck of land which connects it with the main. It is a dangerous place to try the steadiness of your nerves. Hodge says that these cliffs descend "perpendicularly ninety feet" below the surface of the water.

The plants which chiefly attracted our attention on this mountain were the mountain cinquefoil (*Potentilla tridentata*), abundant and in bloom still at the very base, by the waterside, though it is usually confined to the summits of mountains in our latitude; very beautiful

harebells overhanging the precipice; bear-berry; the Canada blueberry (*Vaccinium Canadense*), similar to the V. Pennsylvanicum, our earliest one, but entire-leaved and with a downy stem and leaf (I have not seen it in Massachusetts); *Diervilla trifida*; *Microstylis ophioglossoides*, an orchidaceous plant new to us; wild holly (*Nemopanthes Canadensis*); the great round-leaved orchis (*Platanthera orbiculata*), not long in bloom; *Spiranthes cernua*, at the top; bunchberry, reddening as we ascended, green at the base of the mountain, red at the top; and the small fern *Woodsia ilvensis*, growing in tufts, now in fruit. I have also received *Liparis liliifolia*, or tway-blade, from this spot. Having explored the wonders of the mountain, and the weather being now entirely cleared up, we commenced the descent. We met the Indian, puffing and panting, about one third of the way up, but thinking that he must be near the top, and saying that it took his breath away. I thought that superstition had something to do with his fatigue. Perhaps he believed that he was climbing over the back of a tremendous moose. He said that he had never ascended Kineo. On reaching the canoe we found that he had caught a lake trout weighing about three pounds, at the depth of twenty-five or thirty feet, while we were on the mountain.

When we got to the camp, the canoe was taken out and turned over, and a log laid across it to prevent its being blown away. The Indian cut some large logs of damp and rotten hard wood to smoulder and keep fire through the night. The trout was fried for supper. Our tent was of thin cotton cloth and quite small, forming with the ground a triangular prism closed at the rear end, six feet long, seven wide, and four high, so that we could barely sit up in the middle. It required two forked stakes, a smooth ridge-pole, and a dozen or more pins to pitch it. It kept off dew and wind, and an ordinary rain, and answered our purpose well enough. We reclined within it till bedtime, each with his baggage at his head, or else sat about the fire, having hung our wet clothes on a pole before the fire for the night.

As we sat there, just before night, looking out through the dusky wood, the Indian heard a noise which he said was made by a snake. He imitated it at my request, making a low whistling note, — *pheet*

— *pheet*, — two or three times repeated, somewhat like the peep of the hylodes, but not so loud. In answer to my inquiries, he said that he had never seen them while making it, but going to the spot he finds the snake. This, he said on another occasion, was a sign of rain. When I had selected this place for our camp, he had remarked that there were snakes there, — he saw them. "But they won't do any hurt," I said. "Oh, no," he answered, "just as you say; it makes no difference to me."

He lay on the right side of the tent, because, as he said, he was partly deaf in one ear, and he wanted to lie with his good ear up. As we lay there, he inquired if I ever heard "Indian sing." I replied that I had not often, and asked him if he would not favor us with a song. He readily assented, and, lying on his back, with his blanket wrapped around him, he commenced a slow, somewhat nasal, yet musical chant, in his own language, which probably was taught his tribe long ago by the Catholic missionaries. He translated it to us, sentence by sentence, afterward, wishing to see if we could remember it. It proved to be a very simple religious exercise or hymn, the burden of which was, that there was only one God who ruled all the world. This was hammered (or sung) out very thin, so that some stanzas well-nigh meant nothing at all, merely keeping up the idea. He then said that he would sing us a Latin song; but we did not detect any Latin, only one or two Greek words in it, — the rest may have been Latin with the Indian pronunciation.

His singing carried me back to the period of the discovery of America, to San Salvador and the Incas, when Europeans first encountered the simple faith of the Indian. There was, indeed, a beautiful simplicity about it; nothing of the dark and savage, only the mild and infantile. The sentiments of humility and reverence chiefly were expressed.

It was a dense and damp spruce and fir wood in which we lay, and, except for our fire, perfectly dark; and when I awoke in the night, I either heard an owl from deeper in the forest behind us, or a loon from a distance over the lake. Getting up some time after midnight to collect the scattered brands together, while my companions were sound asleep, I observed, partly in the fire, which had ceased to blaze, a perfectly regular elliptical ring of light, about

five inches in its shortest diameter, six or seven in its longer, and from one eighth to one quarter of an inch wide. It was fully as bright as the fire, but not reddish or scarlet, like a coal, but a white and slumbering light, like the glow-worm's. I could tell it from the fire only by its whiteness. I saw at once that it must be phosphorescent wood, which I had so often heard of, but never chanced to see. Putting my finger on it, with a little hesitation, I found that it was a piece of dead moose-wood (*Acer striatum*) which the Indian had cut off in a slanting direction the evening before. Using my knife, I discovered that the light proceeded from that portion of the sap-wood immediately under the bark, and thus presented a regular ring at the end, which, indeed, appeared raised above the level of the wood, and when I pared off the bark and cut into the sap, it was all aglow along the log. I was surprised to find the wood quite hard and apparently sound, though probably decay had commenced in the sap, and I cut out some little triangular chips, and, placing them in the hollow of my hand, carried them into the camp, waked my companion, and showed them to him. They lit up the inside of my hand, revealing the lines and wrinkles, and appearing exactly like coals of fire raised to a white heat, and I saw at once how, probably, the Indian jugglers had imposed on their people and on travelers, pretending to hold coals of fire in their mouths.

I also noticed that part of a decayed stump within four or five feet of the fire, an inch wide and six inches long, soft and shaking wood, shone with equal brightness.

I neglected to ascertain whether our fire had anything to do with this, but the previous day's rain and long-continued wet weather undoubtedly had.

I was exceedingly interested by this phenomenon, and already felt paid for my journey. It could hardly have thrilled me more if it had taken the form of letters, or of the human face. If I had met with this ring of light while groping in this forest alone, away from any fire, I should have been still more surprised. I little thought that there was such a light shining in the darkness of the wilderness for me.

The next day the Indian told me their name for this light, — artoosoqu' — and on my inquiring concerning the will-o'-the-wisp, and the like phenomena, he said that his "folks" sometimes saw fires

passing along at various heights, even as high as the trees, and making a noise. I was prepared after this to hear of the most startling and unimagined phenomena, witnessed by "his folks;" they are abroad at all hours and seasons in scenes so unfrequented by white men. Nature must have made a thousand revelations to them which are still secrets to us.

I did not regret my not having seen this before, since I now saw it under circumstances so favorable. I was in just the frame of mind to see something wonderful, and this was a phenomenon adequate to my circumstances and expectation, and it put me on the alert to see more like it. I exulted like "a pagan suckled in a creed" that had never been worn at all, but was bran-new, and adequate to the occasion. I let science slide, and rejoiced in that light as if it had been a fellow creature. I saw that it was excellent, and was very glad to know that it was so cheap. A scientific *explanation*, as it is called, would have been altogether out of place there. That is for pale daylight. Science with its retorts would have put me to sleep; it was the opportunity to be ignorant that I improved. It suggested to me that there was something to be seen if one had eyes. It made a believer of me more than before. I believed that the woods were not tenantless, but choke-full of honest spirits as good as myself any day, — not an empty chamber, in which chemistry was left to work alone, but an inhabited house, — and for a few moments I enjoyed fellowship with them. Your so-called wise man goes trying to persuade himself that there is no entity there but himself and his traps, but it is a great deal easier to believe the truth. It suggested, too, that the same experience always gives birth to the same sort of belief or religion. One revelation has been made to the Indian, another to the white man. I have much to learn of the Indian, nothing of the missionary. I am not sure but all that would tempt me to teach the Indian my religion would be his promise to teach me *his*. Long enough I had heard of irrelevant things; now at length I was glad to make acquaintance with the light that dwells in rotten wood. Where is all your knowledge gone to? It evaporates completely, for it has no depth.

I kept those little chips and wet them again the next night, but they emitted no light.

* * * * *

SATURDAY, July 25.

At breakfast this Saturday morning, the Indian, evidently curious to know what would be expected of him the next day, whether we should go along or not, asked me how I spent the Sunday when at home. I told him that I commonly sat in my chamber reading, etc., in the forenoon, and went to walk in the afternoon. At which he shook his head and said, "Er, that is ver bad." "How do you spend it?" I asked. He said that he did no work, that he went to church at Oldtown when he was at home; in short, he did as he had been taught by the whites. This led to a discussion in which I found myself in the minority. He stated that he was a Protestant, and asked me if I was. I did not at first know what to say, but I thought that I could answer with truth that I was.

When we were washing the dishes in the lake, many fishes, apparently chivin, came close up to us to get the particles of grease.

The weather seemed to be more settled this morning, and we set out early in order to finish our voyage up the lake before the wind arose. Soon after starting, the Indian directed our attention to the Northeast Carry, which we could plainly see, about thirteen miles distant in that direction as measured on the map, though it is called much farther. This carry is a rude wooden railroad, running north and south about two miles, perfectly straight, from the lake to the Penobscot, through a low tract, with a clearing three or four rods wide; but low as it is, it passes over the height of land there. This opening appeared as a clear bright, or light, point in the horizon, resting on the edge of the lake, whose breadth a hair could have covered at a considerable distance from the eye, and of no appreciable height. We should not have suspected it to be visible if the Indian had not drawn our attention to it. It was a remarkable kind of light to steer for, — daylight seen through a vista in the forest, — but visible as far as an ordinary beacon at night.

We crossed a deep and wide bay which makes eastward north of Kineo, leaving an island on our left, and keeping up the eastern side of the lake. This way or that led to some Tomhegan or *Socatarian* stream, up which the Indian had hunted, and whither I longed to go.

The last name, however, had a bogus sound, too much like sectarian for me, as if a missionary had tampered with it; but I knew that the Indians were very liberal. I think I should have inclined to the Tomhegan first.

We then crossed another broad bay, which, as we could no longer observe the shore particularly, afforded ample time for conversation. The Indian said that he had got his money by hunting, mostly high up the West Branch of the Penobscot, and toward the head of the St. John; he had hunted there from a boy, and knew all about that region. His game had been beaver, otter, black cat (or fisher), sable, moose, etc. Loup-cervier (or Canada lynx) were plenty yet in burnt grounds. For food in the woods, he uses partridges, ducks, dried moose-meat, hedgehog, etc. Loons, too, were good, only "bile 'em good." He told us at some length how he had suffered from starvation when a mere lad, being overtaken by winter when hunting with two grown Indians in the northern part of Maine, and obliged to leave their canoe on account of ice.

Pointing into the bay, he said that it was the way to various lakes which he knew. Only solemn bear-haunted mountains, with their great wooded slopes, were visible; where, as man is not, we suppose some other power to be. My imagination personified the slopes themselves, as if by their very length they would waylay you, and compel you to camp again on them before night. Some invisible glutton would seem to drop from the trees and gnaw at the heart of the solitary hunter who threaded those woods; and yet I was tempted to walk there. The Indian said that he had been along there several times.

I asked him how he guided himself in the woods. "Oh," said he, "I can tell good many ways." When I pressed him further, he answered, "Sometimes I lookum side-hill," and he glanced toward a high hill or mountain on the eastern shore, "great difference between the north and south, see where the sun has shone most. So trees, — the large limbs bend toward south. Sometimes I lookum locks" (rocks). I asked what he saw on the rocks, but he did not describe anything in particular, answering vaguely, in a mysterious or drawling tone, "Bare locks on lake shore, — great difference between north, south, east, west, side, — can tell what the sun has shone on." "Suppose,"

said I, “that I should take you in a dark night, right up here into the middle of the woods a hundred miles, set you down, and turn you round quickly twenty times, could you steer straight to Oldtown?” “Oh, yer,” said he, “have done pretty much same thing. I will tell you. Some years ago I met an old white hunter at Millinocket; very good hunter. He said he could go anywhere in the woods. He wanted to hunt with me that day, so we start. We chase a moose all the forenoon, round and round, till middle of afternoon, when we kill him. Then I said to him, ‘Now you go straight to camp. Don’t go round and round where we’ve been, but go straight.’ He said, ‘I can’t do that, I don’t know where I am.’ ‘Where you think camp?’ I asked. He pointed so. Then I laugh at him. I take the lead and go right off the other way, cross our tracks many times, straight camp.” “How do you do that?” asked I. “Oh, I can’t tell you,” he replied. “Great difference between me and white man.”

It appeared as if the sources of information were so various that he did not give a distinct, conscious attention to any one, and so could not readily refer to any when questioned about it, but he found his way very much as an animal does. Perhaps what is commonly called instinct in the animal, in this case is merely a sharpened and educated sense. Often, when an Indian says, “I don’t know,” in regard to the route he is to take, he does not mean what a white man would by those words, for his Indian instinct may tell him still as much as the most confident white man knows. He does not carry things in his head, nor remember the route exactly, like a white man, but relies on himself at the moment. Not having experienced the need of the other sort of knowledge, all labeled and arranged, he has not acquired it.

The white hunter with whom I talked in the stage knew some of the resources of the Indian. He said that he steered by the wind, or by the limbs of the hemlocks, which were largest on the south side; also sometimes, when he knew that there was a lake near, by firing his gun and listening to hear the direction and distance of the echo from over it.

The course we took over this lake, and others afterward, was rarely direct, but a succession of curves from point to point, digressing considerably into each of the bays; and this was not

merely on account of the wind, for the Indian, looking toward the middle of the lake, said it was hard to go there, easier to keep near the shore, because he thus got over it by successive reaches and saw by the shore how he got along.

The following will suffice for a common experience in crossing lakes in a canoe. As the forenoon advanced, the wind increased. The last bay which we crossed before reaching the desolate pier at the Northeast Carry was two or three miles over, and the wind was southwesterly. After going a third of the way, the waves had increased so as occasionally to wash into the canoe, and we saw that it was worse and worse ahead. At first we might have turned about, but were not willing to. It would have been of no use to follow the course of the shore, for not only the distance would have been much greater, but the waves ran still higher there on account of the greater sweep the wind had. At any rate it would have been dangerous now to alter our course, because the waves would have struck us at an advantage. It will not do to meet them at right angles, for then they will wash in both sides, but you must take them quartering. So the Indian stood up in the canoe, and exerted all his skill and strength for a mile or two, while I paddled right along in order to give him more steerage-way. For more than a mile he did not allow a single wave to strike the canoe as it would, but turned it quickly from this side to that, so that it would always be on or near the crest of a wave when it broke, where all its force was spent, and we merely settled down with it. At length I jumped out on to the end of the pier, against which the waves were dashing violently, in order to lighten the canoe, and catch it at the landing, which was not much sheltered; but just as I jumped we took in two or three gallons of water. I remarked to the Indian, "You managed that well," to which he replied, "Ver few men do that. Great many waves; when I look out for one, another come quick."

While the Indian went to get cedar bark, etc., to carry his canoe with, we cooked the dinner on the shore, at this end of the carry, in the midst of a sprinkling rain.

He prepared his canoe for carrying in this wise. He took a cedar shingle or splint eighteen inches long and four or five wide, rounded at one end, that the corners might not be in the way, and tied it with

cedar bark by two holes made midway, near the edge on each side, to the middle cross-bar of the canoe. When the canoe was lifted upon his head bottom up, this shingle, with its rounded end uppermost, distributed the weight over his shoulders and head, while a band of cedar bark, tied to the cross-bar on each side of the shingle, passed round his breast, and another longer one, outside of the last, round his forehead; also a hand on each side-rail served to steer the canoe and keep it from rocking. He thus carried it with his shoulders, head, breast, forehead, and both hands, as if the upper part of his body were all one hand to clasp and hold it. If you know of a better way, I should like to hear of it. A cedar tree furnished all the gear in this case, as it had the woodwork of the canoe. One of the paddles rested on the cross-bars in the bows. I took the canoe upon my head and found that I could carry it with ease, though the straps were not fitted to my shoulders; but I let him carry it, not caring to establish a different precedent, though he said that if I would carry the canoe, he would take all the rest of the baggage, except my companion's. This shingle remained tied to the cross-bar throughout the voyage, was always ready for the carries, and also served to protect the back of one passenger.

We were obliged to go over this carry twice, our load was so great. But the carries were an agreeable variety, and we improved the opportunity to gather the rare plants which we had seen, when we returned empty handed.

We reached the Penobscot about four o'clock, and found there some St. Francis Indians encamped on the bank, in the same place where I camped with four Indians four years before. They were making a canoe, and, as then, drying moose-meat. The meat looked very suitable to make a *black* broth at least. Our Indian said it was not good. Their camp was covered with spruce bark. They had got a young moose, taken in the river a fortnight before, confined in a sort of cage of logs piled up cob-fashion, seven or eight feet high. It was quite tame, about four feet high, and covered with moose-flies. There was a large quantity of cornel (C. stolonifera), red maple, and also willow and aspen boughs, stuck through between the logs on all sides, butt ends out, and on their leaves it was browsing. It looked at first as if it were in a bower rather than a pen.

Our Indian said that *he* used *black* spruce roots to sew canoes with, obtaining it from high lands or mountains. The St. Francis Indian thought that *white* spruce roots might be best. But the former said, "No good, break, can't split 'em;" also that they were hard to get, deep in ground, but the black were near the surface, on higher land, as well as tougher. He said that the white spruce was *subekoondark*, black, *skusk*. I told him I thought that I could make a canoe, but he expressed great doubt of it; at any rate, he thought that my work would not be "neat" the first time. An Indian at Greenville had told me that the winter bark, that is, bark taken off before the sap flows in May, was harder and much better than summer bark.

Having reloaded, we paddled down the Penobscot, which, as the Indian remarked, and even I detected, remembering how it looked before, was uncommonly full. We soon after saw a splendid yellow lily (*Lilium Canadense*) by the shore, which I plucked. It was six feet high, and had twelve flowers, in two whorls, forming a pyramid, such as I have seen in Concord. We afterward saw many more thus tall along this stream, and also still more numerous on the East Branch, and, on the latter, one which I thought approached yet nearer to the *Lilium superbum*. The Indian asked what we called it, and said that the "loots" (roots) were good for soup, that is, to cook with meat, to thicken it, taking the place of flour. They get them in the fall. I dug some, and found a mass of bulbs pretty deep in the earth, two inches in diameter, looking, and even tasting, somewhat like raw green corn on the ear.

When we had gone about three miles down the Penobscot, we saw through the tree-tops a thunder-shower coming up in the west, and we looked out a camping-place in good season, about five o'clock, on the west side, not far below the mouth of what Joe Aitteon, in '53, called Lobster Stream, coming from Lobster Pond. Our present Indian, however, did not admit this name, nor even that of *Matahumkeag*, which is on the map, but called the lake *Beskabekuk*.

I will describe, once for all, the routine of camping at this season. We generally told the Indian that we would stop at the first suitable place, so that he might be on the lookout for it. Having observed a clear, hard, and flat beach to land on, free from mud, and from stones which would injure the canoe, one would run up the bank to see if

there were open and level space enough for the camp between the trees, or if it could be easily cleared, preferring at the same time a cool place, on account of insects. Sometimes we paddled a mile or more before finding one to our minds, for where the shore was suitable, the bank would often be too steep, or else too low and grassy, and therefore mosquitoey. We then took out the baggage and drew up the canoe, sometimes turning it over on shore for safety. The Indian cut a path to the spot we had selected, which was usually within two or three rods of the water, and we carried up our baggage. One, perhaps, takes canoe birch bark, always at hand, and dead dry wood or bark, and kindles a fire five or six feet in front of where we intend to lie. It matters not, commonly, on which side this is, because there is little or no wind in so dense a wood at that season; and then he gets a kettle of water from the river, and takes out the pork, bread, coffee, etc., from their several packages.

Another, meanwhile, having the axe, cuts down the nearest dead rock maple or other dry hard wood, collecting several large logs to last through the night, also a green stake, with a notch or fork to it, which is slanted over the fire, perhaps resting on a rock or forked stake, to hang the kettle on, and two forked stakes and a pole for the tent.

The third man pitches the tent, cuts a dozen or more pins with his knife, usually of moose-wood, the common underwood, to fasten it down with, and then collects an armful or two of fir twigs, arbor-vitæ, spruce, or hemlock, whichever is at hand, and makes the bed, beginning at either end, and laying the twigs wrong side up, in regular rows, covering the stub ends of the last row; first, however, filling the hollows, if there are any, with coarser material. Wrangel says that his guides in Siberia first strewed a quantity of dry brushwood on the ground, and then cedar twigs on that.

Commonly, by the time the bed is made, or within fifteen or twenty minutes, the water boils, the pork is fried, and supper is ready. We eat this sitting on the ground, or a stump, if there is any, around a large piece of birch bark for a table, each holding a dipper in one hand and a piece of ship-bread or fried pork in the other, frequently making a pass with his hand, or thrusting his head into the smoke, to avoid the mosquitoes.

Next, pipes are lit by those who smoke, and veils are donned by those who have them, and we hastily examine and dry our plants, anoint our faces and hands, and go to bed — and — the mosquitoes.

Though you have nothing to do but see the country, there's rarely any time to spare, hardly enough to examine a plant, before the night or drowsiness is upon you.

Such was the ordinary experience, but this evening we had camped earlier on account of the rain, and had more time.

We found that our camp to-night was on an old, and now more than usually indistinct, supply road, running along the river. What is called a road there shows no ruts or trace of wheels, for they are not used; nor, indeed, of runners, since they are used only in the winter when the snow is several feet deep. It is only an indistinct vista through the wood, which it takes an experienced eye to detect.

We had no sooner pitched our tent than the thunder-shower burst on us, and we hastily crept under it, drawing our bags after us, curious to see how much of a shelter our thin cotton roof was going to be in this excursion. Though the violence of the rain forced a fine shower through the cloth before it was fairly wetted and shrunk, with which we were well bedewed, we managed to keep pretty dry, only a box of matches having been left out and spoiled, and before we were aware of it the shower was over, and only the dripping trees imprisoned us.

Wishing to see what fishes there were in the river there, we cast our lines over the wet bushes on the shore, but they were repeatedly swept down the swift stream in vain. So, leaving the Indian, we took the canoe just before dark, and dropped down the river a few rods to fish at the mouth of a sluggish brook on the opposite side. We pushed up this a rod or two, where, perhaps, only a canoe had been before. But though there were a few small fishes, mostly chivin, there, we were soon driven off by the mosquitoes. While there we heard the Indian fire his gun twice in such rapid succession that we thought it must be double-barreled, though we observed afterward that it was single. His object was to clean out and dry it after the rain, and he then loaded it with ball, being now on ground where he expected to meet with large game. This sudden, loud, crashing noise in the still aisles of the forest, affected me like an insult to nature, or ill manners

at any rate, as if you were to fire a gun in a hall or temple. It was not heard far, however, except along the river, the sound being rapidly hushed up or absorbed by the damp trees and mossy ground.

The Indian made a little smothered fire of damp leaves close to the back of the camp, that the smoke might drive through and keep out the mosquitoes; but just before we fell asleep this suddenly blazed up, and came near setting fire to the tent. We were considerably molested by mosquitoes at this camp.

* * * * *

SUNDAY, July 26.

The note of the white-throated sparrow, a very inspiriting but almost wiry sound, was the first heard in the morning, and with this all the woods rang. This was the prevailing bird in the northern part of Maine. The forest generally was all alive with them at this season, and they were proportionally numerous and musical about Bangor. They evidently breed in that State. Though commonly unseen, their simple ah, te-te-te, te-te-te, te-te-te, so sharp and piercing, was as distinct to the ear as the passage of a spark of fire shot into the darkest of the forest would be to the eye. I thought that they commonly uttered it as they flew. I hear this note for a few days only in the spring, as they go through Concord, and in the fall see them again going southward, but then they are mute. We were commonly aroused by their lively strain very early. What a glorious time they must have in that wilderness, far from mankind and election day!

I told the Indian that we would go to church to Chesuncook this (Sunday) morning, some fifteen miles. It was settled weather at last. A few swallows flitted over the water, we heard Maryland yellow-throats along the shore, the phebe notes of the chickadee, and, I believe, redstarts, and moose-flies of large size pursued us in midstream.

The Indian thought that we should lie by on Sunday. Said he, "We come here lookum things, look all round; but come Sunday, lock up all that, and then Monday look again." He spoke of an Indian of his acquaintance who had been with some ministers to Ktaadn, and had told him how they conducted. This he described in a low and solemn voice. "They make a long prayer every morning and night, and at every meal. Come Sunday," said he, "they stop 'em, no go at all that day, — keep still, — preach all day, — first one, then another, just like church. Oh, ver good men." "One day," said he, "going along a river, they came to the body of a man in the water, drowned good while, all ready fall to pieces. They go right ashore, — stop there, go no farther that day, — they have meeting there, preach and pray just like Sunday. Then they get poles and lift up the body, and they go back and carry the body with them. Oh, they ver good men."

I judged from this account that their every camp was a camp-meeting, and they had mistaken their route, — they should have gone to Eastham; that they wanted an opportunity to preach somewhere more than to see Ktaadn. I read of another similar party that seem to have spent their time there singing the songs of Zion. I was glad that I did not go to that mountain with such slow coaches.

However, the Indian added, plying the paddle all the while, that if we would go along, he must go with us, he our man, and he suppose that if he no takum pay for what he do Sunday, then ther's no harm, but if he takum pay, then wrong. I told him that he was stricter than white men. Nevertheless, I noticed that he did not forget to reckon in the Sundays at last.

He appeared to be a very religious man, and said his prayers in a loud voice, in Indian, kneeling before the camp, morning and evening, — sometimes scrambling up again in haste when he had forgotten this, and saying them with great rapidity. In the course of the day, he remarked, not very originally, "Poor man rememberum God more than rich."

We soon passed the island where I had camped four years before, and I recognized the very spot. The deadwater, a mile or two below it, the Indian called *Beskabekukskishtuk*, from the lake *Beskabekuk*, which empties in above. This deadwater, he said, was "a great place for moose always." We saw the grass bent where a moose came out the night before, and the Indian said that he could smell one as far as he could see him; but, he added, that if he should see five or six to-day close by canoe, he no shoot 'em. Accordingly, as he was the only one of the party who had a gun, or had come a-hunting, the moose were safe.

Just below this, a cat owl flew heavily over the stream, and he, asking if I knew what it was, imitated very well the common *hoo, hoo, hoo, hoorer, hoo*, of our woods; making a hard, guttural sound, "Ugh, ugh, ugh, — ugh, ugh." When we passed the Moose-horn, he said that it had no name. What Joe Aitteon had called Ragmuff, he called *Paytaytequick*, and said that it meant Burnt Ground Stream. We stopped there, where I had stopped before, and I bathed in this tributary. It was shallow but cold, apparently too cold for the Indian, who stood looking on. As we were pushing away again, a white-

headed eagle sailed over our heads. A reach some miles above Pine Stream, where there were several islands, the Indian said was *Nonglangyis* Deadwater. Pine Stream he called Black River, and said that its Indian name was *Karsaootuk*. He could go to Caribou Lake that way.

We carried a part of the baggage about Pine Stream Falls, while the Indian went down in the canoe. A Bangor merchant had told us that two men in his employ were drowned some time ago while passing these falls in a batteau, and a third clung to a rock all night, and was taken off in the morning. There were magnificent great purple fringed orchises on this carry and the neighboring shores. I measured the largest canoe birch which I saw in this journey near the end of the carry. It was 14½ feet in circumference at two feet from the ground, but at five feet divided into three parts. The canoe birches thereabouts were commonly marked by conspicuous dark spiral ridges, with a groove between, so that I thought at first that they had been struck by lightning, but, as the Indian said, it was evidently caused by the grain of the tree. He cut a small, woody knob, as big as a filbert, from the trunk of a fir, apparently an old balsam vesicle filled with wood, which he said was good medicine.

After we had embarked and gone half a mile, my companion remembered that he had left his knife, and we paddled back to get it, against the strong and swift current. This taught us the difference between going up and down the stream, for while we were working our way back a quarter of a mile, we should have gone down a mile and a half at least. So we landed, and while he and the Indian were gone back for it, I watched the motions of the foam, a kind of white water-fowl near the shore, forty or fifty rods below. It alternately appeared and disappeared behind the rock, being carried round by an eddy. Even this semblance of life was interesting on that lonely river.

Immediately below these falls was the Chesuncook Deadwater, caused by the flowing back of the lake. As we paddled slowly over this, the Indian told us a story of his hunting thereabouts, and something more interesting about himself. It appeared that he had represented his tribe at Augusta, and also once at Washington, where he had met some Western chiefs. He had been consulted at Augusta, and gave advice, which he said was followed, respecting the eastern

boundary of Maine, as determined by highlands and streams, at the time of the difficulties on that side. He was employed with the surveyors on the line. Also he had called on Daniel Webster in Boston, at the time of his Bunker Hill oration.

I was surprised to hear him say that he liked to go to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, etc., etc.; that he would like to live there. But then, as if relenting a little, when he thought what a poor figure he would make there, he added, "I suppose, I live in New York, I be poorest hunter, I expect." He understood very well both his superiority and his inferiority to the whites. He criticised the people of the United States as compared with other nations, but the only distinct idea with which he labored was, that they were "very strong," but, like some individuals, "too fast." He must have the credit of saying this just before the general breaking down of railroads and banks. He had a great idea of education, and would occasionally break out into such expressions as this, "Kademy — a-cad-e-my — good thing — I suppose they usum Fifth Reader there.... You been college?"

From this deadwater the outlines of the mountains about Ktaadn were visible. The top of Ktaadn was concealed by a cloud, but the Souneunk Mountains were nearer, and quite visible. We steered across the northwest end of the lake, from which we looked down south-southeast, the whole length to Joe Merry Mountain, seen over its extremity. It is an agreeable change to cross a lake, after you have been shut up in the woods, not only on account of the greater expanse of water, but also of sky. It is one of the surprises which Nature has in store for the traveler in the forest. To look down, in this case, over eighteen miles of water, was liberating and civilizing even. No doubt, the short distance to which you can see in the woods, and the general twilight, would at length react on the inhabitants, and make them salvages. The lakes also reveal the mountains, and give ample scope and range to our thought. The very gulls which we saw sitting on the rocks, like white specks, or circling about, reminded me of custom-house officers. Already there were half a dozen log huts about this end of the lake, though so far from a road. I perceive that in these woods the earliest settlements are, for various reasons, clustering about the lakes, but partly, I think, for the sake of the

neighborhood as the oldest clearings. They are forest schools already established, — great centres of light. Water is a pioneer which the settler follows, taking advantage of its improvements.

Thus far only I had been before. About noon we turned northward, up a broad kind of estuary, and at its northeast corner found the Caucomgomoc River, and after going about a mile from the lake, reached the Umbazookskus, which comes in on the right at a point where the former river, coming from the west, turns short to the south. Our course was up the Umbazookskus, but as the Indian knew of a good camping-place, that is, a cool place where there were few mosquitoes about half a mile farther up the Caucomgomoc, we went thither. The latter river, judging from the map, is the longer and principal stream, and, therefore, its name must prevail below the junction. So quickly we changed the civilizing sky of Chesuncook for the dark wood of the Caucomgomoc. On reaching the Indian's camping-ground, on the south side, where the bank was about a dozen feet high, I read on the trunk of a fir tree, blazed by an axe, an inscription in charcoal which had been left by him. It was surmounted by a drawing of a bear paddling a canoe, which he said was the sign which had been used by his family always. The drawing, though rude, could not be mistaken for anything but a bear, and he doubted my ability to copy it. The inscription ran thus, *verbatim et literatim*. I interline the English of his Indian as he gave it to me.



July 26
1853

niasoseb

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Joseph

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Oldtown

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July 15
1855
niasoseb
He added now below: —
1857
July 26
Jo. Polis

This was one of his homes. I saw where he had sometimes stretched his moose-hides on the opposite or sunny north side of the river, where there was a narrow meadow.

After we had selected a place for our camp, and kindled our fire, almost exactly on the site of the Indian's last camp here, he, looking up, observed, "That tree danger." It was a dead part, more than a foot in diameter, of a large canoe birch, which branched at the ground. This branch, rising thirty feet or more, slanted directly over the spot which we had chosen for our bed. I told him to try it with his axe; but he could not shake it perceptibly, and therefore seemed inclined to disregard it, and my companion expressed his willingness to run the risk. But it seemed to me that we should be fools to lie under it, for though the lower part was firm, the top, for aught we knew, might be just ready to fall, and we should at any rate be very uneasy if the wind arose in the night. It is a common accident for men camping in the woods to be killed by a falling tree. So the camp was moved to the other side of the fire.

It was, as usual, a damp and shaggy forest, that Caucomgomoc one, and the most you knew about it was, that on this side it stretched toward the settlements, and on that to still more unfrequented regions. You carried so much topography in your mind always, — and sometimes it seemed to make a considerable difference whether you sat or lay nearer the settlements, or farther off, than your companions, — were the rear or frontier man of the camp. But there is really the same difference between our positions wherever we may be camped, and some are nearer the frontiers on feather-beds in the towns than others on fir twigs in the backwoods.

The Indian said that the Umbazookskus, being a dead stream with broad meadows, was a good place for moose, and he frequently came a-hunting here, being out alone three weeks or more from Oldtown. He sometimes, also, went a-hunting to the Seboois Lakes, taking the stage, with his gun and ammunition, axe and blankets, hard-bread and pork, perhaps for a hundred miles of the way, and jumped off at the wildest place on the road, where he was at once at home, and every rod was a tavern-site for him. Then, after a short journey through the woods, he would build a spruce-bark canoe in one day, putting but few ribs into it, that it might be light, and, after doing his hunting with it on the lakes, would return with his furs the same way he had come. Thus you have an Indian availing himself cunningly of the advantages of civilization, without losing any of his woodcraft,

but proving himself the more successful hunter for it.

This man was very clever and quick to learn anything in his line. Our tent was of a kind new to him; but when he had once seen it pitched, it was surprising how quickly he would find and prepare the pole and forked stakes to pitch it with, cutting and placing them right the first time, though I am sure that the majority of white men would have blundered several times.

This river came from Caucomgomoc Lake, about ten miles farther up. Though it was sluggish here, there were falls not far above us, and we saw the foam from them go by from time to time. The Indian said that *Caucomgomoc* meant Big-Gull Lake (i. e., herring gull, I suppose), gomoc meaning lake. Hence this was *Caucomgomoctook*, or the river from that lake. This was the Penobscot *Caucomgomoctook*; there was another St. John one not far north. He finds the eggs of this gull, sometimes twenty together, as big as hen's eggs, on rocky ledges on the west side of Millinocket River, for instance, and eats them.

Now I thought I would observe how he spent his Sunday. While I and my companion were looking about at the trees and river, he went to sleep. Indeed, he improved every opportunity to get a nap, whatever the day.

Rambling about the woods at this camp, I noticed that they consisted chiefly of firs, black spruce, and some white, red maple, canoe birch, and, along the river, the hoary alder (*Alnus incana*). I name them in the order of their abundance. The *Viburnum nudum* was a common shrub, and of smaller plants, there were the dwarf cornel, great round-leaved orchis, abundant and in bloom (a greenish-white flower growing in little communities), *Uvularia grandiflora*, whose stem tasted like a cucumber, *Pyrola secunda*, apparently the commonest pyrola in those woods, now out of bloom, *Pyrola elliptica*, and *Chiogenes hispidula*. The *Clintonia borealis*, with ripe berries, was very abundant, and perfectly at home there. Its leaves, disposed commonly in triangles about its stem, were just as handsomely formed and green, and its berries as blue and glossy, as if it grew by some botanist's favorite path.

I could trace the outlines of large birches that had fallen long ago, collapsed and rotted and turned to soil, by faint yellowish-green lines

of feather-like moss, eighteen inches wide and twenty or thirty feet long, crossed by other similar lines.

I heard a night-warbler, wood thrush, kingfisher, tweezer-bird or parti-colored warbler, and a nighthawk. I also heard and saw red squirrels, and heard a bullfrog. The Indian said that he heard a snake.

Wild as it was, it was hard for me to get rid of the associations of the settlements. Any steady and monotonous sound, to which I did not distinctly attend, passed for a sound of human industry. The waterfalls which I heard were not without their dams and mills to my imagination; and several times I found that I had been regarding the steady rushing sound of the wind from over the woods beyond the rivers as that of a train of cars, — the cars at Quebec. Our minds anywhere, when left to themselves, are always thus busily drawing conclusions from false premises.

I asked the Indian to make us a sugar-bowl of birch bark, which he did, using the great knife which dangled in a sheath from his belt; but the bark broke at the corners when he bent it up, and he said it was not good; that there was a great difference in this respect between the bark of one canoe birch and that of another, i. e., one cracked more easily than another. I used some thin and delicate sheets of this bark which he split and cut, in my flower-book; thinking it would be good to separate the dried specimens from the green.

My companion, wishing to distinguish between the black and white spruce, asked Polis to show him a twig of the latter, which he did at once, together with the black; indeed, he could distinguish them about as far as he could see them; but as the two twigs appeared very much alike, my companion asked the Indian to point out the difference; whereupon the latter, taking the twigs, instantly remarked, as he passed his hand over them successively in a stroking manner, that the white was rough (i. e., the needles stood up nearly perpendicular), but the black smooth (i. e., as if bent or combed down). This was an obvious difference, both to sight and touch. However, if I remember rightly, this would not serve to distinguish the white spruce from the light-colored variety of the black.

I asked him to let me see him get some black spruce root, and make some thread. Whereupon, without looking up at the trees

overhead, he began to grub in the ground, instantly distinguishing the black spruce roots, and cutting off a slender one, three or four feet long, and as big as a pipe-stem, he split the end with his knife, and, taking a half between the thumb and forefinger of each hand, rapidly separated its whole length into two equal semicylindrical halves; then giving me another root, he said, "You try." But in my hands it immediately ran off one side, and I got only a very short piece. In short, though it looked very easy, I found that there was a great art in splitting these roots. The split is skillfully humored by bending short with this hand or that, and so kept in the middle. He then took off the bark from each half, pressing a short piece of cedar bark against the convex side with both hands, while he drew the root upward with his teeth. An Indian's teeth are strong, and I noticed that he used his often where we should have used a hand. They amounted to a third hand. He thus obtained, in a moment, a very neat, tough, and flexible string, which he could tie into a knot, or make into a fish-line even. It is said that in Norway and Sweden the roots of the Norway spruce (*Abies excelsa*) are used in the same way for the same purpose. He said that you would be obliged to give half a dollar for spruce root enough for a canoe, thus prepared. He had hired the sewing of his own canoe, though he made all the rest. The root in his canoe was of a pale slate-color, probably acquired by exposure to the weather, or perhaps from being boiled in water first.

He had discovered the day before that his canoe leaked a little, and said that it was owing to stepping into it violently, which forced the water under the edge of the horizontal seams on the side. I asked him where he would get pitch to mend it with, for they commonly use hard pitch, obtained of the whites at Oldtown. He said that he could make something very similar, and equally good, not of spruce gum, or the like, but of material which we had with us; and he wished me to guess what. But I could not, and he would not tell me, though he showed me a ball of it when made, as big as a pea, and like black pitch, saying, at last, that there were some things which a man did not tell even his wife. It may have been his own discovery. In Arnold's expedition the pioneers used for their canoe "the turpentine of the pine, and the scrapings of the pork-bag."

Being curious to see what kind of fishes there were in this dark,

deep, sluggish river, I cast in my line just before night, and caught several small somewhat yellowish sucker-like fishes, which the Indian at once rejected, saying that they were *michigan* fish (i. e., soft *and* stinking fish) and good for nothing. Also, he would not touch a pout, which I caught, and said that neither Indians nor whites thereabouts ever ate them, which I thought was singular, since they are esteemed in Massachusetts, and he had told me that he ate hedgehogs, loons, etc. But he said that some small silvery fishes, which I called white chivin, which were similar in size and form to the first, were the best fish in the Penobscot waters, and if I would toss them up the bank to him, he would cook them for me. After cleaning them, not very carefully, leaving the heads on, he laid them on the coals and so broiled them.

Returning from a short walk, he brought a vine in his hand, and asked me if I knew what it was, saying that it made the best tea of anything in the woods. It was the creeping snowberry (*Chiogenes hispidula*), which was quite common there, its berries just grown. He called it *cowosnebagosar*, which name implies that it grows where old prostrate trunks have collapsed and rotted. So we determined to have some tea made of this to-night. It had a slight checkerberry flavor, and we both agreed that it was really better than the black tea which we had brought. We thought it quite a discovery, and that it might well be dried, and sold in the shops. I, for one, however, am not an old tea-drinker, and cannot speak with authority to others. It would have been particularly good to carry along for a cold drink during the day, the water thereabouts being invariably warm. The Indian said that they also used for tea a certain herb which grew in low ground, which he did not find there, and ledum, or Labrador tea, which I have since found and tried in Concord; also hemlock leaves, the last especially in the winter, when the other plants were covered with snow; and various other things; but he did not approve of arbor-vitæ, which I said I had drunk in those woods. We could have had a new kind of tea every night.

Just before night we saw a *musquash* (he did not say muskrat), the only one we saw in this voyage, swimming downward on the opposite side of the stream. The Indian, wishing to get one to eat, hushed us, saying, “Stop, me call ‘em;” and, sitting flat on the bank,

he began to make a curious squeaking, wiry sound with his lips, exerting himself considerably. I was greatly surprised, — thought that I had at last got into the wilderness, and that he was a wild man indeed, to be talking to a musquash! I did not know which of the two was the strangest to me. He seemed suddenly to have quite forsaken humanity, and gone over to the musquash side. The musquash, however, as near as I could see, did not turn aside, though he may have hesitated a little, and the Indian said that he saw our fire; but it was evident that he was in the habit of calling the musquash to him, as he said. An acquaintance of mine who was hunting moose in those woods a month after this, tells me that his Indian in this way repeatedly called the musquash within reach of his paddle in the moonlight, and struck at them.

The Indian said a particularly long prayer this Sunday evening, as if to atone for working in the morning.

* * * * *

MONDAY, July 27.

Having rapidly loaded the canoe, which the Indian always carefully attended to, that it might be well trimmed, and each having taken a look, as usual, to see that nothing was left, we set out again descending the Caucomgomoc, and turning northeasterly up the *Umbazookskus*. This name, the Indian said, meant Much Meadow River. We found it a very meadowy stream, and deadwater, and now very wide on account of the rains, though, he said, it was sometimes quite narrow. The space between the woods, chiefly bare meadow, was from fifty to two hundred rods in breadth, and is a rare place for moose. It reminded me of the Concord; and what increased the resemblance was one old musquash-house almost afloat.

In the water on the meadows grew sedges, wool-grass, the common blue flag abundantly, its flower just showing itself above the high water, as if it were a blue water-lily, and higher in the meadows a great many clumps of a peculiar narrow-leaved willow (*Salix petiolaris*), which is common in our river meadows. It was the prevailing one here, and the Indian said that the musquash ate much of it; and here also grew the red osier (*Cornus stolonifera*), its large fruit now whitish.

Though it was still early in the morning, we saw nighthawks circling over the meadow, and as usual heard the pepe (*Muscicapa Cooperi*), which is one of the prevailing birds in these woods, and the robin.

It was unusual for the woods to be so distant from the shore, and there was quite an echo from them, but when I was shouting in order to awake it, the Indian reminded me that I should scare the moose, which he was looking out for, and which we all wanted to see. The word for echo was *Pockadunkquaywayle*.

A broad belt of dead larch trees along the distant edge of the meadow, against the forest on each side, increased the usual wildness of the scenery. The Indian called these juniper, and said that they had been killed by the backwater caused by the dam at the outlet of Chesuncook Lake, some twenty miles distant. I plucked at the water's edge the *Asclepias incarnata*, with quite handsome flowers, a

brighter red than our variety (the *pulchra*). It was the only form of it which I saw there.

Having paddled several miles up the Umbazookskus, it suddenly contracted to a mere brook, narrow and swift, the larches and other trees approaching the bank and leaving no open meadow, and we landed to get a black spruce pole for pushing against the stream. This was the first occasion for one. The one selected was quite slender, cut about ten feet long, merely whittled to a point, and the bark shaved off. The stream, though narrow and swift, was still deep, with a muddy bottom, as I proved by diving to it. Beside the plants which I have mentioned, I observed on the bank here the *Salix cordata* and *rostrata*, *Ranunculus recurvatus*, and *Rubus triflorus* with ripe fruit.

While we were thus employed, two Indians in a canoe hove in sight round the bushes, coming down stream. Our Indian knew one of them, an old man, and fell into conversation with him in Indian. He belonged at the foot of Moosehead. The other was of another tribe. They were returning from hunting. I asked the younger if they had seen any moose, to which he said no; but I, seeing the moose-hides sticking out from a great bundle made with their blankets in the middle of the canoe, added, "Only their hides." As he was a foreigner, he may have wished to deceive me, for it is against the law for white men and foreigners to kill moose in Maine at this season. But perhaps he need not have been alarmed, for the moose-wardens are not very particular. I heard quite directly of one who being asked by a white man going into the woods what he would say if he killed a moose, answered, "If you bring me a quarter of it, I guess you won't be troubled." His duty being, as he said, only to prevent the "indiscriminate" slaughter of them for their hides. I suppose that he would consider it an *indiscriminate* slaughter when a quarter was not reserved for himself. Such are the perquisites of this office.

We continued along through the most extensive larch wood which I had seen, — tall and slender trees with fantastic branches. But though this was the prevailing tree here, I do not remember that we saw any afterward. You do not find straggling trees of this species here and there throughout the wood, but rather a little forest of them. The same is the case with the white and red pines, and some other trees, greatly to the convenience of the lumberer. They are of a social

habit, growing in “veins,” “clumps,” “groups,” or “communities,” as the explorers call them, distinguishing them far away, from the top of a hill or a tree, the white pines towering above the surrounding forest, or else they form extensive forests by themselves. I should have liked to come across a large community of pines, which had never been invaded by the lumbering army.

We saw some fresh moose-tracks along the shore, but the Indian said that the moose were not driven out of the woods by the flies, as usual at this season, on account of the abundance of water everywhere. The stream was only from one and one half to three rods wide, quite winding, with occasional small islands, meadows, and some very swift and shallow places. When we came to an island, the Indian never hesitated which side to take, as if the current told him which was the shortest and deepest. It was lucky for us that the water was so high. We had to walk but once on this stream, carrying a part of the load, at a swift and shallow reach, while he got up with the canoe, not being obliged to take out, though he said it was very strong water. Once or twice we passed the red wreck of a batteau which had been stove some spring.

While making this portage I saw many splendid specimens of the great purple fringed orchis, three feet high. It is remarkable that such delicate flowers should here adorn these wilderness paths.

Having resumed our seats in the canoe, I felt the Indian wiping my back, which he had accidentally spat upon. He said it was a sign that I was going to be married.

The Umbazookskus River is called ten miles long. Having poled up the narrowest part some three or four miles, the next opening in the sky was over Umbazookskus Lake, which we suddenly entered about eleven o’clock in the forenoon. It stretches northwesterly four or five miles, with what the Indian called the Caucomgomoc Mountain seen far beyond it. It was an agreeable change.

This lake was very shallow a long distance from the shore, and I saw stone-heaps on the bottom, like those in the Assabet at home. The canoe ran into one. The Indian thought that they were made by an eel. Joe Aitteon in 1853 thought that they were made by chub. We crossed the southeast end of the lake to the carry into Mud Pond.

Umbazookskus Lake is the head of the Penobscot in this direction,

and Mud Pond is the nearest head of the Allegash, one of the chief sources of the St. John. Hodge, who went through this way to the St. Lawrence in the service of the State, calls the portage here a mile and three quarters long, and states that Mud Pond has been found to be fourteen feet higher than Umbazookskus Lake. As the West Branch of the Penobscot at the Moosehead carry is considered about twenty-five feet lower than Moosehead Lake, it appears that the Penobscot in the upper part of its course runs in a broad and shallow valley, between the Kennebec and St. John, and lower than either of them, though, judging from the map, you might expect it to be the highest.

Mud Pond is about halfway from Umbazookskus to Chamberlain Lake, into which it empties, and to which we were bound. The Indian said that this was the wettest carry in the State, and as the season was a very wet one, we anticipated an unpleasant walk. As usual he made one large bundle of the pork-keg, cooking-utensils, and other loose traps, by tying them up in his blanket. We should be obliged to go over the carry twice, and our method was to carry one half part way, and then go back for the rest.

Our path ran close by the door of a log hut in a clearing at this end of the carry, which the Indian, who alone entered it, found to be occupied by a Canadian and his family, and that the man had been blind for a year. He seemed peculiarly unfortunate to be taken blind there, where there were so few eyes to see for him. He could not even be led out of that country by a dog, but must be taken down the rapids as passively as a barrel of flour. This was the first house above Chesuncook, and the last on the Penobscot waters, and was built here, no doubt, because it was the route of the lumberers in the winter and spring.

After a slight ascent from the lake through the springy soil of the Canadian's clearing, we entered on a level and very wet and rocky path through the universal dense evergreen forest, a loosely paved gutter merely, where we went leaping from rock to rock and from side to side, in the vain attempt to keep out of the water and mud. We concluded that it was yet Penobscot water, though there was no flow to it. It was on this carry that the white hunter whom I met in the stage, as he told me, had shot two bears a few months before. They stood directly in the path, and did not turn out for him. They might

be excused for not turning out there, or only taking the right as the law directs. He said that at this season bears were found on the mountains and hillsides in search of berries, and were apt to be saucy, — that we might come across them up Trout Stream; and he added, what I hardly credited, that many Indians slept in their canoes, not daring to sleep on land, on account of them.

Here commences what was called, twenty years ago, the best timber land in the State. This very spot was described as "covered with the greatest abundance of pine," but now this appeared to me, comparatively, an uncommon tree there, — and yet you did not see where any more could have stood, amid the dense growth of cedar, fir, etc. It was then proposed to cut a canal from lake to lake here, but the outlet was finally made farther east, at Telos Lake, as we shall see.

The Indian with his canoe soon disappeared before us; but ere long he came back and told us to take a path which turned off westward, it being better walking, and, at my suggestion, he agreed to leave a bough in the regular carry at that place, that we might not pass it by mistake. Thereafter, he said, we were to keep the main path, and he added, "You see 'em my tracks." But I had not much faith that we could distinguish his tracks, since others had passed over the carry within a few days.

We turned off at the right place, but were soon confused by numerous logging-paths, coming into the one we were on, by which lumberers had been to pick out those pines which I have mentioned. However, we kept what we considered the main path, though it was a winding one, and in this, at long intervals, we distinguished a faint trace of a footstep. This, though comparatively unworn, was at first a better, or, at least, a drier road than the regular carry which we had left. It led through an arbor-vitæ wilderness of the grimmest character. The great fallen and rotting trees had been cut through and rolled aside, and their huge trunks abutted on the path on each side, while others still lay across it two or three feet high. It was impossible for us to discern the Indian's trail in the elastic moss, which, like a thick carpet, covered every rock and fallen tree, as well as the earth. Nevertheless, I did occasionally detect the track of a man, and I gave myself some credit for it. I carried my whole load at

once, a heavy knapsack, and a large india-rubber bag, containing our bread and a blanket, swung on a paddle; in all, about sixty pounds; but my companion preferred to make two journeys, by short stages, while I waited for him. We could not be sure that we were not depositing our loads each time farther off from the true path.

As I sat waiting for my companion, he would seem to be gone a long time, and I had ample opportunity to make observations on the forest. I now first began to be seriously molested by the black fly, a very small but perfectly formed fly of that color, about one tenth of an inch long, which I first felt, and then saw, in swarms about me, as I sat by a wider and more than usually doubtful fork in this dark forest path. The hunters tell bloody stories about them, — how they settle in a ring about your neck, before you know it, and are wiped off in great numbers with your blood. But remembering that I had a wash in my knapsack, prepared by a thoughtful hand in Bangor, I made haste to apply it to my face and hands, and was glad to find it effectual, as long as it was fresh, or for twenty minutes, not only against black flies, but all the insects that molested us. They would not alight on the part thus defended. It was composed of sweet oil and oil of turpentine, with a little oil of spearmint, and camphor. However, I finally concluded that the remedy was worse than the disease. It was so disagreeable and inconvenient to have your face and hands covered with such a mixture.

Three large slate-colored birds of the jay genus (*Garrulus Canadensis*), the Canada jay, moose-bird, meat-bird, or what not, came flitting silently and by degrees toward me, and hopped down the limbs inquisitively to within seven or eight feet. They were more clumsy and not nearly so handsome as the bluejay. Fish hawks, from the lake, uttered their sharp whistling notes low over the top of the forest near me, as if they were anxious about a nest there.

After I had sat there some time, I noticed at this fork in the path a tree which had been blazed, and the letters “Chamb. L.” written on it with red chalk. This I knew to mean Chamberlain Lake. So I concluded that on the whole we were on the right course, though as we had come nearly two miles, and saw no signs of Mud Pond, I did harbor the suspicion that we might be on a direct course to Chamberlain Lake, leaving out Mud Pond. This I found by my map

would be about five miles northeasterly, and I then took the bearing by my compass.

My companion having returned with his bag, and also defended his face and hands with the insect-wash, we set forward again. The walking rapidly grew worse, and the path more indistinct, and at length, after passing through a patch of *Calla palustris*, still abundantly in bloom, we found ourselves in a more open and regular swamp, made less passable than ordinary by the unusual wetness of the season. We sank a foot deep in water and mud at every step, and sometimes up to our knees, and the trail was almost obliterated, being no more than that a musquash leaves in similar places, when he parts the floating sedge. In fact, it probably was a musquash trail in some places. We concluded that if Mud Pond was as muddy as the approach to it was wet, it certainly deserved its name. It would have been amusing to behold the dogged and deliberate pace at which we entered that swamp, without interchanging a word, as if determined to go through it, though it should come up to our necks. Having penetrated a considerable distance into this, and found a tussock on which we could deposit our loads, though there was no place to sit, my companion went back for the rest of his pack. I had thought to observe on this carry when we crossed the dividing line between the Penobscot and St. John, but as my feet had hardly been out of water the whole distance, and it was all level and stagnant, I began to despair of finding it. I remembered hearing a good deal about the "highlands" dividing the waters of the Penobscot from those of the St. John, as well as the St. Lawrence, at the time of the northeast boundary dispute, and I observed by my map, that the line claimed by Great Britain as the boundary prior to 1842 passed between Umbazookskus Lake and Mud Pond, so that we had either crossed or were then on it. These, then, according to *her* interpretation of the treaty of '83, were the "highlands which divide those rivers that empty themselves into the St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean." Truly an interesting spot to stand on, — if that were it, — though you could not sit down there. I thought that if the commissioners themselves, and the King of Holland with them, had spent a few days here, with their packs upon their backs, looking for that "highland," they would have had an interesting time, and

perhaps it would have modified their views of the question somewhat. The King of Holland would have been in his element. Such were my meditations while my companion was gone back for his bag.

It was a cedar swamp, through which the peculiar note of the white-throated sparrow rang loud and clear. There grew the side-saddle flower, Labrador tea, *Kalmia glauca*, and, what was new to me, the low birch (*Betula pumila*), a little round-leafed shrub, two or three feet high only. We thought to name this swamp after the latter.

After a long while my companion came back, and the Indian with him. We had taken the wrong road, and the Indian had lost us. He had very wisely gone back to the Canadian's camp, and asked him which way we had probably gone, since he could better understand the ways of white men, and he told him correctly that we had undoubtedly taken the supply road to Chamberlain Lake (slender supplies they would get over such a road at this season). The Indian was greatly surprised that we should have taken what he called a "tow" (i. e., tote or toting or supply) road, instead of a carry path, — that we had not followed his tracks, — said it was "strange," and evidently thought little of our woodcraft.

Having held a consultation, and eaten a mouthful of bread, we concluded that it would perhaps be nearer for us two now to keep on to Chamberlain Lake, omitting Mud Pond, than to go back and start anew for the last place, though the Indian had never been through this way, and knew nothing about it. In the meanwhile he would go back and finish carrying over his canoe and bundle to Mud Pond, cross that, and go down its outlet and up Chamberlain Lake, and trust to meet us there before night. It was now a little after noon. He supposed that the water in which we stood had flowed back from Mud Pond, which could not be far off eastward, but was unapproachable through the dense cedar swamp.

Keeping on, we were ere long agreeably disappointed by reaching firmer ground, and we crossed a ridge where the path was more distinct, but there was never any outlook over the forest. While descending the last, I saw many specimens of the great round-leaved orchis, of large size; one which I measured had leaves, as usual, flat on the ground, nine and a half inches long, and nine wide, and was

two feet high. The dark, damp wilderness is favorable to some of these orchidaceous plants, though they are too delicate for cultivation. I also saw the swamp gooseberry (*Rides lacustre*), with green fruit, and in all the low ground, where it was not too wet, the *Rubus triflorus* in fruit. At one place I heard a very clear and piercing note from a small hawk, like a single note from a white-throated sparrow, only very much louder, as he dashed through the tree-tops over my head. I wondered that he allowed himself to be disturbed by our presence, since it seemed as if he could not easily find his nest again himself in that wilderness. We also saw and heard several times the red squirrel, and often, as before observed, the bluish scales of the fir cones which it had left on a rock or fallen tree. This, according to the Indian, is the only squirrel found in those woods, except a very few striped ones. It must have a solitary time in that dark evergreen forest, where there is so little life, seventy-five miles from a road as we had come. I wondered how he could call any particular tree there his home; and yet he would run up the stem of one out of the myriads, as if it were an old road to him. How can a hawk ever find him there? I fancied that he must be glad to see us, though he did seem to chide us. One of those sombre fir and spruce woods is not complete unless you hear from out its cavernous mossy and twiggy recesses his fine alarum, — his spruce voice, like the working of the sap through some crack in a tree, — the working of the spruce beer. Such an impertinent fellow would occasionally try to alarm the wood about me. "Oh," said I, "I am well acquainted with your family, I know your cousins in Concord very well. Guess the mail's irregular in these parts, and you'd like to hear from 'em." But my overtures were vain, for he would withdraw by his aerial turnpikes into a more distant cedar-top, and spring his rattle again.

We then entered another swamp, at a necessarily slow pace, where the walking was worse than ever, not only on account of the water, but the fallen timber, which often obliterated the indistinct trail entirely. The fallen trees were so numerous, that for long distances the route was through a succession of small yards, where we climbed over fences as high as our heads, down into water often up to our knees, and then over another fence into a second yard, and so on; and, going back for his bag, my companion once lost his way

and came back without it. In many places the canoe would have run if it had not been for the fallen timber. Again it would be more open, but equally wet, too wet for trees to grow, and no place to sit down. It was a mossy swamp, which it required the long legs of a moose to traverse, and it is very likely that we scared some of them in our transit, though we saw none. It was ready to echo the growl of a bear, the howl of a wolf, or the scream of a panther; but when you get fairly into the middle of one of these grim forests, you are surprised to find that the larger inhabitants are not at home commonly, but have left only a puny red squirrel to bark at you. Generally speaking, a howling wilderness does not howl: it is the imagination of the traveler that does the howling. I did, however, see one dead porcupine; perhaps he had succumbed to the difficulties of the way. These bristly fellows are a very suitable small fruit of such unkempt wildernesses.

Making a logging-road in the Maine woods is called “swamping” it, and they who do the work are called “swampers.” I now perceived the fitness of the term. This was the most perfectly swamped of all the roads I ever saw. Nature must have cooperated with art here. However, I suppose they would tell you that this name took its origin from the fact that the chief work of roadmakers in those woods is to make the swamps passable. We came to a stream where the bridge, which had been made of logs tied together with cedar bark, had been broken up, and we got over as we could. This probably emptied into Mud Pond, and perhaps the Indian might have come up it and taken us in there if he had known it. Such as it was, this ruined bridge was the chief evidence that we were on a path of any kind.

We then crossed another low rising ground, and I, who wore shoes, had an opportunity to wring out my stockings, but my companion, who used boots, had found that this was not a safe experiment for him, for he might not be able to get his wet boots on again. He went over the whole ground, or water, three times, for which reason our progress was very slow; beside that the water softened our feet, and to some extent unfitted them for walking. As I sat waiting for him, it would naturally seem an unaccountable time that he was gone. Therefore, as I could see through the woods that the sun was getting low, and it was uncertain how far the lake might

be, even if we were on the right course, and in what part of the world we should find ourselves at nightfall, I proposed that I should push through with what speed I could, leaving boughs to mark my path, and find the lake and the Indian, if possible, before night, and send the latter back to carry my companion's bag.

Having gone about a mile, and got into low ground again, I heard a noise like the note of an owl, which I soon discovered to be made by the Indian, and, answering him, we soon came together. He had reached the lake, after crossing Mud Pond, and running some rapids below it, and had come up about a mile and a half on our path. If he had not come back to meet us, we probably should not have found him that night, for the path branched once or twice before reaching this particular part of the lake. So he went back for my companion and his bag, while I kept on. Having waded through another stream, where the bridge of logs had been broken up and half floated away, — and this was not altogether worse than our ordinary walking, since it was less muddy, — we continued on, through alternate mud and water, to the shore of Apmoojenegamook Lake, which we reached in season for a late supper, instead of dining there, as we had expected, having gone without our dinner. It was at least five miles by the way we had come, and as my companion had gone over most of it three times, he had walked full a dozen miles, bad as it was. In the winter, when the water is frozen, and the snow is four feet deep, it is no doubt a tolerable path to a footman. As it was, I would not have missed that walk for a good deal. If you want an exact recipe for making such a road, take one part Mud Pond, and dilute it with equal parts of Umbazookskus and Apmoojenegamook; then send a family of musquash through to locate it, look after the grades and culverts, and finish it to their minds, and let a hurricane follow to do the fencing.

We had come out on a point extending into Apmoojenegamook, or Chamberlain Lake, west of the outlet of Mud Pond, where there was a broad, gravelly, and rocky shore, encumbered with bleached logs and trees. We were rejoiced to see such dry things in that part of the world. But at first we did not attend to dryness so much as to mud and wetness. We all three walked into the lake up to our middle to wash our clothes.

This was another noble lake, called twelve miles long, east and west; if you add Telos Lake, which, since the dam was built, has been connected with it by dead water, it will be twenty; and it is apparently from a mile and a half to two miles wide. We were about midway its length, on the south side. We could see the only clearing in these parts, called the "Chamberlain Farm," with two or three log buildings close together, on the opposite shore, some two and a half miles distant. The smoke of our fire on the shore brought over two men in a canoe from the farm, that being a common signal agreed on when one wishes to cross. It took them about half an hour to come over, and they had their labor for their pains this time. Even the English name of the lake had a wild, woodland sound, reminding me of that Chamberlain who killed Paugus at Lovewell's fight.

After putting on such dry clothes as we had, and hanging the others to dry on the pole which the Indian arranged over the fire, we ate our supper, and lay down on the pebbly shore with our feet to the fire, without pitching our tent, making a thin bed of grass to cover the stones.

Here first I was molested by the little midge called the no-see-em (*Simulium nocivum*, — the latter word is not the Latin for no-see-em), especially over the sand at the water's edge, for it is a kind of sand-fly. You would not observe them but for their light-colored wings. They are said to get under your clothes, and produce a feverish heat, which I suppose was what I felt that night.

Our insect foes in this excursion, to sum them up, were, first, mosquitoes, the chief ones, but only troublesome at night, or when we sat still on shore by day; second, black flies (*Simulium molestum*), which molested us more or less on the carries by day, as I have before described, and sometimes in narrower parts of the stream. Harris mistakes when he says that they are not seen after June. Third, moose-flies. The big ones, Polis said, were called *Bososquasis*. It is a stout, brown fly, much like a horse-fly, about eleven sixteenths of an inch long, commonly rusty-colored beneath, with unspotted wings. They can bite smartly, according to Polis, but are easily avoided or killed. Fourth, the no-see-ems above mentioned. Of all these, the mosquitoes are the only ones that troubled me seriously; but, as I was provided with a wash and a veil, they have not made any deep

impression.

The Indian would not use our wash to protect his face and hands, for fear that it would hurt his skin, nor had he any veil; he, therefore, suffered from insects now, and throughout this journey, more than either of us. I think that he suffered more than I did, when neither of us was protected. He regularly tied up his face in his handkerchief, and buried it in his blanket, and he now finally lay down on the sand between us and the fire for the sake of the smoke, which he tried to make enter his blanket about his face, and for the same purpose he lit his pipe and breathed the smoke into his blanket.

As we lay thus on the shore, with nothing between us and the stars, I inquired what stars he was acquainted with, or had names for. They were the Great Bear, which he called by this name, the Seven Stars, which he had no English name for, "the morning star," and "the north star."

In the middle of the night, as indeed each time that we lay on the shore of a lake, we heard the voice of the loon, loud and distinct, from far over the lake. It is a very wild sound, quite in keeping with the place and the circumstances of the traveler, and very unlike the voice of a bird. I could lie awake for hours listening to it, it is so thrilling. When camping in such a wilderness as this, you are prepared to hear sounds from some of its inhabitants which will give voice to its wildness. Some idea of bears, wolves, or panthers runs in your head naturally, and when this note is first heard very far off at midnight, as you lie with your ear to the ground, — the forest being perfectly still about you, you take it for granted that it is the voice of a wolf or some other wild beast, for only the last part is heard when at a distance, — you conclude that it is a pack of wolves, baying the moon, or, perchance, cantering after a moose. Strange as it may seem, the "mooing" of a cow on a mountain-side comes nearest to my idea of the voice of a bear; and this bird's note resembled that. It was the unfailing and characteristic sound of those lakes. We were not so lucky as to hear wolves howl, though that is an occasional serenade. Some friends of mine, who two years ago went up the Caucomgomoc River, were serenaded by wolves while moose-hunting by moonlight. It was a sudden burst, as if a hundred demons had broke loose, — a startling sound enough, which, if any, would

make your hair stand on end, and all was still again. It lasted but a moment, and you'd have thought there were twenty of them, when probably there were only two or three. They heard it twice only, and they said that it gave expression to the wilderness which it lacked before. I heard of some men who, while skinning a moose lately in those woods, were driven off from the carcass by a pack of wolves, which ate it up.

This of the loon — I do not mean its laugh, but its looning, — is a long-drawn call, as it were, sometimes singularly human to my ear, — hoo-hoo-ooooo, like the hallooing of a man on a very high key, having thrown his voice into his head. I have heard a sound exactly like it when breathing heavily through my own nostrils, half awake at ten at night, suggesting my affinity to the loon; as if its language were but a dialect of my own, after all. Formerly, when lying awake at midnight in those woods, I had listened to hear some words or syllables of their language, but it chanced that I listened in vain until I heard the cry of the loon. I have heard it occasionally on the ponds of my native town, but there its wildness is not enhanced by the surrounding scenery.

I was awakened at midnight by some heavy, low-flying bird, probably a loon, flapping by close over my head, along the shore. So, turning the other side of my half-clad body to the fire, I sought slumber again.

* * * * *

TUESDAY, July 28.

When we awoke, we found a heavy dew on our blankets. I lay awake very early, and listened to the clear, shrill *ah, te te, te te, te* of the white-throated sparrow, repeated at short intervals, without the least variation, for half an hour, as if it could not enough express its happiness. Whether my companions heard it or not, I know not, but it was a kind of matins to me, and the event of that forenoon.

It was a pleasant sunrise, and we had a view of the mountains in the southeast. Ktaadn appeared about southeast by south. A double-topped mountain, about southeast by east, and another portion of the same, east-southeast. The last the Indian called Nerlumskeechticook, and said that it was at the head of the East Branch, and we should pass near it on our return that way.

We did some more washing in the lake this morning, and with our clothes hung about on the dead trees and rocks, the shore looked like washing-day at home. The Indian, taking the hint, borrowed the soap, and, walking into the lake, washed his only cotton shirt on his person, then put on his pants and let it dry on him.

I observed that he wore a cotton shirt, originally white, a greenish flannel one over it, but no waistcoat, flannel drawers, and strong linen or duck pants, which also had been white, blue woolen stockings, cowhide boots, and a Kossuth hat. He carried no change of clothing, but putting on a stout, thick jacket, which he laid aside in the canoe, and seizing a full-sized axe, his gun and ammunition, and a blanket, which would do for a sail or knapsack, if wanted, and strapping on his belt, which contained a large sheath-knife, he walked off at once, ready to be gone all summer. This looked very independent; a few simple and effective tools, and no india-rubber clothing. He was always the first ready to start in the morning, and if it had not held some of our property, would not have been obliged to roll up his blanket. Instead of carrying a large bundle of his own extra clothing, etc., he brought back the greatcoats of moose tied up in his blanket. I found that his outfit was the result of a long experience, and in the main hardly to be improved on, unless by washing and an extra shirt. Wanting a button here, he walked off to a

place where some Indians had recently encamped, and searched for one, but I believe in vain.

Having softened our stiffened boots and shoes with the pork fat, the usual disposition of what was left at breakfast, we crossed the lake early, steering in a diagonal direction, northeasterly about four miles, to the outlet, which was not to be discovered till we were close to it. The Indian name, *Apmoojenegamook*, means lake that is crossed, because the usual course lies across, and not along it. This is the largest of the Allegash lakes, and was the first St. John water that we floated on. It is shaped in the main like Chesuncook. There are no mountains or high hills very near it. At Bangor we had been told of a township many miles farther northwest; it was indicated to us as containing the highest land thereabouts, where, by climbing a particular tree in the forest, we could get a general idea of the country. I have no doubt that the last was good advice, but we did not go there. We did not intend to go far down the Allegash, but merely to get a view of the great lakes which are its source, and then return this way to the East Branch of the Penobscot. The water now, by good rights, flowed northward, if it could be said to flow at all.

After reaching the middle of the lake, we found the waves as usual pretty high, and the Indian warned my companion, who was nodding, that he must not allow himself to fall asleep in the canoe lest he should upset us; adding, that when Indians want to sleep in a canoe, they lie down straight on the bottom. But in this crowded one that was impossible. However, he said that he would nudge him if he saw him nodding.

A belt of dead trees stood all around the lake, some far out in the water, with others prostrate behind them, and they made the shore, for the most part, almost inaccessible. This is the effect of the dam at the outlet. Thus the natural sandy or rocky shore, with its green fringe, was concealed and destroyed. We coasted westward along the north side, searching for the outlet, about one quarter of a mile distant from this savage-looking shore, on which the waves were breaking violently, knowing that it might easily be concealed amid this rubbish, or by the overlapping of the shore. It is remarkable how little these important gates to a lake are blazoned. There is no triumphal arch over the modest inlet or outlet, but at some

undistinguished point it trickles in or out through the uninterrupted forest, almost as through a sponge.

We reached the outlet in about an hour, and carried over the dam there, which is quite a solid structure, and about one quarter of a mile farther there was a second dam. The reader will perceive that the result of this particular damming about Chamberlain Lake is, that the head-waters of the St. John are made to flow by Bangor. They have thus dammed all the larger lakes, raising their broad surfaces many feet; Moosehead, for instance, some forty miles long, with its steamer on it; thus turning the forces of nature against herself, that they might float their spoils out of the country. They rapidly run out of these immense forests all the finer, and more accessible pine timber, and then leave the bears to watch the decaying dams, not clearing nor cultivating the land, nor making roads, nor building houses, but leaving it a wilderness as they found it. In many parts, only these dams remain, like deserted beaver-dams. Think how much land they have flowed, without asking Nature's leave! When the State wishes to endow an academy or university, it grants it a tract of forest land: one saw represents an academy; a gang, a university.

The wilderness experiences a sudden rise of all her streams and lakes. She feels ten thousand vermin gnawing at the base of her noblest trees. Many combining drag them off, jarring over the roots of the survivors, and tumble them into the nearest stream, till, the fairest having fallen, they scamper off to ransack some new wilderness, and all is still again. It is as when a migrating army of mice girdles a forest of pines. The chopper fells trees from the same motive that the mouse gnaws them, — to get his living. You tell me that he has a more interesting family than the mouse. That is as it happens. He speaks of a "berth" of timber, a good place for him to get into, just as a worm might. When the chopper would praise a pine, he will commonly tell you that the one he cut was so big that a yoke of oxen stood on its stump; as if that were what the pine had grown for, to become the footstool of oxen. In my mind's eye, I can see these unwieldy tame deer, with a yoke binding them together, and brazen-tipped horns betraying their servitude, taking their stand on the stump of each giant pine in succession throughout this whole forest, and chewing their cud there, until it is nothing but an ox-

pasture, and run out at that. As if it were good for the oxen, and some terebinthine or other medicinal quality ascended into their nostrils. Or is their elevated position intended merely as a symbol of the fact that the pastoral comes next in order to the sylvan or hunter life?

The character of the logger's admiration is betrayed by his very mode of expressing it. If he told all that was in his mind, he would say, it was so big that I cut it down and then a yoke of oxen could stand on its stump. He admires the log, the carcass or corpse, more than the tree. Why, my dear sir, the tree might have stood on its own stump, and a great deal more comfortably and firmly than a yoke of oxen can, if you had not cut it down. What right have you to celebrate the virtues of the man you murdered?

The Anglo-American can indeed cut down, and grub up all this waving forest, and make a stump speech, and vote for Buchanan on its ruins, but he cannot converse with the spirit of the tree he fells, he cannot read the poetry and mythology which retire as he advances. He ignorantly erases mythological tablets in order to print his handbills and town-meeting warrants on them. Before he has learned his *a b c* in the beautiful but mystic lore of the wilderness which Spenser and Dante had just begun to read, he cuts it down, coins a pine-tree shilling (as if to signify the pine's value to him), puts up a *dee*strict schoolhouse, and introduces Webster's spelling-book.

Below the last dam, the river being swift and shallow, though broad enough, we two walked about half a mile to lighten the canoe. I made it a rule to carry my knapsack when I walked, and also to keep it tied to a crossbar when in the canoe, that it might be found with the canoe if we should upset.

I heard the dog-day locust here, and afterward on the carries, a sound which I had associated only with more open, if not settled countries. The area for locusts must be small in the Maine woods.

We were now fairly on the Allegash River, which name our Indian said meant hemlock bark. These waters flow northward about one hundred miles, at first very feebly, then southeasterly two hundred and fifty more to the Bay of Fundy. After perhaps two miles of river, we entered Heron Lake, called on the map *Pongokwahem*, scaring up forty or fifty young *shecorways*, sheldrakes, at the entrance, which ran over the water with great rapidity, as usual in a

long line.

This was the fourth great lake, lying northwest and southeast, like Chesuncook and most of the long lakes in that neighborhood, and, judging from the map, it is about ten miles long. We had entered it on the southwest side, and saw a dark mountain northeast over the lake, not very far off nor high, which the Indian said was called Peaked Mountain, and used by explorers to look for timber from. There was also some other high land more easterly. The shores were in the same ragged and unsightly condition, encumbered with dead timber, both fallen and standing, as in the last lake, owing to the dam on the Allegash below. Some low points or islands were almost drowned.

I saw something white a mile off on the water, which turned out to be a great gull on a rock in the middle, which the Indian would have been glad to kill and eat, but it flew away long before we were near; and also a flock of summer ducks that were about the rock with it. I asking him about herons, since this was Heron Lake, he said that he found the blue heron's nests in the hardwood trees. I thought that I saw a light-colored object move along the opposite or northern shore, four or five miles distant. He did not know what it could be, unless it were a moose, though he had never seen a white one; but he said that he could distinguish a moose "anywhere on shore, clear across the lake."

Rounding a point, we stood across a bay for a mile and a half or two miles, toward a large island, three or four miles down the lake. We met with ephemeræ (shadfly) midway, about a mile from the shore, and they evidently fly over the whole lake. On Moosehead I had seen a large devil's-needle half a mile from the shore, coming from the middle of the lake, where it was three or four miles wide at least. It had probably crossed. But at last, of course, you come to lakes so large that an insect cannot fly across them; and this, perhaps, will serve to distinguish a large lake from a small one.

We landed on the southeast side of the island, which was rather elevated and densely wooded, with a rocky shore, in season for an early dinner. Somebody had camped there not long before, and left the frame on which they stretched a moose-hide, which our Indian criticised severely, thinking it showed but little woodcraft. Here were

plenty of the shells of crayfish, or fresh-water lobsters, which had been washed ashore, such as have given a name to some ponds and streams. They are commonly four or five inches long. The Indian proceeded at once to cut a canoe birch, slanted it up against another tree on the shore, tying it with a withe, and lay down to sleep in its shade.

When we were on the Caucomgomoc, he recommended to us a new way home, the very one which we had first thought of, by the St. John. He even said that it was easier, and would take but little more time than the other, by the East Branch of the Penobscot, though very much farther round; and taking the map, he showed where we should be each night, for he was familiar with the route. According to his calculation, we should reach the French settlements the next night after this, by keeping northward down the Allegash, and when we got into the main St. John the banks would be more or less settled all the way; as if that were a recommendation. There would be but one or two falls, with short carrying-places, and we should go down the stream very fast, even a hundred miles a day, if the wind allowed; and he indicated where we should carry over into Eel River to save a bend below Woodstock in New Brunswick, and so into the Schoodic Lake, and thence to the Mattawamkeag. It would be about three hundred and sixty miles to Bangor this way, though only about one hundred and sixty by the other; but in the former case we should explore the St. John from its source through two thirds of its course, as well as the Schoodic Lake and Mattawamkeag, — and we were again tempted to go that way. I feared, however, that the banks of the St. John were too much settled. When I asked him which course would take us through the wildest country, he said the route by the East Branch. Partly from this consideration, as also from its shortness, we resolved to adhere to the latter route, and perhaps ascend Ktaadn on the way. We made this island the limit of our excursion in this direction.

We had now seen the largest of the Allegash lakes. The next dam "was about fifteen miles" farther north, down the Allegash, and it was dead water so far. We had been told in Bangor of a man who lived alone, a sort of hermit, at that dam, to take care of it, who spent his time tossing a bullet from one hand to the other, for want of

employment, — as if we might want to call on him. This sort of tit-for-tat intercourse between his two hands, bandying to and fro a leaden subject, seems to have been his symbol for society.

This island, according to the map, was about a hundred and ten miles in a straight line north-northwest from Bangor, and about ninety-nine miles east-southeast from Quebec. There was another island visible toward the north end of the lake, with an elevated clearing on it; but we learned afterward that it was not inhabited, had only been used as a pasture for cattle which summered in these woods, though our informant said that there was a hut on the mainland near the outlet of the lake. This unnaturally smooth-shaven, squarish spot, in the midst of the otherwise uninterrupted forest, only reminded us how uninhabited the country was. You would sooner expect to meet with a bear than an ox in such a clearing. At any rate, it must have been a surprise to the bears when they came across it. Such, seen far or near, you know at once to be man's work, for Nature never does it. In order to let in the light to the earth as on a lake, he clears off the forest on the hillsides and plains, and sprinkles fine grass seed, like an enchanter, and so carpets the earth with a firm sward.

Polis had evidently more curiosity respecting the few settlers in those woods than we. If nothing was said, he took it for granted that we wanted to go straight to the next log-hut. Having observed that we came by the log huts at Chesuncook, and the blind Canadian's at the Mud Pond carry, without stopping to communicate with the inhabitants, he took occasion now to suggest that the usual way was, when you came near a house, to go to it, and tell the inhabitants what you had seen or heard, and then they tell you what they had seen; but we laughed, and said that we had had enough of houses for the present, and had come here partly to avoid them.

In the meanwhile, the wind, increasing, blew down the Indian's birch, and created such a sea that we found ourselves prisoners on the island, the nearest shore, which was the western, being perhaps a mile distant, and we took the canoe out to prevent its drifting away. We did not know but we should be compelled to spend the rest of the day and the night there. At any rate, the Indian went to sleep again in the shade of his birch, my companion busied himself drying his

plants, and I rambled along the shore westward, which was quite stony, and obstructed with fallen, bleached, or drifted trees for four or five rods in width. I found growing on this broad, rocky, and gravelly shore the *Salix rostrata*, *discolor*, and *lucida*, *Ranunculus recurvatus*, *Potentilla Norvegica*, *Scutellaria lateriflora*, *Eupatorium purpureum*, *Aster Tradescanti*, *Mentha Canadensis*, *Epilobium angustifolium* (abundant), *Lycopus sinuatus*, *Solidago lanceolata*, *Spiræa salicifolia*, *Antennaria margaraticea*, *Prunella*, *Rumex Acetosella*, raspberries, wool-grass, *Onoclea*, etc. The nearest trees were *Betula papyracea* and *excelsa*, and *Populus tremuloides*. I give these names because it was my farthest northern point.

Our Indian said that he was a doctor, and could tell me some medicinal use for every plant I could show him. I immediately tried him. He said that the inner bark of the aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) was good for sore eyes; and so with various other plants, proving himself as good as his word. According to his account, he had acquired such knowledge in his youth from a wise old Indian with whom he associated, and he lamented that the present generation of Indians "had lost a great deal."

He said that the caribou was a "very great runner," that there was none about this lake now, though there used to be many, and pointing to the belt of dead trees caused by the dams, he added, "No likum stump, — when he sees that he scared."

Pointing southeasterly over the lake and distant forest, he observed, "Me go Oldtown in three days." I asked how he would get over the swamps and fallen trees. "Oh," said he, "in winter all covered, go anywhere on snowshoes, right across lakes." When I asked how he went, he said, "First I go Ktaadn, west side, then I go Millinocket, then Pamadumcook, then Nicketow, then Lincoln, then Oldtown," or else he went a shorter way by the Piscataquis. What a wilderness walk for a man to take alone! None of your half-mile swamps, none of your mile-wide woods merely, as on the skirts of our towns, without hotels, only a dark mountain or a lake for guide-board and station, over ground much of it impassable in summer!

It reminded me of Prometheus Bound. Here was traveling of the old heroic kind over the unaltered face of nature. From the Allegash, or Hemlock River, and Pongoquahem Lake, across great

Apmoojenegamook, and leaving the Nerlumskeechticook Mountain on his left, he takes his way under the bear-haunted slopes of Souneunk and Ktaadn Mountains to Pamadumcook, and Millinocket's inland seas (where often gulls'-eggs may increase his store), and so on to the forks of the Nicketow (*niasoseb*, "we alone Joseph," seeing what our folks see), ever pushing the boughs of the fir and spruce aside, with his load of furs, contending day and night, night and day, with the shaggy demon vegetation, traveling through the mossy graveyard of trees. Or he could go by "that rough tooth of the sea," Kineo, great source of arrows and of spears to the ancients, when weapons of stone were used. Seeing and hearing moose, caribou, bears, porcupines, lynxes, wolves, and panthers. Places where he might live and die and never hear of the United States, which make such a noise in the world, — never hear of America, so called from the name of a European gentleman.

There is a lumberer's road called the Eagle Lake road, from the Seboois to the east side of this lake. It may seem strange that any road through such a wilderness should be passable, even in winter, when the snow is three or four feet deep, but at that season, wherever lumbering operations are actively carried on, teams are continually passing on the single track, and it becomes as smooth almost as a railway. I am told that in the Aroostook country the sleds are required by law to be of one width (four feet), and sleighs must be altered to fit the track, so that one runner may go in one rut and the other follow the horse. Yet it is very bad turning out.

We had for some time seen a thunder-shower coming up from the west over the woods of the island, and heard the muttering of the thunder, though we were in doubt whether it would reach us; but now the darkness rapidly increasing, and a fresh breeze rustling the forest, we hastily put up the plants which we had been drying, and with one consent made a rush for the tent material and set about pitching it. A place was selected and stakes and pins cut in the shortest possible time, and we were pinning it down lest it should be blown away, when the storm suddenly burst over us.

As we lay huddled together under the tent, which leaked considerably about the sides, with our baggage at our feet, we listened to some of the grandest thunder which I ever heard, — rapid

peals, round and plump, bang, bang, bang, in succession, like artillery from some fortress in the sky; and the lightning was proportionally brilliant. The Indian said, "It must be good powder." All for the benefit of the moose and us, echoing far over the concealed lakes. I thought it must be a place which the thunder loved, where the lightning practiced to keep its hand in, and it would do no harm to shatter a few pines. What had become of the ephemeræ and devil's-needles then? Were they prudent enough to seek harbor before the storm? Perhaps their motions might guide the voyageur.

Looking out I perceived that the violent shower falling on the lake had almost instantaneously flattened the waves, — the commander of that fortress had smoothed it for us so, — and, it clearing off, we resolved to start immediately, before the wind raised them again.

Going outside, I said that I saw clouds still in the southwest, and heard thunder there. The Indian asked if the thunder went "lound" (round), saying that if it did we should have more rain. I thought that it did. We embarked, nevertheless, and paddled rapidly back toward the dams. The white-throated sparrows on the shore were about, singing, Ah, te-e-e, te-e-e, te*, or else* ah, te-e-e, te-e-e, te-e-e, te-e-e.

At the outlet of Chamberlain Lake we were overtaken by another gusty rain-storm, which compelled us to take shelter, the Indian under his canoe on the bank, and we ran under the edge of the dam. However, we were more scared than wet. From my covert I could see the Indian peeping out from beneath his canoe to see what had become of the rain. When we had taken our respective places thus once or twice, the rain not coming down in earnest, we commenced rambling about the neighborhood, for the wind had by this time raised such waves on the lake that we could not stir, and we feared that we should be obliged to camp there. We got an early supper on the dam and tried for fish there, while waiting for the tumult to subside. The fishes were not only few, but small and worthless, and the Indian declared that there were no good fishes in the St. John's waters; that we must wait till we got to the Penobscot waters.

At length, just before sunset, we set out again. It was a wild evening when we coasted up the north side of this Apmoojenegamook Lake. One thunder-storm was just over, and the

waves which it had raised still running with violence, and another storm was now seen coming up in the southwest, far over the lake; but it might be worse in the morning, and we wished to get as far as possible on our way up the lake while we might. It blowed hard against the northern shore about an eighth of a mile distant on our left, and there was just as much sea as our shallow canoe would bear, without our taking unusual care. That which we kept off, and toward which the waves were driving, was as dreary and harborless a shore as you can conceive. For half a dozen rods in width it was a perfect maze of submerged trees, all dead and bare and bleaching, some standing half their original height, others prostrate, and criss-across, above or beneath the surface, and mingled with them were loose trees and limbs and stumps, beating about. Imagine the wharves of the largest city in the world, decayed, and the earth and planking washed away, leaving the spiles standing in loose order, but often of twice the ordinary height, and mingled with and beating against them the wreck of ten thousand navies, all their spars and timbers, while there rises from the water's edge the densest and grimmest wilderness, ready to supply more material when the former fails, and you may get a faint idea of that coast. We could not have landed if we would, without the greatest danger of being swamped; so blow as it might, we must depend on coasting by it. It was twilight, too, and that stormy cloud was advancing rapidly in our rear. It was a pleasant excitement, yet we were glad to reach, at length, in the dusk, the cleared shore of the Chamberlain Farm.

We landed on a low and thinly wooded point there, and while my companions were pitching the tent, I ran up to the house to get some sugar, our six pounds being gone; — it was no wonder they were, for Polis had a sweet tooth. He would first fill his dipper nearly a third full of sugar, and then add the coffee to it. Here was a clearing extending back from the lake to a hilltop, with some dark-colored log buildings and a storehouse in it, and half a dozen men standing in front of the principal hut, greedy for news. Among them was the man who tended the dam on the Allegash and tossed the bullet. He having charge of the dams, and learning that we were going to Webster Stream the next day, told me that some of their men, who were haying at Telos Lake, had shut the dam at the canal there in order to

catch trout, and if we wanted more water to take us through the canal, we might raise the gate, for he would like to have it raised. The Chamberlain Farm is no doubt a cheerful opening in the woods, but such was the lateness of the hour that it has left but a dusky impression on my mind. As I have said, the influx of light merely is civilizing, yet I fancied that they walked about on Sundays in their clearing somewhat as in a prison-yard.

They were unwilling to spare more than four pounds of brown sugar, — unlocking the storehouse to get it, — since they only kept a little for such cases as this, and they charged twenty cents a pound for it, which certainly it was worth to get it up there.

When I returned to the shore it was quite dark, but we had a rousing fire to warm and dry us by, and a snug apartment behind it. The Indian went up to the house to inquire after a brother who had been absent hunting a year or two, and while another shower was beginning, I groped about cutting spruce and arbor-vitæ twigs for a bed. I preferred the arbor-vitæ on account of its fragrance, and spread it particularly thick about the shoulders. It is remarkable with what pure satisfaction the traveler in these woods will reach his camping-ground on the eve of a tempestuous night like this, as if he had got to his inn, and, rolling himself in his blanket, stretch himself on his six-feet-by-two bed of dripping fir twigs, with a thin sheet of cotton for roof, snug as a meadow-mouse in its nest. Invariably our best nights were those when it rained, for then we were not troubled with mosquitoes.

You soon come to disregard rain on such excursions, at least in the summer, it is so easy to dry yourself, supposing a dry change of clothing is not to be had. You can much sooner dry you by such a fire as you can make in the woods than in anybody's kitchen, the fireplace is so much larger, and wood so much more abundant. A shed-shaped tent will catch and reflect the heat like a Yankee baker, and you may be drying while you are sleeping.

Some who have leaky roofs in the towns may have been kept awake, but we were soon lulled asleep by a steady, soaking rain, which lasted all night. To-night, the rain not coming at once with violence, the twigs were soon dried by the reflected heat.

* * * * *

WEDNESDAY, July 29.

When we awoke it had done raining, though it was still cloudy. The fire was put out, and the Indian's boots, which stood under the eaves of the tent, were half full of water. He was much more improvident in such respects than either of us, and he had to thank us for keeping his powder dry. We decided to cross the lake at once, before breakfast, or while we could; and before starting I took the bearing of the shore which we wished to strike, S. S. E. about three miles distant, lest a sudden misty rain should conceal it when we were midway. Though the bay in which we were was perfectly quiet and smooth, we found the lake already wide awake outside, but not dangerously or unpleasantly so; nevertheless, when you get out on one of those lakes in a canoe like this, you do not forget that you are completely at the mercy of the wind, and a fickle power it is. The playful waves may at any time become too rude for you in their sport, and play right on over you. We saw a few *shecorways* and a fish hawk thus early, and after much steady paddling and dancing over the dark waves of Apmoojenegamook, we found ourselves in the neighborhood of the southern land, heard the waves breaking on it, and turned our thoughts wholly to that side. After coasting eastward along this shore a mile or two, we breakfasted on a rocky point, the first convenient place that offered.

It was well enough that we crossed thus early, for the waves now ran quite high, and we should have been obliged to go round somewhat, but beyond this point we had comparatively smooth water. You can commonly go along one side or the other of a lake, when you cannot cross it.

The Indian was looking at the hard-wood ridges from time to time, and said that he would like to buy a few hundred acres somewhere about this lake, asking our advice. It was to buy as near the crossing-place as possible.

My companion and I, having a minute's discussion on some point of ancient history, were amused by the attitude which the Indian, who could not tell what we were talking about, assumed. He constituted himself umpire, and, judging by our air and gesture, he

very seriously remarked from time to time, "you beat," or "he beat."

Leaving a spacious bay, a northeasterly prolongation of Chamberlain Lake, on our left, we entered through a short strait into a small lake a couple of miles over, called on the map *Telasinis*, but the Indian had no distinct name for it, and thence into *Telos* Lake, which he called *Paytaywecomgomoc*, or Burnt-Ground Lake. This curved round toward the northeast, and may have been three or four miles long as we paddled. He had not been here since 1825. He did not know what Telos meant; thought it was not Indian. He used the word "*spokelogan*" (for an inlet in the shore which led nowhere), and when I asked its meaning said that there was "no Indian in 'em." There was a clearing, with a house and barn, on the southwest shore, temporarily occupied by some men who were getting the hay, as we had been told; also a clearing for a pasture on a hill on the west side of the lake.

We landed on a rocky point on the northeast side, to look at some red pines (*Pinus resinosa*), the first we had noticed, and get some cones, for our few which grow in Concord do not bear any.

The outlet from the lake into the East Branch of the Penobscot is an artificial one, and it was not very apparent where it was exactly, but the lake ran curving far up northeasterly into two narrow valleys or ravines, as if it had for a long time been groping its way toward the Penobscot waters, or remembered when it anciently flowed there; by observing where the horizon was lowest, and following the longest of these, we at length reached the dam, having come about a dozen miles from the last camp. Somebody had left a line set for trout, and the jack knife with which the bait had been cut on the dam beside it, an evidence that man was near, and on a deserted log close by a loaf of bread baked in a Yankee baker. These proved the property of a solitary hunter, whom we soon met, and canoe and gun and traps were not far off. He told us that it was twenty miles farther on our route to the foot of Grand Lake, where you could catch as many trout as you wanted, and that the first house below the foot of the lake, on the East Branch, was Hunt's, about forty-five miles farther; though there was one about a mile and a half up Trout Stream, some fifteen miles ahead, but it was rather a blind route to it. It turned out that, though the stream was in our favor, we did not

reach the next house till the morning of the third day after this. The nearest permanently inhabited house behind us was now a dozen miles distant, so that the interval between the two nearest houses on our route was about sixty miles.

This hunter, who was a quite small, sunburnt man, having already carried his canoe over, and baked his loaf, had nothing so interesting and pressing to do as to observe our transit. He had been out a month or more alone. How much more wild and adventurous his life than that of the hunter in Concord woods, who gets back to his house and the mill-dam every night! Yet they in the towns who have wild oats to sow commonly sow them on cultivated and comparatively exhausted ground. And as for the rowdy world in the large cities, so little enterprise has it that it never adventures in this direction, but like vermin clubs together in alleys and drinking-saloons, its highest accomplishment, perchance, to run beside a fire-engine and throw brickbats. But the former is comparatively an independent and successful man, getting his living in a way that he likes, without disturbing his human neighbors. How much more respectable also is the life of the solitary pioneer or settler in these, or any woods, — having real difficulties, not of his own creation, drawing his subsistence directly from nature, — than that of the helpless multitudes in the towns who depend on gratifying the extremely artificial wants of society and are thrown out of employment by hard times!

Here for the first time we found the raspberries really plenty, — that is, on passing the height of land between the Allegash and the East Branch of the Penobscot; the same was true of the blueberries.

Telos Lake, the head of the St. John on this side, and Webster Pond, the head of the East Branch of the Penobscot, are only about a mile apart, and they are connected by a ravine, in which but little digging was required to make the water of the former, which is the highest, flow into the latter. This canal, which is something less than a mile long and about four rods wide, was made a few years before my first visit to Maine. Since then the lumber of the upper Allegash and its lakes has been run down the Penobscot, that is, up the Allegash, which here consists principally of a chain of large and stagnant lakes, whose thoroughfares, or river-links, have been made

nearly equally stagnant by damming, and then down the Penobscot. The rush of the water has produced such changes in the canal that it has now the appearance of a very rapid mountain stream flowing through a ravine, and you would not suspect that any digging had been required to persuade the waters of the St. John to flow into the Penobscot here. It was so winding that one could see but little way down.

It is stated by Springer, in his "Forest Life," that the cause of this canal being dug was this: according to the treaty of 1842 with Great Britain, it was agreed that all the timber run down the St. John, which rises in Maine, "when within the Province of New Brunswick ... shall be dealt with as if it were the produce of the said Province," which was thought by our side to mean that it should be free from taxation. Immediately, the Province, wishing to get something out of the Yankees, levied a duty on all the timber that passed down the St. John; but to satisfy its own subjects "made a corresponding discount on the stumpage charged those hauling timber from the crown lands." The result was that the Yankees made the St. John run the other way, or down the Penobscot, so that the Province lost both its duty and its water, while the Yankees, being greatly enriched, had reason to thank it for the suggestion.

It is wonderful how well watered this country is. As you paddle across a lake, bays will be pointed out to you, by following up which, and perhaps the tributary stream which empties in, you may, after a short portage, or possibly, at some seasons, none at all, get into another river, which empties far away from the one you are on. Generally, you may go in any direction in a canoe, by making frequent but not very long portages. You are only realizing once more what all nature distinctly remembers here, for no doubt the waters flowed thus in a former geological period, and, instead of being a lake country, it was an archipelago. It seems as if the more youthful and impressible streams can hardly resist the numerous invitations and temptations to leave their native beds and run down their neighbors' channels. Your carries are often over half-submerged ground, on the dry channels of a former period. In carrying from one river to another, I did not go over such high and rocky ground as in going about the falls of the same river. For in the

former case I was once lost in a swamp, as I have related, and, again, found an artificial canal which appeared to be natural.

I remember once dreaming of pushing a canoe up the rivers of Maine, and that, when I had got so high that the channels were dry, I kept on through the ravines and gorges, nearly as well as before, by pushing a little harder, and now it seemed to me that my dream was partially realized.

Wherever there is a channel for water, there is a road for the canoe. The pilot of the steamer which ran from Oldtown up the Penobscot in 1854 told me that she drew only fourteen inches, and would run easily in two feet of water, though they did not like to. It is said that some Western steamers can run on a heavy dew, whence we can imagine what a canoe may do. Montresor, who was sent from Quebec by the English about 1760 to explore the route to the Kennebec, over which Arnold afterward passed, supplied the Penobscot near its source with water by opening the beaver-dams, and he says, "This is often done." He afterward states that the Governor of Canada had forbidden to molest the beaver about the outlet of the Kennebec from Moosehead Lake, on account of the service which their dams did by raising the water for navigation.

This canal, so called, was a considerable and extremely rapid and rocky river. The Indian decided that there was water enough in it without raising the dam, which would only make it more violent, and that he would run down it alone, while we carried the greater part of the baggage. Our provision being about half consumed, there was the less left in the canoe. We had thrown away the pork-keg, and wrapt its contents in birch bark, which is the unequaled wrapping-paper of the woods.

Following a moist trail through the forest, we reached the head of Webster Pond about the same time with the Indian, notwithstanding the velocity with which he moved, our route being the most direct. The Indian name of Webster Stream, of which this pond is the source, is, according to him, *Madunkchunk*, i. e.*, Height of Land, and of the pond,* Madunkchunk-gamooc, or Height of Land Pond. The latter was two or three miles long. We passed near a pine on its shore which had been splintered by lightning, perhaps the day before. This was the first proper East Branch Penobscot water that we came to.

At the outlet of Webster Lake was another dam, at which we stopped and picked raspberries, while the Indian went down the stream a half-mile through the forest, to see what he had got to contend with. There was a deserted log camp here, apparently used the previous winter, with its "hovel" or barn for cattle. In the hut was a large fir twig bed, raised two feet from the floor, occupying a large part of the single apartment, a long narrow table against the wall, with a stout log bench before it, and above the table a small window, the only one there was, which admitted a feeble light. It was a simple and strong fort erected against the cold, and suggested what valiant trencher work had been done there. I discovered one or two curious wooden traps, which had not been used for a long time, in the woods near by. The principal part consisted of a long and slender pole.

We got our dinner on the shore, on the upper side of the dam. As we were sitting by our fire, concealed by the earth bank of the dam, a long line of sheldrake, half-grown, came waddling over it from the water below, passing within about a rod of us, so that we could almost have caught them in our hands. They were very abundant on all the streams and lakes which we visited, and every two or three hours they would rush away in a long string over the water before us, twenty to fifty of them at once, rarely ever flying, but running with great rapidity up or down the stream, even in the midst of the most violent rapids, and apparently as fast up as down, or else crossing diagonally, the old, as it appeared, behind, and driving them, and flying to the front from time to time, as if to direct them. We also saw many small black dippers, which behaved in a similar manner, and, once or twice, a few black ducks.

An Indian at Oldtown had told us that we should be obliged to carry ten miles between Telos Lake on the St. John and Second Lake on the East Branch of the Penobscot; but the lumberers whom we met assured us that there would not be more than a mile of carry. It turned out that the Indian, who had lately been over this route, was nearest right, as far as we were concerned. However, if one of us could have assisted the Indian in managing the canoe in the rapids, we might have run the greater part of the way; but as he was alone in the management of the canoe in such places, we were obliged to walk the greater part. I did not feel quite ready to try such an

experiment on Webster Stream, which has so bad a reputation. According to my observation, a batteau, properly manned, shoots rapids as a matter of course, which a single Indian with a canoe carries round.

My companion and I carried a good part of the baggage on our shoulders, while the Indian took that which would be least injured by wet in the canoe. We did not know when we should see him again, for he had not been this way since the canal was cut, nor for more than thirty years. He agreed to stop when he got to smooth water, come up and find our path if he could, and halloo for us, and after waiting a reasonable time go on and try again, — and we were to look out in like manner for him.

He commenced by running through the sluiceway and over the dam, as usual, standing up in his tossing canoe, and was soon out of sight behind a point in a wild gorge. This Webster Stream is well known to lumbermen as a difficult one. It is exceedingly rapid and rocky, and also shallow, and can hardly be considered navigable, unless that may mean that what is launched in it is sure to be carried swiftly down it, though it may be dashed to pieces by the way. It is somewhat like navigating a thunder-spout. With commonly an irresistible force urging you on, you have got to choose your own course each moment, between the rocks and shallows, and to get into it, moving forward always with the utmost possible moderation, and often holding on, if you can, that you may inspect the rapids before you.

By the Indian's direction we took an old path on the south side, which appeared to keep down the stream, though at a considerable distance from it, cutting off bends, perhaps to Second Lake, having first taken the course from the map with a compass, which was northeasterly, for safety. It was a wild wood-path, with a few tracks of oxen which had been driven over it, probably to some old camp clearing, for pasturage, mingled with the tracks of moose which had lately used it. We kept on steadily for about an hour without putting down our packs, occasionally winding around or climbing over a fallen tree, for the most part far out of sight and hearing of the river; till, after walking about three miles, we were glad to find that the path came to the river again at an old camp ground, where there was

a small opening in the forest, at which we paused. Swiftly as the shallow and rocky river ran here, a continuous rapid with dancing waves, I saw, as I sat on the shore, a long string of sheldrakes, which something scared, run up the opposite side of the stream by me, with the same ease that they commonly did down it, just touching the surface of the waves, and getting an impulse from them as they flowed from under them; but they soon came back, driven by the Indian, who had fallen a little behind us on account of the windings. He shot round a point just above, and came to land by us with considerable water in his canoe. He had found it, as he said, "very strong water," and had been obliged to land once before to empty out what he had taken in. He complained that it strained him to paddle so hard in order to keep his canoe straight in its course, having no one in the bows to aid him, and, shallow as it was, said that it would be no joke to upset there, for the force of the water was such that he had as lief I would strike him over the head with a paddle as have that water strike him. Seeing him come out of that gap was as if you should pour water down an inclined and zigzag trough, then drop a nutshell into it, and, taking a short cut to the bottom, get there in time to see it come out, notwithstanding the rush and tumult, right side up, and only partly full of water.

After a moment's breathing-space, while I held his canoe, he was soon out of sight again around another bend, and we, shouldering our packs, resumed our course.

We did not at once fall into our path again, but made our way with difficulty along the edge of the river, till at length, striking inland through the forest, we recovered it. Before going a mile we heard the Indian calling to us. He had come up through the woods and along the path to find us, having reached sufficiently smooth water to warrant his taking us in. The shore was about one fourth of a mile distant, through a dense, dark forest, and as he led us back to it, winding rapidly about to the right and left, I had the curiosity to look down carefully, and found that he was following his steps backward. I could only occasionally perceive his trail in the moss, and yet he did not appear to look down nor hesitate an instant, but led us out exactly to his canoe. This surprised me; for without a compass, or the sight or noise of the river to guide us, we could not have kept our

course many minutes, and could have retraced our steps but a short distance, with a great deal of pains and very slowly, using a laborious circumspection. But it was evident that he could go back through the forest wherever he had been during the day.

After this rough walking in the dark woods it was an agreeable change to glide down the rapid river in the canoe once more. This river, which was about the size of our Assabet (in Concord), though still very swift, was almost perfectly smooth here, and showed a very visible declivity, a regularly inclined plane, for several miles, like a mirror set a little aslant, on which we coasted down. This very obvious regular descent, particularly plain when I regarded the water-line against the shores, made a singular impression on me, which the swiftness of our motion probably enhanced, so that we seemed to be gliding down a much steeper declivity than we were, and that we could not save ourselves from rapids and falls if we should suddenly come to them. My companion did not perceive this slope, but I have a surveyor's eyes, and I satisfied myself that it was no ocular illusion. You could tell at a glance on approaching such a river which way the water flowed, though you might perceive no motion. I observed the angle at which a level line would strike the surface, and calculated the amount of fall in a rod, which did not need to be remarkably great to produce this effect.

It was very exhilarating, and the perfection of traveling, quite unlike floating on our dead Concord River, the coasting down this inclined mirror, which was now and then gently winding, down a mountain, indeed, between two evergreen forests, edged with lofty dead white pines, sometimes slanted half-way over the stream, and destined soon to bridge it. I saw some monsters there, nearly destitute of branches, and scarcely diminishing in diameter for eighty or ninety feet.

As we thus swept along, our Indian repeated in a deliberate and drawling tone the words "Daniel Webster, great lawyer," apparently reminded of him by the name of the stream, and he described his calling on him once in Boston, at what he supposed was his boarding-house. He had no business with him, but merely went to pay his respects, as we should say. In answer to our questions, he described his person well enough. It was on the day after Webster

delivered his Bunker Hill oration, which I believe Polis heard. The first time he called he waited till he was tired without seeing him, and then went away. The next time, he saw him go by the door of the room in which he was waiting several times, in his shirt-sleeves, without noticing him. He thought that if he had come to see Indians, they would not have treated him so. At length, after very long delay, he came in, walked toward him, and asked in a loud voice, gruffly, "What do you want?" and he, thinking at first, by the motion of his hand, that he was going to strike him, said to himself, "You'd better take care; if you try that I shall know what to do." He did not like him, and declared that all he said "was not worth talk about a musquash." We suggested that probably Mr. Webster was very busy, and had a great many visitors just then.

Coming to falls and rapids, our easy progress was suddenly terminated. The Indian went alongshore to inspect the water, while we climbed over the rocks, picking berries. The peculiar growth of blueberries on the tops of large rocks here made the impression of high land, and indeed this was the Height-of-Land Stream. When the Indian came back, he remarked, "You got to walk; ver strong water." So, taking out his canoe, he launched it again below the falls, and was soon out of sight. At such times he would step into the canoe, take up his paddle, and, with an air of mystery, start off, looking far down-stream, and keeping his own counsel, as if absorbing all the intelligence of forest and stream into himself; but I sometimes detected a little fun in his face, which could yield to my sympathetic smile, for he was thoroughly good-humored. We meanwhile scrambled along the shore with our packs, without any path. This was the last of *our* boating for the day.

The prevailing rock here was a kind of slate, standing on its edges, and my companion, who was recently from California, thought it exactly like that in which the gold is found, and said that if he had had a pan he would have liked to wash a little of the sand here.

The Indian now got along much faster than we, and waited for us from time to time. I found here the only cool spring that I drank at anywhere on this excursion, a little water filling a hollow in the sandy bank. It was a quite memorable event, and due to the elevation

of the country, for wherever else we had been the water in the rivers and the streams emptying in was dead and warm, compared with that of a mountainous region. It was very bad walking along the shore over fallen and drifted trees and bushes, and rocks, from time to time swinging ourselves round over the water, or else taking to a gravel bar or going inland. At one place, the Indian being ahead, I was obliged to take off all my clothes in order to ford a small but deep stream emptying in, while my companion, who was inland, found a rude bridge, high up in the woods, and I saw no more of him for some time. I saw there very fresh moose tracks, found a new goldenrod to me (perhaps *Solidago thyrsoidea*), and I passed one white pine log, which had lodged, in the forest near the edge of the stream, which was quite five feet in diameter at the butt. Probably its size detained it.

Shortly after this I overtook the Indian at the edge of some burnt land, which extended three or four miles at least, beginning about three miles above Second Lake, which we were expecting to reach that night, and which is about ten miles from Telos Lake. This burnt region was still more rocky than before, but, though comparatively open, we could not yet see the lake. Not having seen my companion for some time, I climbed, with the Indian, a singular high rock on the edge of the river, forming a narrow ridge only a foot or two wide at top, in order to look for him; and, after calling many times, I at length heard him answer from a considerable distance inland, he having taken a trail which led off from the river, perhaps directly to the lake, and was now in search of the river again. Seeing a much higher rock, of the same character, about one third of a mile farther east, or down-stream, I proceeded toward it, through the burnt land, in order to look for the lake from its summit, supposing that the Indian would keep down the stream in his canoe, and hallooing all the while that my companion might join me on the way. Before we came together I noticed where a moose, which possibly I had scared by my shouting, had apparently just run along a large rotten trunk of a pine, which made a bridge, thirty or forty feet long, over a hollow, as convenient for him as for me. The tracks were as large as those of an ox, but an ox could not have crossed there. This burnt land was an exceedingly wild and desolate region. Judging by the weeds and

sprouts, it appeared to have been burnt about two years before. It was covered with charred trunks, either prostrate or standing, which crocked our clothes and hands, and we could not easily have distinguished a bear there by his color. Great shells of trees, sometimes unburnt without, or burnt on one side only, but black within, stood twenty or forty feet high. The fire had run up inside, as in a chimney, leaving the sap-wood. Sometimes we crossed a rocky ravine fifty feet wide, on a fallen trunk; and there were great fields of fire-weed (*Epilobium angustifolium*) on all sides, the most extensive that I ever saw, which presented great masses of pink. Intermixed with these were blueberry and raspberry bushes.

Having crossed a second rocky ridge like the first, when I was beginning to ascend the third, the Indian, whom I had left on the shore some fifty rods behind, beckoned to me to come to him, but I made sign that I would first ascend the highest rock before me, whence I expected to see the lake. My companion accompanied me to the top. This was formed just like the others. Being struck with the perfect parallelism of these singular rock hills, however much one might be in advance of another, I took out my compass and found that they lay northwest and southeast, the rock being on its edge, and sharp edges they were. This one, to speak from memory, was perhaps a third of a mile in length, but quite narrow, rising gradually from the northwest to the height of about eighty feet, but steep on the southeast end. The southwest side was as steep as an ordinary roof, or as we could safely climb; the northeast was an abrupt precipice from which you could jump clean to the bottom, near which the river flowed; while the level top of the ridge, on which you walked along, was only from one to three or four feet in width. For a rude illustration, take the half of a pear cut in two lengthwise, lay it on its flat side, the stem to the northwest, and then halve it vertically in the direction of its length, keeping the southwest half. Such was the general form.

There was a remarkable series of these great rock-waves revealed by the burning; breakers, as it were. No wonder that the river that found its way through them was rapid and obstructed by falls. No doubt the absence of soil on these rocks, or its dryness where there was any, caused this to be a very thorough burning. We could see the

lake over the woods, two or three miles ahead, and that the river made an abrupt turn southward around the northwest end of the cliff on which we stood, or a little above us, so that we had cut off a bend, and that there was an important fall in it a short distance below us. I could see the canoe a hundred rods behind, but now on the opposite shore, and supposed that the Indian had concluded to take out and carry round some bad rapids on that side, and that that might be what he had beckoned to me for; but after waiting a while I could still see nothing of him, and I observed to my companion that I wondered where he was, though I began to suspect that he had gone inland to look for the lake from some hilltop on that side, as we had done. This proved to be the case; for after I had started to return to the canoe, I heard a faint halloo, and descried him on the top of a distant rocky hill on that side. But as, after a long time had elapsed, I still saw his canoe in the same place, and he had not returned to it, and appeared in no hurry to do so, and, moreover, as I remembered that he had previously beckoned to me, I thought that there might be something more to delay him than I knew, and began to return northwest, along the ridge, toward the angle in the river. My companion, who had just been separated from us, and had even contemplated the necessity of camping alone, wishing to husband his steps, and yet to keep with us, inquired where I was going; to which I answered that I was going far enough back to communicate with the Indian, and that then I thought we had better go along the shore together, and keep him in sight.

When we reached the shore, the Indian appeared from out the woods on the opposite side, but on account of the roar of the water it was difficult to communicate with him. He kept along the shore westward to his canoe, while we stopped at the angle where the stream turned southward around the precipice. I again said to my companion that we would keep along the shore and keep the Indian in sight. We started to do so, being close together, the Indian behind us having launched his canoe again, but just then I saw the latter, who had crossed to our side, forty or fifty rods behind, beckoning to me, and I called to my companion, who had just disappeared behind large rocks at the point of the precipice, three or four rods before me, on his way down the stream, that I was going to help the Indian a moment. I did so, — helped get the canoe over a fall, lying with my

breast over a rock, and holding one end while he received it below, — and within ten or fifteen minutes at most I was back again at the point where the river turned southward, in order to catch up with my companion, while Polis glided down the river alone, parallel with me. But to my surprise, when I rounded the precipice, though the shore was bare of trees, without rocks, for a quarter of a mile at least, my companion was not to be seen. It was as if he had sunk into the earth. This was the more unaccountable to me, because I knew that his feet were, since our swamp walk, very sore, and that he wished to keep with the party; and besides this was very bad walking, climbing over or about the rocks. I hastened along, hallooing and searching for him, thinking he might be concealed behind a rock, yet doubting if he had not taken the other side of the precipice, but the Indian had got along still faster in his canoe, till he was arrested by the falls, about a quarter of a mile below. He then landed, and said that we could go no farther that night. The sun was setting, and on account of falls and rapids we should be obliged to leave this river and carry a good way into another farther east. The first thing then was to find my companion, for I was now very much alarmed about him, and I sent the Indian along the shore down-stream, which began to be covered with unburnt wood again just below the falls, while I searched backward about the precipice which we had passed. The Indian showed some unwillingness to exert himself, complaining that he was very tired, in consequence of his day's work, that it had strained him very much getting down so many rapids alone; but he went off calling somewhat like an owl. I remembered that my companion was near-sighted, and I feared that he had either fallen from the precipice, or fainted and sunk down amid the rocks beneath it. I shouted and searched above and below this precipice in the twilight till I could not see, expecting nothing less than to find his body beneath it. For half an hour I anticipated and believed only the worst. I thought what I should do the next day if I did not find him, what I *could* do in such a wilderness, and how his relatives would feel, if I should return without him. I felt that if he were really lost away from the river there, it would be a desperate undertaking to find him; and where were they who could help you? What would it be to raise the country, where there were only two or three camps, twenty

or thirty miles apart, and no road, and perhaps nobody at home? Yet we must try the harder, the less the prospect of success.

I rushed down from this precipice to the canoe in order to fire the Indian's gun, but found that my companion had the caps. I was still thinking of getting it off when the Indian returned. He had not found him, but he said that he had seen his tracks once or twice along the shore. This encouraged me very much. He objected to firing the gun, saying that if my companion heard it, which was not likely, on account of the roar of the stream, it would tempt him to come toward us, and he might break his neck in the dark. For the same reason we refrained from lighting a fire on the highest rock. I proposed that we should both keep down the stream to the lake, or that I should go at any rate, but the Indian said: "No use, can't do anything in the dark; come morning, then we find 'em. No harm, — he make 'em camp. No bad animals here, no gristly bears, such as in California, where he's been, — warm night, — he well off as you and I." I considered that if he was well he could do without us. He had just lived eight years in California, and had plenty of experience with wild beasts and wilder men, was peculiarly accustomed to make journeys of great length; but if he were sick or dead, he was near where we were. The darkness in the woods was by this so thick that it alone decided the question. We must camp where we were. I knew that he had his knapsack, with blankets and matches, and, if well, would fare no worse than we, except that he would have no supper nor society.

This side of the river being so encumbered with rocks, we crossed to the eastern or smoother shore, and proceeded to camp there, within two or three rods of the falls. We pitched no tent, but lay on the sand, putting a few handfuls of grass and twigs under us, there being no evergreen at hand. For fuel we had some of the charred stumps. Our various bags of provisions had got quite wet in the rapids, and I arranged them about the fire to dry. The fall close by was the principal one on this stream, and it shook the earth under us. It was a cool, because dewy, night; the more so, probably, owing to the nearness of the falls. The Indian complained a good deal, and thought afterward that he got a cold there which occasioned a more serious illness. We were not much troubled by mosquitoes at any rate. I lay awake a good deal from anxiety, but, unaccountably to myself, was

at length comparatively at ease respecting him. At first I had apprehended the worst, but now I had little doubt but that I should find him in the morning. From time to time I fancied that I heard his voice calling through the roar of the falls from the opposite side of the river; but it is doubtful if we could have heard him across the stream there. Sometimes I doubted whether the Indian had really seen his tracks, since he manifested an unwillingness to make much of a search, and then my anxiety returned.

It was the most wild and desolate region we had camped in, where, if anywhere, one might expect to meet with befitting inhabitants, but I heard only the squeak of a nighthawk flitting over. The moon in her first quarter, in the fore part of the night, setting over the bare rocky hills garnished with tall, charred, and hollow stumps or shells of trees, served to reveal the desolation.

* * * * *

THURSDAY, July 30.

I aroused the Indian early this morning to go in search of our companion, expecting to find him within a mile or two, farther down the stream. The Indian wanted his breakfast first, but I reminded him that my companion had had neither breakfast nor supper. We were obliged first to carry our canoe and baggage over into another stream, the main East Branch, about three fourths of a mile distant, for Webster Stream was no farther navigable. We went twice over this carry, and the dewy bushes wet us through like water up to the middle; I hallooed in a high key from time to time, though I had little expectation that I could be heard over the roar of the rapids, and, moreover, we were necessarily on the opposite side of the stream to him. In going over this portage the last time, the Indian, who was before me with the canoe on his head, stumbled and fell heavily once, and lay for a moment silent, as if in pain. I hastily stepped forward to help him, asking if he was much hurt, but after a moment's pause, without replying, he sprang up and went forward. He was all the way subject to taciturn fits, but they were harmless ones.

We had launched our canoe and gone but little way down the East Branch, when I heard an answering shout from my companion, and soon after saw him standing on a point where there was a clearing a quarter of a mile below, and the smoke of his fire was rising near by. Before I saw him I naturally shouted again and again, but the Indian curtly remarked, "He hears you," as if once was enough. It was just below the mouth of Webster Stream. When we arrived, he was smoking his pipe, and said that he had passed a pretty comfortable night, though it was rather cold, on account of the dew.

It appeared that when we stood together the previous evening, and I was shouting to the Indian across the river, he, being near-sighted, had not seen the Indian nor his canoe, and when I went back to the Indian's assistance, did not see which way I went, and supposed that we were below and not above him, and so, making haste to catch up, he ran away from us. Having reached this clearing, a mile or more below our camp, the night overtook him, and he made a fire in a little

hollow, and lay down by it in his blanket, still thinking that we were ahead of him. He thought it likely that he had heard the Indian call once the evening before, but mistook it for an owl. He had seen one botanical rarity before it was dark, — pure white *Epilobium angustifolium* amidst the fields of pink ones, in the burnt lands. He had already stuck up the remnant of a lumberer's shirt, found on the point, on a pole by the waterside, for a signal, and attached a note to it, to inform us that he had gone on to the lake, and that if he did not find us there, he would be back in a couple of hours. If he had not found us soon, he had some thoughts of going back in search of the solitary hunter whom we had met at Telos Lake, ten miles behind, and, if successful, hire him to take him to Bangor. But if this hunter had moved as fast as we, he would have been twenty miles off by this time, and who could guess in what direction? It would have been like looking for a needle in a haymow, to search for him in these woods. He had been considering how long he could live on berries alone.

We substituted for his note a card containing our names and destination, and the date of our visit, which Polis neatly inclosed in a piece of birch bark to keep it dry. This has probably been read by some hunter or explorer ere this.

We all had good appetites for the breakfast which we made haste to cook here, and then, having partially dried our clothes, we glided swiftly down the winding stream toward Second Lake.

As the shores became flatter with frequent gravel and sand-bars, and the stream more winding in the lower land near the lake, elms and ash trees made their appearance; also the wild yellow lily (*Lilium Canadense*), some of whose bulbs I collected for a soup. On some ridges the burnt land extended as far as the lake. This was a very beautiful lake, two or three miles long, with high mountains on the southwest side, the (as our Indian said) *Nerlumskeechticook*, i. e., Deadwater Mountain. It appears to be the same called Carbuncle Mountain on the map. According to Polis, it extends in separate elevations all along this and the next lake, which is much larger. The lake, too, I think, is called by the same name, or perhaps with the addition of *gamoc* or *mooc*. The morning was a bright one, and perfectly still and serene, the lake as smooth as glass, we making the only ripple as we paddled into it. The dark mountains about it were

seen through a glaucous mist, and the brilliant white stems of canoe birches mingled with the other woods around it. The wood thrush sang on the distant shore, and the laugh of some loons, sporting in a concealed western bay, as if inspired by the morning, came distinct over the lake to us, and, what was more remarkable, the echo which ran round the lake was much louder than the original note; probably because, the loon being in a regularly curving bay under the mountain, we were exactly in the focus of many echoes, the sound being reflected like light from a concave mirror. The beauty of the scene may have been enhanced to our eyes by the fact that we had just come together again after a night of some anxiety. This reminded me of the Ambejijis Lake on the West Branch, which I crossed in my first coming to Maine. Having paddled down three quarters of the lake, we came to a standstill, while my companion let down for fish. A white (or whitish) gull sat on a rock which rose above the surface in mid-lake not far off, quite in harmony with the scene; and as we rested there in the warm sun, we heard one loud crushing or crackling sound from the forest, forty or fifty rods distant, as of a stick broken by the foot of some large animal. Even this was an interesting incident there. In the midst of our dreams of giant lake trout, even then supposed to be nibbling, our fishermen drew up a diminutive red perch, and we took up our paddles again in haste.

It was not apparent where the outlet of this lake was, and while the Indian thought it was in one direction, I thought it was in another. He said, “I bet you four-pence it is there,” but he still held on in my direction, which proved to be the right one. As we were approaching the outlet, it being still early in the forenoon, he suddenly exclaimed, “Moose! moose!” and told us to be still. He put a cap on his gun, and, standing up in the stern, rapidly pushed the canoe straight toward the shore and the moose. It was a cow moose, about thirty rods off, standing in the water by the side of the outlet, partly behind some fallen timber and bushes, and at that distance she did not look very large. She was flapping her large ears, and from time to time poking off the flies with her nose from some part of her body. She did not appear much alarmed by our neighborhood, only occasionally turned her head and looked straight at us, and then gave her attention to the flies again. As we approached nearer she got out of the water,

stood higher, and regarded us more suspiciously. Polis pushed the canoe steadily forward in the shallow water, and I for a moment forgot the moose in attending to some pretty rose-colored Polygonums just rising above the surface, but the canoe soon grounded in the mud eight or ten rods distant from the moose, and the Indian seized his gun and prepared to fire. After standing still a moment, she turned slowly, as usual, so as to expose her side, and he improved this moment to fire, over our heads. She thereupon moved off eight or ten rods at a moderate pace, across a shallow bay, to an old standing-place of hers, behind some fallen red maples, on the opposite shore, and there she stood still again a dozen or fourteen rods from us, while the Indian hastily loaded and fired twice at her, without her moving. My companion, who passed him his caps and bullets, said that Polis was as excited as a boy of fifteen, that his hand trembled, and he once put his ramrod back upside down. This was remarkable for so experienced a hunter. Perhaps he was anxious to make a good shot before us. The white hunter had told me that the Indians were not good shots, because they were excited, though he said that we had got a good hunter with us.

The Indian now pushed quickly and quietly back, and a long distance round, in order to get into the outlet, — for he had fired over the neck of a peninsula between it and the lake, — till we approached the place where the moose had stood, when he exclaimed, “She is a goner!” and was surprised that we did not see her as soon as he did. There, to be sure, she lay perfectly dead, with her tongue hanging out, just where she had stood to receive the last shots, looking unexpectedly large and horse-like, and we saw where the bullets had scarred the trees.

Using a tape, I found that the moose measured just six feet from the shoulder to the tip of the hoof, and was eight feet long as she lay. Some portions of the body, for a foot in diameter, were almost covered with flies, apparently the common fly of our woods, with a dark spot on the wing, and not the very large ones which occasionally pursued us in midstream, though both are called moose-flies.

Polis, preparing to skin the moose, asked me to help him find a stone on which to sharpen his large knife. It being all a flat alluvial

ground where the moose had fallen, covered with red maples, etc., this was no easy matter; we searched far and wide, a long time, till at length I found a flat kind of slate-stone, and soon after he returned with a similar one, on which he soon made his knife very sharp.

While he was skinning the moose, I proceeded to ascertain what kind of fishes were to be found in the sluggish and muddy outlet. The greatest difficulty was to find a pole. It was almost impossible to find a slender, straight pole ten or twelve feet long in those woods. You might search half an hour in vain. They are commonly spruce, arbor-vitæ, fir, etc., short, stout, and branchy, and do not make good fish-poles, even after you have patiently cut off all their tough and scraggy branches. The fishes were red perch and chivin.

The Indian, having cut off a large piece of sirloin, the upper lip, and the tongue, wrapped them in the hide, and placed them in the bottom of the canoe, observing that there was "one man," meaning the weight of one. Our load had previously been reduced some thirty pounds, but a hundred pounds were now added, — a serious addition, which made our quarters still more narrow, and considerably increased the danger on the lakes and rapids, as well as the labor of the carries. The skin was ours according to custom, since the Indian was in our employ, but we did not think of claiming it. He being a skillful dresser of moose-hides would make it worth seven or eight dollars to him, as I was told. He said that he sometimes earned fifty or sixty dollars in a day at them; he had killed ten moose in one day, though the skinning and all took two days. This was the way he had got his property. There were the tracks of a calf thereabouts, which he said would come "by, by," and he could get it if we cared to wait, but I cast cold water on the project.

We continued along the outlet toward Grand Lake, through a swampy region, by a long, winding, and narrow dead water, very much choked up by wood, where we were obliged to land sometimes in order to get the canoe over a log. It was hard to find any channel, and we did not know but we should be lost in the swamp. It abounded in ducks, as usual. At length we reached Grand Lake, which the Indian called *Matungamook*.

At the head of this we saw, coming in from the southwest, with a sweep apparently from a gorge in the mountains, Trout Stream, or

Uncardnerheese, which name, the Indian said, had something to do with mountains.

We stopped to dine on an interesting high rocky island, soon after entering Matungamook Lake, securing our canoe to the cliffy shore. It is always pleasant to step from a boat on to a large rock or cliff. Here was a good opportunity to dry our dewy blankets on the open sunny rock. Indians had recently camped here, and accidentally burned over the western end of the island, and Polis picked up a gun-case of blue broadcloth, and said that he knew the Indian it belonged to, and would carry it to him. His tribe is not so large but he may know all its effects. We proceeded to make a fire and cook our dinner amid some pines, where our predecessors had done the same, while the Indian busied himself about his moose-hide on the shore, for he said that he thought it a good plan for one to do all the cooking, i. e., I suppose, if that one were not himself. A peculiar evergreen overhung our fire, which at first glance looked like a pitch pine (P. rigida), with leaves little more than an inch long, spruce-like, but we found it to be the *Pinus Banksiana*,— "Banks's, or the Labrador Pine," also called scrub pine, gray pine, etc., a new tree to us. These must have been good specimens, for several were thirty or thirty-five feet high. Richardson found it forty feet high and upward, and states that the porcupine feeds on its bark. Here also grew the red pine (*Pinus resinosa*).

I saw where the Indians had made canoes in a little secluded hollow in the woods, on the top of the rock, where they were out of the wind, and large piles of whittlings remained. This must have been a favorite resort for their ancestors, and, indeed, we found here the point of an arrowhead, such as they have not used for two centuries and now know not how to make. The Indian, picking up a stone, remarked to me, "That very strange lock (rock)." It was a piece of hornstone, which I told him his tribe had probably brought here centuries before to make arrowheads of. He also picked up a yellowish curved bone by the side of our fireplace and asked me to guess what it was. It was one of the upper incisors of a beaver, on which some party had feasted within a year or two. I found also most of the teeth, and the skull, etc. We here dined on fried moose-meat.

One who was my companion in my two previous excursions to

these woods, tells me that when hunting up the Caucomgomoc, about two years ago, he found himself dining one day on moose-meat, mud turtle, trout, and beaver, and he thought that there were few places in the world where these dishes could easily be brought together on one table.

After the almost incessant rapids and falls of the Madunkchunk (Height-of-Land, or Webster Stream), we had just passed through the dead water of Second Lake, and were now in the much larger dead water of Grand Lake, and I thought the Indian was entitled to take an extra nap here. Ktaadn, near which we were to pass the next day, is said to mean "Highest Land." So much geography is there in their names. The Indian navigator naturally distinguishes by a name those parts of a stream where he has encountered quick water and forks, and again, the lakes and smooth water where he can rest his weary arms, since those are the most interesting and more arable parts to him. The very sight of the *Nerlumskeechticook*, or Deadwater Mountains, a day's journey off over the forest, as we first saw them, must awaken in him pleasing memories. And not less interesting is it to the white traveler, when he is crossing a placid lake in these out-of-the-way woods, perhaps thinking that he is in some sense one of the earlier discoverers of it, to be reminded that it was thus well known and suitably named by Indian hunters perhaps a thousand years ago.

Ascending the precipitous rock which formed this long narrow island, I was surprised to find that its summit was a narrow ridge, with a precipice on one side, and that its axis of elevation extended from northwest to southeast exactly like that of the great rocky ridge at the commencement of the Burnt Ground, ten miles northwesterly. The same arrangement prevailed here, and we could plainly see that the mountain ridges on the west of the lake trended the same way. Splendid large harebells nodded over the edge and in the clefts of the cliff, and the blueberries (*Vaccinium Canadense*) were for the first time really abundant in the thin soil on its top. There was no lack of them henceforward on the East Branch. There was a fine view hence over the sparkling lake, which looked pure and deep, and had two or three, in all, rocky islands in it. Our blankets being dry, we set out again, the Indian as usual having left his gazette on a tree. This time

it was we three in a canoe, my companion smoking. We paddled southward down this handsome lake, which appeared to extend nearly as far east as south, keeping near the western shore, just outside a small island, under the dark Nerlumskeechticook Mountain. For I had observed on my map that this was the course. It was three or four miles across it. It struck me that the outline of this mountain on the southwest of the lake, and of another beyond it, was not only like that of the huge rock waves of Webster Stream, but in the main like Kineo, on Moosehead Lake, having a similar but less abrupt precipice at the southeast end; in short, that all the prominent hills and ridges hereabouts were larger or smaller Kineos, and that possibly there was such a relation between Kineo and the rocks of Webster Stream.



Mount Kineo Cliff

The Indian did not know exactly where the outlet was, whether at the extreme southwest angle or more easterly, and had asked to see my plan at the last stopping-place, but I had forgotten to show it to him. As usual, he went feeling his way by a middle course between two probable points, from which he could diverge either way at last without losing much distance. In approaching the south shore, as the clouds looked gusty and the waves ran pretty high, we so steered as to get partly under the lee of an island, though at a great distance from it.

I could not distinguish the outlet till we were almost in it, and heard the water falling over the dam there.

Here was a considerable fall, and a very substantial dam, but no sign of a cabin or camp. The hunter whom we met at Telos Lake had told us that there were plenty of trout here, but at this hour they did not rise to the bait, only cousin trout, from the very midst of the rushing waters. There are not so many fishes in these rivers as in the Concord.

While we loitered here, Polis took occasion to cut with his big knife some of the hair from his moose-hide, and so lightened and prepared it for drying. I noticed at several old Indian camps in the woods the pile of hair which they had cut from their hides.

Having carried over the dam, he darted down the rapids, leaving us to walk for a mile or more, where for the most part there was no path, but very thick and difficult traveling near the stream. At length he would call to let us know where he was waiting for us with his canoe, when, on account of the windings of the stream, we did not know where the shore was, but he did not call often enough, forgetting that we were not Indians. He seemed to be very saving of his breath, — yet he would be surprised if we went by, or did not strike the right spot. This was not because he was unaccommodating, but a proof of superior manners. Indians like to get along with the least possible communication and ado. He was really paying us a great compliment all the while, thinking that we preferred a hint to a kick.

At length, climbing over the willows and fallen trees, when this was easier than to go round or under them, we overtook the canoe, and glided down the stream in smooth but swift water for several miles. I here observed again, as at Webster Stream, and on a still larger scale the next day, that the river was a smooth and regularly inclined plane down which we coasted. As we thus glided along we started the first black ducks which we had distinguished.

We decided to camp early to-night, that we might have ample time before dark; so we stopped at the first favorable shore, where there was a narrow gravelly beach on the western side, some five miles below the outlet of the lake. It was an interesting spot, where the river began to make a great bend to the east, and the last of the

peculiar moose-faced Nerlumskeechticook Mountains not far southwest of Grand Lake rose dark in the northwest a short distance behind, displaying its gray precipitous southeast side, but we could not see this without coming out upon the shore.

Two steps from the water on either side, and you come to the abrupt bushy and rooty if not turfy edge of the bank, four or five feet high, where the interminable forest begins, as if the stream had but just cut its way through it.

It is surprising on stepping ashore anywhere into this unbroken wilderness to see so often, at least within a few rods of the river, the marks of the axe, made by lumberers who have either camped here or driven logs past in previous springs. You will see perchance where, going on the same errand that you do, they have cut large chips from a tall white pine stump for their fire. While we were pitching the camp and getting supper, the Indian cut the rest of the hair from his moose-hide, and proceeded to extend it vertically on a temporary frame between two small trees, half a dozen feet from the opposite side of the fire, lashing and stretching it with arbor-vitæ bark which was always at hand, and in this case was stripped from one of the trees it was tied to. Asking for a new kind of tea, he made us some, pretty good, of the checkerberry (*Gaultheria procumbens*), which covered the ground, dropping a little bunch of it tied up with cedar bark into the kettle; but it was not quite equal to the *Chiogenes*. We called this therefore Checkerberry-Tea Camp.

I was struck with the abundance of the *Linnæa borealis*, checkerberry, and *Chiogenes hispidula*, almost everywhere in the Maine woods. The wintergreen (*Chimaphila umbellata*) was still in bloom here, and clintonia berries were abundant and ripe. This handsome plant is one of the most common in that forest. We here first noticed the moose-wood in fruit on the banks. The prevailing trees were spruce (commonly black), arbor-vitæ, canoe birch (black ash and elms beginning to appear), yellow birch, red maple, and a little hemlock skulking in the forest. The Indian said that the white maple punk was the best for tinder, that yellow birch punk was pretty good, but hard. After supper he put on the moose tongue and lips to boil, cutting out the *septum*. He showed me how to write on the under side of birch bark, with a black spruce twig, which is hard and

tough, and can be brought to a point.

The Indian wandered off into the woods a short distance just before night, and, coming back, said, "Me found great treasure, — fifty, sixty dollars' worth." "What's that?" we asked. "Steel traps, under a log, thirty or forty, I didn't count 'em. I guess Indian work, — worth three dollars apiece." It was a singular coincidence that he should have chanced to walk to and look under that particular log, in that trackless forest.

I saw chivin and chub in the stream when washing my hands, but my companion tried in vain to catch them. I also heard the sound of bullfrogs from a swamp on the opposite side, thinking at first that they were moose; a duck paddled swiftly by; and sitting in that dusky wilderness, under that dark mountain, by the bright river which was full of reflected light, still I heard the wood thrush sing, as if no higher civilization could be attained. By this time the night was upon us.

You commonly make your camp just at sundown, and are collecting wood, getting your supper, or pitching your tent while the shades of night are gathering around and adding to the already dense gloom of the forest. You have no time to explore or look around you before it is dark. You may penetrate half a dozen rods farther into that twilight wilderness, after some dry bark to kindle your fire with, and wonder what mysteries lie hidden still deeper in it, say at the end of a long day's walk; or you may run down to the shore for a dipper of water, and get a clearer view for a short distance up or down the stream, and while you stand there, see a fish leap, or duck alight in the river, or hear a wood thrush or robin sing in the woods. That is as if you had been to town or civilized parts. But there is no sauntering off to see the country, and ten or fifteen rods seems a great way from your companions, and you come back with the air of a much-traveled man, as from a long journey, with adventures to relate, though you may have heard the crackling of the fire all the while, — and at a hundred rods you might be lost past recovery, and have to camp out. It is all mossy and *moosey*. In some of those dense fir and spruce woods there is hardly room for the smoke to go up. The trees are a *standing* night, and every fir and spruce which you fell is a plume plucked from night's raven wing. Then at night the general stillness

is more impressive than any sound, but occasionally you hear the note of an owl farther or nearer in the woods, and if near a lake, the semihuman cry of the loons at their unearthly revels.

To-night the Indian lay between the fire and his stretched moose-hide, to avoid the mosquitoes. Indeed, he also made a small smoky fire of damp leaves at his head and his feet, and then as usual rolled up his head in his blanket. We with our veils and our wash were tolerably comfortable, but it would be difficult to pursue any sedentary occupation in the woods at this season; you cannot see to read much by the light of a fire through a veil in the evening, nor handle pencil and paper well with gloves or anointed fingers.

* * * * *

FRIDAY, July 31.

The Indian said, "You and I kill moose last night, therefore use 'em best wood. Always use hard wood to cook moose-meat." His "best wood" was rock maple. He cast the moose's lip into the fire, to burn the hair off, and then rolled it up with the meat to carry along. Observing that we were sitting down to breakfast without any pork, he said, with a very grave look, "Me want some fat," so he was told that he might have as much as he would fry.

We had smooth but swift water for a considerable distance, where we glided rapidly along, scaring up ducks and kingfishers. But, as usual, our smooth progress ere long came to an end, and we were obliged to carry canoe and all about half a mile down the right bank, around some rapids or falls. It required sharp eyes sometimes to tell which side was the carry, before you went over the falls, but Polis never failed to land us rightly. The raspberries were particularly abundant and large here, and all hands went to eating them, the Indian remarking on their size.

Often on bare rocky carries the trail was so indistinct that I repeatedly lost it, but when I walked behind him I observed that he could keep it almost like a hound, and rarely hesitated, or, if he paused a moment on a bare rock, his eye immediately detected some sign which would have escaped me. Frequently *we* found no path at all at these places, and were to him unaccountably delayed. He would only say it was "ver strange."

We had heard of a Grand Fall on this stream, and thought that each fall we came to must be it, but after christening several in succession with this name, we gave up the search. There were more Grand or Petty Falls than I can remember.

I cannot tell how many times we had to walk on account of falls or rapids. We were expecting all the while that the river would take a final leap and get to smooth water, but there was no improvement this forenoon. However, the carries were an agreeable variety. So surely as we stepped out of the canoe and stretched our legs we found ourselves in a blueberry and raspberry garden, each side of our rocky trail around the falls being lined with one or both. There was

not a carry on the main East Branch where we did not find an abundance of both these berries, for these were the rockiest places, and partially cleared, such as these plants prefer, and there had been none to gather the finest before us.

In our three journeys over the carries, — for we were obliged to go over the ground three times whenever the canoe was taken out, — we did full justice to the berries, and they were just what we wanted to correct the effect of our hard bread and pork diet. Another name for making a portage would have been going a-berrying. We also found a few amelanchier, or service, berries, though most were abortive, but they held on rather more generally than they do in Concord. The Indian called them *pemoymenuk*, and said that they bore much fruit in some places. He sometimes also ate the northern wild red cherries, saying that they were good medicine, but they were scarcely edible. We bathed and dined at the foot of one of these carries. It was the Indian who commonly reminded us that it was dinner-time, sometimes even by turning the prow to the shore. He once made an indirect, but lengthy apology, by saying that we might think it strange, but that one who worked hard all day was very particular to have his dinner in good season. At the most considerable fall on this stream, when I was walking over the carry, close behind the Indian, he observed a track on the rock, which was but slightly covered with soil, and, stooping, muttered "caribou." When we returned, he observed a much larger track near the same place, where some animal's foot had sunk into a small hollow in the rock, partly filled with grass and earth, and he exclaimed with surprise, "What that?" "Well, what is it?" I asked. Stooping and laying his hand in it, he answered with a mysterious air, and in a half whisper, "Devil [that is, Indian Devil, or cougar] — ledges about here — very bad animal — pull 'em rocks all to pieces." "How long since it was made?" I asked. "To-day or yesterday," said he. But when I asked him afterward if he was sure it was the devil's track, he said he did not know. I had been told that the scream of a cougar was heard about Ktaadn recently, and we were not far from that mountain.

We spent at least half the time in walking to-day, and the walking was as bad as usual, for the Indian, being alone, commonly ran down

far below the foot of the carries before he waited for us. The carry-paths themselves were more than usually indistinct, often the route being revealed only by the countless small holes in the fallen timber made by the tacks in the drivers' boots, or where there *was* a slight trail we did not find it. It was a tangled and perplexing thicket, through which we stumbled and threaded our way, and when we had finished a mile of it, our starting-point seemed far away. We were glad that we had not got to walk to Bangor along the banks of this river, which would be a journey of more than a hundred miles. Think of the denseness of the forest, the fallen trees and rocks, the windings of the river, the streams emptying in, and the frequent swamps to be crossed. It made you shudder. Yet the Indian from time to time pointed out to us where he had thus crept along day after day when he was a boy of ten, and in a starving condition. He had been hunting far north of this with two grown Indians. The winter came on unexpectedly early, and the ice compelled them to leave their canoe at Grand Lake, and walk down the bank. They shouldered their furs and started for Oldtown. The snow was not deep enough for snowshoes, or to cover the inequalities of the ground. Polis was soon too weak to carry any burden; but he managed to catch one otter. This was the most they all had to eat on this journey, and he remembered how good the yellow lily roots were, made into a soup with the otter oil. He shared this food equally with the other two, but being so small he suffered much more than they. He waded through the Mattawamkeag at its mouth, when it was freezing cold and came up to his chin, and he, being very weak and emaciated, expected to be swept away. The first house which they reached was at Lincoln, and thereabouts they met a white teamster with supplies, who, seeing their condition, gave them as much of his load as they could eat. For six months after getting home, he was very low, and did not expect to live, and was perhaps always the worse for it.

We could not find much more than half of this day's journey on our maps (the "Map of the Public Lands of Maine and Massachusetts," and "Colton's Railroad and Township Map of Maine," which copies the former). By the maps there was not more than fifteen miles between camps at the outside, and yet we had been busily progressing all day, and much of the time very rapidly.

For seven or eight miles below that succession of “Grand” falls, the aspect of the banks as well as the character of the stream was changed. After passing a tributary from the northeast, perhaps Bowlin Stream, we had good swift smooth water, with a regular slope, such as I have described. Low, grassy banks and muddy shores began. Many elms, as well as maples, and more ash trees, overhung the stream, and supplanted the spruce.

My lily roots having been lost when the canoe was taken out at a carry, I landed late in the afternoon, at a low and grassy place amid maples, to gather more. It was slow work, grubbing them up amid the sand, and the mosquitoes were all the while feasting on me. Mosquitoes, black flies, etc., pursued us in mid-channel, and we were glad sometimes to get into violent rapids, for then we escaped them.

A red-headed woodpecker flew across the river, and the Indian remarked that it was good to eat. As we glided swiftly down the inclined plane of the river, a great cat owl launched itself away from a stump on the bank, and flew heavily across the stream, and the Indian, as usual, imitated its note. Soon the same bird flew back in front of us, and we afterwards passed it perched on a tree. Soon afterward a white-headed eagle sailed down the stream before us. We drove him several miles, while we were looking for a good place to camp, for we expected to be overtaken by a shower, — and still we could distinguish him by his white tail, sailing away from time to time from some tree by the shore still farther down the stream. Some shecorways being surprised by us, a part of them dived, and we passed directly over them, and could trace their course here and there by a bubble on the surface, but we did not see them come up. Polis detected once or twice what he called a “tow” road, an indistinct path leading into the forest. In the meanwhile we passed the mouth of the Seboois on our left. This did not look so large as our stream, which was indeed the main one. It was some time before we found a camping-place, for the shore was either too grassy and muddy, where mosquitoes abounded, or too steep a hillside. The Indian said that there were but few mosquitoes on a steep hillside. We examined a good place, where somebody had camped a long time; but it seemed pitiful to occupy an old site, where there was so much room to choose, so we continued on. We at length found a place to our minds,

on the west bank, about a mile below the mouth of the Seboois, where, in a very dense spruce wood above a gravelly shore, there seemed to be but few insects. The trees were so thick that we were obliged to clear a space to build our fire and lie down in, and the young spruce trees that were left were like the wall of an apartment rising around us. We were obliged to pull ourselves up a steep bank to get there. But the place which you have selected for your camp, though never so rough and grim, begins at once to have its attractions, and becomes a very centre of civilization to you: "Home is home, be it never so homely."

It turned out that the mosquitoes were more numerous here than we had found them before, and the Indian complained a good deal, though he lay, as the night before, between three fires and his stretched hide. As I sat on a stump by the fire, with a veil and gloves on, trying to read, he observed, "I make you candle," and in a minute he took a piece of birch bark about two inches wide and rolled it hard, like an allumette fifteen inches long, lit it, and fixed it by the other end horizontally in a split stick three feet high, stuck it in the ground, turning the blazing end to the wind, and telling me to snuff it from time to time. It answered the purpose of a candle pretty well.

I noticed, as I had done before, that there was a lull among the mosquitoes about midnight, and that they began again in the morning. Nature is thus merciful. But apparently they need rest as well as we. Few, if any, creatures are equally active all night. As soon as it was light I saw, through my veil, that the inside of the tent about our heads was quite blackened with myriads, each one of their wings when flying, as has been calculated, vibrating some three thousand times in a minute, and their combined hum was almost as bad to endure as their stings. I had an uncomfortable night on this account though I am not sure that one succeeded in his attempt to sting me. We did not suffer so much from insects on this excursion as the statements of some who have explored these woods in midsummer led us to anticipate. Yet I have no doubt that at some seasons and in some places they are a much more serious pest. The Jesuit Hierome Lalemant, of Quebec, reporting the death of Father Reni Menard, who was abandoned, lost his way, and died in the woods, among the Ontarios near Lake Superior, in 1661, dwells

chiefly on his probable sufferings from the attacks of mosquitoes when too weak to defend himself, adding that there was a frightful number of them in those parts, "and so insupportable," says he, "that the three Frenchmen who have made that voyage affirm that there was no other means of defending one's self but to run always without stopping, and it was even necessary for two of them to be employed in driving off these creatures while the third wanted to drink, otherwise he could not have done it." I have no doubt that this was said in good faith.

* * * * *

August 1.

I caught two or three large red chivin (*Leuciscus pulchellus*) early this morning, within twenty feet of the camp, which, added to the moose-tongue, that had been left in the kettle boiling overnight, and to our other stores, made a sumptuous breakfast. The Indian made us some hemlock tea instead of coffee, and we were not obliged to go as far as China for it; indeed, not quite so far as for the fish. This was tolerable, though he said it was not strong enough. It was interesting to see so simple a dish as a kettle of water with a handful of green hemlock sprigs in it, boiling over the huge fire in the open air, the leaves fast losing their lively green color, and know that it was for our breakfast.

We were glad to embark once more, and leave some of the mosquitoes behind. We had passed the *Wassataquoik* without perceiving it. This, according to the Indian, is the name of the main East Branch itself, and not properly applied to this small tributary alone, as on the maps.

We found that we had camped about a mile above Hunt's, which is on the east bank, and is the last house for those who ascend Ktaadn on this side.

We had expected to ascend it from this point, but my companion was obliged to give up this on account of sore feet. The Indian, however, suggested that perhaps he might get a pair of moccasins at this place, and that he could walk very easily in them without hurting his feet, wearing several pairs of stockings, and he said beside that they were so porous that when you had taken in water it all drained out again in a little while. We stopped to get some sugar, but found

that the family had moved away, and the house was unoccupied, except temporarily by some men who were getting the hay. They told me that the road to Ktaadn left the river eight miles above; also that perhaps we could get some sugar at Fisk's, fourteen miles below. I do not remember that we saw the mountain at all from the river. I noticed a seine here stretched on the bank, which probably had been used to catch salmon. Just below this, on the west bank, we saw a moose-hide stretched, and with it a bearskin, which was comparatively very small. I was the more interested in this sight, because it was near here that a townsman of ours, then quite a lad, and alone, killed a large bear some years ago. The Indian said that they belonged to Joe Aitteon, my last guide, but how he told I do not know. He was probably hunting near, and had left them for the day. Finding that we were going directly to Oldtown, he regretted that he had not taken more of the moose-meat to his family, saying that in a short time, by drying it, he could have made it so light as to have brought away the greater part, leaving the bones. We once or twice inquired after the lip, which is a famous tidbit, but he said, "That go Oldtown for my old woman; don't get it every day."

Maples grew more and more numerous. It was lowering, and rained a little during the forenoon, and, as we expected a wetting, we stopped early and dined on the east side of a small expansion of the river, just above what are probably called Whetstone Falls, about a dozen miles below Hunt's. There were pretty fresh moose-tracks by the waterside. There were singular long ridges hereabouts, called "horsebacks," covered with ferns. My companion, having lost his pipe, asked the Indian if he could not make him one. "Oh, yer," said he, and in a minute rolled up one of birch bark, telling him to wet the bowl from time to time. Here also he left his gazette on a tree.

We carried round the falls just below, on the west side. The rocks were on their edges, and very sharp. The distance was about three fourths of a mile. When we had carried over one load, the Indian returned by the shore, and I by the path, and though I made no particular haste, I was nevertheless surprised to find him at the other end as soon as I. It was remarkable how easily he got along over the worst ground. He said to me, "I take canoe and you take the rest, suppose you can keep along with me?" I thought that he meant that

while he ran down the rapids I should keep along the shore, and be ready to assist him from time to time, as I had done before; but as the walking would be very bad, I answered, “I suppose you will go too fast for me, but I will try.” But I was to go by the path, he said. This I thought would not help the matter, I should have so far to go to get to the riverside when he wanted me. But neither was this what he meant. He was proposing a race over the carry, and asked me if I thought I could keep along with him by the same path, adding that I must be pretty smart to do it. As his load, the canoe, would be much the heaviest and bulkiest, though the simplest, I thought that I ought to be able to do it, and said that I would try. So I proceeded to gather up the gun, axe, paddle, kettle, frying-pan, plates, dippers, carpets, etc., etc., and while I was thus engaged he threw me his cowhide boots. “What, are these in the bargain?” I asked. “Oh, yer,” said he; but before I could make a bundle of my load I saw him disappearing over a hill with the canoe on his head; so, hastily scraping the various articles together, I started on the run, and immediately went by him in the bushes, but I had no sooner left him out of sight in a rocky hollow than the greasy plates, dippers, etc., took to themselves wings, and while I was employed in gathering them up again, he went by me; but hastily pressing the sooty kettle to my side, I started once more, and soon passing him again, I saw him no more on the carry. I do not mention this as anything of a feat, for it was but poor running on my part, and he was obliged to move with great caution for fear of breaking his canoe as well as his neck. When he made his appearance, puffing and panting like myself, in answer to my inquiries where he had been, he said, “Rocks (locks) cut ‘em feet,” and, laughing, added, “Oh, me love to play sometimes.” He said that he and his companions, when they came to carries several miles long, used to try who would get over first; each, perhaps, with a canoe on his head. I bore the sign of the kettle on my brown linen sack for the rest of the voyage.

We made a second carry on the west side, around some falls about a mile below this. On the mainland were Norway pines, indicating a new geological formation, and it was such a dry and sandy soil as we had not noticed before.

As we approached the mouth of the East Branch, we passed two

or three huts, the first sign of civilization after Hunt's, though we saw no road as yet; we heard a cow-bell, and even saw an infant held up to a small square window to see us pass, but apparently the infant and the mother that held it were the only inhabitants then at home for several miles. This took the wind out of our sails, reminding us that we were travelers surely, while it was a native of the soil, and had the advantage of us. Conversation flagged. I would only hear the Indian, perhaps, ask my companion, "You load my pipe?" He said that he smoked alder bark, for medicine. On entering the West Branch at Nicketow it appeared much larger than the East. Polis remarked that the former was all gone and lost now, that it was all smooth water hence to Oldtown, and he threw away his pole which was cut on the Umbazookskus. Thinking of the rapids, he said once or twice that you wouldn't catch him to go East Branch again; but he did not by any means mean all that he said.

Things are quite changed since I was here eleven years ago. Where there were but one or two houses, I now found quite a village, with sawmills and a store (the latter was locked, but its contents were so much the more safely stored), and there was a stage-road to Mattawamkeag, and the rumor of a stage. Indeed, a steamer had ascended thus far once, when the water was very high. But we were not able to get any sugar, only a better shingle to lean our backs against.

We camped about two miles below Nicketow, on the south side of the West Branch, covering with fresh twigs the withered bed of a former traveler, and feeling that we were now in a settled country, especially when in the evening we heard an ox sneeze in its wild pasture across the river. Wherever you land along the frequented part of the river, you have not far to go to find these sites of temporary inns, the withered bed of flattened twigs, the charred sticks, and perhaps the tent-poles. And not long since, similar beds were spread along the Connecticut, the Hudson, and the Delaware, and longer still ago, by the Thames and Seine, and they now help to make the soil where private and public gardens, mansions and palaces are. We could not get fir twigs for our bed here, and the spruce was harsh in comparison, having more twig in proportion to its leaf, but we improved it somewhat with hemlock. The Indian remarked as before,

"Must have hard wood to cook moose-meat," as if that were a maxim, and proceeded to get it. My companion cooked some in California fashion, winding a long string of the meat round a stick and slowly turning it in his hand before the fire. It was very good. But the Indian, not approving of the mode, or because he was not allowed to cook it his own way, would not taste it. After the regular supper we attempted to make a lily soup of the bulbs which I had brought along, for I wished to learn all I could before I got out of the woods. Following the Indian's directions, for he began to be sick, I washed the bulbs carefully, minced some moose-meat and some pork, salted and boiled all together, but we had not patience to try the experiment fairly, for he said it must be boiled till the roots were completely softened so as to thicken the soup like flour; but though we left it on all night, we found it dried to the kettle in the morning, and not yet boiled to a flour. Perhaps the roots were not ripe enough, for they commonly gather them in the fall. As it was, it was palatable enough, but it reminded me of the Irishman's limestone broth. The other ingredients were enough alone. The Indian's name for these bulbs was *Sheepnoc*. I stirred the soup by accident with a striped maple or moose-wood stick, which I had peeled, and he remarked that its bark was an emetic.

He prepared to camp as usual between his moose-hide and the fire; but it beginning to rain suddenly, he took refuge under the tent with us, and gave us a song before falling asleep. It rained hard in the night, and spoiled another box of matches for us, which the Indian had left out, for he was very careless; but, as usual, we had so much the better night for the rain, since it kept the mosquitoes down.

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SUNDAY, August 2.

Was a cloudy and unpromising morning. One of us observed to the Indian, "You did not stretch your moose-hide last night, did you, Mr. Polis?" Whereat he replied, in a tone of surprise, though perhaps not of ill humor: "What you ask me that question for? Suppose I stretch 'em, you see 'em. May be your way talking, may be all right, no Indian way." I had observed that he did not wish to answer the same question more than once, and was often silent when it was put again for the sake of certainty, as if he were moody. Not that he was incommunicative, for he frequently commenced a long-winded narrative of his own accord, — repeated at length the tradition of some old battle, or some passage in the recent history of his tribe in which he had acted a prominent part, from time to time drawing a long breath, and resuming the thread of his tale, with the true story-teller's leisureliness, perhaps after shooting a rapid, — prefacing with "We-e-ll, by-by," etc., as he paddled along. Especially after the day's work was over, and he had put himself in posture for the night, he would be unexpectedly sociable, exhibit even the *bonhommie* of a Frenchman, and we would fall asleep before he got through his periods.

Nicketow is called eleven miles from Mattawamkeag by the river. Our camp was, therefore, about nine miles from the latter place.

The Indian was quite sick this morning with the colic. I thought that he was the worse for the moose-meat he had eaten.

We reached the Mattawamkeag at half past eight in the morning, in the midst of a drizzling rain, and, after buying some sugar, set out again.

The Indian growing much worse, we stopped in the north part of Lincoln to get some brandy for him; but failing in this, an apothecary recommended Brandreth's pills, which he refused to take, because he was not acquainted with them. He said to me, "Me doctor, — first study my case, find out what ail 'em, — then I know what to take." We dropped down a little farther, and stopped at mid-forenoon on an island and made him a dipper of tea. Here, too, we dined and did some washing and botanizing, while he lay on the bank. In the

afternoon we went on a little farther, though the Indian was no better. "Burntibus," as he called it, was a long, smooth, lake-like reach below the Five Islands. He said that he owned a hundred acres somewhere up this way. As a thunder-shower appeared to be coming up, we stopped opposite a barn on the west bank, in Chester, about a mile above Lincoln. Here at last we were obliged to spend the rest of the day and night, on account of our patient, whose sickness did not abate. He lay groaning under his canoe on the bank, looking very woebegone, yet it was only a common case of colic. You would not have thought, if you had seen him lying about thus, that he was the proprietor of so many acres in that neighborhood, was worth six thousand dollars, and had been to Washington. It seemed to me that, like the Irish, he made a greater ado about his sickness than a Yankee does, and was more alarmed about himself. We talked somewhat of leaving him with his people in Lincoln, — for that is one of their homes, — and taking the stage the next day, but he objected on account of the expense saying, "Suppose me well in morning, you and I go Oldtown by noon."

As we were taking our tea at twilight, while he lay groaning still under his canoe, having at length found out "what ail him," he asked me to get him a dipper of water. Taking the dipper in one hand he seized his powder-horn with the other, and, pouring into it a charge or two of powder, stirred it up with his finger, and drank it off. This was all he took to-day after breakfast beside his tea.

To save the trouble of pitching our tent, when we had secured our stores from wandering dogs, we camped in the solitary half-open barn near the bank, with the permission of the owner, lying on new-mown hay four feet deep. The fragrance of the hay, in which many ferns, etc., were mingled, was agreeable, though it was quite alive with grasshoppers which you could hear crawling through it. This served to graduate our approach to houses and feather beds. In the night some large bird, probably an owl, flitted through over our heads, and very early in the morning we were awakened by the twittering of swallows which had their nests there.

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MONDAY, August 3.

We started early before breakfast, the Indian being considerably better, and soon glided by Lincoln, and after another long and handsome lake-like reach, we stopped to breakfast on the west shore, two or three miles below this town.

We frequently passed Indian islands with their small houses on them. The Governor, Aitteon, lives in one of them, in Lincoln.

The Penobscot Indians seem to be more social, even, than the whites. Ever and anon in the deepest wilderness of Maine, you come to the log hut of a Yankee or Canada settler, but a Penobscot never takes up his residence in such a solitude. They are not even scattered about on their islands in the Penobscot, which are all within the settlements, but gathered together on two or three, — though not always on the best soil, — evidently for the sake of society. I saw one or two houses not now used by them, because, as our Indian Polis said, they were too solitary.

The small river emptying in at Lincoln is the Matanancook, which also, we noticed, was the name of a steamer moored there. So we paddled and floated along, looking into the mouths of rivers. When passing the Mohawk Rips, or, as the Indian called them, "Mohog lips," four or five miles below Lincoln, he told us at length the story of a fight between his tribe and the Mohawks there, anciently, — how the latter were overcome by stratagem, the Penobscots using concealed knives, — but they could not for a long time kill the Mohawk chief, who was a very large and strong man, though he was attacked by several canoes at once, when swimming alone in the river.

From time to time we met Indians in their canoes, going up river. Our man did not commonly approach them, but exchanged a few words with them at a distance in his tongue. These were the first Indians we had met since leaving the Umbazookskus.

At Piscataquis Falls, just above the river of that name, we walked over the wooden railroad on the eastern shore, about one and a half miles long, while the Indian glided down the rapids. The steamer from Oldtown stops here, and passengers take a new boat above.

Piscataquis, whose mouth we here passed, means "branch." It is obstructed by falls at its mouth, but can be navigated with batteaux or canoes above through a settled country, even to the neighborhood of Moosehead Lake, and we had thought at first of going that way. We were not obliged to get out of the canoe after this on account of falls or rapids, nor, indeed, was it quite necessary here. We took less notice of the scenery to-day, because we were in quite a settled country. The river became broad and sluggish, and we saw a blue heron winging its way slowly down the stream before us.

We passed the Passadumkeag River on our left and saw the blue Olamon mountains at a distance in the southeast. Hereabouts our Indian told us at length the story of their contention with the priest respecting schools. He thought a great deal of education and had recommended it to his tribe. His argument in its favor was, that if you had been to college and learnt to calculate, you could "keep 'em property, — no other way." He said that his boy was the best scholar in the school at Oldtown, to which he went with whites. He himself is a Protestant, and goes to church regularly at Oldtown. According to his account, a good many of his tribe are Protestants, and many of the Catholics also are in favor of schools. Some years ago they had a schoolmaster, a Protestant, whom they liked very well. The priest came and said that they must send him away, and finally he had such influence, telling them that they would go to the bad place at last if they retained him, that they sent him away. The school party, though numerous, were about giving up. Bishop Fenwick came from Boston and used his influence against them. But our Indian told his side that they must not give up, must hold on, they were the strongest. If they gave up, then they would have no party. But they answered that it was "no use, priest too strong, we'd better give up." At length he persuaded them to make a stand.

The priest was going for a sign to cut down the liberty-pole. So Polis and his party had a secret meeting about it; he got ready fifteen or twenty stout young men, "stript 'em naked, and painted 'em like old times," and told them that when the priest and his party went to cut down the liberty-pole, they were to rush up, take hold of it, and prevent them, and he assured them that there would be no war, only a noise,— "no war where priest is." He kept his men concealed in a

house near by, and when the priest's party were about to cut down the liberty-pole, the fall of which would have been a death-blow to the school party, he gave a signal, and his young men rushed out and seized the pole. There was a great uproar, and they were about coming to blows, but the priest interfered, saying, "No war, no war," and so the pole stands, and the school goes on still.

We thought that it showed a good deal of tact in him, to seize this occasion and take his stand on it; proving how well he understood those with whom he had to deal.

The Olamon River comes in from the east in Greenbush a few miles below the Passadumkeag. When we asked the meaning of this name, the Indian said there was an island opposite its mouth which was called *Olarmon*; that in old times, when visitors were coming to Oldtown, they used to stop there to dress and fix up or paint themselves. "What is that which ladies used?" he asked. Rouge? Red Vermilion? "Yer," he said, "that is *larmon*, a kind of clay or red paint, which they used to get here."

We decided that we, too, would stop at this island, and fix up our inner man, at least, by dining.

It was a large island, with an abundance of hemp nettle, but I did not notice any kind of red paint there. The Olamon River, at its mouth at least, is a dead stream. There was another large island in that neighborhood, which the Indian called "*Soogle*" (i. e., Sugar) Island.

About a dozen miles before reaching Oldtown he inquired, "How you like 'em your pilot?" But we postponed an answer till we had got quite back again.

The Sunkhaze, another short dead stream, comes in from the east two miles above Oldtown. There is said to be some of the best deer ground in Maine on this stream. Asking the meaning of this name, the Indian said, "Suppose you are going down Penobscot, just like we, and you see a canoe come out of bank and go along before you, but you no see 'em stream. That is *Sunkhaze*."

He had previously complimented me on my paddling, saying that I paddled "just like anybody," giving me an Indian name which meant "great paddler." When off this stream he said to me, who sat in the bows, "Me teach you paddle." So, turning toward the shore, he

got out, came forward, and placed my hands as he wished. He placed one of them quite outside the boat, and the other parallel with the first, grasping the paddle near the end, not over the flat extremity, and told me to slide it back and forth on the side of the canoe. This, I found, was a great improvement which I had not thought of, saving me the labor of lifting the paddle each time, and I wondered that he had not suggested it before. It is true, before our baggage was reduced we had been obliged to sit with our legs drawn up, and our knees above the side of the canoe, which would have prevented our paddling thus, or perhaps he was afraid of wearing out his canoe, by constant friction on the side.

I told him that I had been accustomed to sit in the stern, and, lifting my paddle at each stroke, give it a twist in order to steer the boat, only getting a pry on the side each time, and I still paddled partly as if in the stern. He then wanted to see me paddle in the stern. So, changing paddles, for he had the longer and better one, and turning end for end, he sitting flat on the bottom and I on the crossbar, he began to paddle very hard, trying to turn the canoe, looking over his shoulder and laughing; but finding it in vain, he relaxed his efforts, though we still sped along a mile or two very swiftly. He said that he had no fault to find with my paddling in the stern, but I complained that he did not paddle according to his own directions in the bows.

Opposite the Sunkhaze is the main boom of the Penobscot, where the logs from far up the river are collected and assorted.

As we drew near to Oldtown I asked Polis if he was not glad to get home again; but there was no relenting to his wildness, and he said, “It makes no difference to me where I am.” Such is the Indian’s pretense always.

We approached the Indian Island through the narrow strait called “Cook.” He said, “I ‘xpect we take in some water there, river so high, — never see it so high at this season. Very rough water there, but short; swamp steamboat once. Don’t you paddle till I tell you, then you paddle right along.” It was a very short rapid. When we were in the midst of it he shouted “paddle,” and we shot through without taking in a drop.

Soon after the Indian houses came in sight, but I could not at first

tell my companion which of two or three large white ones was our guide's. He said it was the one with blinds.

We landed opposite his door at about four in the afternoon, having come some forty miles this day. From the Piscataquis we had come remarkably and unaccountably quick, probably as fast as the stage or the boat, though the last dozen miles was dead water.

Polis wanted to sell us his canoe, said it would last seven or eight years, or with care, perhaps ten; but we were not ready to buy it.

We stopped for an hour at his house, where my companion shaved with his razor, which he pronounced in very good condition. Mrs. P. wore a hat and had a silver brooch on her breast, but she was not introduced to us. The house was roomy and neat. A large new map of Oldtown and the Indian Island hung on the wall, and a clock opposite to it. Wishing to know when the cars left Oldtown, Polis's son brought one of the last Bangor papers, which I saw was directed to "Joseph Polis," from the office.

This was the last that I saw of Joe Polis. We took the last train, and reached Bangor that night.

APPENDIX

I. TREES

The prevailing trees (I speak only of what I saw) on the east and west branches of the Penobscot and on the upper part of the Allegash were the fir, spruce (both black and white), and arbor-vitæ, or "cedar." The fir has the darkest foliage, and, together with the spruce, makes a very dense "black growth," especially on the upper parts of the rivers. A dealer in lumber with whom I talked called the former a weed, and it is commonly regarded as fit neither for timber nor fuel. But it is more sought after as an ornamental tree than any other evergreen of these woods except the arbor-vitæ. The black spruce is much more common than the white. Both are tall and slender trees. The arbor-vitæ, which is of a more cheerful hue, with its light-green fans, is also tall and slender, though sometimes two feet in diameter. It often fills the swamps.

Mingled with the former, and also here and there forming extensive and more open woods by themselves, indicating, it is said, a better soil, were canoe and yellow birches (the former was always at hand for kindling a fire, — we saw no small white birches in that wilderness), and sugar and red maples.

The aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) was very common on burnt grounds. We saw many straggling white pines, commonly unsound trees, which had therefore been skipped by the choppers; these were the largest trees we saw; and we occasionally passed a small wood in which this was the prevailing tree; but I did not notice nearly so many of these trees as I can see in a single walk in Concord. The speckled or hoary alder (*Alnus incana*) abounds everywhere along the muddy banks of rivers and lakes, and in swamps. Hemlock could commonly be found for tea, but was nowhere abundant. Yet F. A. Michaux states that in Maine, Vermont, and the upper part of New Hampshire, etc., the hemlock forms three fourths of the evergreen woods, the rest being black spruce. It belongs to cold hillsides.

The elm and black ash were very common along the lower and stiller parts of the streams, where the shores were flat and grassy or there were low gravelly islands. They made a pleasing variety in the scenery, and we felt as if nearer home while gliding past them.

The above fourteen trees made the bulk of the woods which we saw.

The larch (juniper), beech, and Norway pine (*Pinus resinosa*, red pine) were only occasionally seen in particular places. The *Pinus Banksiana* (gray or Northern scrub pine), and a single small red oak (*Quercus rubra*) only, are on islands in Grand Lake, on the East Branch.

The above are almost all peculiarly Northern trees, and found chiefly, if not solely, on mountains southward.

II. FLOWERS AND SHRUBS

It appears that in a forest like this the great majority of flowers, shrubs, and grasses are confined to the banks of the rivers and lakes, and to the meadows, more open swamps, burnt lands, and mountain-tops; comparatively very few indeed penetrate the woods. There is no such dispersion even of wild-flowers as is commonly supposed, or as exists in a cleared and settled country. Most of our wild-flowers, so called, may be considered as naturalized in the localities where they grow. Rivers and lakes are the great protectors of such plants against the aggressions of the forest, by their annual rise and fall keeping open a narrow strip where these more delicate plants have light and space in which to grow. They are the *protégés* of the rivers. These narrow and straggling bands and isolated groups are, in a sense, the pioneers of civilization. Birds, quadrupeds, insects, and man also, in the main, follow the flowers, and the latter in his turn makes more room for them and for berry-bearing shrubs, birds, and small quadrupeds. One settler told me that not only blackberries and raspberries but mountain maples came in, in the clearing and burning.

Though plants are often referred to primitive woods as their locality, it cannot be true of very many, unless the woods are supposed to include such localities as I have mentioned. Only those which require but little light, and can bear the drip of the trees, penetrate the woods, and these have commonly more beauty in their leaves than in their pale and almost colorless blossoms.

The prevailing flowers and conspicuous small plants of the *woods*, which I noticed, were: *Clintonia borealis*, linnæa, checkerberry (*Gaultheria procumbens*), *Aralia nudicaulis* (wild sarsaparilla), great round-leaved orchis, *Dalibarda repens*, *Chiogenes hispidula* (creeping snowberry), *Oxalis Acetosella* (common wood-sorrel), *Aster acuminatus*, *Pyrola secunda* (one-sided pyrola), *Medeola Virginica* (Indian cucumber-root), small *Circæa* (enchanter's nightshade), and perhaps *Cornus Canadensis* (dwarf cornel).

Of these, the last of July, 1858, only the *Aster acuminatus* and great round-leaved orchis were conspicuously in bloom.

The most common flowers of the *river* and *lake shores* were: *Thalictrum cornuti* (meadow-rue); *Hypericum ellipticum*, *mutilum*, and *Canadense* (St. John's-wort); horsemint; horehound, *Lycopus Virginicus* and *Europæus*, var. *sinuatus* (bugle-weed); *Scutellaria galericulata* (skullcap); *Solidago lanceolata* and *squarrosa*, East Branch, (goldenrod); *Diplopappus umbellatus* (double-bristled aster); *Aster Radula*; *Cicuta maculata* and *bulbifera* (water hemlock); meadow-sweet; *Lysimachia stricta* and *ciliata* (loosestrife); *Galium trifidum* (small bed-straw); *Lilium Canadense* (wild yellow lily); *Platanthera peramœna* and *psycodes* (great purple orchis and small purple fringed orchis); *Mimulus ringens* (monkey-flower); dock (water); blue flag; *Hydrocotyle Americana* (marsh pennywort); *Sanicula Canadensis* (?) (black snake-root); *Clematis Virginiana* (?) (common virgin's-bower); *Nasturtium palustre* (marsh cress); *Ranunculus recurvatus* (hooked crow-foot); *Asclepias incarnata* (swamp milkweed); *Aster Tradescanti* (Tradescant's aster); *Aster miser*, also *longifolius*; *Eupatorium purpureum*, apparently, lake shores, (Joe-Pye-weed); *Apocynum Cannabinum*, East Branch, (Indian hemp); *Polygonum cilinode* (bindweed); and others. Not to mention, among inferior orders, wool-grass and the sensitive fern.

In the water, *Nuphar advena* (yellow pond-lily), some *potamogetons* (pond-weed), *Sagittaria variabilis* (arrowhead), *Sium lineare* (?) (water-parsnip).

Of these, those conspicuously in flower the last of July, 1857, were: rue, *Solidago lanceolata* and *squarrosa*, *Diplopappus umbellatus*, *Aster Radula*, *Lilium Canadense*, great and small purple orchis, *Mimulus ringens*, blue flag, virgin's-bower, etc.

The characteristic flowers in *swamps* were: *Rubus triflorus* (dwarf raspberry); *Calla palustris* (water-arum); and *Sarracenia purpurea* (pitcher-plant). On *burnt grounds*: *Epilobium angustifolium*, in full bloom, (great willow-herb); and *Erechthites hieracifolia* (fire-weed). On *cliffs*: *Campanula rotundifolia* (harebell); *Cornus Canadensis* (dwarf cornel); Arctostaphylos Uva-Ursi (bear-berry); *Potentilla tridentata* (mountain cinquefoil); *Pteris aquilina* (common brake). At old camps, carries, and logging-paths: *Cirsium arvense* (Canada thistle); *Prunella vulgaris* (common self-heal); clover; herd's-grass; *Achillea millefolium* (common yarrow); *Leucanthemum vulgare*

(whiteweed); *Aster macrophyllus*; *Halenia deflexa*, East Branch, (spurred gentian); *Antennaria margaritacea* (pearly everlasting); *Actæa rubra* and *alba*, wet carries, (red and white cohosh); *Desmodium Canadense* (tick-trefoil); sorrel.

The handsomest and most interesting flowers were the great purple orchises, rising ever and anon, with their great purple spikes perfectly erect, amid the shrubs and grasses of the shore. It seemed strange that they should be made to grow there in such profusion, seen of moose and moose-hunters only, while they are so rare in Concord. I have never seen this species flowering nearly so late with us, or with the small one.

The prevailing underwoods were: *Dirca palustris* (moose-wood), *Acer spicatum* (mountain maple), *Virburnum lantanoides* (hobble-bush), and frequently *Taxus baccata*, var. *Canadensis* (American yew).

The prevailing shrubs and small trees along the shore were: *osier rouge* and alders (before mentioned); sallows, or small willows, of two or three kinds, as *Salis humilis*, *rostrata*, and *discolor* (?); *Sambucus Canadensis* (black elder); rose; *Viburnum Opulus* and *nudum* (cranberry-tree and withe-rod); *Pyrus Americana* (American mountain-ash); *Corylus rostrata* (beaked hazelnut); *Diervilla trifida* (bush honeysuckle); *Prunus Virginiana* (choke-cherry); *Myrica gale* (sweet-gale); *Nemopanthes Canadensis* (mountain holly); *Cephalanthus occidentalis* (button-bush); *Ribes prostratum*, in some places, (fetid currant).

More particularly of shrubs and small trees in *swamps*: some willows, *Kalmia glauca* (pale laurel), *Ledum latifolium* and *palustre* (Labrador tea), *Ribes lacustre* (swamp gooseberry), and in one place *Betula pumila* (low birch). At *camps and carries*: raspberry, *Vaccinium Canadense* (Canada blueberry), *Prunus Pennsylvanica* (also alongshore) (wild red cherry), *Amelanchier Canadensis* (shad-bush), *Sambucus pubens* (red-berried elder). Among those peculiar to the *mountains* would be the Vaccinium Vitis-Idæa (cow-berry).

Of plants commonly regarded as *introduced* from Europe, I observed at Ansel Smith's clearing, Chesuncook, abundant in 1857: *Ranunculus acris* (buttercups); *Plantago major* (common plantain); *Chenopodium album* (lamb's-quarters); Capsella Bursa-pastoris,

1853, (shepherd's-purse); *Spergula arvensis*, also north shore of Moosehead in 1853, and elsewhere, 1857, (corn-spurry); Taraxacum Dens-leonis — regarded as indigenous by Gray, but evidently introduced there — (common dandelion); *Polygonum Persicaria* and *hydropiper*, by a logging-path in woods at Smith's, (lady's-thumb and smart-weed); *Rumex Acetosella*, common at carries, (sheep sorrel); *Trifolium pratense*, 1853, on carries, frequent, (red clover); *Leucanthemum vulgare*, carries, (whiteweed); *Phleum pratense*, carries, 1853 and 1857, (herd's-grass); *Verbena hastata* (blue vervain); *Cirsium arvense*, abundant at camps, 1857, (Canada thistle); *Rumex crispus* (?), West Branch, 1853 (?), (curled dock); *Verbascum Thapsus*, between Bangor and lake, 1853, (common mullein).

It appears that I saw about a dozen plants which had accompanied man as far into the woods as Chesuncook, and had naturalized themselves there, in 1853. Plants begin thus early to spring by the side of a logging-path, — a mere vista through the woods, which can only be used in the winter, on account of the stumps and fallen trees, — which at length are the roadside plants in old settlements. The pioneers of such are planted in part by the first cattle, which cannot be summered in the woods.

III. LIST OF PLANTS

The following is a list of the plants which I noticed in the Maine woods, in the years 1853 and 1857. (Those marked * not in woods.)

1. THOSE WHICH ATTAINED THE HEIGHT OF TREES

Alnus incana (speckled or hoary alder), abundant along streams, etc.

Thuja occidentalis (American arbor-vitæ), one of the prevailing.

Fraxinus sambucifolia (black ash), very common, especially near dead water. The Indian spoke of "yellow ash" as also found there.

Populus tremuloides (American aspen), very common, especially on burnt lands, almost as white as birches.

Populus grandidentata (large-toothed aspen), perhaps two or three.

Fagus ferruginea (American beech), not uncommon, at least on the West Branch. (Saw more in 1846.)

Betula papyracea (canoe birch), prevailing everywhere and about Bangor.

Betula excelsa (yellow birch), very common.

Betula lenta (black birch), on the West Branch in 1853.

Betula alba (American white birch), about Bangor only.

Ulmus Americana (American or white elm), West Branch and low down the East Branch, i. e. on the lower and alluvial part of the river, very common.

Larix Americana (American or black larch), very common on the Umbazookskus; some elsewhere.

Abies Canadensis (hemlock spruce); not abundant; some on the West Branch, and a little everywhere.

Acer saccharinum (sugar maple), very common.

Acer rubrum (red or swamp maple), very common.

Acer dasycarpum (white or silver maple), a little low on East Branch and in Chesuncook woods.

Quercus rubra (red oak), one on an island in Grand Lake, East Branch, and, according to a settler, a few on the east side of Chesuncook Lake; a few also about Bangor in 1853.

Pinus Strobus (white pine), scattered along, most abundant at

Heron Lake.

Pinus resinosa (red pine), Telos and Grand Lake, a little afterwards here and there.

Abies balsamea (balsam fir), perhaps the most common tree, especially in the upper parts of rivers.

Abies nigra (black or double spruce), next to the last the most common, if not equally common, and on mountains.

Abies alba (white or single spruce), common with the last along the rivers.

Pinus Banksiana (gray or Northern scrub pine), a few on an island in Grand Lake.

Twenty-three in all (23).

2. SMALL TREES AND SHRUBS

Prunus depressa (dwarf cherry), on gravel-bars, East Branch, near Hunt's, with green fruit; obviously distinct from the *pumila* of river and meadows.

Vaccinium corymbosum (common swamp blueberry), Bucksport.

Vaccinium Canadense (Canada blueberry), carries and rocky hills everywhere as far south as Bucksport.

Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum (dwarf-blueberry?), Whetstone Falls.

Betula pumila (low birch), Mud Pond Swamp.

Prinos verticillatus (black alder), 1857, now placed with *Ilex* by Gray, 2d ed.

Cephalanthus occidentalis (button-bush).

Prunus Pennsylvanica (wild red cherry), very common at camps, carries, etc., along rivers; fruit ripe August 1, 1857.

Prunus Virginiana (choke-cherry), riverside, common.

Cornus alternifolia (alternate-leaved cornel), West Branch, 1853.

Ribes prostratum (fetid currant), common along streams; on Webster Stream.

Sambucus Canadensis (common elder), common along riversides.

Sambucus pubens (red-berried elder), not quite so common; roadsides toward Moosehead, and on carries afterward; fruit beautiful.

Ribes lacustre (swamp-gooseberry), swamps, common; Mud Pond Swamp and Webster Stream; not ripe July 29, 1857.

Corylus rostrata (beaked hazelnut), common.

Taxus baccata, var. *Canadensis* (American yew), a common undershrub at an island in West Branch and Chesuncook woods.

Viburnum lantanoides (hobble-bush), common, especially in Chesuncook woods; fruit ripe in September, 1853, not in July, 1857.

Viburnum Opulus (cranberry-tree), on West Branch; one in flower still, July 25, 1857.

Viburnum nudum (withe-rod), common along rivers.

Kalmia glauca (pale laurel), swamps, common, as at Moosehead Carry and Chamberlain Swamp.

Kalmia angustifolia (lambkill), with *Kalmia glauca*.

Acer spicatum (mountain maple), a prevailing underwood.

Acer striatum (striped maple), in fruit July 30, 1857; green the first year; green, striped with white, the second; darker, the third, with dark blotches.

Cornus stolonifera (red-osier dogwood), prevailing shrub on shore of West Branch; fruit still white in August, 1857.

Pyrus Americana (American mountain-ash), common along shores.

Amelanchier Canadensis (shad-bush), rocky carries, etc., considerable fruit in 1857.

Rubus strigosus (wild red raspberry), very abundant, burnt grounds, camps, and carries, but not ripe till we got to Chamberlain dam and on East Branch.

Rosa Carolina (swamp rose), common on the shores of lakes, etc.

*Rhus typhina** (staghorn sumach).

Myrica Gale (sweet-gale), common.

Nemopanthes Canadensis (mountain holly), common in low ground, Moosehead Carry, and on Mount Kineo.

Cratægus (*coccinea*? scarlet-fruited thorn), not uncommon; with hard fruit in September, 1853.

Salix (near to *petiolaris*, petioled willow), very common in Umbazookskus meadows.

Salix rostrata (long-beaked willow), common.

Salix humilis (low bush willow), common.

Salix discolor (glaucous willow) (?).

Salix lucida (shining willow), at island in Heron Lake.

Dirca palustris (moose-wood), common.

In all, 38.

3. SMALL SHRUBS AND HERBACEOUS PLANTS

Agrimonia Eupatoria (common agrimony), not uncommon.

Circæa alpina (enchanter's nightshade), very common in woods.

Nasturtium palustre (marsh cress), var. *hispidum*, common, as at A. Smith's.

Aralia hispida (bristly sarsaparilla), on West Branch, both years.

Aralia nudicaulis (wild sarsaparilla), Chesuncook woods.

Sagittaria variabilis (arrowhead), common at Moosehead and afterward.

Arum triphyllum (Indian turnip), now *arisæma*, Moosehead Carry in 1853.

Asclepias incarnata (swamp milkweed), Umbazookskus River and after; redder than ours, and a different variety from our var. *pulchra*.

Aster acuminatus (pointed-leaved aster), the prevailing aster in woods, not long open on South Branch, July 31; two or more feet high.

Aster macrophyllus (large-leaved aster), common, and the whole plant surprisingly fragrant, like a medicinal herb; just out at Telos Dam, July 29, 1857, and after to Bangor and Bucksport; bluish flower (in woods on Pine Stream and at Chesuncook in 1853).

Aster Radula (rough-leaved aster), common, Moosehead Carry and after.

Aster miser (petty aster), in 1853 on West Branch, and common on Chesuncook shore.

Aster longifolius (willow-leaved blue aster), 1853, Moosehead and Chesuncook shores.

Aster cordifolius (heart-leaved aster), 1853, West Branch.

Aster Tradescanti (Tradescant's aster), 1857. A narrow-leaved one, Chesuncook shore, 1853.

Aster, *longifolius*-like, with small flowers, West Branch, 1853.

Aster puniceus (rough-stemmed aster), Pine Stream.

Diplopappus umbellatus (large diplopappus aster), common along river.

Arctostaphylos Uva-Ursi (bear-berry), Kineo, etc., 1857.

Polygonum cilinode (fringe-jointed false-buckwheat), common.

Bidens cernua (bur-marigold), 1853, West Branch.

Ranunculus acris (buttercups), abundant at Smith's dam, Chesuncook, 1853.

Rubus triflorus (dwarf raspberry), low grounds and swamps, common.

*Utricularia vulgaris** (greater bladderwort), Pushaw.

Iris versicolor (larger blue flag), common, Moosehead, West Branch, Umbazookskus, etc.

Sparganium (bur-reed).

Calla palustris (water-arum), in bloom July 27, 1857, Mud Pond Swamp.

Lobelia cardinalis (cardinal-flower), apparently common, but out of bloom August, 1857.

Cerastium nutans (clammy wild chickweed) (?).

Gaultheria procumbens (checkerberry), prevailing everywhere in woods along banks of rivers.

*Stellaria media** (common chickweed), Bangor.

Chiogenes hispidula (creeping snowberry), very common in woods.

Cicuta maculata (water hemlock).

Cicuta bulbifera (bulb-bearing water hemlock), Penobscot and Chesuncook shore, 1853.

Galium trifidum (small bed-straw), common.

Galium Aparine (cleavers) (?), Chesuncook, 1853.

Galium, one kind on Pine Stream, 1853.

Trifolium pratense (red clover), on carries, etc.

Actæa spicata, var. *alba* (white cohosh), Chesuncook woods, 1853, and East Branch, 1857.

Actæa, var. *rubra* (red cohosh), East Branch, 1857.

Vaccinium Vitis-Idæa (cow-berry), Ktaadn, very abundant.

Cornus Canadensis (dwarf cornel), in woods Chesuncook, 1853; just ripe at Kineo, July 24, 1857, common; still in bloom, Moosehead Carry, September 16, 1853.

Medeola Virginica (Indian cucumber-root), West Branch and Chesuncook woods.

Dalibarda repens (dalibarda), Moosehead Carry and after, common. In flower still, August 1, 1857.

Taraxacum Dens-leonis (common dandelion), Smith's, 1853; only there. Is it not foreign?

Diervilla trifida (bush honeysuckle), very common.

Rumex Hydrolapathum (?) (great water dock), in 1857; noticed it was large-seeded in 1853; common.

Rumex crispus (?) (curled dock), West Branch, 1853.

Apocynum cannabinum (Indian hemp), Kineo (Bradford) and East Branch, 1857, at Whetstone Falls.

Apocynum androsæmifolium (spreading dogbane), Kineo (Bradford).

Clintonia borealis (clintonia), all over woods; fruit just ripening, July 25, 1857.

A *Lemna* (duckweed), Pushaw, 1857.

Elodea Virginica (marsh St. John's-wort), Moosehead, 1853.

Epilobium angustifolium (great willow-herb), great fields on burnt lands; some white at Webster Stream.

Epilobium coloratum (purple-veined willow-herb), once in 1857.

Eupatorium purpureum (Joe-Pye-weed), Heron, Moosehead, and Chesuncook lake shores, common.

Allium (onion), a new kind to me in bloom, without bulbs above, on rocks near Whetstone Falls (?), East Branch.

Halenia deflexa (spurred gentian), carries on East Branch, common.

Geranium Robertianum (herb-robert).

Solidago lanceolata (bushy goldenrod), very common.

Solidago, one of the three-ribbed, in both years.

Solidago thyrsoidea (large mountain goldenrod), one on Webster Stream.

Solidago squarrosa (large-spiked goldenrod), the most common on East Branch.

Solidago altissima (rough hairy goldenrod), not uncommon both years.

Coptis trifolia (three-leaved gold-thread).

Smilax herbacea (carrion-flower), not uncommon both years.

*Spiræa tomentosa** (hardhack), Bangor.

Campanula rotundifolia (harebell), cliffs, Kineo, Grand Lake, etc.

Hieracium (hawkweed), not uncommon.

Veratrum viride (American white hellebore).

Lycopus Virginicus (bugle-weed), 1857.

Lycopus Europæus (water horehound), var. *sinuatus*, Heron Lake shore.

Chenopodium album (lamb's-quarters), Smith's.

Mentha Canadensis (wild mint), very common.

Galeopsis tetrahit (common hemp-nettle), Olamon Isle, abundant, and below, in prime, August 3, 1857.

Houstonia cærulea (bluets), now *Oldenlandia* (Gray, 2d ed.), 1857.

Hydrocotyle Americana (marsh pennywort), common.

Hypericum ellipticum (elliptical-leaved St. John's-wort), common.

Hypericum mutilum (small St. John's-wort), both years, common.

Hypericum Canadense (Canadian St. John's-wort), Moosehead Lake and Chesuncook shores, 1853.

Trientalis Americana (star-flower), Pine Stream, 1853.

Lobelia inflata (Indian tobacco).

Spiranthes cernua (ladies'-tresses), Kineo and after.

Nabalus (rattlesnake-root), 1857; *altissimus* (tall white lettuce), Chesuncook woods, 1853.

Antennaria margaritacea (pearly everlasting), common, Moosehead, Smith's, etc.

Lilium Canadense (wild yellow lily), very common and large, West and East Branch; one on East Branch, 1857, with strongly revolute petals, and leaves perfectly smooth beneath, but not larger than the last, and apparently only a variety.

Linnæa borealis (linnæa), almost everywhere in woods.

Lobelia Dortmanna (water lobelia), pond in Bucksport.

Lysimachia ciliata (hairy-stalked loosestrife), very common, Chesuncook shore and East Branch.

Lysimachia stricta (upright loosestrife), very common.

Microstylis ophioglossoides (adder's-mouth), Kineo.

Spiræa salicifolia (common meadow-sweet), common.

Mimulus ringens (monkey-flower), common, lake-shores, etc.

Scutellaria galericulata (skullcap), very common.

Scutellaria lateriflora (mad-dog skullcap), Heron Lake, 1857;

Chesuncook, 1853.

Platanthera psycodes (small purple fringed orchis), very common, East Branch and Chesuncook, 1853.

Platanthera fimbriata (large purple fringed orchis), very common, West Branch and Umbazookskus, 1857.

Platanthera orbiculata (large round-leaved orchis), very common in woods, Moosehead and Chamberlain carries, Caucomgomoc, etc.

Amphicarpæa monoica (hog peanut).

Aralia racemosa (spikenard), common, Moosehead Carry, Telos Lake, etc., and after; out about August 1, 1857.

Plantago major (common plantain), common in open land at Smith's in 1853.

*Pontederia cordata** (pickerel-weed), only near Oldtown, 1857.

Potamogeton (pondweed), not common.

Potentilla tridentata (mountain cinquefoil), Kineo.

Potentilla Norvegica (cinquefoil), Heron Lake shore and Smith's.

Polygonum amphibium (water persicaria), var. *aquaticum* Second Lake.

Polygonum Persicaria (lady's-thumb), log-path, Chesuncook, 1853.

Nuphar advena (yellow pond-lily), not abundant.

Nymphæa odorata (sweet water-lily), a few in West Branch, 1853.

Polygonum Hydropiper (smart-weed), log-path, Chesuncook.

Pyrola secunda (one-sided pyrola), very common, Caucomgomoc.

Pyrola elliptica (shin-leaf), Caucomgomoc River.

Ranunculus Flammula (spearwort, var. *reptans*).

Ranunculus recurvatus (hooked crowfoot), Umbazookskus landing, &c.

*Typha latifolia** (common cat-tail or reed-mace), extremely abundant between Bangor and Portland.

Sanicula Marylandica (black snake-root), Moosehead Carry and after.

Aralia nudicaulis (wild sarsaparilla).

Capsella Bursa-pastoris (shepherd's-purse), Smith's, 1853.

Prunella vulgaris (self-heal), very common everywhere.

Erechthites hieracifolia (fire-weed), 1857, and Smith's open land, 1853.

Sarracenia purpurea (pitcher-plant), Mud Pond Swamp.

Smilacina bifolia (false Solomon's-seal), 1857, and Chesuncook woods, 1853.

Smilacina racemosa (false spikenard) (?), Umbazookskus Carry, July 27, 1853.

Veronica scutellata (marsh speedwell).

Spergula arvensis (corn-spurry), 1857, not uncommon, 1853, Moosehead and Smith's.

Fragaria (strawberry), 1853, Smith's; 1857, Bucksport.

Thalictrum Cornuti (meadow-rue), very common, especially along rivers, tall, and conspicuously in bloom in July, 1857.

Cirsium arvense (Canada thistle), abundant at camps and highway-sides in the north of Maine.

Cirsium muticum (swamp thistle), well in bloom, Webster Stream, August 31.

Rumex acetosella (sheep sorrel), common by river and log-paths, as Chesuncook log-path.

Impatiens fulva (spotted touch-me-not).

Trillium erythrocarpum (painted trillium), common West Branch and Moosehead Carry.

Verbena hastata (blue vervain).

Clematis Virginiana (common virgin's-bower), common on river-banks; feathered in September, 1853; in bloom July, 1857.

Leucanthemum vulgare (whiteweed).

Sium lineare (water-parsnip), 1857, and Chesuncook shore 1853.

Achillea millefolium (common yarrow), by river and log-paths, and Smith's.

Desmodium Canadense (Canadian tick-trefoil), not uncommon.

Oxalis Acetosella (common wood-sorrel), still out July 25 1853, at Moosehead Carry and after.

Oxalis stricta (yellow wood-sorrel), 1853, at Smith's and his wood-path.

Liparis liliifolia (tway-blade), Kineo (Bradford).

Uvularia grandiflora (large-flowered bellwort), woods, common.

Uvularia sessilifolia (sessile-leaved bellwort), Chesuncook

woods, 1853.

In all, 145.

4. OF LOWER ORDER

Scirpus Eriophorum (wool-grass), very common, especially on low islands. A coarse grass, four or five feet high, along the river.

Phleum pratense (herd's-grass), on carries, at camps and clearings.

Equisetum sylvaticum (sylvatic horse-tail).

Pteris aquilina (brake), Kineo and after.

Onoclea sensibilis (sensitive fern), very common along the riversides; some on the gravelly shore of Heron Lake Island.

Polypodium Dryopteris (brittle polypody).

Woodsia Ilvensis (rusty woodsia), Kineo.

Lycopodium lucidulum (toothed club-moss).

Usnea (a parmeliaceous lichen), common on various trees.

IV. LIST OF BIRDS

WHICH I SAW IN MAINE BETWEEN JULY 24 AND AUGUST 3, 1857

A very small hawk at Great Falls, on Webster Stream.

Haliæetus leucocephalus (white-headed or bald eagle), at Ragmuff, and above and below Hunt's, and on pond below Mattawamkeag.

Pandion haliaëtus (fish hawk or osprey), heard, also seen on East Branch.

Bubo Virginianus (cat owl), near Camp Island, also above mouth of Schoonis, from a stump back and forth, also near Hunt's on a tree.

Icterus phœniceus (red-winged blackbird), Umbazookskus River.

Corvus Americanus (American crow), a few, as at outlet of Grand Lake; a peculiar cawing.

Fringilla Canadensis (tree sparrow), think I saw one on Mount Kineo, July 24, which behaved as if it had a nest there.

Garrulus cristatus (blue jay).

Parus atricapillus (chickadee), a few.

Muscicapa tyrannus (kingbird).

Muscicapa Cooperii (olive-sided flycatcher), everywhere a prevailing bird.

Muscicapa virens (wood pewee), Moosehead, and I think beyond.

Muscicapa acadica (small pewee), common.

Muscicapa ruticilla (American redstart), Moosehead.

Vireo olivaceus (red-eyed vireo), everywhere common.

Turdus migratorius (red-breasted robin), some everywhere.

Turdus melodus (wood thrush), common in all the woods.

Turdus Wilsonii (Wilson's thrush), Moosehead and beyond.

Turdus aurocapillus (golden-crowned thrush or oven-bird), Moosehead.

Fringilla albicollis (white-throated sparrow), Kineo and after, apparently nesting; the prevailing bird early and late.

Fringilla melodia (song sparrow), at Moosehead or beyond.

Sylvia pinus (pine warbler), one part of voyage.

Trichas Marylandica (Maryland yellow-throat), everywhere.

Coccyzus Americanus (?) (yellow-billed cuckoo), common.

Picus erythrocephalus (red-headed woodpecker), heard and saw, and good to eat.

Sitta Carolinensis (?) (white-breasted American nuthatch), heard.

Alcedo alcyon (belted kingfisher), very common.

Caprimulgus Americanus (nighthawk).

Tetrao umbellus (partridge), Moosehead Carry, etc.

Tetrao cupido (?) (pinnated grouse), Webster Stream.

Ardea cærulea (blue heron), lower part of Penobscot.

Totanus macularius (spotted sandpiper or peetweet), everywhere.

Larus argentatus (?) (herring gull), Heron Lake on rocks, and Chamberlain. Smaller gull on Second Lake.

Anas obscura (dusky or black duck), once in East Branch.

Anas sponsa (summer or wood duck), everywhere.

Fuligula albeola (spirit duck or dipper), common.

Colymbus glacialis (great northern diver or loon), in all the lakes.

Mergus Merganser (buff-breasted merganser or sheldrake), common on lakes and rivers.

A swallow; the night-warbler (?) once or twice.

V. QUADRUPEDS

A bat on West Branch; beaver skull at Grand Lake; Mr. Thatcher ate beaver with moose on the Caucomgomoc. A muskrat on the last stream; the red squirrel is common in the depths of the woods; a dead porcupine on Chamberlain road; a cow moose and tracks of calf; skin of a bear, just killed.

VI. OUTFIT FOR AN EXCURSION

The following will be a good outfit for one who wishes to make an excursion of *twelve* days into the Maine woods in July, with a companion and one Indian, for the same purposes that I did.

Wear, — a check shirt, stout old shoes, thick socks, a neck-ribbon, thick waistcoat, thick pants, old Kossuth hat, a linen sack.

Carry, — in an india-rubber knapsack, with a large flap, two shirts (check), one pair thick socks, one pair drawers, one flannel shirt, two pocket-handkerchiefs, a light india-rubber coat or a thick woolen one, two bosoms and collars to go and come with, one napkin, pins, needles, thread, one blanket, best gray, seven feet long.

Tent, — six by seven feet, and four feet high in middle, will do; veil and gloves and insect-wash, or, better, mosquito-bars to cover all at night; best pocket map, and perhaps description of the route; compass; plant-book and red blotting-paper; paper and stamps, botany, small pocket spy-glass for birds, pocket microscope, tape-measure, insect-boxes.

Axe, full size if possible, jackknife, fish-lines, two only apiece, with a few hooks and corks ready, and with pork for bait in a packet, rigged; matches (some also in a small vial in the waistcoat pocket); soap, two pieces; large knife and iron spoon (for all); three or four old newspapers, much twine, and several rags for dish-cloths; twenty feet of strong cord, four-quart tin pail for kettle, two tin dippers, three tin plates, a fry-pan.

Provisions. — Soft hard-bread, twenty-eight pounds; pork, sixteen pounds; sugar, twelve pounds; one pound black tea or three pounds coffee; one box or a pint of salt; one quart Indian meal, to fry fish in; six lemons, good to correct the pork and warm water; perhaps two or three pounds of rice, for variety. You will probably get some berries, fish, etc., beside.

A gun is not worth the carriage, unless you go as hunters. The pork should be in an open keg, sawed to fit; the sugar, tea or coffee, meal, salt, etc., should be put in separate water-tight india-rubber bags, tied with a leather string; and all the provisions, and part of the rest of the baggage, put into two large india-rubber bags, which have

been proved to be water-tight and durable.

Expense of preceding outfit is twenty-four dollars.

An Indian may be hired for about one dollar and fifty cents per day, and perhaps fifty cents a week for his canoe (this depends on the demand). The canoe should be a strong and tight one. This expense will be nineteen dollars.

Such an excursion need not cost more than twenty-five dollars apiece, starting at the foot of Moosehead, if you already possess or can borrow a reasonable part of the outfit. If you take an Indian and canoe at Oldtown, it will cost seven or eight dollars more to transport them to the lake.

VII. A LIST OF INDIAN WORDS

1. *Ktaadn*, said to mean *Highest Land*, Rasles puts for *Mt. Pemadene*; for *Grai, pierre à aiguiser*, *Kitadaügan*. (*Vide* Potter.)

Mattawamkeag, place where two rivers meet. (Indian of carry.) (*Vide* Williamson's History of Maine, and Willis.)

Molunkus.

Ebeeme, rock.

Noliseemack; other name, Shad Pond.

Kecunnilessu, chickadee.
}
Joe.

Nipsquecohossus, woodcock.
}

Skuscumonsuk, kingfisher. Has it not the pl. termination *uk* here, or *suk*?
}

Wassus, bear, *aouessous* (Rasles).
}

Lunxus, Indian-devil.
}

Upahsis, mountain-ash.

}

Moose (is it called, or does it mean, wood-eater?), *mous* (Rasles).

Katahdinauguoh, said to mean mountains about Ktaadn.

Ebemena, tree-cranberry. *Ibibimin*, *nar*, red, bad fruit. (Rasles.)
}
Joe

Wighiggin, a bill or writing, *aouixigan*, "*livre*, *lettre*, *peinture*, *ceinture*" (Rasles).
}
Ind'n of carry.

Sebamook, Large-bay Lake, *Peqouasebem*; add *ar* for plural, *lac* or *étang*, (Rasles). *Ouaürinaügamek*, *anse dans un lac*, (Rasles). *Mspame*, large water. Polis.
}
Nicholai.

Sebago and *Sebec*, large open water.

Chesuncook, place where many streams empty in. (*Vide* Willis and Potter.)
}
Tahmunt, etc.

Caucomgomoc, Gull Lake. (*Caucomgomoc*, the lake; *Caucomgomoc-took*, the river, Polis.)
}

Pammadumcook.

Kenduskieg, Little Eel River. (*Vide* Willis.)

}
Nicholai.

Penobscot, Rocky River. *Puapeskou*, stone. (Rasles v. Springer.)
}
Ind'n of carry.

Umbazookskus, meadow stream. (Much-meadow river, Polis.)
}
Nicholai.

Millinocket, place of islands.
}

Souneunk, that runs between mountains.
}

Aboljacarmegus, Smooth-ledge Falls and Deadwater.
}

Aboljacarmeguscook, the river there.

Muskiticook, dead stream. (Indian of carry.) *Meskikou*, or *Meskikouikou*, a place where there is grass, (Rasles). *Muskéeticook*, deadwater, (Polis).

Mattahumkeag, Sand-creek Pond.
}
Nicholai.

Piscataquis, branch of river.
}

Shecorways, sheldrakes.
}
Polis.

Naramekechus, peetweet.
}

Medawisla, loon.
}

Orignal, Moosehead Lake. (Montresor.)

Chor-chor-que, usnea.
}
Polis.

Adelungquamooktum, wood thrush.
}

Bematruichtik, high land generally.
}

(*Mt. Pemadené.* Rasles).
}

Maquoxigil, bark of red osier, Indian tobacco.
}

Kineo, flint (Williamson; old Indian hunter). (Hodge.)

Artoosoqu', phosphorescence.

}
Polis.

Subekoondark, white spruce.
}

Skusk, black spruce.
}

Beskabekuk, the “Lobster Lake” of maps.
}

Beskabekukskishtuk, the deadwater below the island.
}

Paytaytequick, Burnt-Ground Stream, what Joe called *Ragmuff*.
}

Nonlangyis, the name of a deadwater between the last and Pine Stream.
}

Karsaootuk, Black River (or Pine Stream). *Mkazéouighen*, black, (Rasles).
}

Michigan, fimus. Polis applied it to a sucker, or a poor, good-for-nothing fish. *Fiante (?) mitsegan* (Rasles). (Pickering puts the ? after the first word.)
}

Cowosnebagosar, *Chiogenes hispidula*, means, grows where trees have rotted.
}

Pockadunkquaywayle, echo. *Pagadaïkoueouérré* (Rasles).
}

Bororquasis, moose-fly.
}

Nerlumskeechtcook (or *quoik*?), (or *skeetcook*), Deadwater, and applied to the mountains near.
}

Apmoojenegamook, lake that is crossed.
}

Allegash, hemlock bark. (*Vide* Willis.)
}

Paytaywecongomec, Burnt-Ground Lake, *Telos*.

Madunkehunk, Height-of-Land Stream (Webster Stream).
}
Polis.

Madunkehunk-gamooc, Height-of-Land Lake.
}

Matungamooc, Grand Lake.
}

Uncardnerheese, Trout Stream.
}

Wassataquoik (or *-cook*), Salmon River, East Branch. (*Vide* Willis.)
}

Pemoymenuk, amelanchier berries, "*Pemouaimin, nak*, a black fruit. Rasles." Has it not here the plural ending?
}

Sheepnoc, *Lilium Canadense* bulbs. "*Sipen, nak*, white, larger than *penak*" (Rasles).
}

Paytgumkiss, Petticoat (where a small river comes into the Penobscot below Nicketow).
}

Burntibus, a lake-like reach in the Penobscot.
}

Passadumkeag, "where the water falls into the Penobscot above the falls" (Williamson). *Paüsidaükioui* is, *au dessus de la montagne* (Rasles).

Olarmon, or *larmon* (Polis), red paint. "Vermilion, paint, *Ouramaü*" (Rasles).

Sunkhaze, "See canoe come out; no see 'em stream" (Polis). The mouth of a river, according to Rasles, is *Saüghedétegoue*. The place where one stream empties into another, thus is *saüktaüoui*. (*Vide* Willis.)

Tomhegan Br. (at Moosehead). "*Hatchet*, *temahigan*" (Rasles).

Nicketow, "*Nicketaoutegué*, or *Niketoutegoue*, *rivière qui fourche*" (Rasles).

2. From William Willis, on the Language of the Abnaquies, Maine Hist. Coll., Vol. IV.

Abalajako-megus (river near Ktaadn).

Aitteon (name of a pond and sachem).

Apmogenegamook (name of a lake).

Allagash (a bark camp). Sockbasin, a Penobscot, told him, "The Indians gave this name to the lake from the fact of their keeping a hunting-camp there."

Bamonewengamock, head of Allegash, Cross Lake. (Sockbasin.)

Chesuncook, Big Lake. (Sockbasin.)

Caucongamock (a lake).

Ebeeme, mountains that have plums on them. (Sockbasin).

Ktaadn. Sockbasin pronounces this Ka-tah-din, and said it meant "large mountain or large thing."

Kenduskeag (the place of eels).

Kineo (flint), mountain on the border, etc.

Metawamkeag, a river with a smooth, gravelly bottom. (Sockbasin.)

Metanawcook.

Millinoket, a lake with many islands in it. (Sockbasin.)

Matakeunk (river).

Molunkus (river).

Nicketow, Neccotoh, where two streams meet ("Forks of the Penobscot").

Negas (Indian village on the Kenduskeag).

Orignal (Montresor's name for Moosehead Lake).

Ponguongamook, Allagash, name of a Mohawk Indian killed there. (Sockbasin.)

Penobscot, *Penobskeag*, French *Pentagoet*, etc.

Pougohwaken (Heron Lake).

Pemadumcook (lake).

Passadumkeag, where water goes into the river above falls. (Williamson.)

Ripogenus (river).

Sunkhaze (river), deadwater.

Souneunk.

Seboomook. Sockbasin says this word means "the shape of a Moose's head, and was given to the lake," etc. Howard says differently.

Seboois, a brook, a small river. (Sockbasin.)

Sebec (river).

Sebago (great water).

Telos (lake).

Telasius (lake).

Umbagog (lake), doubled up; so called from its form. (Sockbasin.)

Umbazookskus (lake).

Wassatiquoik, a mountain river. (Sockbasin.)

Judge C. E. Potter of Manchester, New Hampshire, adds in November, 1855: —

"*Chesuncook.* This is formed from *Chesunk*, or *Schunk* (a goose), and *Auke* (a place), and means 'The Goose Place.' Chesunk, or Schunk, is the sound made by the wild geese when flying."

Ktaadn. This is doubtless a corruption of *kees* (high), and *auke* (a place).

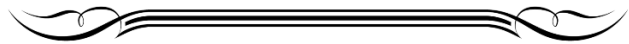
Penobscot, *penapse* (stone, rock place), and *auke* (place).

Suncook, goose place, *Schunk-auke*.

The Judge says that *schoot* means to rush, and hence *schoodic* from this and *auke* (a place where water rushes), and that *schoon* means the same; and that the Marblehead people and others have derived the words "scoon" and "scoot" from the Indians, and hence

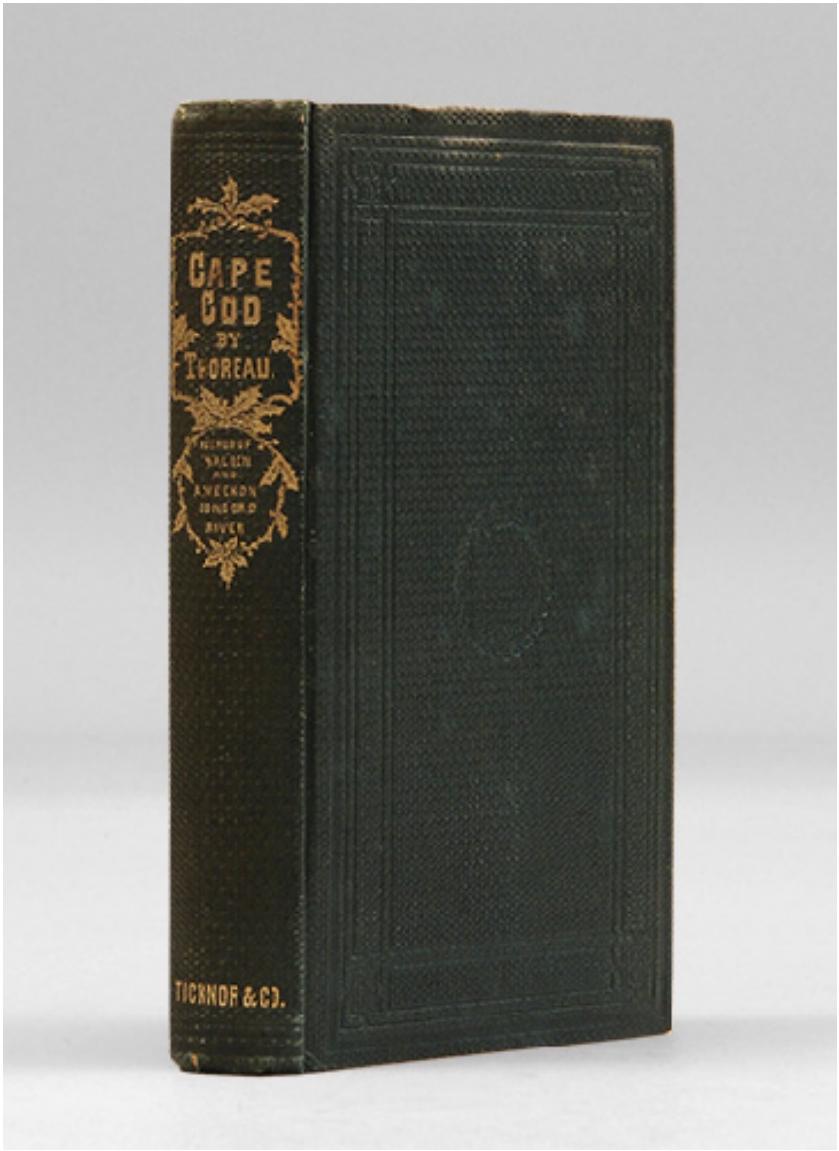
“schooner”; refers to a Mr. Chute.

CAPE COD

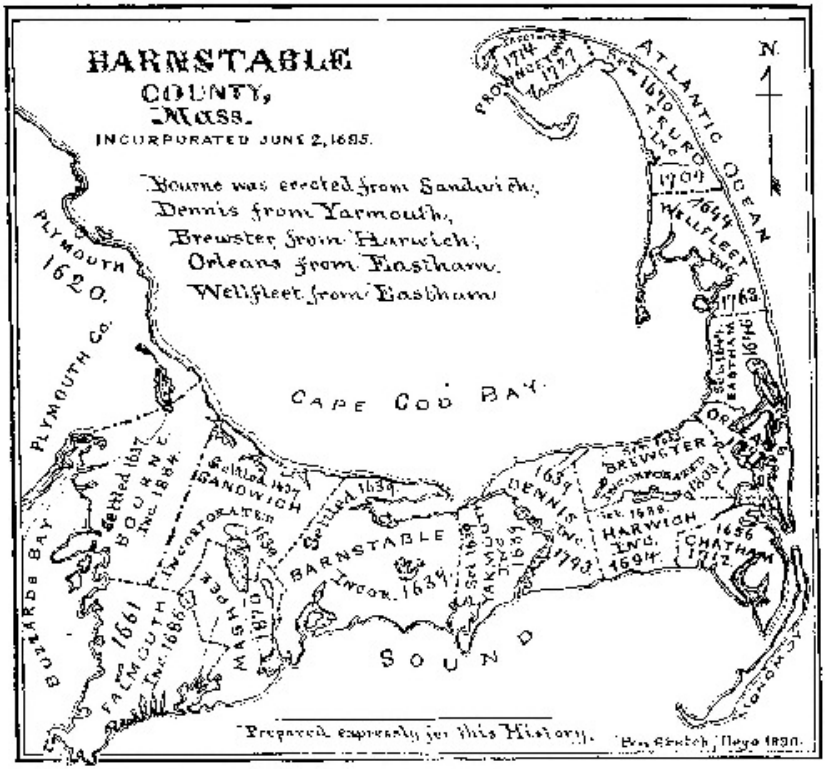


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The first edition



Historical map of Cape Cod, 1890



Cape Cod today

INTRODUCTION

Of the group of notables who in the middle of the last century made the little Massachusetts town of Concord their home, and who thus conferred on it a literary fame both unique and enduring, Thoreau is the only one who was Concord born. His neighbor, Emerson, had sought the place in mature life for rural retirement, and after it became his chosen retreat, Hawthorne, Alcott, and the others followed; but Thoreau, the most peculiar genius of them all, was native to the soil.

In 1837, at the age of twenty, he graduated from Harvard, and for three years taught school in his home town. Then he applied himself to the business in which his father was engaged, — the manufacture of lead pencils. He believed he could make a better pencil than any at that time in use; but when he succeeded and his friends congratulated him that he had now opened his way to fortune he responded that he would never make another pencil. "Why should I?" said he. "I would not do again what I have done once."

So he turned his attention to miscellaneous studies and to nature. When he wanted money he earned it by some piece of manual labor agreeable to him, as building a boat or a fence, planting, or surveying. He never married, very rarely went to church, did not vote, refused to pay a tax to the State, ate no flesh, drank no wine, used no tobacco; and for a long time he was simply an oddity in the estimation of his fellow-townsmen. But when they at length came to understand him better they recognized his genuineness and sincerity and his originality, and they revered and admired him. He was entirely independent of the conventional, and his courage to live as he saw fit and to defend and uphold what he believed to be right never failed him. Indeed, so devoted was he to principle and his own ideals that he seems never to have allowed himself one indifferent or careless moment.

He was a man of the strongest local attachments, and seldom wandered beyond his native township. A trip abroad did not tempt him in the least. It would mean in his estimation just so much time lost for enjoying his own village, and he says: "At best, Paris could

only be a school in which to learn to live here — a stepping-stone to Concord."

He had a very pronounced antipathy to the average prosperous city man, and in speaking of persons of this class remarks: "They do a little business commonly each day in order to pay their board, and then they congregate in sitting-rooms, and feebly fabulate and paddle in the social slush, and go unashamed to their beds and take on a new layer of sloth."

The men he loved were those of a more primitive sort, unartificial, with the daring to cut loose from the trammels of fashion and inherited custom. Especially he liked the companionship of men who were in close contact with nature. A half-wild Irishman, or some rude farmer, or fisherman, or hunter, gave him real delight; and for this reason, Cape Cod appealed to him strongly. It was then a very isolated portion of the State, and its dwellers were just the sort of independent, self-reliant folk to attract him. In his account of his rambles there the human element has large place, and he lingers fondly over the characteristics of his chance acquaintances and notes every salient remark. They, in turn, no doubt found him interesting, too, though the purposes of the wanderer were a good deal of a mystery to them, and they were inclined to think he was a pedler.

His book was the result of several journeys, but the only trip of which he tells us in detail was in October. That month, therefore, was the one I chose for my own visit to the Cape when I went to secure the series of pictures that illustrate this edition; for I wished to see the region as nearly as possible in the same guise that Thoreau describes it. From Sandwich, where his record of Cape experiences begins, and where the inner shore first takes a decided turn eastward, I followed much the same route he had travelled in 1849, clear to Provincetown, at the very tip of the hook.

Thoreau has a good deal to say of the sandy roads and toilsome walking. In that respect there has been marked improvement, for latterly a large proportion of the main highway has been macadamed. Yet one still encounters plenty of the old yielding sand roads that make travel a weariness either on foot or in teams. Another feature to which the nature lover again and again refers is the windmills. The last of these ceased grinding a score of years ago, though several

continue to stand in fairly perfect condition. There have been changes on the Cape, but the landscape in the main presents the same appearance it did in Thoreau's time. As to the people, if you see them in an unconventional way, tramping as Thoreau did, their individuality retains much of the interest that he discovered.

Our author's report of his trip has a piquancy that is quite alluring. This might be said of all his books, for no matter what he wrote about, his comments were certain to be unusual; and it is as much or more for the revelations of his own tastes, thoughts, and idiosyncrasies that we read him as for the subject matter with which he deals. He had published only two books when he died in 1862 at the age of forty-four, and his "Cape Cod" did not appear until 1865. Nor did the public at first show any marked interest in his books. During his life, therefore, the circle of his admirers was very small, but his fame has steadily increased since, and the stimulus of his lively descriptions and observations seems certain of enduring appreciation.

Clifton Johnson. Hadley, Mass.

I. THE SHIPWRECK

Wishing to get a better view than I had yet had of the ocean, which, we are told, covers more than two-thirds of the globe, but of which a man who lives a few miles inland may never see any trace, more than of another world, I made a visit to Cape Cod in October, 1849, another the succeeding June, and another to Truro in July, 1855; the first and last time with a single companion, the second time alone. I have spent, in all, about three weeks on the Cape; walked from Eastham to Province-town twice on the Atlantic side, and once on the Bay side also, excepting four or five miles, and crossed the Cape half a dozen times on my way; but having come so fresh to the sea, I have got but little salted. My readers must expect only so much saltness as the land breeze acquires from blowing over an arm of the sea, or is tasted on the windows and the bark of trees twenty miles inland, after September gales. I have been accustomed to make excursions to the ponds within ten miles of Concord, but latterly I have extended my excursions to the seashore.

I did not see why I might not make a book on Cape Cod, as well as my neighbor on "Human Culture." It is but another name for the same thing, and hardly a sandier phase of it. As for my title, I suppose that the word Cape is from the French *cap*; which is from the Latin *caput*, a head; which is, perhaps, from the verb *capere*, to take, — that being the part by which we take hold of a thing: — Take Time by the forelock. It is also the safest part to take a serpent by. And as for Cod, that was derived directly from that "great store of codfish" which Captain Bartholomew Gosnold caught there in 1602; which fish appears to have been so called from the Saxon word *codde*, "a case in which seeds are lodged," either from the form of the fish, or the quantity of spawn it contains; whence also, perhaps, *codling* (*pomum coctile?*) and coddle, — to cook green like peas. (V. Dic.)

Cape Cod is the bared and bended arm of Massachusetts: the shoulder is at Buzzard's Bay; the elbow, or crazy-bone, at Cape Mallebarre; the wrist at Truro; and the sandy fist at Provincetown, — behind which the State stands on her guard, with her back to the

Green Mountains, and her feet planted on the floor of the ocean, like an athlete protecting her Bay, — boxing with northeast storms, and, ever and anon, heaving up her Atlantic adversary from the lap of earth, — ready to thrust forward her other fist, which keeps guard the while upon her breast at Cape Ann.

On studying the map, I saw that there must be an uninterrupted beach on the east or outside of the forearm of the Cape, more than thirty miles from the general line of the coast, which would afford a good sea view, but that, on account of an opening in the beach, forming the entrance to Nauset Harbor, in Orleans, I must strike it in Eastham, if I approached it by land, and probably I could walk thence straight to Race Point, about twenty-eight miles, and not meet with any obstruction.

We left Concord, Massachusetts, on Tuesday, October 9th, 1849. On reaching Boston, we found that the Provincetown steamer, which should have got in the day before, had not yet arrived, on account of a violent storm; and, as we noticed in the streets a handbill headed, "Death! one hundred and forty-five lives lost at Cohasset," we decided to go by way of Cohasset. We found many Irish in the cars, going to identify bodies and to sympathize with the survivors, and also to attend the funeral which was to take place in the afternoon; — and when we arrived at Cohasset, it appeared that nearly all the passengers were bound for the beach, which was about a mile distant, and many other persons were flocking in from the neighboring country. There were several hundreds of them streaming off over Cohasset common in that direction, some on foot and some in wagons, — and among them were some sportsmen in their hunting-jackets, with their guns, and game-bags, and dogs. As we passed the graveyard we saw a large hole, like a cellar, freshly dug there, and, just before reaching the shore, by a pleasantly winding and rocky road, we met several hay-riggings and farm-wagons coming away toward the meeting-house, each loaded with three large, rough deal boxes. We did not need to ask what was in them. The owners of the wagons were made the undertakers. Many horses in carriages were fastened to the fences near the shore, and, for a mile or more, up and down, the beach was covered with people looking out for bodies, and examining the fragments of the wreck. There was a small island

called Brook Island, with a hut on it, lying just off the shore. This is said to be the rockiest shore in Massachusetts, from Nantasket to Scituate, — hard sienitic rocks, which the waves have laid bare, but have not been able to crumble. It has been the scene of many a shipwreck.

The brig *St. John*, from Galway, Ireland, laden with emigrants, was wrecked on Sunday morning; it was now Tuesday morning, and the sea was still breaking violently on the rocks. There were eighteen or twenty of the same large boxes that I have mentioned, lying on a green hillside, a few rods from the water, and surrounded by a crowd. The bodies which had been recovered, twenty-seven or eight in all, had been collected there. Some were rapidly nailing down the lids, others were carting the boxes away, and others were lifting the lids, which were yet loose, and peeping under the cloths, for each body, with such rags as still adhered to it, was covered loosely with a white sheet. I witnessed no signs of grief, but there was a sober dispatch of business which was affecting. One man was seeking to identify a particular body, and one undertaker or carpenter was calling to another to know in what box a certain child was put. I saw many marble feet and matted heads as the cloths were raised, and one livid, swollen, and mangled body of a drowned girl, — who probably had intended to go out to service in some American family, — to which some rags still adhered, with a string, half concealed by the flesh, about its swollen neck; the coiled-up wreck of a human hulk, gashed by the rocks or fishes, so that the bone and muscle were exposed, but quite bloodless, — merely red and white, — with wide-open and staring eyes, yet lustreless, dead-lights; or like the cabin windows of a stranded vessel, filled with sand. Sometimes there were two or more children, or a parent and child, in the same box, and on the lid would perhaps be written with red chalk, “Bridget such-a-one, and sister’s child.” The surrounding sward was covered with bits of sails and clothing. I have since heard, from one who lives by this beach, that a woman who had come over before, but had left her infant behind for her sister to bring, came and looked into these boxes and saw in one, — probably the same whose superscription I have quoted, — her child in her sister’s arms, as if the sister had meant to be found thus; and within three days after, the mother died from the

effect of that sight.

We turned from this and walked along the rocky shore. In the first cove were strewn what seemed the fragments of a vessel, in small pieces mixed with sand and sea-weed, and great quantities of feathers; but it looked so old and rusty, that I at first took it to be some old wreck which had lain there many years. I even thought of Captain Kidd, and that the feathers were those which sea-fowl had cast there; and perhaps there might be some tradition about it in the neighborhood. I asked a sailor if that was the *St. John*. He said it was. I asked him where she struck. He pointed to a rock in front of us, a mile from the shore, called the Grampus Rock, and added:

"You can see a part of her now sticking up; it looks like a small boat."

I saw it. It was thought to be held by the chain-cables and the anchors. I asked if the bodies which I saw were all that were drowned.

"Not a quarter of them," said he.

"Where are the rest?"

"Most of them right underneath that piece you see."

It appeared to us that there was enough rubbish to make the wreck of a large vessel in this cove alone, and that it would take many days to cart it off. It was several feet deep, and here and there was a bonnet or a jacket on it. In the very midst of the crowd about this wreck, there were men with carts busily collecting the sea-weed which the storm had cast up, and conveying it beyond the reach of the tide, though they were often obliged to separate fragments of clothing from it, and they might at any moment have found a human body under it. Drown who might, they did not forget that this weed was a valuable manure. This shipwreck had not produced a visible vibration in the fabric of society.

About a mile south we could see, rising above the rocks, the masts of the British brig which the *St. John* had endeavored to follow, which had slipped her cables and, by good luck, run into the mouth of Cohasset Harbor. A little further along the shore we saw a man's clothes on a rock; further, a woman's scarf, a gown, a straw bonnet, the brig's caboose, and one of her masts high and dry, broken into several pieces. In another rocky cove, several rods from the water,

and behind rocks twenty feet high, lay a part of one side of the vessel, still hanging together. It was, perhaps, forty feet long, by fourteen wide. I was even more surprised at the power of the waves, exhibited on this shattered fragment, than I had been at the sight of the smaller fragments before. The largest timbers and iron braces were broken superfluously, and I saw that no material could withstand the power of the waves; that iron must go to pieces in such a case, and an iron vessel would be cracked up like an egg-shell on the rocks. Some of these timbers, however, were so rotten that I could almost thrust my umbrella through them. They told us that some were saved on this piece, and also showed where the sea had heaved it into this cove, which was now dry. When I saw where it had come in, and in what condition, I wondered that any had been saved on it. A little further on a crowd of men was collected around the mate of the *St. John*, who was telling his story. He was a slim-looking youth, who spoke of the captain as the master, and seemed a little excited. He was saying that when they jumped into the boat, she filled, and, the vessel lurching, the weight of the water in the boat caused the painter to break, and so they were separated. Whereat one man came away, saying: —

"Well, I don't see but he tells a straight story enough. You see, the weight of the water in the boat broke the painter. A boat full of water is very heavy," — and so on, in a loud and impertinently earnest tone, as if he had a bet depending on it, but had no humane interest in the matter.

Another, a large man, stood near by upon a rock, gazing into the sea, and chewing large quids of tobacco, as if that habit were forever confirmed with him.

"Come," says another to his companion, "let's be off. We've seen the whole of it. It's no use to stay to the funeral."

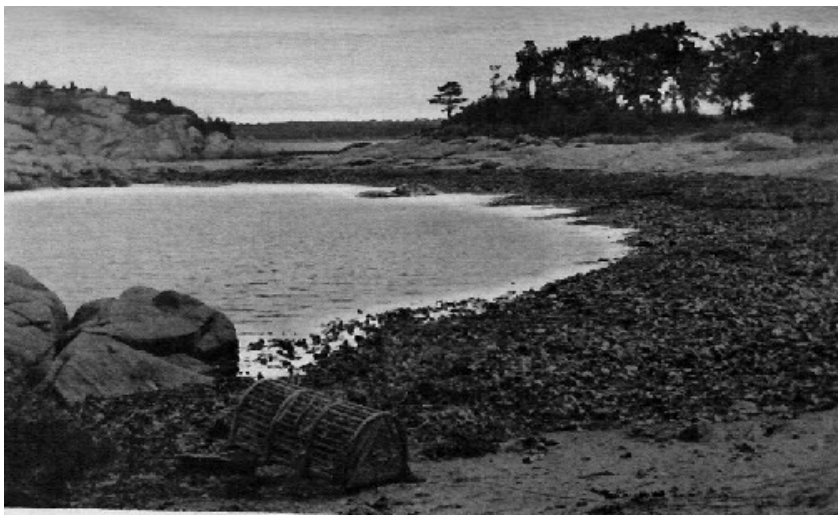
Further, we saw one standing upon a rock, who, we were told, was one that was saved. He was a sober-looking man, dressed in a jacket and gray pantaloons, with his hands in the pockets. I asked him a few questions, which he answered; but he seemed unwilling to talk about it, and soon walked away. By his side stood one of the life-boatmen, in an oil-cloth jacket, who told us how they went to the relief of the British brig, thinking that the boat of the *St. John*, which

they passed on the way, held all her crew, — for the waves prevented their seeing those who were on the vessel, though they might have saved some had they known there were any there. A little further was the flag of the *St. John* spread on a rock to dry, and held down by stones at the corners. This frail, but essential and significant portion of the vessel, which had so long been the sport of the winds, was sure to reach the shore. There were one or two houses visible from these rocks, in which were some of the survivors recovering from the shock which their bodies and minds had sustained. One was not expected to live.

We kept on down the shore as far as a promontory called Whitehead, that we might see more of the Cohasset Rocks. In a little cove, within half a mile, there were an old man and his son collecting, with their team, the sea-weed which that fatal storm had cast up, as serenely employed as if there had never been a wreck in the world, though they were within sight of the Grampus Rock, on which the *St. John* had struck. The old man had heard that there was a wreck, and knew most of the particulars, but he said that he had not been up there since it happened. It was the wrecked weed that concerned him most, rock-weed, kelp, and sea-weed, as he named them, which he carted to his barn-yard; and those bodies were to him but other weeds which the tide cast up, but which were of no use to him. We afterwards came to the life-boat in its harbor, waiting for another emergency, — and in the afternoon we saw the funeral procession at a distance, at the head of which walked the captain with the other survivors.

On the whole, it was not so impressive a scene as I might have expected. If I had found one body cast upon the beach in some lonely place, it would have affected me more. I sympathized rather with the winds and waves, as if to toss and mangle these poor human bodies was the order of the day. If this was the law of Nature, why waste any time in awe or pity? If the last day were come, we should not think so much about the separation of friends or the blighted prospects of individuals. I saw that corpses might be multiplied, as on the field of battle, till they no longer affected us in any degree, as exceptions to the common lot of humanity. Take all the graveyards together, they are always the majority. It is the individual and private

that demands our sympathy. A man can attend but one funeral in the course of his life, can behold but one corpse. Yet I saw that the inhabitants of the shore would be not a little affected by this event. They would watch there many days and nights for the sea to give up its dead, and their imaginations and sympathies would supply the place of mourners far away, who as yet knew not of the wreck. Many days after this, something white was seen floating on the water by one who was sauntering on the beach. It was approached in a boat, and found to be the body of a woman, which had risen in an upright position, whose white cap was blown back with the wind. I saw that the beauty of the shore itself was wrecked for many a lonely walker there, until he could perceive, at last, how its beauty was enhanced by wrecks like this, and it acquired thus a rarer and sublimer beauty still.



Cohasset — The little cove at Whitehead promontory

Why care for these dead bodies? They really have no friends but the worms or fishes. Their owners were coming to the New World, as Columbus and the Pilgrims did, — they were within a mile of its shores; but, before they could reach it, they emigrated to a newer world than ever Columbus dreamed of, yet one of whose existence we believe that there is far more universal and convincing evidence — though it has not yet been discovered by science — than Columbus had of this; not merely mariners' tales and some paltry

drift-wood and sea-weed, but a continual drift and instinct to all our shores. I saw their empty hulks that came to land; but they themselves, meanwhile, were cast upon some shore yet further west, toward which we are all tending, and which we shall reach at last, it may be through storm and darkness, as they did. No doubt, we have reason to thank God that they have not been "shipwrecked into life again." The mariner who makes the safest port in Heaven, perchance, seems to his friends on earth to be shipwrecked, for they deem Boston Harbor the better place; though perhaps invisible to them, a skillful pilot comes to meet him, and the fairest and balmiest gales blow off that coast, his good ship makes the land in halcyon days, and he kisses the shore in rapture there, while his old hulk tosses in the surf here. It is hard to part with one's body, but, no doubt, it is easy enough to do without it when once it is gone. All their plans and hopes burst like a bubble! Infants by the score dashed on the rocks by the enraged Atlantic Ocean! No, no! If the *St. John* did not make her port here, she has been telegraphed there. The strongest wind cannot stagger a Spirit; it is a Spirit's breath. A just man's purpose cannot be split on any Grampus or material rock, but itself will split rocks till it succeeds.

The verses addressed to Columbus, dying, may, with slight alterations, be applied to the passengers of the *St. John:* —

"Soon with them will all be over,
Soon the voyage will be begun
That shall bear them to discover,
Far away, a land unknown.

"Land that each, alone, must visit,
But no tidings bring to men;
For no sailor, once departed,
Ever hath returned again.

"No carved wood, no broken branches,
Ever drift from that far wild;
He who on that ocean launches
Meets no corse of angel child.

“Undismayed, my noble sailors,
Spread, then spread your canvas out;
Spirits! on a sea of ether
Soon shall ye serenely float!

“Where the deep no plummet soundeth,
Fear no hidden breakers there,
And the fanning wing of angels
Shall your bark right onward bear.

“Quit, now, full of heart and comfort,
These rude shores, they are of earth;
Where the rosy clouds are parting,
There the blessed isles loom forth.”

One summer day, since this, I came this way, on foot, along the shore from Boston. It was so warm that some horses had climbed to the very top of the ramparts of the old fort at Hull, where there was hardly room to turn round, for the sake of the breeze. The *Datura stramonium*, or thorn-apple, was in full bloom along the beach; and, at sight of this cosmopolite, — this Captain Cook among plants, — carried in ballast all over the world, I felt as if I were on the highway of nations. Say, rather, this Viking, king of the Bays, for it is not an innocent plant; it suggests not merely commerce, but its attend-ant vices, as if its fibres were the stuff of which pirates spin their yarns. I heard the voices of men shouting aboard a vessel, half a mile from the shore, which sounded as if they were in a barn in the country, they being between the sails. It was a purely rural sound. As I looked over the water, I saw the isles rapidly wasting away, the sea nibbling voraciously at the continent, the springing arch of a hill suddenly interrupted, as at Point Alderton, — what botanists might call premorse, — showing, by its curve against the sky, how much space it must have occupied, where now was water only, On the other hand, these wrecks of isles were being fancifully arranged into new shores, as at Hog Island, inside of Hull, where everything seemed to be gently lapsing, into futurity. This isle had got the very form of a ripple, — and I thought that the inhabitants should bear a ripple for

device on their shields, a wave passing over them, with the *datura*, which is said to produce mental alienation of long duration without affecting the bodily health, springing from its edge. The most interesting thing which I heard of, in this township of Hull, was an unfailing spring, whose locality was pointed out to me, on the side of a distant hill, as I was panting along the shore, though I did not visit it. Perhaps, if I should go through Rome, it would be some spring on the Capitoline Hill I should remember the longest. It is true, I was somewhat interested in the well at the old French fort, which was said to be ninety feet deep, with a cannon at the bottom of it. On Nantasket beach I counted a dozen chaises from the public-house. From time to time the riders turned their horses toward the sea, standing in the water for the coolness, — and I saw the value of beaches to cities for the sea breeze and the bath.

At Jerusalem village the inhabitants were collecting in haste, before a thunder-shower now approaching, the Irish moss which they had spread to dry. The shower passed on one side, and gave me a few drops only, which did not cool the air. I merely felt a puff upon my cheek, though, within sight, a vessel was capsized in the bay, and several others dragged their anchors, and were near going ashore. The sea-bathing at Cohasset Rocks was perfect. The water was purer and more transparent than any I had ever seen. There was not a particle of mud or slime about it. The bottom being sandy, I could see the sea-perch swimming about. The smooth and fantastically worn rocks, and the perfectly clean and tress-like rock-weeds falling over you, and attached so firmly to the rocks that you could pull yourself up by them, greatly enhanced the luxury of the bath. The stripe of barnacles just above the weeds reminded me of some vegetable growth, — the buds, and petals, and seed-vessels of flowers. They lay along the seams of the rock like buttons on a waistcoat. It was one of the hottest days in the year, yet I found the water so icy cold that I could swim but a stroke or two, and thought that, in case of shipwreck, there would be more danger of being chilled to death than simply drowned. One immersion was enough to make you forget the dog-days utterly. Though you were sweltering before, it will take you half an hour now to remember that it was ever warm. There were the tawny rocks, like lions couchant, defying the

ocean, whose waves incessantly dashed against and scoured them with vast quantities of gravel. The water held in their little hollows, on the receding of the tide, was so crystalline that I could not believe it salt, but wished to drink it; and higher up were basins of fresh water left by the rain, — all which, being also of different depths and temperature, were convenient for different kinds of baths. Also, the larger hollows in the smoothed rocks formed the most convenient of seats and dressing-rooms. In these respects it was the most perfect seashore that I had seen.

I saw in Cohasset, separated from the sea only by a narrow beach, a handsome but shallow lake of some four hundred acres, which, I was told, the sea had tossed over the beach in a great storm in the spring, and, after the alewives had passed into it, it had stopped up its outlet, and now the alewives were dying: by thousands, and the inhabitants were apprehending a pestilence as the water evaporated. It had live rocky islets in it.

This Rock shore is called Pleasant Cove, on some maps; on the map of Cohasset, that name appears to be confined to the particular cove where I saw the wreck of the St. J aim. The ocean did not look, now, as if any were ever shipwrecked in it; it was not grand and sublime, but beautiful as a lake. Not a vestige of a wreck was visible, nor could I believe that the bones of many a shipwrecked man were buried in that pure sand. But to go on with our first excursion.

The Jamestown weed (or thorn-apple). “This, being an early plant, was gathered very young for a boiled salad, by some of the soldiers sent thither [*i.e.* to Virginia] to quell the rebellion of Bacon; and some of them ate plentifully of it, the effect of which was a very pleasant comedy, for they turned natural fools upon it for several days: one would blow up a feather in the air; another would dart straws at it with much fury; and another, stark naked, was sitting up in a corner like a monkey, grinning and making mows at them; a fourth would fondly kiss and paw his companions, and sneer in their faces, with a countenance more antic than any in a Dutch droll. In this frantic condition they were confined, lest they should, in their folly, destroy themselves, — though it was observed that all their actions were full of innocence and good nature. Indeed, they were not very cleanly. A thousand such simple tricks they played, and

after eleven days returned to themselves again, not remembering anything that had passed." — Beverly's *History of Virginia*, p. 120.

II. STAGE COACH VIEWS

After spending the night in Bridgewater, and picking up a few arrow-heads there in the morning, we took the cars for Sandwich, where we arrived before noon. This was the terminus of the "Cape Cod Railroad," though it is but the beginning of the Cape. As it rained hard, with driving mists, and there was no sign of its holding up, we here took that almost obsolete conveyance, the stage, for "as far as it went that day," as we told the driver. We had for-gotten how far a stage could go in a day, but we were told that the Cape roads were very "heavy," though they added that, being of sand, the rain would improve them. This coach was an exceedingly narrow one, but as there was a slight spherical excess over two on a seat, the driver waited till nine passengers had got in, without taking the measure of any of them, and then shut the door after two or three ineffectual slams, as if the fault were all in the hinges or the latch, — while we timed our inspirations and expirations so as to assist him.

We were now fairly on the Cape, which extends from Sandwich eastward thirty-five miles, and thence north and northwest thirty more, in all sixty-five, and has an average breadth of about five miles. In the interior it rises to the height of two hundred, and sometimes perhaps three hundred feet above the level of the sea. According to Hitchcock, the geologist of the State, it is composed almost entirely of sand, even to the depth of three hundred feet in some places, though there is probably a concealed core of rock a little beneath the surface, and it is of diluvian origin, excepting a small portion at the extremity and elsewhere along the shores, which is alluvial. For the first half of the Cape large blocks of stone are found, here and there, mixed with the sand, but for the last thirty miles boulders, or even gravel, are rarely met with. Hitchcock conjectures that the ocean has, in course of time, eaten out Boston, Harbor and other bays in the mainland, and that the minute fragments have been deposited by the currents at a distance from the shore, and formed this sand-bank. Above the sand, if the surface is subjected to agricultural tests, there is found to be a thin layer of soil gradually diminishing from Barnstable to Truro, where it ceases; but there are

many holes and rents in this weather-beaten garment not likely to be stitched in time, which reveal the naked flesh of the Cape, and its extremity is completely bare.

I at once got out my book, the eighth volume of the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, printed in 1802, which contains some short notices of the Cape towns, and began to read up to where I was, for in the cars I could not read as fast as I travelled. To those who came from the side of Plymouth, it said: "After riding through a body of woods, twelve miles in extent, interspersed with but few houses, the settlement of Sandwich appears, with a more agreeable effect, to the eye of the traveller." Another writer speaks of this as a *beautiful* village. But I think that our villages will bear to be contrasted only with one another, not with Nature. I have no great respect for the writer's taste, who talks easily about beautiful villages, embellished, perchance, with a "fulling-mill," "a handsome academy," or meeting-house, and "a number of shops for the different mechanic arts"; where the green and white houses of the gentry, drawn up in rows, front on a street of which it would be difficult to tell whether it is most like a desert or a long stable-yard. Such spots can be beautiful only to the weary traveller, or the returning native, — or, perchance, the repentant misanthrope; not to him who, with unprejudiced senses, has just come out of the woods, and approaches one of them, by a bare road, through a succession of straggling homesteads where he cannot tell which is the alms-house. However, as for Sandwich, I cannot speak particularly. Ours was but half a Sandwich at most, and that must have fallen on the buttered side some time. I only saw that it was a closely built town for a small one, with glass-works to improve its sand, and narrow streets in which we turned round and round till we could not tell which way we were going, and the rain came in, first on this side, and then on that, and I saw that they in the houses were more comfortable than we in the coach. My book also said of this town, "The inhabitants, in general, are substantial livers." — that is. I suppose, they do not live like philosophers: but, as the stage did not stop long enough for us to dine, we had no opportunity to test the truth of this statement. It may have referred, however, to the quantity "of oil they would yield." It further said, "The inhabitants of Sandwich generally manifest a fond

and steady adherence to the manners, employments, and modes of living which characterized their fathers"; which made me think that they were, after all, very much like all the rest of the world; — and it added that this was "a resemblance, which, at this day, will constitute no impeachment of either their virtue or taste": which remark proves to me that the writer was one with the rest of them. No people ever lived by cursing their fathers, however great a curse their fathers might have been to them. But it must be confessed that ours was old authority, and probably they have changed all that now.



An old windmill

Our route was along the Bay side, through Barnstable, Yarmouth, Dennis, and Brewster, to Orleans, with a range of low hills on our right, running down the Cape. The weather was not favorable for wayside views, but we made the most of such glimpses of land and

water as we could get through the rain. The country was, for the most part, bare, or with only a little scrubby wood left on the hills. We noticed in Yarmouth — and, if I do not mistake, in Dennis — large tracts where pitch-pines were planted four or five years before. They were in rows, as they appeared when we were abreast of them, and, excepting that there were extensive vacant spaces, seemed to be doing remarkably well. This, we were told, was the only use to which such tracts could be profitably put. Every higher eminence had a pole set up on it, with an old storm-coat or sail tied to it, for a signal, that those on the south side of the Cape, for instance, might know when the Boston packets had arrived on the north. It appeared as if this use must absorb the greater part of the old clothes of the Cape, leaving but few rags for the pedlers. The wind-mills on the hills, — large weather-stained octagonal structures, — and the salt-works scattered all along the shore, with their long rows of vats resting on piles driven into the marsh, their low, turtle-like roofs, and their slighter wind-mills, were novel and interesting objects to an inlander. The sand by the road-side was partially covered with bunches of a moss-like plant, *Hudsonia tomentosa*, which a woman in the stage told us was called "poverty-grass," because it grew where nothing else would.

I was struck by the pleasant equality which reigned among the stage company, and their broad and invulnerable good-humor. They were what is called free and easy, and met one another to advantage, as men who had at length learned how to live. They appeared to know each other when they were strangers, they were so simple and downright. They were well met, in an unusual sense, that is, they met as well as they could meet, and did not seem to be troubled with any impediment. They were not afraid nor ashamed of one another, but were contented to make just such a company as the ingredients allowed. It was evident that the same foolish respect was not here claimed for mere wealth and station that is in many parts of New England; yet some of them were the "first people," as they are called, of the various towns through which we passed. Retired sea-captains, in easy circumstances, who talked of farming as sea-captains are wont; an erect, respectable, and trustworthy-looking man, in his wrapper, some of the salt of the earth, who had formerly been the salt

of the sea; or a more courtly gentleman, who, per-chance, had been a representative to the General Court in his day; or a broad, red-faced Cape Cod man, who had seen too many storms to be easily irritated; or a fisherman's wife, who had been waiting a week for a coaster to leave Boston, and had at length come by the cars.

A strict regard for truth obliges us to say that the few women whom we saw that day looked exceedingly pinched up. They had prominent chins and noses, having lost all their teeth, and a sharp *W* would represent their profile. They were not so well preserved as their husbands; or perchance they were well preserved as dried specimens. (Their husbands, however, were pickled.) But we respect them not the less for all that; our own dental system is far from perfect.

Still we kept on in the rain, or, if we stopped, it was commonly at a post-office, and we thought that writing letters, and sorting them against our arrival, must be the principal employment of the inhabitants of the Cape this rainy day. The post-office appeared a singularly domestic institution here. Ever and anon the stage stopped before some low shop or dwelling, and a wheelwright or shoemaker appeared in his shirt sleeves and leather apron, with spectacles newly donned, holding up Uncle Sam's bag, as if it were a slice of home-made cake, for the travellers, while he retailed some piece of gossip to the driver, really as indifferent to the presence of the former as if they were so much baggage. In one instance we understood that a woman was the postmistress, and they said that she made the best one on the road; but we suspected that the letters must be subjected to a very close scrutiny there. While we were stopping for this purpose at Dennis, we ventured to put our heads out of the windows, to see where we were going, and saw rising before us, through the mist, singular barren hills, all stricken with poverty-grass, looming up as if they were in the horizon, though they were close to us, and we seemed to have got to the end of the land on that side, notwithstanding that the horses were still headed that way. Indeed, that part of Dennis which we saw was an exceedingly barren and desolate country, of a character which I can find no name for; such a surface, perhaps, as the bottom of the sea made dry land day before yesterday. It was covered with poverty-grass, and there was hardly a

tree in sight, but here and there a little weather-stained, one-storied house, with a red roof, — for often the roof was painted, though the rest of the house was not, — standing bleak and cheerless, yet with a broad foundation to the land, where the comfort must have been all inside. Yet we read in the Gazetteer — for we carried that too with us — that, in 1837, one hundred and fifty masters of vessels, belonging to this town, sailed from the various ports of the Union. There must be many more houses in the south part of the town, else we cannot imagine where they all lodge when they are at home, if ever they are there; but the truth is, their houses are floating ones, and their home is on the ocean. There were almost no trees at all in this part of Dennis, nor could I learn that they talked of setting out any. It is true, there was a meeting-house, set round with Lombardy poplars, in a hollow square, the rows fully as straight as the studs of a building, and the corners as square; but, if I do not mistake, every one of them was dead. I could not help thinking that they needed a revival here. Our book said that, in 1795, there was erected in Dennis "an elegant meeting-house, with a steeple." Perhaps this was the one; though whether it had a steeple, or had died down so far from sympathy with the poplars, I do not remember. Another meeting-house in this town was described as a "neat building"; but of the meeting-house in Chatham, a neigh-boring town, for there was then but one, nothing is said, except that it "is in good repair," — both which remarks, I trust, may be understood as applying to the churches spiritual as well as material. However, "elegant meeting-houses," from that Trinity one on Broadway, to this at Nobscusset, in my estimation, belong to the same category with "beautiful villages." I was never in season to see one. Handsome is that handsome does. What they did for shade here, in warm weather, we did not know, though we read that "fogs are more frequent in Chatham than in any other part of the country; and they serve in summer, instead of trees, to shelter the houses against the heat of the sun. To those who delight in extensive vision," — is it to be inferred that the inhabitants of Chatham do not?— "they are unpleasant, but they are not found to be unhealthful." Probably, also, the unobstructed sea-breeze answers the purpose of a fan. The historian of Chatham says further, that "in many families there is no difference between the breakfast and supper; cheese, cakes, and pies

being as common at the one as at the other." But that leaves us still uncertain whether they were really common at either.



A street in Sandwich

The road, which was quite hilly, here ran near the Bay-shore, having the Bay on one side, and "the rough hill of Scargo," said to be

the highest land on the Cape, on the other. Of the wide prospect of the Bay afforded by the summit of this hill, our guide says: “The view has not much of the beautiful in it, but it communicates a strong emotion of the sublime.” That is the kind of communication which we love to have made to us. We passed through the village of Suet, in Dennis, on Suet and Quivet Necks, of which it is said, “when compared with Nobscusset,” — we had a misty recollection of having passed through, or near to, the latter,— “it may be denominated a pleasant village; but, in comparison with the village of Sandwich, there is little or no beauty in it.” However, we liked Dennis well, better than any town we had seen on the Cape, it was so novel, and, in that stormy day, so sublimely dreary.

Captain John Sears, of Suet, was the first per-son in this country who obtained pure marine salt by solar evaporation alone; though it had long been made in a similar way on the coast of France, and elsewhere. This was in the year 1776, at which time, on account of the war, salt was scarce and dear. The Historical Collections contain an interesting account of his experiments, which we read when we first saw the roofs of the salt-works. Barnstable county is the most favorable locality for these works on our northern coast, — there is so little fresh water here emptying into ocean. Quite recently there were about two millions of dollars invested in this business here. But now the Cape is unable to compete with the importers of salt and the manufacturers of it at the West, and, accordingly, her salt-works are fast going to decay. From making salt, they turn to fishing more than ever. The Gazetteer will uniformly tell you, under the head of each town, how many go a-fishing, and the value of the fish and oil taken, how much salt is made and used, how many are engaged in the coasting trade, how many in manufacturing palm-leaf hats, leather, boots, shoes, and tinware, and then it has done, and leaves you to imagine the more truly domestic manufactures which are nearly the same all the world over.

Late in the afternoon, we rode through Brewster, so named after Elder Brewster, for fear he would be forgotten else. Who has not heard of Elder Brewster? Who knows who he was? This appeared to be the modern-built town of the Cape, the favorite residence of retired sea-captains. It is said that “there are more masters and mates

of vessels which sail on foreign voyages belonging to this place than to any other town in the country." There were many of the modern American houses here, such as they turn out at Cambridgeport, standing on the sand; you could almost swear that they had been floated down Charles River, and drifted across the Bay. I call them American, because they are paid for by Americans, and "put up" by American carpenters; but they are little removed from lumber; only Eastern stuff disguised with white paint, the least interesting kind of drift-wood to me. Perhaps we have reason to be proud of our naval architecture, and need not go to the Greeks, or the Goths, or the Italians, for the models of our vessels. Sea-captains do not employ a Cambridgeport carpenter to build their floating houses, and for their houses on shore, if they must copy any, it would be more agreeable to the imagination to see one of their vessels turned bottom upward, in the Numidian fashion. We read that, "at certain seasons, the reflection of the sun upon the windows of the houses in Well-fleet and Truro (across the inner side of the elbow of the Cape) is discernible with the naked eye, at a distance of eighteen miles and upward, on the county road." This we were pleased to imagine, as we had not seen the sun for twenty-four hours.



The old Higgins tavern at Orleans

The same author (the Rev. John Simpkins) said of the inhabitants, a good while ago: "No persons appear to have a greater relish for the

social circle and domestic pleasures. They are not in the habit of frequenting taverns, unless on public occasions. I know not of a proper idler or tavern-haunter in the place." This is more than can be said of my townsmen.

At length we stopped for the night at Higgins's tavern, in Orleans, feeling very much as if we were on a sand-bar in the ocean, and not knowing whether we should see land or water ahead when the mist cleared away. We here overtook two Italian boys, who had waded thus far down the Cape through the sand, with their organs on their backs, and were going on to Provincetown. What a hard lot, we thought, if the Provincetown people should shut their doors against them! Whose yard would they go to next? Yet we concluded that they had chosen wisely to come here, where other music than that of the surf must be rare. Thus the great civilizer sends out its emissaries, sooner or later, to every sandy cape and light-house of the New World which the census-taker visits, and summons the savage there to surrender.

III. THE PLAINS OF NAUSET

The next morning, Thursday, October 11th, it rained, as hard as ever; but we were determined to proceed on foot, nevertheless. We first made some inquiries with regard to the practicability of walking up the shore on the Atlantic side to Provincetown, whether we should meet with any creeks or marshes to trouble us. Higgins said that there was no obstruction, and that it was not much farther than by the road, but he thought that we should find it very "heavy" walking in the sand; it was bad enough in the road, a horse would sink in up to the fetlocks there. But there was one man at the tavern who had walked it, and he said that we could go very well, though it was sometimes inconvenient and even dangerous walking under the bank, when there was a great tide, with an easterly wind, which caused the sand to cave. For the first four or five miles we followed the road, which here turns to the north on the elbow, — the narrowest part of the Cape, — that we might clear an inlet from the ocean, a part of Nauset Harbor, in Orleans, on our right. We found the travelling good enough for walkers on the sides of the roads, though it was "heavy" for horses in the middle. We walked with our umbrellas behind us, since it blowed hard as well as rained, with driving mists, as the day before, and the wind helped us over the sand at a rapid rate. Everything indicated that we had reached a strange shore. The road was a mere lane, winding over bare swells of bleak and barren-looking land. The houses were few and far between, besides being small and rusty, though they appeared to be kept in good repair, and their dooryards, which were the unfenced Cape, were tidy; or, rather, they looked as if the ground around them was blown clean by the wind. Perhaps the scarcity of wood here, and the consequent absence of the wood-pile and other wooden traps, had something to do with this appearance. They seemed, like mariners ashore, to have sat right down to enjoy the firmness of the land, without studying their postures or habiliments. To them it was merely *terra firma* and *cognita*, not yet *fertilis* and *jucunda*. Every landscape which is dreary enough has a certain beauty to my eyes, and in this instance its permanent qualities were enhanced by the weather. Everything told

of the sea, even when we did not see its waste or hear its roar. For birds there were gulls, and for carts in the fields, boats turned bottom upward against the houses, and sometimes the rib of a whale was woven into the fence by the road-side. The trees were, if possible, rarer than the houses, excepting apple-trees, of which there were a few small orchards in the hollows. These were either narrow and high, with flat tops, having lost their side branches, like huge plum-bushes growing in exposed situations, or else dwarfed and branching immediately at the ground, like quince-bushes. They suggested that, under like circumstances, all trees would at last acquire like habits of growth. I afterward saw on the Cape many full-grown apple-trees not higher than a man's head; one whole orchard, indeed, where all the fruit could have been gathered by a man standing on the ground; but you could hardly creep beneath the trees. Some, which the owners told me were twenty years old, were only three and a half feet high, spreading at six inches from the ground five feet each way, and being withal surrounded with boxes of tar to catch the cankerworms, they looked like plants in flower-pots, and as if they might be taken into the house in the winter. In another place, I saw some not much larger than currant-bushes; yet the owner told me that they had borne a barrel and a half of apples that fall. If they had been placed close together, I could have cleared them all at a jump. I measured some near the Highland Light in Truro, which had been taken from the shrubby woods thereabouts when young, and grafted. One, which had been set ten years, was on an average eighteen inches high, and spread nine feet with a flat top. It had borne one bushel of apples two years before. Another, probably twenty years old from the seed, was five feet high, and spread eighteen feet, branching, as usual, at the ground, so that you could not creep under it. This bore a barrel of apples two years before. The owner of these trees invariably used the personal pronoun in speaking of them; as, "I got *him* out of the woods, but *he* doesn't bear." The largest that I saw in that neighborhood was nine feet high to the topmost leaf, and spread thirty-three feet, branching at the ground five ways.



A Nauset lane

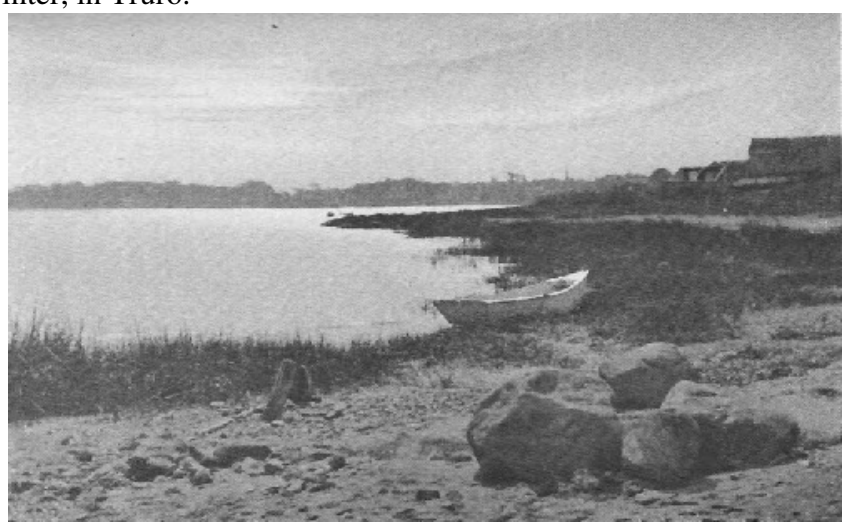
In one yard I observed a single, very healthy-looking tree, while all the rest were dead or dying. The occupant said that his father had manured all but that one with blackfish.

This habit of growth should, no doubt, be encouraged; and they should not be trimmed up, as some travelling practitioners have advised. In 1802 there was not a single fruit-tree in Chatham, the next town to Orleans, on the south; and the old account of Orleans says: "Fruit-trees cannot be made to grow within a mile of the ocean. Even those which are placed at a greater distance are injured by the east winds; and, after violent storms in the spring, a saltish taste is perceptible on their bark." We noticed that they were often covered with a yellow lichen-like rust, the *Parmelia parietina*.

The most foreign and picturesque structures on the Cape, to an inlander, not excepting the salt-works, are the wind-mills, — gray-looking octagonal towers, with long timbers slanting to the ground in the rear, and there resting on a cart-wheel, by which their fans are turned round to face the wind. These appeared also to serve in some measure for props against its force. A great circular rut was worn around the building by the wheel. The neighbors who assemble to turn the mill to the wind are likely to know which way it blows, without a weathercock. They looked loose and slightly locomotive, like huge wounded birds, trailing a wing or a leg, and re-minded one of pictures of the Netherlands. Being on elevated ground, and high in themselves, they serve as landmarks, — for there are no tall trees, or other objects commonly, which can be seen at a distance in the horizon; though the outline of the land itself is so firm and distinct that an insignificant cone, or even precipice of sand, is visible at a great distance from over the sea. Sailors making the land commonly steer either by the wind-mills or the meeting-houses. In the country, we are obliged to steer by the meeting-houses alone. Yet the meeting-house is a kind of wind-mill, which runs one day in seven, turned either by the winds of doctrine or public opinion, or more rarely by the winds of Heaven, where another sort of grist is ground, of which, if it be not all bran or musty, if it be not *plaster*, we trust to make bread of life.

There were, here and there, heaps of shells in the fields, where clams had been opened for bait; for Orleans is famous for its shell-

fish, especially clams, or, as our author says, "to speak more properly, worms." The shores are more fertile than the dry land. The inhabitants measure their crops, not only by bushels of corn, but by barrels of clams. A thousand barrels of clam-bait are counted as equal in value to six or eight thousand bushels of Indian corn, and once they were procured without more labor or expense, and the supply was thought to be inexhaustible. "For," runs the history, "after a portion of the shore has been dug over, and almost all the clams taken up, at the end of two years, it is said, they are as plenty there as ever. It is even affirmed by many persons, that it is as necessary to stir the clam ground frequently as it is to hoe a field of potatoes; because, if this labor is omitted, the clams will be crowded too closely together, and will be prevented from increasing in size." But we were told that the small clam, *Mya arenaria*, was not so plenty here as formerly. Probably the clam ground has been stirred too frequently, after all. Nevertheless, one man, who complained that they fed pigs with them and so made them scarce, told me that he dug and opened one hundred and twenty-six dollars' worth in one winter, in Truro.



Nauset Bay

We crossed a brook, not more than fourteen rods long, between Orleans and Eastham, called Jeremiah's Gutter. The Atlantic is said sometimes to meet the Bay here, and isolate the northern part of the

Cape. The streams of the Cape are necessarily formed on a minute scale, since there is no room for them to run, without tumbling immediately into the sea; and beside, we found it difficult to run ourselves in that sand, when there was no want of room. Hence, the least channel where water runs, or may run, is important, and is dignified with a name. We read that there is no running water in Chatham, which is the next town. The barren aspect of the land would hardly be believed if described. It was such soil, or rather land, as, to judge from appearances, no farmer in the interior would think of cultivating, or even fencing. Generally, the ploughed fields of the Cape look white and yellow, like a mixture of salt and Indian meal. This is called soil. All an inlander's notions of soil and fertility will be confounded by a visit to these parts, and he will not be able, for some time afterward, to distinguish soil from sand. The historian of Chatham says of a part of that town, which has been gained from the sea: "There is a doubtful appearance of a soil beginning to be formed. It is styled *doubtful*, because it would not be observed by every eye, and perhaps not acknowledged by many." We thought that this would not be a bad description of the greater part of the Cape. There is a "beach" on the west side of Eastham, which we crossed the next summer, half a mile wide, and stretching across the township, containing seventeen hundred acres, on which there is not now a particle of vegetable mould, though it formerly produced wheat. All sands are here called "beaches," whether they are waves of water or of air that dash against them, since they commonly have their origin on the shore. "The sand in some places," says the historian of Eastham, "lodging against the beach-grass, has been raised into hills fifty feet high, where twenty-five years ago no hills existed. In others it has filled up small valleys, and swamps. Where a strong-rooted bush stood, the appearance is singular: a mass of earth and sand adheres to it, resembling a small tower. In several places, rocks, which were formerly covered with soil, are disclosed, and being lashed by the sand, driven against them by the wind, look as if they were recently dug from a quarry."

We were surprised to hear of the great crops of corn which are still raised in Eastham, notwithstanding the real and apparent barrenness. Our landlord in Orleans had told us that he raised three or

four hundred bushels of corn annually, and also of the great number of pigs which he fattened. In Champlain's "Voyages," there is a plate representing the Indian cornfields hereabouts, with their wigwams in the midst, as they appeared in 1605, and it was here that the Pilgrims, to quote their own words, "bought eight or ten hogsheads of corn and beans" of the Nauset Indians, in 1622, to keep themselves from starving.

"In 1667 the town [of Eastham] voted that every housekeeper should kill twelve blackbirds or three crows, which did great damage to the corn; and this vote was repeated for many years." In 1695 an additional order was passed, namely, that "every unmarried man in the township shall kill six blackbirds, or three crows, while he remains single; as a penalty for not doing it, shall not be married until he obey this order." The blackbirds, however, still molest the corn. I saw them at it the next summer, and there were many scarecrows, if not scare-blackbirds, in the fields, which I often mistook for men.



A scarecrow

From which I concluded that either many men were not married,

or many blackbirds were. Yet they put but three or four kernels in a hill, and let fewer plants remain than we do. In the account of Eastham, in the "Historical Collections," printed in 1802, it is said, that "more corn is produced than the inhabitants consume, and about a thousand bushels are annually sent to market. The soil being free from stones, a plough passes through it speedily; and after the corn has come up, a small Cape horse, somewhat larger than a goat, will, with the assistance of two boys, easily hoe three or four acres in a day; several farmers are accustomed to produce five hundred bushels of grain annually, and not long since one raised eight hundred bushels on sixty acres." Similar accounts are given to-day; indeed, the recent accounts are in some instances suspectable repetitions of the old, and I have no doubt that their statements are as often founded on the exception as the rule, and that by far the greater number of acres are as barren as they appear to be. It is sufficiently remarkable that any crops can be raised here, and it may be owing, as others have suggested, to the amount of moisture in the atmosphere, the warmth of the sand, and the rareness of frosts. A miller, who was sharpening his stones, told me that, forty years ago, he had been to a husking here, where five hundred bushels were husked in one evening, and the corn was piled six feet high or more, in the midst, but now, fifteen or eighteen bushels to an acre were an average yield. I never saw fields of such puny and unpromising looking corn as in this town. Probably the inhabitants are contented with small crops from a great surface easily cultivated. It is not always the most fertile land that is the most profitable, and this sand may repay cultivation, as well as the fertile bottoms of the West. It is said, moreover, that the vegetables raised in the sand, without manure, are remarkably sweet, the pumpkins especially, though when their seed is planted in the interior they soon degenerate. I can testify that the vegetables here, when they succeed at all, look remarkably green and healthy, though perhaps it is partly by contrast with the sand. Yet the inhabitants of the Cape towns, generally, do not raise their own meal or pork. Their gardens are commonly little patches, that have been redeemed from the edges of the marshes and swamps.

All the morning we had heard the sea roar on the eastern shore, which was several miles distant; for it still felt the effects of the

storm in which the *St. John* was wrecked, — though a school-boy, whom we overtook, hardly knew what we meant, his ears were so used to it. He would have more plainly heard the same sound in a shell. It was a very inspiriting sound to walk by, filling the whole air, that of the sea dashing against the land, heard several miles inland. Instead of having a dog to growl before your door, to have an Atlantic Ocean to growl for a whole Cape! On the whole, we were glad of the storm, which would show us the ocean in its angriest mood. Charles Darwin was assured that the roar of the surf on the coast of Chiloe, after a heavy gale, could be heard at night a distance of "21 sea miles across a hilly and wooded country." We conversed with the boy we have mentioned, who might have been eight years old, making him walk the while under the lee of our umbrella; for we thought it as important to know what was life on the Cape to a boy as to a man. We learned from him where the best grapes were to be found in that neighborhood. He was carrying his dinner in a pail; and, without any impertinent questions being put by us, it did at length appear of what it consisted. The homeliest facts are always the most acceptable to an inquiring mind. At length, before we got to Eastham meeting-house, we left the road and struck across the country for the eastern shore at Nauset Lights, — three lights close together, two or three miles distant from us. They were so many that they might be distinguished from others; but this seemed a shiftless and costly way of accomplishing that object. We found ourselves at once on an apparently boundless plain, without a tree or a fence, or, with one or two exceptions, a house in sight. Instead of fences, the earth was sometimes thrown up into a slight ridge. My companion compared it to the rolling prairies of Illinois. In the storm of wind and rain which raged when we traversed it, it no doubt appeared more vast and desolate than it really is. As there were no hills, but only here and there a dry hollow in the midst of the waste, and the distant horizon was concealed by mist, we did not know whether it was high or low. A solitary traveller whom we saw perambulating in the distance loomed like a giant. He appeared to walk slouchingly, as if held up from above by straps under his shoulders, as much as supported by the plain below. Men and boys would have appeared alike at a little distance, there being no object by which to measure

them. Indeed, to an inlander, the Cape landscape is a constant mirage. This kind of country extended a mile or two each way. These were the "Plains of Nauset," once covered with wood, where in winter the winds howl and the snow blows right merrily in the face of the traveller. I was glad to have got out of the towns, where I am wont to feel unspeakably mean and disgraced, — to have left behind me for a season the bar-rooms of Massachusetts, where the full-grown are not weaned from savage and filthy habits, — still sucking a cigar. My spirits rose in proportion to the outward dreariness. The towns need to be ventilated. The gods would be pleased to see some pure flames from their altars. They are not to be appeased with cigar-smoke.

As we thus skirted the back-side of the towns, for we did not enter any village, till we got to Provincetown, we read their histories under our umbrellas, rarely meeting anybody. The old accounts are the richest in topography, which was what we wanted most; and, indeed, in most things else, for I find that the readable parts of the modern accounts of these towns consist, in a great measure, of quotations, acknowledged and unacknowledged, from the older ones, without any additional information of equal interest; — town histories, which at length run into a history of the Church of that place, that being the only story they have to tell, and conclude by quoting the Latin epitaphs of the old pastors, having been written in the good old days of Latin and of Greek. They will go back to the ordination of every minister and tell you faithfully who made the introductory prayer, and who delivered the sermon; who made the ordaining prayer, and who gave the charge; who extended the right hand of fellowship, and who pronounced the benediction; also how many ecclesiastical councils convened from time to time to inquire into the orthodoxy of some minister, and the names of all who composed them. As it will take us an hour to get over this plain, and there is no variety in the prospect, peculiar as it is, I will read a little in the history of Eastham the while.

When the committee from Plymouth had purchased the territory of Eastham of the Indians, "it was demanded, who laid claim to Billingsgate?" which was understood to be all that part of the Cape north of what they had purchased. "The answer was, there was not

any who owned it. 'Then,' said the committee, 'that land is ours.' The Indians answered, that it was." This was a remarkable assertion and admission. The Pilgrims appear to have regarded themselves as Not Any's representatives. Perhaps this was the first instance of that quiet way of "speaking for" a place not yet occupied, or at least not improved as much as it may be, which their descendants have practised, and are still practising so extensively. Not Any seems to have been the sole proprietor of all America before the Yankees. But history says that, when the Pilgrims had held the lands of Billingsgate many years, at length "appeared an Indian, who styled himself Lieutenant Anthony," who laid claim to them, and of him they bought them. Who knows but a Lieutenant Anthony may be knocking at the door of the White House some day? At any rate, I know that if you hold a thing unjustly, there will surely be the devil to pay at last.

Thomas Prince, who was several times the governor of the Plymouth colony, was the leader of the settlement of Eastham. There was recently standing, on what was once his farm, in this town, a pear-tree which is said to have been brought from England, and planted there by him, about two hundred years ago. It was blown down a few months before we were there. A late account says that it was recently in a vigorous state; the fruit small, but excellent; and it yielded on an average fifteen bushels. Some appropriate lines have been addressed to it, by a Mr. Heman Doane, from which I will quote, partly because they are the only specimen of Cape Cod verse which I remember to have seen, and partly because they are not bad.

"Two hundred years have, on the wings of Time,
Passed with their joys and woes, since thou, Old Tree!
Put forth thy first leaves in this foreign clime.
Transplanted from the soil beyond the sea."

* * * * *

[These stars represent the more clerical lines, and also those which have deceased.]

"That exiled band long since have passed away,
And still, Old Tree I thou standest in the place
Where Prince's hand did plant thee in his day, —
An undesigned memorial of his race
And time; of those out honored fathers,
when They came from Plymouth o'er and settled here;
Doane, Higgins, Snow, and other worthy men.
Whose names their sons remember to revere.

* * * * *

"Old Time has thinned thy boughs. Old Pilgrim Tree!
And bowed thee with the weight of many years;
Yet 'mid the frosts of age, thy bloom we see,
And yearly still thy mellow fruit appears."

There are some other lines which I might quote, if they were not tied to unworthy companions by the rhyme. When one ox will lie down, the yoke bears hard on him that stands up.

One of the first settlers of Eastham was Deacon John Doane, who died in 1707, aged one hundred and ten. Tradition says that he was rocked in a cradle several of his last years. That, certainly, was not an Achillean life. His mother must have let him slip when she dipped him into the liquor which was to make him invulnerable, and he went in, heels and all. Some of the stone-bounds to his farm which he set up are standing to-day, with his initials cut in them.

The ecclesiastical history of this town interested us somewhat. It appears that "they very early built a small meeting-house, twenty feet square, with a thatched roof through which they might fire their muskets," — of course, at the Devil. "In 1662, the town agreed that a part of every whale cast on shore be appropriated for the support of the ministry." No doubt there seemed to be some propriety in thus leaving the support of the ministers to Providence, whose servants they are, and who alone rules the storms; for, when few whales were cast up, they might suspect that their worship was not acceptable. The ministers must have sat upon the cliffs in every storm, and watched the shore with anxiety. And, for my part, if I were a minister

I would rather trust to the bowels of the billows, on the back-side of Cape Cod, to cast up a whale for me, than to the generosity of many a country parish that I know. You cannot say of a country minister's salary, commonly, that it is "very like a whale." Nevertheless, the minister who depended on whales cast up must have had a trying time of it. I would rather have gone to the Falkland Isles with a harpoon, and done with it. Think of a w hale having the breath of life beaten out of him by a storm, and dragging in over the bars and guzzles, for the support of the ministry! What a consolation it must have been to him! I have heard of a minister, who had been a fisherman, being settled in Bridgewater for as long a time as he could tell a cod from a haddock. Generous as it seems, this condition would empty most country pulpits forthwith, for it is long since the fishers of men were fishermen. Also, a duty was put on mackerel here to support a free-school; in other words, the mackerel-school was taxed in order that the children's school might be free. "In 1665 the Court passed a law to inflict corporal punishment on all persons, who resided in the towns of this government, who denied the Scriptures." Think of a man being whipped on a spring morning till he was constrained to confess that the Scriptures were true! "It was also voted by the town that all persons who should stand out of the meeting-house during the time of divine service should be set in the stocks." It behooved such a town to see that sitting in the meeting-house was nothing akin to sitting in the stocks, lest the penalty of obedience to the law might be greater than that of disobedience. This was the Eastham famous of late years for its camp-meetings, held in a grove near by, to which thousands flock from all parts of the Bay. We conjectured that the reason for the perhaps unusual, if not unhealthful, development of the religious sentiment here was the fact that a large portion of the population are women whose husbands and sons are either abroad on the sea, or else drowned, and there is nobody but they and the ministers left behind. The old account says that "hysteric fits are very common in Orleans, Eastham, and the towns below, particularly on Sunday, in the times of divine service. When one woman is affected, five or six others generally sympathize with her; and the congregation is thrown into the utmost confusion. Several old men suppose, unphilosophically and uncharitably,

perhaps, that the will is partly concerned, and that ridicule and threats would have a tendency to prevent the evil." How this is now we did not learn. We saw one singularly masculine woman, however, in a house on this very plain, who did not look as if she was ever troubled with hysterics, or sympathized with those that were; or, perchance, life itself was to her a hysteric fit, — a Nauset woman, of a hardness and coarseness such as no man ever possesses or suggests. It was enough to see the vertebrae and sinews of her neck, and her set jaws of iron, which would have bitten a board-nail in two in their ordinary action, — braced against the world, talking like a man-of-war's-man in petticoats, or as if shouting to you through a breaker; who looked as if it made her head ache to live; hard enough for any enormity. I looked upon her as one who had committed infanticide; who never had a brother, unless it were some wee thins: that died in infancy, — for what need of him? — and whose father must have died before she was born. This woman told us that the camp-meetings were not held the previous summer for fear of introducing the cholera, and that they would have been held earlier this summer, but the rye was so backward that straw would not have been re adv for them; for they He in straw. There are sometimes one hundred and fifty ministers (!) and five thousand hearers assembled. The ground, which is called Millennium Grove, is owned by a company in Boston, and is the most suitable, or rather unsuitable, for this purpose of any that I saw on the Cape. It is fenced, and the frames of the tents are at all times to be seen interspersed among the oaks. They have an oven and a pump, and keep all their kitchen utensils and tent coverings and furniture in a permanent building on the spot. They select a time for their meetings when the moon is full. A man is appointed to clear out the pump a week beforehand, while the ministers are clearing their throats; but, probably, the latter do not always deliver as pure a stream as the former. I saw the heaps of clam-shells left under the tables, where they had feasted in previous summers, and supposed, of course, that that was the work of the unconverted, or the backsliders and scoffers. It looked as if a camp-meeting must be a singular combination of a prayer-meeting and a picnic.



Millennium Grove camp-meeting grounds

The first minister settled here was the Rev. Samuel Treat, in 1672, a gentleman who is said to be "entitled to a distinguished rank among the evangelists of New England." He converted many Indians, as well as white men, in his day, and translated the Confession of Faith into the Nauset language. These were the Indians concerning whom their first teacher, Richard Bourne, wrote to Gookin, in 1674, that he had been to see one who was sick, "and there came from him very savory and heavenly expressions," but, with regard to the mass of them, he says, "the truth is, that many of them are very loose in their course, to my heartbreaking sorrow." Mr. Treat is described as a Calvinist of the strictest kind, not one of those who, by giving up or explaining away, become like a porcupine disarmed of its quills, but a consistent Calvinist, who can dart his quills to a distance and courageously defend himself. There exists a volume of his sermons in manuscript, "which," says a commentator, "appear to have been designed for publication." I quote the following sentences at second hand, from a Discourse on Luke xvi. 23, addressed to sinners: —

"Thou must erelong go to the bottomless pit. Hell hath enlarged herself, and is ready to receive thee. There is room enough for thy entertainment....

"Consider, thou art going to a place prepared by God on purpose

to exalt his justice in, — a place made for no other employment but torments. Hell is God's house of correction; and, remember, God doth all things like himself. When God would show his justice, and what is the weight of his wrath, he makes a hell where it shall, indeed, appear to purpose.... Woe to thy soul when thou shalt be set up as a butt for the arrows of the Almighty....

"Consider, God himself shall be the principal agent in thy misery, — his breath is the bellows which blows up the flame of hell forever; — and if he punish thee, if he meet thee in his fury, he will not meet thee as a man; he will give thee an omnipotent blow."

"Some think sinning ends with this life; but it is a mistake. The creature is held under an everlasting law; the damned increase in sin in hell. Possibly, the mention of this may please thee. But, remember, there shall be no pleasant sins there; no eating, drinking, singing, dancing, wanton dalliance, and drinking stolen waters, but damned sins, bitter, hellish sins; sins exasperated by torments, cursing God, spite, rage, and blasphemy. — The guilt of all thy sins shall be laid upon thy soul, and be made so many heaps of fuel....

"Sinner, I beseech thee, realize the truth of these things. Do not go about to dream that this is derogatory to God's mercy, and nothing but a vain fable to scare children out of their wits withal. God can be merciful, though he make thee miserable. He shall have monuments enough of that precious attribute, shining like stars in the place of glory, and singing eternal hallelujahs to the praise of Him that redeemed them, though, to exalt the power of his justice, he damn sinners heaps upon heaps."

"But," continues the same writer, "with the advantage of proclaiming the doctrine of terror, which is naturally productive of a sublime and impressive style of eloquence ('Triumphat ventoso gloriæ curru orator, qui pectus angit, irritat, et implet terroribus.' Vid. Burnet, De Stat. Mort., p. 309), he could not attain the character of a popular preacher. His voice was so loud that it could be heard at a great distance from the meeting-house, even amidst the shrieks of hysterical women, and the winds that howled over the plains of Nauset; but there was no more music in it than in the discordant sounds with which it was mingled."

"The effect of such preaching," it is said, "was that his hearers

were several times, in the course of his ministry, awakened and alarmed; and on one occasion a comparatively innocent young man was frightened nearly out of his wits, and Mr. Treat had to exert himself to make hell seem somewhat cooler to him"; yet we are assured that "Treat's manners were cheerful, his conversation pleasant, and sometimes facetious, but always decent. He was fond of a stroke of humor, and a practical joke, and manifested his relish for them by long and loud fits of laughter."

This was the man of whom a well-known anecdote is told, which doubtless many of my readers have heard, but which, nevertheless, I will venture to quote: —

"After his marriage with the daughter of Mr. Willard (pastor of the South Church in Boston), he was sometimes invited by that gentleman to preach in his pulpit. Mr. Willard possessed a graceful delivery, a masculine and harmonious voice; and, though he did not gain much reputation by his 'Body of Divinity,' which is frequently sneered at, particularly by those who have read it, yet in his sermons are strength of thought and energy of language. The natural consequence was that he was generally admired. Mr. Treat having preached one of his best discourses to the congregation of his father-in-law, in his usual unhappy manner, excited universal disgust; and several nice judges waited on Mr. Willard, and begged that Mr. Treat, who was a worthy, pious man, it was true, but a wretched preacher, might never be invited into his pulpit again. To this request Mr. Willard made no reply; but he desired his son-in-law to lend him the discourse; which being left with him, he delivered it without alteration to his people a few weeks after. They ran to Mr. Willard and requested a copy for the press. 'See the difference,' they cried, 'between yourself and your son-in-law; you have preached a sermon on the same text as Mr. Treat's, but whilst his was contemptible, yours is excellent.' As is observed in a note, 'Mr. Willard, after producing the sermon in the handwriting of Mr. Treat, might have addressed these sage critics in the words of Phaedrus,

"'En hie declarat, quales sitis judices.'"

Mr. Treat died of a stroke of the palsy, just after the memorable storm known as the Great Snow, which left the ground around his house entirely bare, but heaped up the snow in the road to an

uncommon height. Through this an arched way was dug, by which the Indians bore his bod to the grave.

The reader will imagine us, all the while, steadily traversing that extensive plain in a direction a little north of east toward Nauset Beach, and reading under our umbrellas as we sailed, while it blowed hard with mingled mist and rain, as if we were approaching a fit anniversary of Mr. Treat's funeral. We fancied that it was such a moor as that on which somebody perished in the snow, as is related in the "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life."

The next minister settled here was the "Rev. Samuel Osborn, who was born in Ireland, and educated at the University of Dublin." He is said to have been "A man of wisdom and virtue," and taught his people the use of peat, and the art of drying and preparing it, which as they had scarcely any other fuel, was a great blessing to them. He also introduced improvements in agriculture. But, notwithstanding his many services, as he embraced the religion of Arminius, some of his flock became dissatisfied. At length, an ecclesiastical council, consisting of ten ministers, with their churches, sat upon him, and they, naturally enough, spoiled his usefulness. The council convened at the desire of two divine philosophers, — Joseph Doane and Nathaniel Freeman.

In their report they say, "It appears to the council that the Rev. Mr. Osborn hath, in his preaching to this people, said, that what Christ did and suffered doth nothing abate or diminish our obligation to obey the law of God, and that Christ's suffering and obedience were for himself; both parts of which, we think, contain dangerous error."

"Also: 'It hath been said, and doth appear to this council, that the Rev. Mr. Osborn, both in public and in private, asserted that there are no promises in the Bible but what are conditional, which we think, also, to be an error, and do say that there are promises which are absolute and without any condition, — such as the promise of a new heart, and that he will write his law in our hearts.'"

"Also, they say, 'it hath been alleged, and doth appear to us, that Mr. Osborn hath declared, that *obedience* is a considerable *cause* of a person's justification, which, we think, contains very dangerous error.'"

And many the like distinctions they made, such as some of my readers, probably, are more familiar with than I am. So, far in the East, among the Yezidis, or Worshippers of the Devil, so-called, the Chaldaeans, and others, according to the testimony of travellers, you may still hear these remarkable disputations on doctrinal points going on. Osborn was, accordingly, dismissed, and he removed to Boston, where he kept school for many years. But he was fully justified, methinks, by his works in the peat-meadow; one proof of which is, that he lived to be between ninety and one hundred years old.

The next minister was the Rev. Benjamin Webb, of whom, though a neighboring clergy-man pronounced him "the best man and the best minister whom he ever knew," yet the historian says that,

"As he spent his days in the uniform discharge of his duty (it reminds one of a country muster) and there were no shades to give relief to his character, not much can be said of him. (Pity the Devil did not plant a few shade-trees along his avenues.) His heart was as pure as the new-fallen snow, which completely covers every dark spot in a field; his mind was as serene as the sky in a mild evening in June, when the moon shines without a cloud. Name any virtue, and that virtue he practised; name any vice, and that vice he shunned. But if peculiar qualities marked his character, they were his humility, his gentleness, and his love of God. The people had long been taught by a son of thunder (Mr. Treat): in him they were instructed by a son of consolation, who sweetly allured them to virtue by soft persuasion, and by exhibiting the mercy of the Supreme Being; for his thoughts were so much in heaven that they seldom descended to the dismal regions below; and though of the same religious sentiments as Mr. Treat, yet his attention was turned to those glad tidings of great joy which a Saviour came to publish."

We were interested to hear that such a man had trodden the plains of Nauset.

Turning over further in our book, our eyes fell on the name of the Rev. Jonathan Bascom, of Orleans; "Senex emunctæ naris, doctus, et auctor elegantium verborum, facetus, et dulcis festique sermonis." And, again, on that of the Rev. Nathan Stone, of Dennis: "Vir humilis, mitis, blandus, advenarum hospes; (there was need of him

there;) suis commodis in terrâ non studens, reconditis thesauris in coelo." An easy virtue that, there, for methinks no inhabitant of Dennis could be very studious about his earthly commodity, but must regard the bulk of his treasures as in heaven. But probably the most just and pertinent character of all is that which appears to be given to the Rev. Ephraim Briggs, of Chatham, in the language of the later Romans, "*Seip, sepoese, sepoemese, wechekum*," — which not being interpreted, we know not what it means, though we have no doubt it occurs somewhere in the Scriptures, probably in the Apostle Eliot's Epistle to the Nipmucks.

Let no one think that I do not love the old ministers. They were, probably, the best men of their generation, and they deserve that their biographies should fill the pages of the town histories. If I could but hear the "glad tidings" of which they tell, and which, perchance, they heard, I might write in a worthier strain than this.

There was no better way to make the reader realize how wide and peculiar that plain was, and how long it took to traverse it, than by inserting these extracts in the midst of my narrative.

They touched after this at a place called Mattachiest, where they got more corn; but their shallop being cast away in a storm, the Governor was obliged to return to Plymouth on foot, fifty miles through the woods. According to Mourt's Relation, "he came safely home, though weary and *surbated*," that is, foot-sore. (Ital. *sobattere*, Lat. *sub* or *solea battere*, to bruise the soles of the feet; v. Dic. Not "from *acerbatus*, embittered or aggrieved," as one commentator on this passage supposes.) This word is of very rare occurrence, being applied only to governors and persons of like description, who are in that predicament; though such generally have considerable mileage allowed them, and might save their soles if they cared.

Lib.v.Fab. 5.

IV. THE BEACH

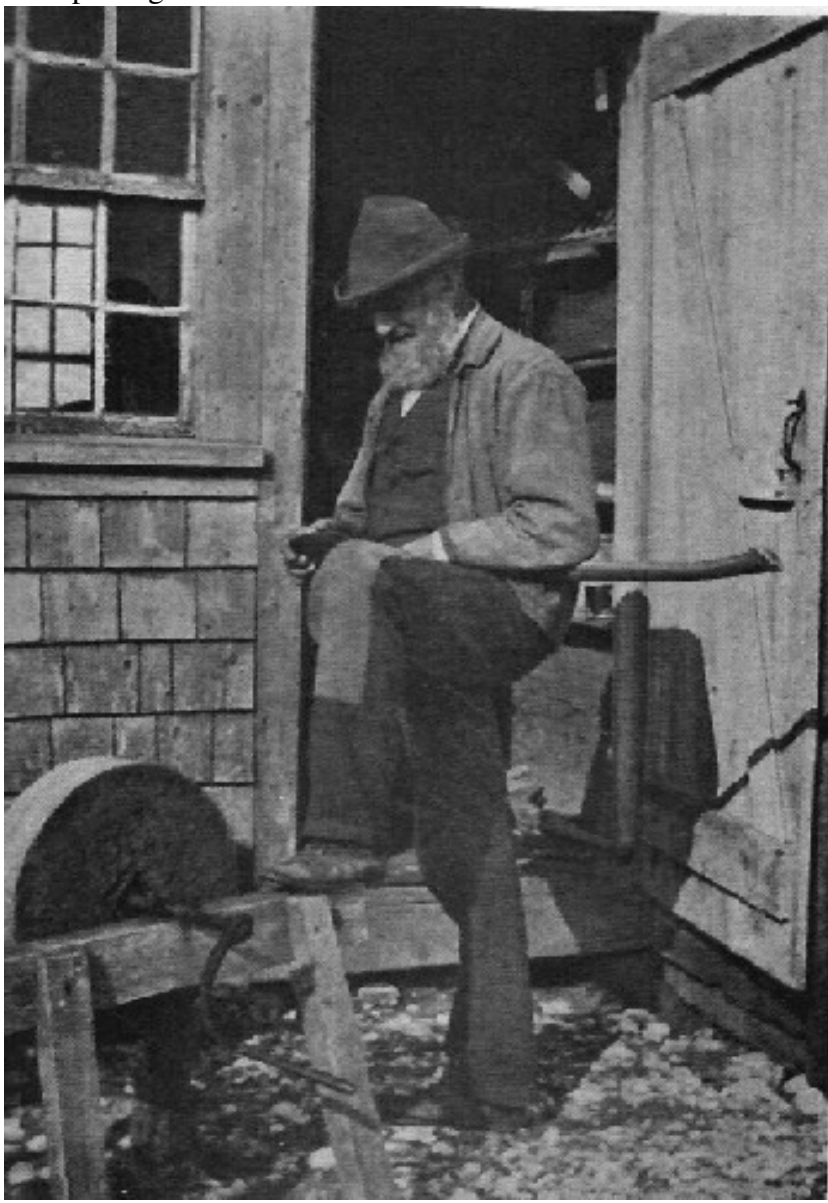
At length we reached the seemingly retreating boundary of the plain, and entered what had appeared at a distance an upland marsh, but proved to be dry sand covered with Beach-grass, the Bearberry, Bayberry, Shrub-oaks, and Beach-plum, slightly ascending as we approached the shore; then, crossing over a belt of sand on which nothing grew, though the roar of the sea sounded scarcely louder than before, and we were prepared to go half a mile farther, we suddenly stood on the edge of a bluff overlooking the Atlantic. Far below us was the beach, from half a dozen to a dozen rods in width, with a long line of breakers rushing to the strand. The sea was exceedingly dark and stormy, the sky completely overcast, the clouds still dropping rain, and the wind seemed to blow not so much as the exciting cause, as from sympathy with the already agitated ocean. The waves broke on the bars at some distance from the shore, and curving green or yellow as if over so many unseen dams, ten or twelve feet high, like a thousand waterfalls, rolled in foam to the sand. There was nothing but that savage ocean between us and Europe.

Having got down the bank, and as close to the water as we could, where the sand was the hardest, leaving the Nauset Lights behind us, we began to walk leisurely up the beach, in a northwest direction, towards Provincetown, which was about twenty-five miles distant, still sailing under our umbrellas with a strong aft wind, admiring in silence, as we walked, the great force of the ocean stream, —

[Greek: potamoio mega sthenos Hôeanoio.]

The white breakers were rushing to the shore; the foam ran up the sand, and then ran back as far as we could see (and we imagined how much farther along the Atlantic coast, before and behind us), as regularly, to compare great things with small, as the master of a choir beats time with his white wand; and ever and anon a higher wave caused us hastily to deviate from our path, and we looked back on our tracks filled with water and foam. The breakers looked like droves of a thousand wild horses of Neptune, rushing to the shore, with their white manes streaming far behind; and when at length the

sun shone for a moment, their manes were rainbow-tinted. Also, the long kelp-weed was tossed up from time to time, like the tails of sea-cows sporting in the brine.



A Cape Cod citizen

There was not a sail in sight, and we saw none that day, — for they had all sought harbors in the late storm, and had not been able to

get out again; and the only human beings whom we saw on the beach for several days were one or two wreckers looking for drift-wood, and fragments of wrecked vessels. After an easterly storm in the spring, this beach is sometimes strewn with eastern wood from one end to the other, which, as it belongs to him who saves it, and the Cape is nearly destitute of wood, is a Godsend to the inhabitants. We soon met one of these wreckers, — a regular Cape Cod man, with whom we parleyed, with a bleached and weather-beaten face, within whose wrinkles I distinguished no particular feature. It was like an old sail endowed with life, — a hanging cliff of weather-beaten flesh, — like one of the clay boulders which occurred in that sand-bank. He had on a hat which had seen salt water, and a coat of many pieces and colors, though it was mainly the color of the beach, as if it had been sanded. His variegated back — for his coat had many patches, even between the shoulders — was a rich study to us, when we had passed him and looked round. It might have been dishonorable for him to have so many scars behind, it is true, if he had not had many more and more serious ones in front. He looked as if he sometimes saw a doughnut, but never descended to comfort; too grave to laugh, too tough to cry; as indifferent as a clam, — like a sea-clam with hat on and legs, that was out walking the strand. He may have been one of the Pilgrims, — Peregrine White, at least, — who has kept on the back-side of the Cape, and let the centuries go by. He was looking for wrecks, old logs, water-logged and covered with barnacles, or bits of boards and joists, even chips, which he drew out of the reach of the tide, and stacked up to dry. When the log was too large to carry far, he cut it up where the last wave had left it, or rolling it a few feet appropriated it by sticking two sticks into the ground crosswise above it. Some rotten trunk, which in Maine cumbers the ground, and is, perchance, thrown into the water on purpose, is here thus carefully picked up, split and dried, and husbanded. Before winter the wrecker painfully carries these things up the bank on his shoulders by a long diagonal slanting path made with a hoe in the sand, if there is no hollow at hand. You may see his hooked pike-staff always lying on the bank ready for use. He is the true monarch of the beach, whose “right there is none to dispute,” and he is as much identified with it as a beach-bird.

Crantz, in his account of Greenland, quotes Dalagen's relation of the ways and usages of the Greenlanders, and says, "Whoever finds driftwood, or the spoils of a shipwreck on the strand, enjoys it as his own, though, he does not live there. But he must haul it ashore and lay a stone upon it, as a token that some one has taken possession of it, and this stone is the deed of security, for no other Greenlander will offer to meddle with it afterwards." Such is the instinctive law of nations. We have also this account of drift-wood in Crantz: "As he (the Founder of Nature) has denied this frigid rocky region the growth of trees, he has bid the streams of the Ocean to convey to its shores a great deal of wood, which accordingly comes floating thither, part without ice, but the most part along with it, and lodges itself between the islands. Were it not for this, we Europeans should have no wood to burn there, and the poor Greenlanders (who, it is true, do not use wood, but train, for burning) would, however, have no wood to roof their houses, to erect their tents, as also to build their boats, and to shaft their arrows (yet there grew some small but crooked alders, &c.), by which they must procure their maintenance, clothing and train for warmth, light, and cooking. Among this wood are great trees torn up by the roots, which by driving up and down for many years and rubbing on the ice, are quite bare of branches and bark, and corroded with great wood-worms. A small part of this drift-wood are willows, alder and birch trees, which come out of the bays in the south of (*i.e.* Greenland); also large trunks of aspen-trees, which must come from a greater distance; but the greatest part is pine and fir. We find also a good deal of a sort of wood finely veined, with few branches; this I fancy is larch-wood, which likes to decorate the sides of lofty, stony mountains. There is also a solid, reddish wood, of a more agreeable fragrance than the common fir, with visible cross-veins; which I take to be the same species as the beautiful silver-firs, or *zirbel*, that have the smell of cedar, and grow on the high Grison hills, and the Switzers wainscot their rooms with them." The wrecker directed us to a slight depression, called Snow's Hollow, by which we ascended the bank, — for elsewhere, if not difficult, it was inconvenient to climb it on ac-count of the sliding sand, which filled our shoes.

This sand-bank — the backbone of the Cape — rose directly from

the beach to the height of a hundred feet or more above the ocean. It was with singular emotions that we first stood upon it and discovered what a place we had chosen to walk on. On our right, beneath us, was the beach of smooth and gently sloping sand, a dozen rods in width; next, the endless series of white breakers; further still, the light green water over the bar, which runs the whole length of the forearm of the Cape, and beyond this stretched the unwearied and illimitable ocean. On our left, extending back from the very edge of the bank, was a perfect desert of shining sand, from thirty to eighty rods in width, skirted in the distance by small sand-hills fifteen or twenty feet high; between which, however, in some places, the sand penetrated as much farther. Next commenced the region of vegetation — a succession of small hills and valleys covered with shrubbery, now glowing with the brightest imaginable autumnal tints; and beyond this were seen, here and there, the waters of the bay. Here, in Wellfleet, this pure sand plateau, known to sailors as the Table Lands of Eastham, on account of its appearance, as seen from the ocean, and because it once made a part of that town, — full fifty rods in width, and in many places much more, and sometimes full one hundred and fifty feet above the ocean, — stretched away northward from the southern boundary of the town, without a particle of vegetation, — as level almost as a table, — for two and a half or three miles, or as far as the eye could reach; slightly rising towards the ocean, then stooping to the beach, by as steep a slope as sand could lie on, and as regular as a military engineer could desire. It was like the escarped rampart of a stupendous fortress, whose glacis was the beach, and whose champaign the ocean. — From its surface we overlooked the greater part of the Cape. In short, we were traversing a desert, with the view of an autumnal landscape of extraordinary brilliancy, a sort of Promised Land, on the one hand, and the ocean on the other. Yet, though the prospect was so extensive, and the country for the most part destitute of trees, a house was rarely visible, — we never saw one from the beach, — and the solitude was that of the ocean and the desert combined. A thousand men could not have seriously interrupted it, but would have been lost in the vastness of the scenery as their footsteps in the sand.

The whole coast is so free from rocks, that we saw but one or two

for more than twenty miles. The sand was soft like the beach, and trying to the eyes when the sun shone. A few piles of drift-wood, which some wreckers had painfully brought up the bank and stacked up there to dry, being the only objects in the desert, looked indefinitely large and distant, even like wigwams, though, when we stood near them, they proved to be insignificant little "jags" of wood.

For sixteen miles, commencing at the Nauset Lights, the bank held its height, though farther north it was not so level as here, but interrupted by slight hollows, and the patches of Beach-grass and Bayberry frequently crept into the sand to its edge. There are some pages entitled "A description of the Eastern Coast of the County of Barnstable," printed in 1802, pointing out the spots on which the Trustees of the Humane Society have erected huts called Charity or Humane Houses, "and other places where shipwrecked seamen may look for shelter." Two thousand copies of this were dispersed, that every vessel which frequented this coast might be provided with one. I have read this Shipwrecked Seaman's Manual with a melancholy kind of interest, — for the sound of the surf, or, you might say, the moaning of the sea, is heard all through it, as if its author were the sole survivor of a shipwreck himself. Of this part of the coast he says: "This highland approaches the ocean with steep and lofty banks, which it is extremely difficult to climb, especially in a storm. In violent tempests, during very high tides, the sea breaks against the foot of them, rendering it then unsafe to walk on the strand which lies between them and the ocean. Should the seaman succeed in his attempt to ascend them, he must forbear to penetrate into the country, as houses are generally so remote that they would escape his research during the night; he must pass on to the valleys by which the banks are intersected. These valleys, which the inhabitants call Hollows, run at right angles with the shore, and in the middle or lowest part of them a road leads from the dwelling-houses to the sea." By the *word* road must not always be understood a visible cart-track.

There were these two roads for us, — an upper and a lower one, — the bank and the beach; both stretching twenty-eight miles northwest, from Nauset Harbor to Race Point, without a single opening into the beach, and with hardly a serious interruption of the desert. If you were to ford the narrow and shallow inlet at Nauset

Harbor, where there is not more than eight feet of water on the bar at full sea, you might walk ten or twelve miles farther, which would make a beach forty miles long, — and the bank and beach, on the east side of Nantucket, are but a continuation of these. I was comparatively satisfied. There I had got the Cape under me, as much as if I were riding it bare-backed. It was not as on the map, or seen from the stagecoach; but there I found it all out of doors, huge and real, Cape Cod! as it cannot be represented on a map, color it as you will; the thing itself, than which there is nothing more like it, no truer picture or account; which you cannot go farther and see. I cannot remember what I thought before that it was. They commonly celebrate those beaches only which have a hotel on them, not those which have a Humane house alone. But I wished to see that seashore where man's works are wrecks; to put up at the true Atlantic House, where the ocean is land-lord as well as sea-lord, and comes ashore without a wharf for the landing; where the crumbling land is the only invalid, or at best is but dry land, and that is all you can say of it.

We walked on quite at our leisure, now on the beach, now on the bank, — sitting from time to time on some damp log, maple or yellow birch, which had long followed the seas, but had now at last settled on land; or under the lee of a sandhill, on the bank, that we might gaze steadily on the ocean. The bank was so steep that, where there was no danger of its caving, we sat on its edge, as on a bench. It was difficult for us landsmen to look out over the ocean without imagining land in the horizon; yet the clouds appeared to hang low over it, and rest on the water as they never do on the land, perhaps on account of the great distance to which we saw. The sand was not without advantage, for, though it was "heavy" walking in it, it was soft to the feet; and, notwithstanding that it had been raining nearly two days, when it held up for half an hour, the sides of the sand-hills, which were porous and sliding, afforded a dry seat. All the aspects of this desert are beautiful, whether you behold it in fair weather or foul, or when the sun is just breaking out after a storm, and shining on its moist surface in the distance, it is so white, and pure, and level, and each slight inequality and track is so distinctly revealed; and when your eyes slide off this, they fall on the ocean. In summer the mackerel gulls — which here have their nests among the neighboring

sand-hills — pursue the traveller anxiously, now and then diving close to his head with a squeak, and he may see them, like swallows, chase some crow which has been feeding on the beach, almost across the Cape.

Though for some time I have not spoken of the roaring of the breakers, and the ceaseless flux and reflux of the waves, yet they did not for a moment cease to dash and roar, with such a tumult that if you had been there, you could scarcely have heard my voice the while; and they are dashing and roaring this very moment, though it may be with less din and violence, for there the sea never rests. We were wholly absorbed by this spectacle and tumult, and like Chryses, though in a different mood from him, we walked silent along the shore of the resounding sea,

[Greek: Bê d akeôy para thina polnphloisboio thalassêst.]

I put in a little Greek now and then, partly because it sounds so much like the ocean, — though I doubt if Homer's *Mediterranean* Sea ever sounded so loud as this.

The attention of those who frequent the camp-meetings at Eastham is said to be divided between the preaching of the Methodists and the preaching of the billows on the back-side of the Cape, for they all stream over here in the course of their stay. I trust that in this case the loudest voice carries it. With what effect may we suppose the ocean to say, "My hearers!" to the multitude on the bank! On that side some John N. Maffit; on this, the Reverend Poluphloisboios Thalassa.

There was but little weed cast up here, and that kelp chiefly, there being scarcely a rock for rockweed to adhere to. Who has not had a vision from some vessel's deck, when he had still his land-legs on, of this great brown apron, drifting half upright, and quite submerged through the green water, clasping a stone or a deep-sea mussel in its unearthly fingers? I have seen it carrying a stone half as large as my head. We sometimes watched a mass of this cable-like weed, as it was tossed up on the crest of a breaker, waiting with interest to see it come in, as if there were some treasure buoyed up by it; but we were always surprised and disappointed at the insignificance of the mass which had attracted us. As we looked out over the water, the smallest objects floating on it appeared indefinitely large, we were so

impressed by the vastness of the ocean, and each one bore so large a proportion to the whole ocean, which we saw. We were so often disappointed in the size of such things as came ashore, the ridiculous bits of wood or weed, with which the ocean labored, that we began to doubt whether the Atlantic itself would bear a still closer inspection, and wold not turn out to be a but small pond, if it should come ashore to us. This kelp, oar-weed, tangle, devils-apron, sole-leather, or ribbon-weed, — as various species are called, — appeared to us a singularly marine and fabulous product, a lit invention for Neptune to adorn his car with, or a freak of Proteus. All that is told of the sea has a fabulous sound to an inhabitant of the land, and all its products have a certain fabulous quality, as if they belonged to another planet, from sea-weed to a sailor's yarn, or a fish-story. In this element the animal and vegetable kingdoms meet and are strangely mingled. One species of kelp, according to Bory St. Vincent, has a stem fifteen hundred feet long, and hence is the longest vegetable known, and a brig's crew spent two days to no purpose collecting the trunks of another kind cast ashore on the Falkland Islands, mistaking it for drift-wood. (See Harvey on *Algæ*) This species looked almost edible; at least, I thought that if I were starving I would try it. One sailor told me that the cows ate it. It cut like cheese: for I took the earliest opportunity to sit down and deliberately whittle up a fathom or two of it, that I might become more intimately acquainted with it, see how it cut, and if it were hollow all the way through. The blade looked like a broad belt, whose edges had been quilled, or as if stretched by hammering, and it was also twisted spirally. The extremity was generally worn and ragged from the lashing of the waves. A piece of the stem which I carried home shrunk to one quarter of its size a week afterward, and was completely covered with crystals of salt like frost. The reader will excuse my greenness, — though it is not sea-greenness, like his, perchance, — for I live by a river-shore, where this weed does not wash up. When we consider in what meadows it grew. and how it was raked, and in what kind of hay weather got in or out, we may well be curious about it. One who is weatherwise has given the following account of the matter.

"When descends on the Atlantic

The gigantic
Storm-wind of the equinox,
Landward in his wrath he scourges
The toiling surges,
Laden with sea-weed from the rocks.

"From Bermuda's reefs, from edges
Of sunken ledges,
On some far-off bright Azore;
From Bahama and the dashing,
Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador;

"From the trembling surf that buries
The Orkneyan Skerries.
Answering the hoarse Hebrides;
And from wrecks and ships and drifting
Spars, uplifting
On the desolate rainy seas;

"Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless main."

But he was not thinking of this shore, when he added: —

"Till, in sheltered coves and reaches
Of sandy beaches,
All have found repose again."

These weeds were the symbols of those grotesque and fabulous thoughts which have not yet got into the sheltered coves of literature.

"Ever drifting, drifting, drifting
On the shifting
Currents of the restless heart,"
And not yet "in books recorded
They, like hoarded

Household words, no more depart."

The beach was also strewn with beautiful sea-jellies, which the wreckers called Sun-squall, one of the lowest forms of animal life, some white, some wine-colored, and a foot in diameter. I at first thought that they were a tender part of some marine monster, which the storm or some other foe had mangled. What right has the sea to bear in its bosom such tender things as sea-jellies and mosses, when it has such a boisterous shore that the stoutest fabrics are wrecked against it? Strange that it should undertake to dandle such delicate children in its arm. I did not at first recognize these for the same which I had formerly seen in myriads in Boston Harbor, rising, with a waving motion, to the surface, as if to meet the sun, and discoloring the waters far and wide, so that I seemed to be sailing through a mere sunfish soup. They say that when you endeavor to take one up, it will spill out the other side of your hand like quicksilver. Before the land rose out of the ocean, and became *dry* land, chaos reigned; and between high and low water mark, where she is partially disrobed and rising, a sort of chaos reigns still, which only anomalous creatures can inhabit. Mackerel-gulls were all the while flying over our heads and amid the breakers, sometimes two white ones pursuing a black one; quite at home in the storm, though they are as delicate organizations as sea-jellies and mosses; and we saw that they were adapted to their circumstances rather by their spirits than their bodies. Theirs must be an essentially wilder, that is, less human, nature than that of larks and robins. Their note was like the sound of some vibrating metal, and harmonized well with the scenery and the roar of the surf, as if one had rudely touched the strings of the lyre, which ever lies on the shore; a ragged shred of ocean music tossed aloft on the spray. But if I were required to name a sound the remembrance of which most perfectly revives the impression which the beach has made, it would be the dreary peep of the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) which haunts there. Their voices, too, are heard as a fugacious part in the dirge which is ever played along the shore for those mariners who have been lost in the deep since first it was created. But through all this dreariness we seemed to have a pure and unqualified strain of eternal melody, for always the same strain

which is a dirge to one household is a morning song of rejoicing to another.

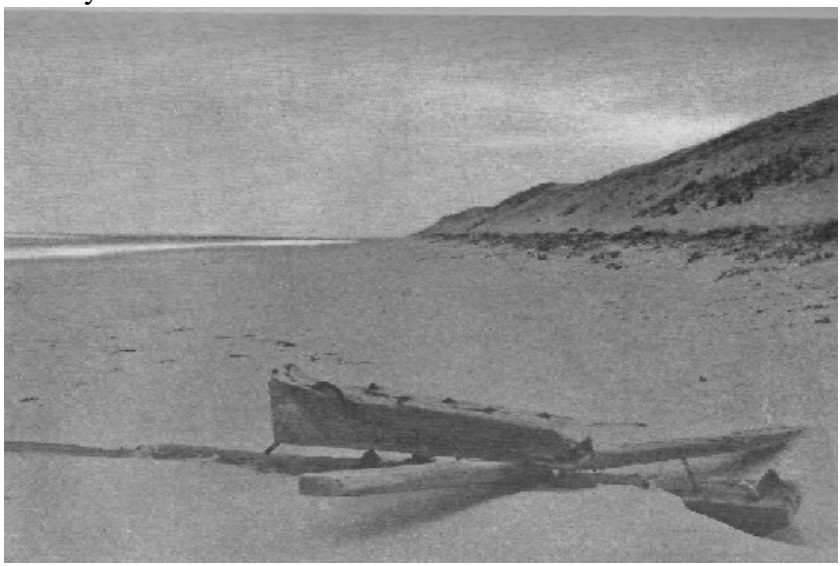
A remarkable method of catching gulls, derived from the Indians, was practised in Wellfleet in 1794. "The Gull House," it is said, "is built with crotchets, fixed in the ground on the beach," poles being stretched across for the top, and the sides made close with stakes and seaweed. "The poles on the top are covered with lean whale. The man being placed within, is not discovered by the fowls, and while they are contending for and eating the flesh, he draws them in, one by one, between the poles, until he has collected forty or fifty." Hence, perchance, a man is said to be *gulled*, when he is *taken in*. We read that one "sort of gulls is called by the Dutch *mallemucke, i.e.* the foolish fly, because they fall upon a whale as eagerly as a fly, and, indeed, all gulls are foolishly bold and easy to be shot. The Norwegians call this bird *havhest*, sea-horse (and the English translator says, it is probably what we call boobies). If they have eaten too much, they throw it up, and eat it again till they are tired. It is this habit in the gulls of parting with their property [disgorging the contents of their stomachs to the skuas], which has given rise to the terms gull, guller, and gulling, among men." We also read that they used to kill small birds which roosted on the beach at night, by making a fire with hog's lard in a frying-pan. The Indians probably used pine torches; the birds flocked to the light, and were knocked down with a stick. We noticed holes dug near the edge of the bank, where gunners conceal themselves to shoot the large gulls which coast up and down a-fishing, for these are considered good to eat.

We found some large clams of the species *Mactra solidissima*, which the storm had torn up from the bottom, and cast ashore. I selected one of the largest, about six inches in length, and carried it along, thinking to try an experiment on it. We soon after met a wrecker, with a grapple and a rope, who said that he was looking for tow cloth, which had made part of the cargo of the ship *Franklin*, which was wrecked here in the spring, at which time nine or ten lives were lost. The reader may remember this wreck, from the circumstance that a letter was found in the captain's valise, which washed ashore, directing him to wreck the vessel before he got to America, and from the trial which took place in consequence. The

wrecker said that tow cloth was still cast up in such storms as this. He also told us that the clam which I had was the sea-clam, or hen, and was good to eat. We took our nooning under a sand-hill, covered with beach-grass, in a dreary little hollow, on the top of the bank, while it alternately rained and shined. There, having reduced some damp drift-wood, which I had picked up on the shore, to shavings with my knife, I kindled a fire with a match and some paper and cooked my clam on the embers for my dinner; for breakfast was commonly the only meal which I took in a house on this excursion. When the clam was done, one valve held the meat and the other the liquor. Though it was very tough, I found it sweet and savory, and ate *the whole* with a relish. Indeed, with the addition of a cracker or two, it would have been a bountiful dinner. I noticed that the shells were such as I had seen in the sugar-kit at home. Tied to a stick, they formerly made the Indian's hoe hereabouts.

At length, by mid-afternoon, after we had had two or three rainbows over the sea, the showers ceased, and the heavens gradually cleared up, though the wind still blowed as hard and the breakers ran as high as before. Keeping on, we soon after came to a Charity-house, which we looked into to see how the shipwrecked mariner might fare. Far away in some desolate hollow by the sea-side, just within the bank, stands a lonely building on piles driven into the sand, with a slight nail put through the staple, which a freezing man can bend, with some straw, perchance, on the floor on which he may lie, or which he may burn in the fireplace to keep him alive. Perhaps this hut has never been required to shelter a ship-wrecked man, and the benevolent person who promised to inspect it annually, to see that the straw and matches are here, and that the boards will keep off the wind, has grown remiss and thinks that storms and shipwrecks are over; and this very night a perishing crew may pry open its door with their numbed fingers and leave half their number dead here by morning. When I thought what must be the condition of the families which alone would ever occupy or had occupied them, what must have been the tragedy of the winter evenings spent by human beings around their hearths, these houses, though they were meant for human dwellings, did not look cheerful to me. They appeared but a stage to the grave. The gulls flew around and screamed over them;

the roar of the ocean in storms, and the lapse of its waves in calms, alone resounds through them, all dark and empty within, year in, year out, except, perchance, on one memorable night. Houses of entertainment for shipwrecked men! What kind of sailors' homes were they?



Wreckage under the sand-bluff

"Each hut," says the author of the "Description of the Eastern Coast of the County of Barnstable," "stands on piles, is eight feet long, eight feet wide, and seven feet high; a sliding door is on the south, a sliding shutter on the west, and a pole, rising fifteen feet above the top of the building, on the east. Within it is supplied either with straw or hay, and is further accommodated with a bench." They have varied little from this model now. There are similar huts at the Isle of Sable and Anticosti, on the north, and how far south along the coast I know not. It is pathetic to read the minute and faithful directions which he gives to seamen who may be wrecked on this coast, to guide them to the nearest Charity-house, or other shelter, for, as is said of Eastham, though there are a few houses within a mile of the shore, yet "in a snow-storm, which rages here with excessive fury, it would be almost impossible to discover them either by night or by day." You hear their imaginary guide thus marshalling, cheering, directing the dripping, shivering, freezing

troop along; “at the entrance of this valley the sand has gathered, so that at present a little climbing is necessary. Passing over several fences and taking heed not to enter the wood on the right hand, at the distance of three-quarters of a mile a house is to be found. This house stands on the south side of the road, and not far from it on the south is Pamet River, which runs from east to west through body of salt marsh.” To him cast ashore in Eastham, he says, “The meeting-house is without a steeple, but it may be distinguished from the dwelling-houses near it by its situation, which is between two small groves of locusts, one on the south and one on the north, — that on the south being three times as long as the other. About a mile and a quarter from the hut, west by north, appear the top and arms of a windmill.” And so on for many pages.

We did not learn whether these houses had been the means of saving any lives, though this writer says, of one erected at the head of Stout’s Creek in Truro, that “it was built in an improper manner, having a chimney in it; and was placed on a spot where no beach-grass grew. The strong winds blew the sand from its foundation and the weight of the chimney brought it to the ground; so that in January of the present year it was entirely demolished. This event took place about six weeks before the *Brutus* was cast away. If it had remained, it is probable that the whole of the unfortunate crew of that ship would have been saved, as they gained the shore a few rods only from the spot where the hut had stood.”

This “Charity-house,” as the wrecker called it, this “Humane-house,” as some call it, that is, the one to which we first came, had neither window nor sliding shutter, nor clapboards, nor paint. As we have said, there was a rusty nail put through the staple. However, as we wished to get an idea of a Humane house, and we hoped that we should never have a better opportunity, we put our eyes, by turns, to a knot-hole in the door, and after long looking, without seeing, into the dark, — not knowing how many shipwrecked men’s bones we might see at last, looking with the eye of faith, knowing that, though to him that knocketh it may not always be opened, yet to him that looketh long enough through a knot-hole the inside shall be visible, — for we had had some practice at looking inward, — by steadily keeping our other ball covered from the light meanwhile, putting the

outward world behind us, ocean and land, and the beach, — till the pupil became enlarged and collected the rays of light that were wandering in that dark (for the pupil shall be enlarged by looking; there never was so dark a night but a faithful and patient eye, however small, might at last prevail over it), — after all this, I say, things began to take shape to our vision, — if we may use this expression where there was nothing but emptiness, — and we obtained the long-wished-for insight. Though we thought at first that it was a hopeless case, after several minutes' steady exercise of the divine faculty, our prospects began decidedly to brighten, and we were ready to exclaim with the blind bard of "Paradise Lost and Regained," —

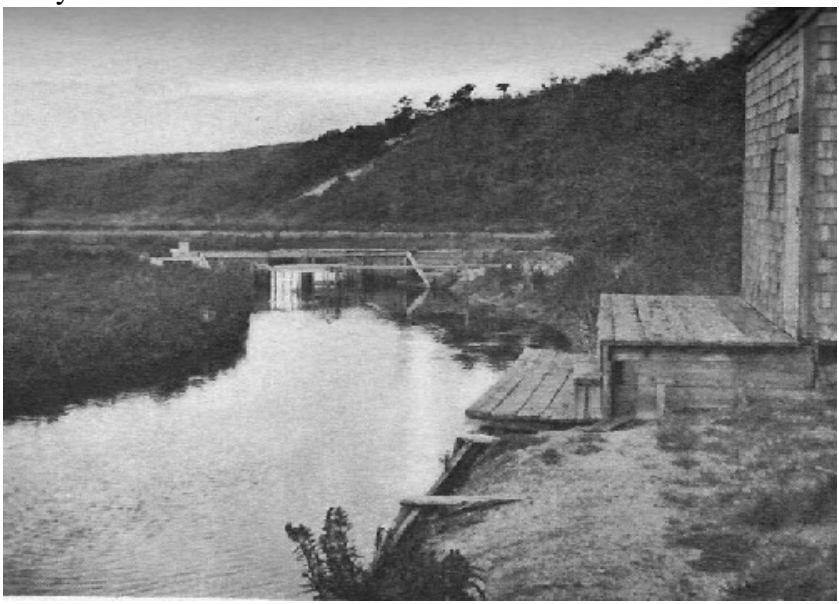
"Hail, holy Light! offspring of Heaven first born,
Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam.
May I express thee unblamed?"

A little longer, and a chimney rushed red on our sight. In short, when our vision had grown familiar with the darkness, we discovered that there were some stones and some loose wads of wool on the floor, and an empty fireplace at the further end; but it *was not* supplied with matches, or straw, or hay, that we could see, nor "accommodated with a bench." Indeed, it was the wreck of all cosmical beauty there within.

Turning our backs on the outward world, we thus looked through the knot-hole into the Humane house, into the very bowels of mercy; and for bread we found a stone. It was literally a great cry (of sea-mews outside), and a little wool. However, we were glad to sit outside, under the lee of the Humane house, to escape the piercing wind; and there we thought how cold is charity! how inhumane humanity! This, then, is what charity hides! Virtues antique and far away with ever a rusty nail over the latch; and very difficult to keep in repair, withal, it is so uncertain whether any will ever gain the beach near you. So we shivered round about, not being able to get into it, ever and anon looking through the knot-hole into that night without a star, until we concluded that it was not a *humane* house at all, but a sea-side box, now shut up. belonging to some of the family

of Night or Chaos, where they spent their summers by the sea, for the sake of the sea breeze, and that it was not proper for us to be prying into their concerns.

My companion had declared before this that I had not a particle of sentiment, in rather absolute terms, to my astonishment; but I suspect he meant that my legs did not ache just then, though I am not wholly a stranger to that sentiment. But I did not intend this for a sentimental journey.



Herring River at Wellfleet

We have no word in English to express the sound of many waves, dashing at once, whether gently or violently, [Greek: polnphloioboios] to the ear, and, in the ocean's gentle moods, an [Greek: anarithmon gelasma] to the eye.

V. THE WELLFLEET OYSTERMAN

Having walked about eight miles since we struck the beach, and passed the boundary between Wellfleet and Truro, a stone post in the sand, — for even this sand comes under the jurisdiction of one town or another, — we turned inland over barren hills and valleys, whither the sea, for some reason, did not follow us, and, tracing up a Hollow, discovered two or three sober-looking houses within half a mile, uncommonly near the eastern coast. Their garrets were apparently so full of chambers, that their roofs could hardly lie down straight, and we did not doubt that there was room for us there. Houses near the sea are generally low and broad. These were a story and a half high; but if you merely counted the windows in their gable-ends, you would think that there were many stories more, or, at any rate, that the half-story was the only one thought worthy of being illustrated. The great number of windows in the ends of the houses, and their irregularity in size and position, here and elsewhere on the Cape, struck us agreeably, — as if each of the various occupants who had their *cunabula* behind had punched a hole where his necessities required it, and, according to his size and stature, without regard to outside effect. There were windows for the grown folks, and windows for the children, — three or four apiece; as a certain man had a large hole cut in his barn-door for the cat, and another smaller one for the kitten. Sometimes they were so low under the eaves that I thought they must have perforated the plate beam for another apartment, and I noticed some which were triangular, to fit that part more exactly. The ends of the houses had thus as many muzzles as a revolver, and, if the inhabitants have the same habit of staring out the windows that some of our neighbors have, a traveller must stand a small chance with them.

Generally, the old-fashioned and unpainted houses on the Cape looked more comfortable, as well as picturesque, than the modern and more pretending ones, which were less in harmony with the scenery, and less firmly planted.



A characteristic gable with many windows

These houses were on the shores of a chain of ponds, seven in number, the source of a small stream called Herring River, which empties into the Bay. There are many Herring Rivers on the Cape; they will, perhaps, be more numerous than herrings soon. We knocked at the door of the first house, but its inhabitants were all gone away. In the meanwhile, we saw the occupants of the next one looking out the window at us, and before we reached it an old woman came out and fastened the door of her bulkhead, and went in again. Nevertheless, we did not hesitate to knock at her door, when a grizzly-looking man appeared, whom we took to be sixty or seventy years old. He asked us, at first, suspiciously, where we were from, and what our business was; to which we returned plain answers.

"How far is Concord from Boston?" he inquired.

"Twenty miles by railroad."

"Twenty miles by railroad," he repeated.

"Didn't you ever hear of Concord of Revolutionary fame?"

"Didn't I ever hear of Concord? Why, I heard the guns fire at the battle of Bunker Hill. [They hear the sound of heavy cannon across the Bay.] I am almost ninety; I am eighty-eight year old. I was fourteen year old at the time of Concord Fight, — and where were you then?"

We were obliged to confess that we were not in the fight.

"Well, walk in, we'll leave it to the women," said he.

So we walked in, surprised, and sat down, an old woman taking our hats and bundles, and the old man continued, drawing up to the large, old-fashioned fireplace, —

"I am a poor good-for-nothing crittur, as Isaiah says; I am all broken down this year. I am under petticoat government here."

The family consisted of the old man, his wife, and his daughter, who appeared nearly as old as her mother, a fool, her son (a brutish-looking, middle-aged man, with a prominent lower face, who was standing by the hearth when we entered, but immediately went out), and a little boy of ten.

While my companion talked with the women, I talked with the old man. They said that he was old and foolish, but he was evidently too knowing for them.

"These women," said he to me, "are both of them poor good-for-nothing critturs. This one is my wife. I married her sixty-four years ago. She is eighty-four years old, and as deaf as an adder, and the other is not much better."

He thought well of the Bible, or at least he *spoke* well, and did not *think* ill, of it, for that would not have been prudent for a man of his age. He said that he had read it attentively for many years, and he had much of it at his tongue's end. He seemed deeply impressed with a sense of his own nothingness, and would repeatedly exclaim, —

"I am a nothing. What I gather from my Bible is just this: that man is a poor good-for-nothing crittur, and everything is just as God sees fit and disposes."

"May I ask your name?" I said.

"Yes," he answered, "I am not ashamed to tell my name. My name is —— . My great-grandfather came over from England and settled here."

He was an old Wellfleet oysterman, who had acquired a competency in that business, and had sons still engaged in it.

Nearly all the oyster shops and stands in Massachusetts, I am told, are supplied and kept by natives of Wellfleet, and a part of this town is still called Billingsgate from the oysters having been formerly planted there; but the native oysters are said to have died in 1770.

Various causes are assigned for this, such as a ground frost, the carcasses of blackfish kept to rot in the harbor, and the like, but the most common account of the matter is, — and I find that a similar superstition with regard to the disappearance of fishes exists almost everywhere, — that when Wellfleet began to quarrel with the neighboring towns about the right to gather them, yellow specks appeared in them, and Providence caused them to disappear. A few years ago sixty thousand bushels were annually brought from the South and planted in the harbor of Wellfleet till they attained "the proper relish of Billingsgate"; but now they are imported commonly full-grown, and laid down near their markets, at Boston and elsewhere, where the water, being a mixture of salt and fresh, suits them better. The business was said to be still good and improving.

The old man said that the oysters were liable to freeze in the winter, if planted too high; but if it were not "so cold as to strain their eyes" they were not injured. The inhabitants of New Brunswick have noticed that "ice will not form over an oyster-bed, unless the cold is very intense indeed, and when the bays are frozen over the oyster-beds are easily discovered by the water above them remaining unfrozen, or as the French residents say, *degèle*." Our host said that they kept them in cellars all winter.

"Without anything to eat or drink?" I asked.

"Without anything to eat or drink," he answered.

"Can the oysters move?"

"Just as much as my shoe."



A Welfleet oysterman

But when I caught him saying that they “bedded themselves down in the sand, flat side up, round side down,” I told him that my shoe

could not do that, without the aid of my foot in it; at which he said that they merely settled down as they grew; if put down in a square they would be found so; but the clam could move quite fast. I have since been told by oystermen of Long Island, where the oyster is still indigenous and abundant, that they are found in large masses attached to the parent in their midst, and are so taken up with their tongs; in which case, they say, the age of the young proves that there could have been no motion for five or six years at least. And Buckland in his Curiosities of Natural History (page 50) says: "An oyster who has once taken up his position and fixed himself when quite young can never make a change. Oysters, nevertheless, that have not fixed themselves, but remain loose at the bottom of the sea, have the power of locomotion; they open their shells to their fullest extent, and then suddenly contracting them, the expulsion of the water forwards gives a motion backwards. A fisherman at Guernsey told me that he had frequently seen oysters moving in this way."

Some still entertain the question "whether the oyster was indigenous in Massachusetts Bay," and whether Wellfleet harbor was a "natural habitat" of this fish; but, to say nothing of the testimony of old oystermen, which, I think, is quite conclusive, though the native oyster may now be extinct there, I saw that their shells, opened by the Indians, were strewn all over the Cape. Indeed, the Cape was at first thickly settled by Indians on account of the abundance of these and other fish. We saw many traces of their occupancy after this, in Truro, near Great Hollow, and at High-Head, near East Harbor River, — oysters, clams, cockles, and other shells, mingled with ashes and the bones of deer and other quadrupeds. I picked up half a dozen arrow-heads, and in an hour or two could have filled my pockets with them. The Indians lived about the edges of the swamps, then probably in some instances ponds, for shelter and water. Moreover, Champlain in the edition of his "Voyages" printed in 1613, says that in the year 1606 he and Poitrincourt explored a harbor (Barnstable Harbor?) in the southerly part of what is now called Massachusetts Bay, in latitude 42 degrees, about five leagues south, one point west of *Cap Blanc* (Cape Cod), and there they found many good oysters, and they named it "*le Port aux Huistres*" (Oyster Harbor). In one edition of his map (1632), the *"R. aux Escailles*" is drawn emptying

into the same part of the bay, and on the map "*Novi Belgii*," in Ogilby's "America" (1670), the words "*Port aux Huistres*" are placed against the same place. Also William Wood, who left New England in 1633, speaks, in his "New England's Prospect," published in 1634, of "a great oyster-bank" in Charles River, and of another in the Mistick, each of which obstructed the navigation of its river. "The oysters," says he, "be great ones in form of a shoehorn; some be a foot long; these breed on certain banks that are bare every spring tide. This fish without the shell is so big, that it must admit of a division before you can well get it into your mouth." Oysters are still found there. (Also, see Thomas Morton's "New English Canaan," page 90.)

Our host told us that the sea-clam, or hen, was not easily obtained; it was raked up, but never on the Atlantic side, only cast ashore there in small quantities in storms. The fisherman sometimes wades in water several feet deep, and thrusts a pointed stick into the sand before him. When this enters between the valves of a clam, he closes them on it, and is drawn out. It has been known to catch and hold coot and teal which were preying on it. I chanced to be on the bank of the Acushnet at New Bedford one day since this, watching some ducks, when a man informed me that, having let out his young ducks to seek their food amid the samphire (*Salicornia*) and other weeds along the river-side at low tide that morning, at length he noticed that one remained stationary, amid the weeds, something preventing it from following the others, and going to it he found its foot tightly shut in a quahog's shell. He took up both together, carried them to his home, and his wife opening the shell with a knife released the duck and cooked the quahog. The old man said that the great clams were good to eat, but that they always took out a certain part which was poisonous, before they cooked them. "People said it would kill a cat." I did not tell him that I had eaten a large one entire that afternoon, but began to think that I was tougher than a cat. He stated that pedlers came round there, and sometimes tried to sell the women folks a skimmer, but he told them that their women had got a better skimmer than *they* could make, in the shell of their clams; it was shaped just right for this purpose. — They call them "skim-alls" in some places. He also said that the sun-squall was poisonous to

handle, and when the sailors came across it, they did not meddle with it, but heaved it out of their way. I told him that I had handled it that afternoon, and had felt no ill effects as yet. But he said it made the hands itch, especially if they had previously been scratched, or if I put it into my bosom I should find out what it was.

He informed us that no ice ever formed on the back side of the Cape, or not more than once in a century, and but little snow lay there, it being either absorbed or blown or washed away. Sometimes in winter, when the tide was down, the beach was frozen, and afforded a hard road up the back side for some thirty miles, as smooth as a floor. One winter when he was a boy, he and his father "took right out into the back side before daylight, and walked to Provincetown and back to dinner."

When I asked what they did with all that barren-looking land, where I saw so few cultivated fields,— "Nothing," he said.

"Then why fence your fields?"

"To keep the sand from blowing and covering up the whole."

"The yellow sand," said he, "has some life in it, but the white little or none."

When, in answer to his questions, I told him that I was a surveyor, he said that they who surveyed his farm were accustomed, where the ground was uneven, to loop up each chain as high as their elbows; that was the allowance they made, and he wished to know if I could tell him why they did not come out according to his deed, or twice alike. He seemed to have more respect for surveyors of the old school, which I did not wonder at. "King George the Third," said he, "laid out a road four rods wide and straight the whole length of the Cape," but where it was now he could not tell.

This story of the surveyors reminded me of a Long-Islander, who once, when I had made ready to jump from the bow of his boat to the shore, and he thought that I underrated the distance and would fall short, — though I found afterward that he judged of the elasticity of my joints by his own, — told me that when he came to a brook which he wanted to get over, he held up one leg, and then, if his foot appeared to cover any part of the opposite bank, he knew that he could jump it. "Why," I told him, "to say nothing of the Mississippi, and other small watery streams, I could blot out a star with my foot,

but I would not engage to jump that distance," and asked how he knew when he had got his leg at the right elevation. But he regarded his legs as no less accurate than a pair of screw dividers or an ordinary quadrant, and appeared to have a painful recollection of every degree and minute in the arc which they described; and he would have had me believe that there was a kind of hitch in his hip-joint which answered the purpose. I suggested that he should connect his two ankles by a string of the proper length, which should be the chord of an arc, measuring his jumping ability on horizontal surfaces, — assuming one leg to be a perpendicular to the plane of the horizon, which, however, may have been too bold an assumption in this case. Nevertheless, this was a kind of geometry in the legs which it interested me to hear of.

Our host took pleasure in telling us the names of the ponds, most of which we could see from his windows, and making us repeat them after him, to see if we had got them right. They were Gull Pond, the largest and a very handsome one, clear and deep, and more than a mile in circumference, Newcomb's, Swett's, Slough, Horse-Leech, Round, and Herring Ponds, all connected at high water, if I do not mistake. The coast-surveyors had come to him for their names, and he told them of one which they had not detected. He said that they were not so high as formerly. There was an earthquake about four years before he was born, which cracked the pans of the ponds, which were of iron, and caused them to settle. I did not remember to have read of this. Innumerable gulls used to resort to them; but the large gulls were now very scarce, for, as he said, the English robbed their nests far in the north, where they breed. He remembered well when gulls were taken in the gull-house, and when small birds were killed by means of a frying-pan and fire at night. His father once lost a valuable horse from this cause. A party from Wellfleet having lighted their fire for this purpose, one dark night, on Billingsgate Island, twenty horses which were pastured there, and this colt among them, being frightened by it, and endeavoring in the dark to cross the passage which separated them from the neighboring beach, and which was then fordable at low tide, were all swept out to sea and drowned. I ob-served that many horses were still turned out to pasture all summer on the islands and beaches in Wellfleet, Eastham,

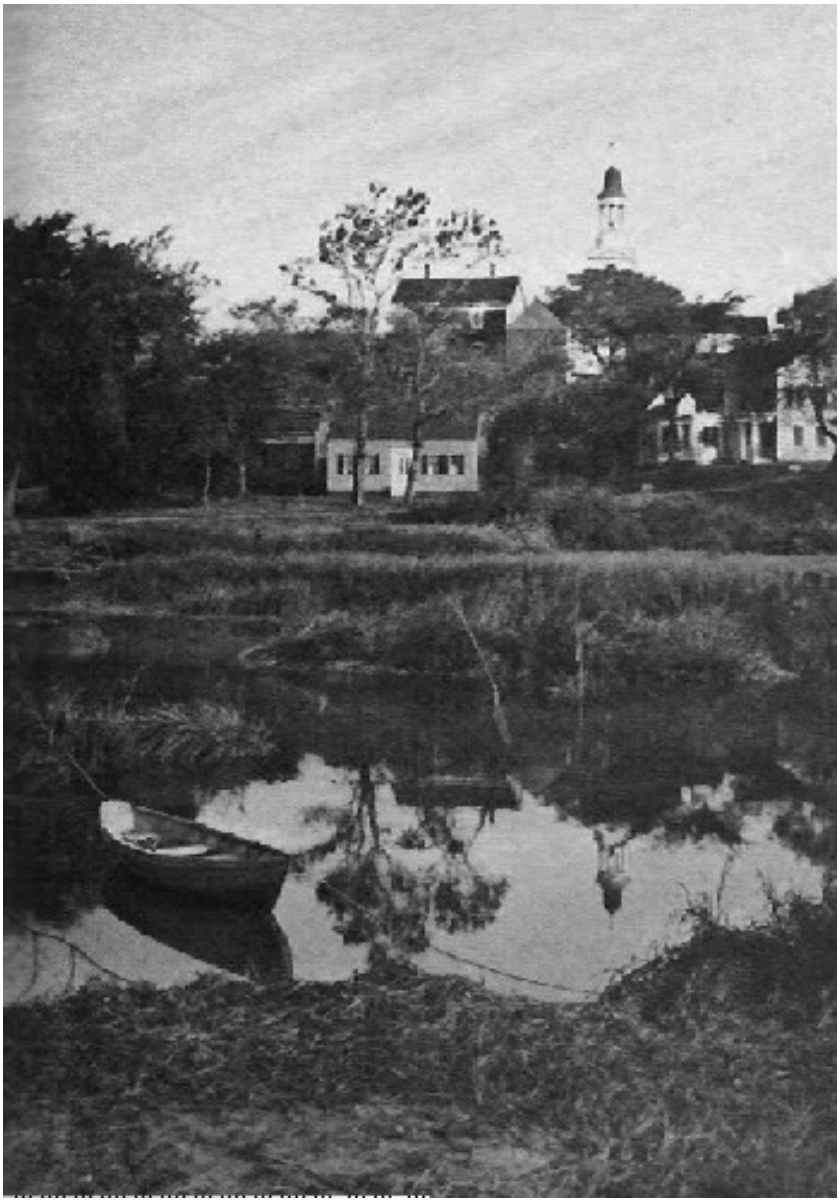
and Orleans, as a kind of common. He also described the killing of what he called "wild hens" here, after they had gone to roost in the woods, when he was a boy. Perhaps they were "Prairie hens" (pinnated grouse).

He liked the Beach-pea (*Lathyrus maritimus*), cooked green, as well as the cultivated. He had seen it growing very abundantly in Newfoundland, where also the inhabitants ate them, but he had never been able to obtain any ripe for seed. We read, under the head of Chatham, that "in 1555, during a time of great scarcity, the people about Orford, in Sussex (England) were preserved from perishing by eating the seeds of this plant, which grew there in great abundance on the sea-coast. Cows, horses, sheep, and goats eat it." But the writer who quoted this could not learn that they had ever been used in Barnstable County.

He had been a voyager, then? O, he had been about the world in his day. He once considered himself a pilot for all our coast; but now they had changed the names so he might be bothered.

He gave us to taste what he called the Summer Sweeting, a pleasant apple which he raised, and frequently grafted from, but had never seen growing elsewhere, except once, — three trees on Newfoundland, or at the Bay of Chaleur, I forget which, as he was sailing by. He was sure that he could tell the tree at a distance.

At length the fool, whom my companion called the wizard, came in, muttering between his teeth, "Damn book-pedlers, — all the time talking about books. Better do something. Damn 'em. I'll shoot 'em. Got a doctor down here. Damn him, I'll get a gun and shoot him"; never once holding up his head. Whereat the old man stood up and said in a loud voice, as if he was accustomed to command, and this was not the first time he had been obliged to exert his authority there: "John, go sit down, mind your business, — we've heard you talk before, — precious little you'll do, — your bark is worse than your bite." But, without minding, John muttered the same gibberish over again, and then sat down at the table which the old folks had left. He ate all there was on it, and then turned to the apples, which his aged mother was paring, that she might give her guests some apple-sauce for breakfast, but she drew them away and sent him off.



Welfleet

When I approached this house the next summer, over the desolate hills between it and the shore, which are worthy to have been the birthplace of Ossian, I saw the wizard in the midst of a cornfield on the hillside, but, as usual, he loomed so strangely, that I mistook him for a scarecrow.

This was the merriest old man that we had ever seen, and one of the best preserved. His style of conversation was coarse and plain enough to have suited Rabelais. He would have made a good Panurge. Or rather he was a sober Silenus, and we were the boys Chromis and Mnasilus, who listened to his story.

"Not by Hæmonian hills the Thracian bard.
Nor awful Phoebus was on Pindus heard
With deeper silence or with more regard."

There was a strange mingling of past and present in his conversation, for he had lived under King George, and might have remembered when Napoleon and the moderns generally were born. He said that one day, when the troubles between the Colonies and the mother country first broke out, as he, a boy of fifteen, was pitching hay out of a cart, one Doane, an old Tory, who was talking with his father, a good Whig, said to him, "Why, Uncle Bill, you might as well undertake to pitch that pond into the ocean with a pitchfork, as for the Colonies to undertake to gain their independence." He remembered well General Washington, and how he rode his horse along the streets of Boston, and he stood up to show us how he looked.

"He was a r — a — ther large and portly-looking man, a manly and resolute-looking officer, with a pretty good leg as he sat on his horse."— "There, I'll tell you, this was the way with Washington." Then he jumped up again, and bowed gracefully to right and left, making show as if he were waving his hat. Said he, *"That* was Washington."

He told us many anecdotes of the Revolution, and was much pleased when we told him that we had read the same in history, and that his account agreed with the written.

"O," he said, "I know, I know! I was a young fellow of sixteen, with my ears wide open; and a fellow of that age, you know, is pretty wide awake, and likes to know everything that's going on. O, I know!"

He told us the story of the wreck of the *Franklin*, which took place there the previous spring: how a boy came to his house early in

the morning to know whose boat that was by the shore, for there was a vessel in distress, and he, being an old man, first ate his breakfast, and then walked over to the top of the hill by the shore, and sat down there, having found a comfortable seat, to see the ship wrecked. She was on the bar, only a quarter of a mile from him, and still nearer to the men on the beach, who had got a boat ready, but could render no assistance on account of the breakers, for there was a pretty high sea running. There were the passengers all crowded together in the forward part of the ship, and some were getting out of the cabin windows and were drawn on deck by the others.

"I saw the captain get out his boat," said he; "he had one little one; and then they jumped into it one after another, down as straight as an arrow. I counted them. There were nine. One was a woman, and she jumped as straight as any of them. Then they shoved off. The sea took them back, one wave went over them, and when they came up there were six still clinging to the boat; I counted them. The next wave turned the boat bottom upward, and emptied them all out. None of them ever came ashore alive. There were the rest of them all crowded together on the forecastle, the other parts of the ship being under water. They had seen all that happened to the boat. At length a heavy sea separated the forecastle from the rest of the wreck, and set it inside of the worst breaker, and the boat was able to reach them, and it saved all that were left, but one woman."

He also told us of the steamer *Cambria's* getting aground on his shore a few months before we were there, and of her English passengers who roamed over his grounds, and who, he said, thought the prospect from the high hill by the shore "the most delightsome they had ever seen," and also of the pranks which the ladies played with his scoop-net in the ponds. He spoke of these travellers with their purses full of guineas, just as our provincial fathers used to speak of British bloods in the time of King George the Third.

Quid loquar? Why repeat what he told us?

"Aut Scyllam Nisi, quam fama secuta est,
Candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstris,
Dulichias vexâsse rates, et gurgite in alto
Ah timidos nautas canibus lacerâsse marinis?"

In the course of the evening I began to feel the potency of the clam which I had eaten, and I was obliged to confess to our host that I was no tougher than the cat he told of; but he answered, that he was a plain-spoken man, and he could tell me that it was all imagination. At any rate, it proved an emetic in my case, and I was made quite sick by it for a short time, while he laughed at my expense. I was pleased to read afterward, in Mourt's Relation of the landing of the Pilgrims in Provincetown Harbor, these words: "We found great muscles (the old editor says that they were undoubtedly sea-clams) and very fat and full of sea-pearl; but we could not eat them, for they made us all sick that did eat, as well sailors as passengers, ... but they were soon well again." It brought me nearer to the Pilgrims to be thus reminded by a similar experience that I was so like them. Moreover, it was a valuable confirmation of their story, and I am prepared now to believe every word of Mourt's Relation. I was also pleased to find that man and the clam lay still at the same angle to one another. But I did not notice sea-pearl. Like Cleopatra, I must have swallowed it. I have since dug these clams on a flat in the Bay and observed them. They could squirt full ten feet before the wind, as appeared by the marks of the drops on the sand.

"Now I'm going to ask you a question," said the old man, "and I don't know as you can tell me; but you are a learned man, and I never had any learning, only what I got by natur." — It was in vain that we reminded him that he could quote Josephus to our confusion. — "I've thought, if I ever met a learned man I should like to ask him this question. Can you tell me how *Axy* is spelt, and what it means? *Axy*," says he; "there's a girl over here is named *Axy*. Now what is it? What does it mean? Is it Scripture? I've read my Bible twenty-five years over and over, and I never came across it."

"Did you read it twenty-five years for this object.'" I asked.

"Well, *how* is it spelt? Wife, how is it spelt?" She said: "It is in the Bible; I've seen it."

"Well, how do you spell it?"

"I don't know. A c h, ach, s e h, seh, — Achseh."

"Does that spell Axy? Well, do *you* know what it means?" asked he, turning to me.

"No," I replied, "I never heard the sound before."

“There was a schoolmaster down here once, and they asked him what it meant, and he said it had no more meaning than a bean-pole.”

I told him that I held the same opinion with the schoolmaster. I had been a schoolmaster myself, and had had strange names to deal with. I also heard of such names as Zoleth, Beriah, Amaziah, Bethuel, and Shearjashub, hereabouts.

At length the little boy, who had a seat quite in the chimney-corner, took off his stockings and shoes, warmed his feet, and having had his sore leg freshly salved, went off to bed; then the fool made bare his knotty-looking feet and legs, and followed him; and finally the old man exposed his calves also to our gaze. We had never had the good fortune to see an old man’s legs before, and were surprised to find them fair and plump as an infant’s, and we thought that he took a pride in exhibiting them. He then proceeded to make preparations for retiring, discoursing meanwhile with Panurgic plainness of speech on the ills to which old humanity is subject. We were a rare haul for him. He could commonly get none but ministers to talk to, though sometimes ten of them at once, and he was glad to meet some of the laity at leisure. The evening was not long enough for him. As I had been sick, the old lady asked if I would not go to bed, — it was getting late for old people; but the old man, who had not yet done his stories, said, “You ain’t particular, are you?”

“O, no,” said I, “I am in no hurry. I believe I have weathered the Clam cape.”

“They are good,” said he; “I wish I had some of them now.”

“They never hurt me,” said the old lady.

“But then you took out the part that killed a cat,” said I.

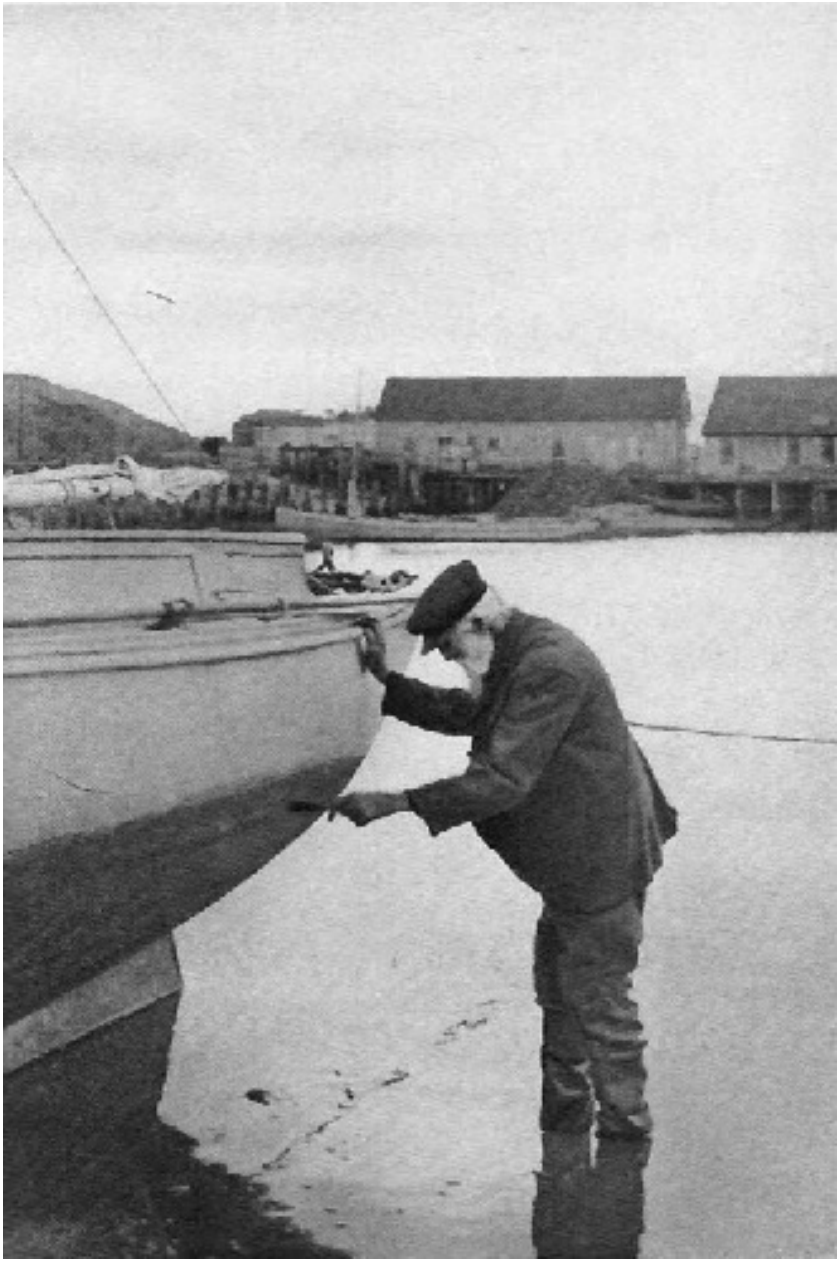
At last we cut him short in the midst of his stories, which he promised to resume in the morning. Yet, after all, one of the old ladies who came into our room in the night to fasten the fire-board, which rattled, as she went out took the precaution to fasten us in. Old women are by nature more suspicious than old men. However, the winds howled around the house, and made the fire-boards as well as the casements rattle well that night. It was probably a windy night for any locality, but we could not distinguish the roar which was proper to the ocean from that which was due to the wind alone.

The sounds which the ocean makes must be very significant and

interesting to those who live near it. When I was leaving the shore at this place the next summer, and had got a quarter of a mile distant, ascending a hill, I was startled by a sudden, loud sound from the sea, as if a large steamer were letting off steam by the shore, so that I caught my breath and felt my blood run cold for an instant, and I turned about, expecting to see one of the Atlantic steamers thus far out of her course, but there was nothing unusual to be seen. There was a low bank at the entrance of the Hollow, between me and the ocean, and suspecting that I might have risen into another stratum of air in ascending the hill, — which had wafted to me only the ordinary roar of the sea, — I immediately descended again, to see if I lost *hearing* of it; but, without regard to my ascending or descending, it died away in a minute or two, and yet there was scarcely any wind all the while. The old man said that this was what they called the "rut," a peculiar roar of the sea before the wind changes, which, however, he could not account for. He thought that he could tell all about the weather from the sounds which the sea made.

Old Josselyn, who came to New England in 1638, has it among his weather-signs, that "the resounding of the sea from the shore, and murmuring of the winds in the woods, without apparent wind, sheweth wind to follow."

Being on another part of the coast one night since this, I heard the roar of the surf a mile distant, and the inhabitants said it was a sign that the wind would work round east, and we should have rainy weather. The ocean was heaped up somewhere at the eastward, and this roar was occasioned by its effort to preserve its equilibrium, the wave reaching the shore before the wind. Also the captain of a packet between this country and England told me that he sometimes met with a wave on the Atlantic coming against the wind, perhaps in a calm sea, which indicated that at a distance the wind was blowing from an opposite quarter, but the undulation had travelled faster than it. Sailors tell of "tide-rips" and "ground-swells," which they suppose to have been occasioned by hurricanes and earthquakes, and to have travelled many hundred, and sometimes even two or three thousand miles.



Hunting for a Leak

Before sunrise the next morning they let us out again, and I ran over to the beach to see the sun come out of the ocean. The old woman of eighty-four winters was already out in the cold morning

wind, bareheaded, tripping about like a young girl, and driving up the cow to milk. She got the breakfast with despatch, and without noise or bustle; and meanwhile the old man resumed his stories, standing before us, who were sitting, with his back to the chimney, and ejecting his tobacco juice right and left into the fire behind him, without regard to the various dishes which were there preparing. At breakfast we had eels, buttermilk cake, cold bread, green beans, doughnuts, and tea. The old man talked a steady stream; and when his wife told him he had better eat his breakfast, he said: "Don't hurry me; I have lived too long to be hurried." I ate of the apple-sauce and the doughnuts, which I thought had sustained the least detriment from the old man's shots, but my companion refused the apple-sauce, and ate of the hot cake and green beans, which had appeared to him to occupy the safest part of the hearth. But on comparing notes afterward, I told him that the buttermilk cake was particularly exposed, and I saw how it suffered repeatedly, and therefore I avoided it; but he declared that, however that might be, he witnessed that the apple-sauce was seriously injured, and had therefore declined that. After breakfast we looked at his clock, which was out of order, and oiled it with some "hen's grease," for want of sweet oil, for he scarcely could believe that we were not tinkers or pedlers; meanwhile he told a story about visions, which had reference to a crack in the clock-case made by frost one night. He was curious to know to what religious sect we belonged. He said that he had been to hear thirteen kinds of preaching in one month, when he was young, but he did not join any of them, — he stuck to his Bible. There was nothing like any of them in his Bible. While I was shaving in the next room, I heard him ask my companion to what sect he belonged, to which he answered: —

"O, I belong to the Universal Brotherhood."

"What's that?" he asked, "Sons o' Temperance?"

Finally, filling our pockets with doughnuts, which he was pleased to find that we called by the same name that he did, and paying for our entertainment, we took our departure; but he followed us out of doors, and made us tell him the names of the vegetables which he had raised from seeds that came out of the *Franklin*. They were cabbage, broccoli, and parsley. As I had asked him the names of so

many things, he tried me in turn with all the plants which grew in his garden, both wild and cultivated. It was about half an acre, which he cultivated wholly himself. Besides the common garden vegetables, there were Yellow-Dock, Lemon Balm, Hyssop, Gill-go-over-the-ground. Mouse-ear, Chick-weed, Roman Wormwood, Elecampane, and other plants. As we stood there, I saw a fish-hawk stoop to pick a fish out of his pond.

"There," said I, "he has got a fish."

"Well," said the old man, who was looking all the while, but could see nothing, "he didn't dive, he just wet his claws."

And, sure enough, he did not this time, though it is said that they often do, but he merely stooped low enough to pick him out with his talons; but as he bore his shining prey over the bushes, it fell to the ground, and we did not see that he recovered it. That is not their practice.

Thus, having had another crack with the old man, he standing bareheaded under the eaves, he directed us "athwart the fields," and we took to the beach again for another day, it being now late in the morning.

It was but a day or two after this that the safe of the Provincetown Bank was broken open and robbed by two men from the interior, and we learned that our hospitable entertainers did at least transiently harbor the suspicion that we were the men.

VI. THE BEACH AGAIN

Our way to the high sand-bank, which I have described as extending all along the coast, led, as usual, through patches of Bayberry bushes which straggled into the sand. This, next to the Shrub-oak, was perhaps the most common shrub thereabouts. I was much attracted by its odoriferous leaves and small gray berries which are clustered about the short twigs, just below the last year's growth. I know of but two bushes in Concord, and they, being staminate plants, do not bear fruit. The berries gave it a venerable appearance, and they smelled quite spicy, like small confectionery. Robert Beverley, in his "History of Virginia," published in 1705, states that "at the mouth of their rivers, and all along upon the sea and bay, and near many of their creeks and swamps, grows the myrtle, bearing a berry, of which they make a hard brittle wax, of a curious green color, which by refining becomes almost transparent. Of this they make candles, which are never greasy to the touch nor melt with lying in the hottest weather; neither does the snuff of these ever offend the smell, like that of a tallow candle; but, instead of being disagreeable, if an accident puts a candle out, it yields a pleasant fragrancy to all that are in the room; insomuch that nice people often put them out on purpose to have the incense of the expiring snuff. The melting of these berries is said to have been first found out by a surgeon in New England, who performed wonderful things with a salve made of them." From the abundance of berries still hanging on the bushes, we judged that the inhabitants did not generally collect them for tallow, though we had seen a piece in the house we had just left. I have since made some tallow myself. Holding a basket beneath the bare twigs in April, I rubbed them together between my hands and thus gathered about a quart in twenty minutes, to which were added enough to make three pints, and I might have gathered them much faster with a suitable rake and a large shallow basket. They have little prominences like those of an orange all creased in tallow, which also fills the interstices down to the stone. The oily part rose to the top, making it look like a savory black broth, which smelled much like balm or other herb tea. You let it cool, then skim off the tallow from

the surface, melt this again and strain it. I got about a quarter of a pound weight from my three pints, and more yet remained within the berries. A small portion cooled in the form of small flattish hemispheres, like crystallizations, the size of a kernel of corn (nuggets I called them as I picked them out from amid the berries), Loudon says, that "cultivated trees are said to yield more wax than those that are found wild." (See Duplessy, Vegetaux Resineux, Vol. II. p. 60.) If you get any pitch on your hands in the pine-woods you have only to rub some of these berries between your hands to start it off. But the ocean was the grand fact there, which made us forget both bay berries and men.

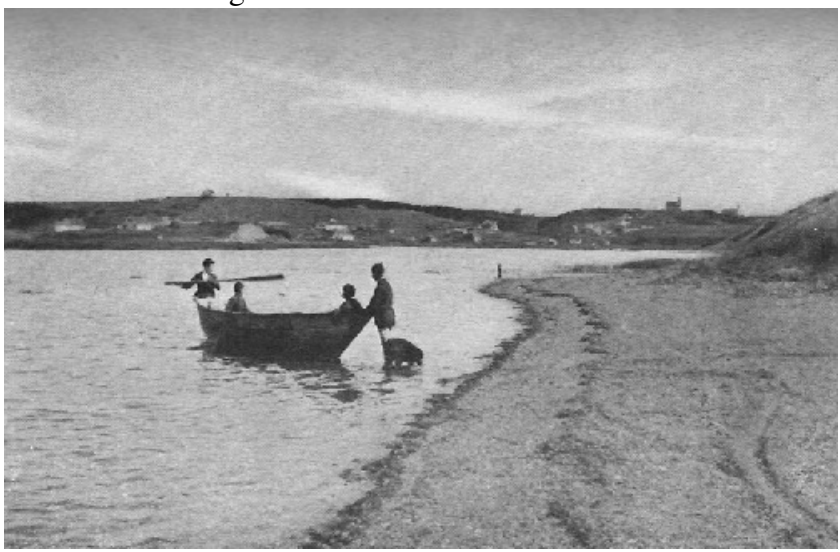
To-day the air was beautifully clear, and the sea no longer dark and stormy, though the waves still broke with foam along the beach, but sparkling and full of life. Already that morning I had seen the day break over the sea as if it came out of its bosom: —

"The saffron-robed Dawn rose in haste from the streams
Of Ocean, that she might bring light to immortals and to mortals."

The sun rose visibly at such a distance over the sea that the cloud-bank in the horizon, which at first concealed him, was not perceptible until he had risen high behind it, and plainly broke and dispersed it, like an arrow. But as yet I looked at him as rising over land, and could not, without an effort, realize that he was rising over the sea. Already I saw some vessels on the horizon, which had rounded the Cape in the night, and were now well on their watery way to other lands.

We struck the beach again in the south part of Truro. In the early part of the day, while it was flood tide and the beach was narrow and soft, we walked on the bank, which was very high here, but not so level as the day before, being more interrupted by slight hollows. The author of the Description of the Eastern Coast says of this part, that "the bank is very high and steep. From the edge of it west, there is a strip of sand a hundred yards in breadth. Then succeeds low brushwood, a quarter of a mile wide, and almost impassable. After which comes a thick, perplexing forest, in which not a house is to be discovered. Seamen, therefore, though the distance between these

two hollows (Newcomb's and Brush Hollows) is great, must not attempt to enter the wood, as in a snowstorm they must undoubtedly perish." This is still a true description of the country, except that there is not much high wood left.



Truro — Starting on a voyage

There were many vessels, like gulls, skimming over the surface of the sea, now half concealed in its troughs, their dolphin-strikers ploughing the water, now tossed on the top of the billows. One, a bark standing down parallel with the coast, suddenly furled her sails, came to anchor, and swung round in the wind, near us, only half a mile from the shore. At first we thought that her captain wished to communicate with us, and perhaps we did not regard the signal of distress, which a mariner would have understood, and he cursed us for cold-hearted wreckers who turned our backs on him. For hours we could still see her anchored there behind us, and we wondered how she could afford to loiter so long in her course. Or was she a smuggler who had chosen that wild beach to land her cargo on? Or did they wish to catch fish, or paint their vessel? Erelong other barks, and brigs, and schooners, which had in the mean while doubled the Cape, sailed by her in the smacking breeze, and our consciences were relieved. Some of these vessels lagged behind, while others steadily went ahead. We narrowly watched their rig, and the cut of their jibs, and how they walked the water, for there was all the difference

between them that there is between living creatures. But we wondered that they should be remembering Boston and New York and Liverpool, steering for them, out there; as if the sailor might forget his peddling business on such a grand highway. They had perchance brought oranges from the Western Isles; and were they carrying back the peel? We might as well transport our old traps across the ocean of eternity. Is *that* but another "trading-flood," with its blessed isles? Is Heaven such a harbor as the Liverpool docks?

Still held on without a break, the inland barrens and shrubbery, the desert and the high sand bank with its even slope, the broad white beach, the breakers, the green water on the bar, and the Atlantic Ocean; and we traversed with delight new reaches of the shore; we took another lesson in sea-horses' manes and sea-cows' tails, in sea-jellies and sea-clams, with our new-gained experience. The sea ran hardly less than the day before. It seemed with every wave to be subsiding, because such was our expectation, and yet when hours had elapsed we could see no difference. But there it was, balancing itself, the restless ocean by our side, lurching in its gait. Each wave left the sand all braided or woven, as it were, with a coarse woof and warp, and a distinct raised edge to its rapid work. We made no haste, since we wished to see the ocean at our leisure; and indeed that soft sand was no place in which to be in a hurry, for one mile there was as good as two elsewhere. Besides, we were obliged frequently to empty our shoes of the sand which one took in in climbing or descending the bank.

As we were walking close to the water's edge this morning we turned round, by chance, and saw a large black object which the waves had just cast up on the beach behind us, yet too far off for us to distinguish what it was; and when we were about to return to it, two men came running from the bank, where no human beings had appeared before, as if they had come out of the sand, in order to save it before another wave took it. As we approached, it took successively the form of a huge fish, a drowned man, a sail or a net, and finally of a mass of tow-cloth, part of the cargo of the *Franklin*, which the men loaded into a cart.

Objects on the beach, whether men or inanimate things, look not only exceedingly grotesque, but much larger and more wonderful

than they actually are. Lately, when approaching the seashore several degrees south of this, I saw before me, seemingly half a mile distant, what appeared like bold and rugged cliffs on the beach, fifteen feet high, and whitened by the sun and waves; but after a few steps it proved to be low heaps of rags, — part of the cargo of a wrecked vessel, — scarcely more than a foot in height. Once also it was my business to go in search of the relics of a human body, mangled by sharks, which had just been cast up, a week after a wreck, having got the direction from a light-house: I should find it a mile or two distant over the sand, a dozen rods from the water, covered with a cloth, by a stick stuck up. I expected that I must look very narrowly to find so small an object, but the sandy beach, half a mile wide, and stretching farther than the eye could reach, was so perfectly smooth and bare, and the mirage toward the sea so magnifying, that when I was half a mile distant the insignificant sliver which marked the spot looked like a bleached spar, and the relics were as conspicuous as if they lay in state on that sandy plain, or a generation had labored to pile up their cairn there. Close at hand they were simply some bones with a little flesh adhering to them, in fact, only a slight inequality in the sweep of the shore. There was nothing at all remarkable about them, and they were singularly inoffensive both to the senses and the imagination. But as I stood there they grew more and more imposing. They were alone with the beach and the sea, whose hollow roar seemed addressed to them, and I was impressed as if there was an understanding between them and the ocean which necessarily left me out, with my snivelling sympathies. That dead body had taken possession of the shore, and reigned over it as no living one, could, in the name of a certain majesty which belonged to it.

We afterward saw many small pieces of tow-cloth washed up, and I learn that it continued to be found in good condition, even as late as November in that year, half a dozen bolts at a time.

We eagerly filled our pockets with the smooth round pebbles which in some places, even here, were thinly sprinkled over the sand, together with flat circular shells (*Scutelloe?*); but, as we had read, when they were dry they had lost their beauty, and at each sitting we emptied our pockets again of the least remarkable, until our collection was well culled. Every material was rolled into the pebble

form by. the waves; not only stones of various kinds, but the hard coal which some vessel had dropped, bits of glass, and in one instance a mass of peat three feet long, where there was nothing like it to be seen for many miles. All the great rivers of the globe are annually, if not constantly, discharging great quantities of lumber, which drifts to distant shores. I have also seen very perfect pebbles of brick, and bars of Castile soap from a wreck rolled into perfect cylinders, and still spirally streaked with red, like a barber's pole. When a cargo of rags is washed ashore, every old pocket and bag-like recess will be filled to bursting with sand by being rolled on the beach; and on one occasion, the pockets in the clothing of the wrecked being thus puffed up, even after they had been ripped open by wreckers, deluded me into the hope of identifying them by the contents. A pair of gloves looked exactly as if filled by a hand. The water in such clothing is soon wrung out and evaporated, but the sand, which works itself into every seam, is not so easily got rid of. Sponges, which are picked up on the shore, as is well known, retain some of the sand of the beach to the latest day, in spite of every effort to extract it.

I found one stone on the top of the bank, of a dark gray color, shaped exactly like a giant clam (*Mactra solidissima*), and of the same size; and, what was more remarkable, one-half of the outside had shelled off and lay near it, of the same form and depth with one of the valves of this clam, while the other half was loose, leaving a solid core of a darker color within it. I afterward saw a stone resembling a razor clam, but it was a solid one. It appeared as if the stone, in the process of formation, had filled the mould which a clam-shell furnished; or the same law that shaped the clam had made a clam of stone. Dead clams, with shells full of sand, are called sand clams. There were many of the large clamshells filled with sand; and sometimes one valve was separately filled exactly even, as if it had been heaped and then scraped. Even, among the many small stones on the top of the bank, I found one arrow-head.

Beside the giant clam and barnacles, we found on the shore a small clam (*Mesodesma arctata*), which I dug with my hands in numbers on the bars, and which is sometimes eaten by the inhabitants, in the absence of the *Mya arenaria*, on this side. Most of

their empty shells had been perforated by some foe. — Also, the

Astarte castanea.

The Edible Mussel (*Mytilus edulis*) on the few rocks, and washed up in curious bunches of forty or fifty, held together by its rope-like *byssus*.

The Scollop Shell (*Pecten concentricus*), used for card-racks and pin-cushions.

Cockles, or Cuckoos (*Natica heros*), and their remarkable *nidus*, called "sand-circle," looking like the top of a stone jug without the stopple, and broken on one side, or like a flaring dickey made of sand-paper. Also,

Cancellaria Couthouyi (?), and

Periwinkles (?) (*Fusus decemcostatus*).

We afterward saw some other kinds on the Bay-side. Gould states that this Cape "has Hitler proved a barrier to the migrations of many species of Mollusca."— "Of the one hundred and ninety-seven species [which he described in 1840 as belonging to Massachusetts], eighty-three do not pass to the South shore, and fifty are not found on the North shore of the Cape."

Among Crustacea, there were the shells of Crabs and Lobsters, often bleached quite white high up the beach; Sea or Beach Fleas (*Amphipoda*); and the cases of the Horse-shoe Crab, or Saucepan Fish (*Limulus Polyphoemus*), of which we saw many alive on the Bay side, where they feed pigs on them. Their tails were used as arrow-heads by the Indians.

Of Radiata, there were the Sea Chestnut or Egg (*Echinus granulatus*), commonly divested of its spines; flat circular shells (*Scutella parma?*) covered with chocolate-colored spines, but becoming smooth and white, with five petal-like figures; a few Star-fishes or Five-fingers (*Asterias rubens*); and Sun-fishes or Sea-jellies (*Aurelioe*).

There was also at least one species of Sponge.

The plants which I noticed here and there on the pure sandy shelf, between the ordinary high-water mark and the foot of the bank, were Sea Rocket (*Cakile Americana*), Saltwort (*Salsola kali*), Sea Sandwort (*Honkenya peploides*), Sea Burdock (*Xanthium echinatum*), Sea-side Spurge (*Euphorbia poylgonifolia*); also, Beach

Grass (*Arundo, Psamma*, or *Calamagrostis arenaria*), Sea-side Golden-rod (*Solidago sempervirens*), and the Beach Pea (*Lathyrus maritimus*).

Sometimes we helped a wrecker turn over a larger log than usual, or we amused ourselves with rolling stones down the bank, but we rarely could make one reach the water, the beach was so soft and wide; or we bathed in some shallow within a bar, where the sea covered us with sand at every flux, though it was quite cold and windy. The ocean there is commonly but a tantalizing prospect in hot weather, for with all that water before you, there is, as we were afterward told, no bathing on the Atlantic side, on account of the undertow and the rumor of sharks. At the lighthouse both in Eastham and Truro, the only houses quite on the shore, they declared, the next year, that they would not bathe there "for any sum," for they sometimes saw the sharks tossed up and quiver for a moment on the sand. Others laughed at these stories, but perhaps they could afford to because they never bathed anywhere. One old wrecker told us that he killed a regular man-eating shark fourteen feet long, and hauled him out with his oxen, where we had bathed; and another, that his father caught a smaller one of the same kind that was stranded there, by standing him up on his snout so that the waves could not take him. They will tell you tough stories of sharks all over the Cape, which I do not presume to doubt utterly, — how they will sometimes upset a boat, or tear it in pieces, to get at the man in it. I can easily believe in the undertow, but I have no doubt that one shark in a dozen years is enough to keep up the reputation of a beach a hundred miles long. I should add, however, that in July we walked on the bank here a quarter of a mile parallel with a fish about six feet in length, possibly a shark, which was prowling slowly along within two rods of the shore. It was of a pale brown color, singularly film-like and indistinct in the water, as if all nature abetted this child of ocean, and showed many darker transverse bars or rings whenever it came to the surface. It is well known that different fishes even of the same species are colored by the water they inhabit. We saw it go into a little cove or bathing-tub, where we had just been bathing, where the water was only four or five feet deep at that time, and after exploring it go slowly out again; but we continued to bathe there, only observing

first from the bank if the cove was preoccupied. We thought that the water was fuller of life, more aerated perhaps than that of the Bay, like soda-water, for we were as particular as young salmon, and the expectation of encountering a shark did not subtract anything from its life-giving qualities.

Sometimes we sat on the wet beach and watched the beach birds, sand-pipers, and others, trotting along close to each wave, and waiting for the sea to cast up their breakfast. The former (*Charadrius melodus*) ran with great rapidity and then stood stock still remarkably erect and hardly to be distinguished from the beach. The wet sand was covered with small skipping Sea Fleas, which apparently make a part of their food. These last are the little scavengers of the beach, and are so numerous that they will devour large fishes, which have been cast up, in a very short time. One little bird not larger than a sparrow, — it may have been a Phalarope. — would alight on the turbulent surface where the breakers were five or six feet high, and float buoyantly there like a duck, cunningly taking to its wings and lifting itself a few feet through the air over the foaming crest of each breaker, but sometimes outriding safely a considerable billow which hid it some seconds, when its instinct told it that it would not break. It was a little creature thus to sport with the ocean, but it was as perfect a success in its way as the breakers in theirs. There was also an almost uninterrupted line of coots rising and falling with the waves, a few rods from the shore, the whole length of the Cape. They made as constant a part of the ocean's border as the pads or pickerel-weed do of that of a pond. We read the following as to the Storm Petrel (*Thalassidroma Wilsonii*), which is seen in the Bay as well as on the outside. "The feathers on the breast of the Storm Petrel are, like those of all swimming birds, water-proof; but substances not susceptible of being wetted with water are, for that very reason, the best fitted for collecting oil from its surface. That function is performed by the feathers on the breast of the Storm Petrels as they touch on the surface; and though that may not be the only way in which they procure their food, it is certainly that in which they obtain great part of it. They dash along till they have loaded their feathers and then they pause upon the wave and remove the oil with their bills."

Thus we kept on along the gently curving shore, seeing two or three miles ahead at once, — along this ocean side-walk, where there was none to turn out for, with the middle of the road the highway of nations on our right, and the sand cliffs of the Cape on our left. We saw this forenoon a part of the wreck of a vessel, probably the *Franklin*, a large piece fifteen feet square, and still freshly painted. With a grapple and a line we could have saved it, for the waves repeatedly washed it within cast, but they as often took it back. It would have been a lucky haul for some poor wrecker, for I have been told that one man who paid three or four dollars for a part of the wreck of that vessel, sold fifty or sixty dollars' worth of iron out of it. Another, the same who picked up the Captain's valise with the memorable letter in it, showed me, growing in his garden, many pear and plum trees which washed ashore from her, all nicely tied up and labelled, and he said that he might have got five hundred dollars' worth; for a Mr. Bell was importing the nucleus of a nursery to be established near Boston. His turnip-seed came from the same source. Also valuable spars from the same vessel and from the *Cactus* lay in his yard. In short the inhabitants visit the beach to see what they have caught as regularly as a fisherman his weir or a lumberer his boom; the Cape is their boom. I heard of one who had recently picked up twenty barrels of apples in good condition, probably a part of a deck load thrown over in a storm.

Though there are wreck-masters appointed to look after valuable property which must be advertised, yet undoubtedly a great deal of value is secretly carried off. But are we not all wreckers contriving that some treasure may be washed up on our beach, that we may secure it, and do we not infer the habits of these Nauset and Barnegat wreckers from the common modes of getting a living?

The sea, vast and wild as it is, bears thus the waste and wrecks of human art to its remotest shore. There is no telling what it may not vomit up. It lets nothing lie; not even the giant clams which cling to its bottom. It is still heaving up the tow-cloth of the *Franklin*, and perhaps a piece of some old pirate's ship, wrecked more than a hundred years ago, comes ashore to-day. Some years since, when a vessel was wrecked here which had nutmegs in her cargo, they were strewn all along the beach, and for a considerable time were not

spoiled by the salt water. Soon afterward, a fisherman caught a cod which was full of them. Why, then, might not the Spice-Islanders shake their nutmeg trees into the ocean, and let all nations who stand in need of them pick them up? However, after a year, I found that the nutmegs from the *Franklin* had become soft.

You might make a curious list of articles which fishes have swallowed, — sailors' open clasp-knives, and bright tin snuff-boxes, not knowing what was in them, — and jugs, and jewels, and Jonah. The other day I came across the following scrap in a newspaper.

"A Religious Fish. — A short time ago, mine host Stewart, of the Denton Hotel, purchased a rock-fish, weighing about sixty pounds. On opening it he found in it a certificate of membership of the M. E. Church, which we read as follows: —

Member

Methodist E. Church.
Founded A. D. 1784.
Quarterly Ticket.

18

Minister.

'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'— "2 Cor. iv. 17.

'O what are all my sufferings here,
If, Lord, thou count me meet
With that enraptured host t' appear,
And worship at thy feet!'

"The paper was of course in a crumpled and wet condition, but on exposing it to the sun, and ironing the kinks out of it, it became quite legible. — *Denton (Md.) Journal*."

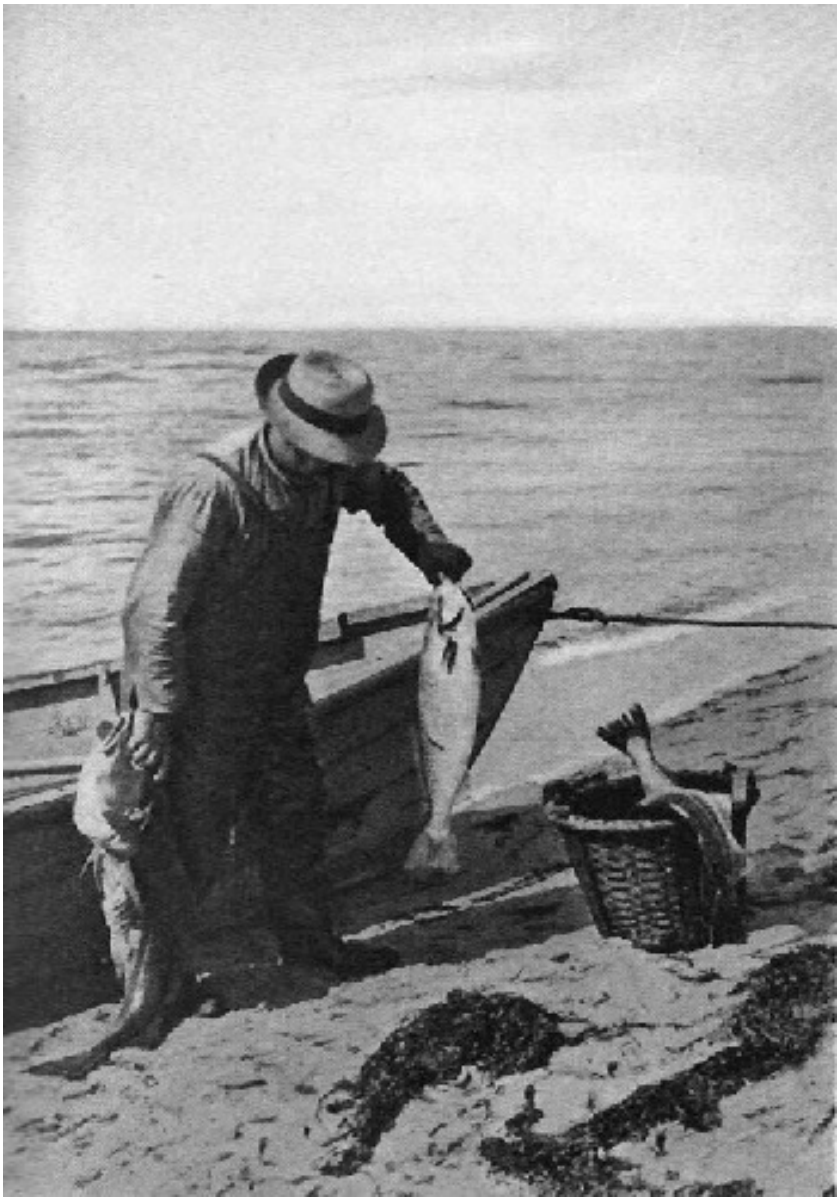
From time to time we saved a wreck ourselves, a box or barrel, and set it on its end, and appropriated it with crossed sticks; and it will lie there perhaps, respected by brother wreckers, until some

more violent storm shall take it, really lost to man until wrecked again. We also saved, at the cost of wet feet only, a valuable cord and buoy, part of a seine, with which the sea was playing, for it seemed ungracious to refuse the least gift which so great a personage offered you. We brought this home and still use it for a garden line. I picked up a bottle half buried in the wet sand, covered with barnacles, but stoppled tight, and half full of red ale, which still smacked of juniper, — all that remained I fancied from the wreck of a rowdy world, — that great salt sea on the one hand, and this little sea of ale on the other, preserving their separate characters. What if it could tell us its adventures over countless ocean waves! Man would not be man through such ordeals as it had passed. But as I poured it slowly out on to the sand, it seemed to me that man himself was like a half-emptied bottle of pale ale, which Time had drunk so far, yet stoppled tight for a while, and drifting about in the ocean of circumstances; but destined erelong to mingle with the surrounding waves, or be spilled amid the sands of a distant shore.

In the summer I saw two men fishing for Bass hereabouts. Their bait was a bullfrog, or several small frogs in a bunch, for want of squid. They followed a retiring wave and whirling their lines round and round their heads with increasing rapidity, threw them as far as they could into the sea; then retreating, sat down, flat on the sand, and waited for a bite. It was literally (or *littorally*) walking down to the shore, and throwing your line into the Atlantic. I should not have known what might take hold of the other end, whether Proteus or another. At any rate, if you could not pull him in, why, you might let him go without being pulled in yourself. And *they* knew by experience that it would be a Striped Bass, or perhaps a Cod, for these fishes play along near the shore.

From time to time we sat under the lee of a sand-hill on the bank, thinly covered with coarse Beach-grass, and steadily gazed on the sea, or watched the vessels going south, all Blessings of the Bay of course. We could see a little more than half a circle of ocean, besides the glimpses of the Bay which we got behind us; the sea there was not wild and dreary in all respects, for there were frequently a hundred sail in sight at once on the Atlantic. You can commonly count about eighty in a favorable summer day and pilots sometimes

land and ascend the bank to look out for these which require their services. These had been waiting for fair weather, and had come out of Boston Harbor together. The same is the case when they have been assembled in the Vineyard Sound, so that you may see but few one day, and a large fleet the next. Schooners with many jibs and stay-sails crowded all the sea road; square-rigged vessels with their great height and breadth of canvas were ever and anon appearing out of the far horizon, or disappearing and sinking into it; here and there a pilot-boat was towing its little boat astern toward some distant foreigner who had just fired a gun, the echo of which along the shore sounded like the caving of the bank. We could see the pilot looking through his glass toward the distant ship which was putting back to speak with him. He sails many a mile to meet her; and now she puts her sails aback, and communicates with him alongside, — sends some important message to the owners, and then bids farewell to these shores for good and all; or, perchance a propeller passed and made fast to some disabled craft, or one that had been becalmed, whose cargo of fruit might spoil. Though silently, and for the most part incommunicatively, going about their business, they were, no doubt, a source of cheerfulness and a kind of society to one another.



Unloading the day's catch

To-day it was the Purple Sea, an epithet which I should not before have accepted. There were distinct patches of the color of a purple grape with the bloom rubbed off. But first and last the sea is of all colors. Well writes Gilpin concerning "the brilliant hues which are continually playing on the surface of a quiet ocean," and this was not

too turbulent at a distance from the shore. “Beautiful,” says he, “no doubt in a high degree are those glimmering tints which often invest the tops of mountains; but they are mere coruscations compared with these marine colors, which are continually varying and shifting into each other in all the vivid splendor of the rainbow, through the space often of several leagues.” Commonly, in calm weather, for half a mile from the shore, where the bottom tinges it, the sea is green, or greenish, as are some ponds; then blue for many miles, often with purple tinges, bounded in the distance by a light almost silvery stripe; beyond which there is generally a dark-blue rim, like a mountain-ridge in the horizon, as if, like that, it owed its color to the intervening atmosphere. On another day it will be marked with long streaks, alternately smooth and rippled, light-colored and dark, even like our inland meadows in a freshet, and showing which way the wind sets.

Thus we sat on the foaming shore, looking on the wine-colored ocean, —

[Greek: Thin eph alos pliês oroôn epi oinopa ponton.]

Here and there was a darker spot on its surface, the shadow of a cloud, though the sky was so clear that no cloud would have been noticed otherwise, and no shadow would have been seen on the land, where a much smaller surface is visible at once. So, distant clouds and showers may be seen on all sides by a sailor in the course of a day, which do not necessarily portend rain where he is. In July we saw similar dark-blue patches where schools of Menhaden rippled the surface, scarcely to be distinguished from the shadows of clouds. Sometimes the sea was spotted with them far and wide, such is its inexhaustible fertility. Close at hand you see their back fin, which is very long and sharp, projecting two or three inches above water. From time to time also we saw the white bellies of the Bass playing along the shore.

It was a poetic recreation to watch those distant sails steering for half-fabulous ports, whose very names are a mysterious music to our ears: Fayal, and Babelmandel, ay, and Chagres, and Panama, — bound to the famous Bay of San Francisco, and the golden streams of Sacramento and San Joaquin, to Feather River and the American Fork, where Sutter’s Fort presides, and inland stands the City de los

Angeles. It is remarkable that men do not sail the sea with more expectation. Nothing remarkable was ever accomplished in a prosaic mood. The heroes and discoverers have found true more than was previously believed, only when they were expecting and dreaming of something more than their contemporaries dreamed of, or even themselves discovered, that is, when they were in a frame of mind fitted to behold the truth. Referred to the world's standard, they are always insane. Even savages have indirectly surmised as much. Humboldt, speaking of Columbus approaching the New World, says: "The grateful coolness of the evening air, the ethereal purity of the starry firmament, the balmy fragrance of flowers, wafted to him by the land breeze, all led him to suppose (as we are told by Herrara, in the Decades) that he was approaching the garden of Eden, the sacred abode of our first parents. The Orinoco seemed to him one of the four rivers which, according to the venerable tradition of the ancient world, flowed from Paradise, to water and divide the surface of the earth, newly adorned with plants." So even the expeditions for the discovery of El Dorado, and of the Fountain of Youth, led to real, if not compensatory discoveries.

We discerned vessels so far off, when once we began to look, that only the tops of their masts in the horizon were visible, and it took a strong intention of the eye, and its most favorable side, to see them at all, and sometimes we doubted if we were not counting our eyelashes. Charles Darwin states that he saw, from the base of the Andes, "the masts of the vessels at anchor in the bay of Valparaiso, although not less than twenty-six geographical miles distant," and that Anson had been surprised at the distance at which his vessels were discovered from the coast, without knowing the reason, namely, the great height of the land and the transparency of the air. Steamers may be detected much farther than sailing vessels, for, as one says, when their hulls and masts of wood and iron are down, their smoky masts and streamers still betray them; and the same writer, speaking of the comparative advantages of bituminous and anthracite coal for war-steamers, states that, "from the ascent of the columns of smoke above the horizon, the motions of the steamers in Calais Harbor [on the coast of France] are at all times observable at Ramsgate [on the English coast], from the first lighting of the fires to the putting out at

sea; and that in America the steamers burning the fat bituminous coal can be tracked at sea at least seventy miles before the hulls become visible, by the dense columns of black smoke pouring out of their chimneys, and trailing along the horizon."

Though there were numerous vessels at this great distance in the horizon on every side, yet the vast spaces between them, like the spaces between the stars, far as they were distant from us, so were they from one another, — nay, some were twice as far from each other as from us, — impressed us with a sense of the immensity of the ocean, the "unfruitful ocean," as it has been called, and we could see what proportion man and his works bear to the globe. As we looked off, and saw the water growing darker and darker and deeper and deeper the farther we looked, till it was awful to consider, and it appeared to have no relation to the friendly land, either as shore or bottom, — of what use is a bottom if it is out of sight, if it is two or three miles from the surface, and you are to be drowned so long before you get to it, though it were made of the same stuff with your native soil? — over that ocean, where, as the Veda says, "there is nothing to give support, nothing to rest upon, nothing to cling to," I felt that I was a land animal. The man in a balloon even may commonly alight on the earth in a few moments, but the sailor's only hope is that he may reach the distant shore. I could then appreciate the heroism of the old navigator. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, of whom it is related that, being overtaken by a storm when on his return from America, in the year 1583, far northeastward from where we were, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, just before he was swallowed up in the deep, he cried out to his comrades in the *Hind*, as they came within hearing, "We are as near to Heaven by sea as by land." I saw that it would not be easy to realize.

On Cape Cod, the next most eastern land you hear of is St. George's Bank (the fishermen tell of "Georges," "Cashus," and other sunken lands which they frequent). Every Cape man has a theory about George's Bank having been an island once, and in their accounts they gradually reduce the shallowness from six, five, four, two fathoms, to somebody's confident assertion that he has seen a mackerel-gull sitting; on a piece of dry land there. It reminded me, when I thought of the shipwrecks which had taken place there, of the

Isle of Demons, laid down off this coast in old charts of the New World. There must be something monstrous, methinks, in a vision of the sea bottom from over some bank a thousand miles from the shore, more awful than its imagined bottomlessness; a drowned continent, all livid and frothing at the nostrils, like the body of a drowned man, which is better sunk deep than near the surface.

I have been surprised to discover from a steamer the shallowness of Massachusetts Bay itself. Off Billingsgate Point I could have touched the bottom with a pole, and I plainly saw it variously shaded with sea-weed, at five or six miles from the shore. This is "The Shoal-ground of the Cape," it is true, but elsewhere the bay is not much deeper than a country pond. We are told that the deepest water in the English Channel between Shakespeare's Cliff and Cape Grinéz, in France, is one hundred and eighty feet; and Guyot says that "the Baltic Sea has a depth of only one hundred and twenty feet between the coasts of Germany and those of Sweden," and "the Adriatic between Venice and Trieste has a depth of only one hundred and thirty feet." A pond in my native town, only half a mile long, is more than one hundred feet deep.

The ocean is but a larger lake. At midsummer you may sometimes see a strip of glassy smoothness on it, a few rods in width and many miles long, as if the surface there were covered with a thin pellicle of oil, just as on a country pond; a sort of stand-still, you would say, at the meeting or parting of two currents of air (if it does not rather mark the unrippled steadiness of a current of water beneath), for sailors tell of the ocean and land breeze meeting between the fore and aft sails of a vessel, while the latter are full, the former being suddenly taken aback. Daniel Webster, in one of his letters describing blue-fishing off Martha's Vineyard, referring to those smooth places, which fishermen and sailors call "slicks," says: "We met with them yesterday, and our boatman made for them, whenever discovered. He said they were caused by the blue-fish chopping up their prey. That is to say, those voracious fellows get into a school of menhaden, which are too large to swallow whole, and they bite them into pieces to suit their tastes. And the oil from this butchery, rising to the surface, makes the 'slick.'"

Yet this same placid Ocean, as civil now as a city's harbor, a

place for ships and commerce, will erelong be lashed into sudden fury, and all its caves and cliffs will resound with tumult. It will ruthlessly heave these vessels to and fro, break them in pieces in its sandy or stony jaws, and deliver their crews to sea-monsters. It will play with them like sea-weed, distend them like dead frogs, and carry them about, now high, now low, to show to the fishes, giving them a nibble. This gentle Ocean will toss and tear the rag of a man's body like the father of mad bulls, and his relatives may be seen seeking the remnants for weeks along the strand. From some quiet inland hamlet they have rushed weeping to the unheard-of shore, and now stand uncertain where a sailor has recently been buried amid the sandhills.

It is generally supposed that they who have long been conversant with the Ocean can foretell by certain indications, such as its roar and the notes of sea-fowl, when it will change from calm to storm; but probably no such ancient mariner as we dream of exists; they know no more, at least, than the older sailors do about this voyage of life on which we are all embarked. Nevertheless, we love to hear the sayings of old sailors, and their accounts of natural phenomena, which totally ignore, and are ignored by, science; and possibly they have not always looked over the gunwale so long in vain. Kalm repeats a story which was told him in Philadelphia by a Mr. Cock, who was one day sailing to the West Indies in a small yacht, with an old man on board who was well acquainted with those seas. "The old man sounding the depth, called to the mate to tell Mr. Cock to launch the boats immediately, and to put a sufficient number of men into them, in order to tow the yacht during the calm, that they might reach the island before them as soon as possible, as within twenty-four hours there would be a strong hurricane. Mr. Cock asked him what reasons he had to think so; the old man replied that, on sounding, he saw the lead in the water at a distance of many fathoms more than he had seen it before; that therefore the water was become clear all of a sudden, which he looked upon as a certain sign of an impending hurricane in the sea." The sequel of the story is that, by good fortune and by dint of rowing they managed to gain a safe harbor before the hurricane had reached its height; but it finally raged with so much violence that not only many ships were lost and houses unroofed, but even their own vessel in harbor was washed so far on shore that

several weeks elapsed before it could be got off.

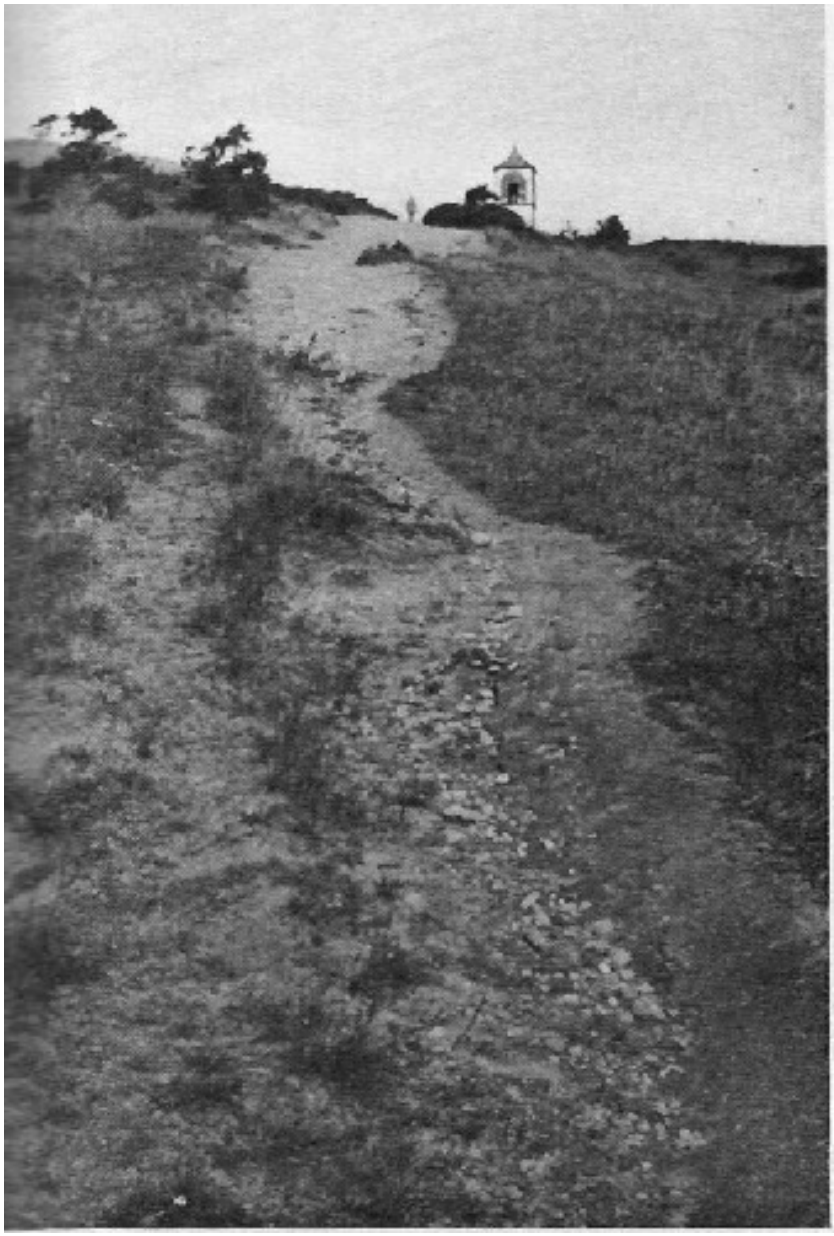
The Greeks would not have called the ocean [Greek: atrnletos,] or unfruitful, though it does not produce wheat, if they had viewed it by the light of modern science; for naturalists now assert that "the sea, and not the land, is the principal seat of life," — though not of vegetable life. Darwin affirms that "our most thickly inhabited forests appear almost as deserts when we come to compare them with the corresponding regions of the ocean." Agassiz and Gould tell us that "the sea teems with animals of all classes, far beyond the extreme point of flowering plants"; but they add that "experiments of dredging in very deep water have also taught us that the abyss of the ocean is nearly a desert";— "so that modern investigations," to quote the words of Desor, "merely go to confirm the great idea which was vaguely anticipated by the ancient poets and philosophers, that the Ocean is the origin of all things." Yet marine animals and plants hold a lower rank in the scale of being than land animals and plants. "There is no instance known," says Desor, "of an animal becoming aquatic in its perfect state, after having lived in its lower stage on dry land." but as in the case of the tadpole, "the progress invariably points towards the dry land." In short, the dry land itself came through and out of the water in its way to the heavens, for, "in going back through the geological ages, we come to an epoch when, according to all appearances, the dry land did not exist, and when the surface of our globe was entirely covered with water." We looked on the sea, then, once more, not as [Greek: atrnletos,] or unfruitful, but as it has been more truly called, the "laboratory of continents."

Though we have indulged in some placid reflections of late, the reader must not forget that the dash and roar of the waves were incessant. Indeed, it would be well if he were to read with a large conch-shell at his ear. But notwithstanding that it was very cold and windy to-day, it was such a cold as we thought would not cause one to take cold who was exposed to it, owing to the saltness of the air and the dryness of the soil. Yet the author of the old Description of Wellfleet says: "The atmosphere is very much impregnated with saline particles, which, perhaps, with the great use of fish, and the neglect of cider and spruce-beer, may be a reason why the people are more subject to sore mouths and throats than in other places."

VII. ACROSS THE CAPE

When we have returned from the seaside, we sometimes ask ourselves why we did not spend more time in gazing at the sea; but very soon the traveller does not look as the sea more than at the heavens. As for the interior, if the elevated sand-bar in the midst of the ocean can be said to have any interior, it was an exceedingly desolate landscape, with rarely a cultivated or cultivable field in sight. We saw no villages, and seldom a house, for these are generally on the Bay side. It was a succession of shrubby hills and valleys, now wearing an autumnal tint. You would frequently think, from the character of the surface, the dwarfish trees, and the bearberries around, that you were on the top of a mountain. The only wood in Eastham was on the edge of Wellfleet. The pitch-pines were not commonly more than fifteen or eighteen feet high. The larger ones covered with lichens, — often hung with the long gray *Usnea*. There is scarcely a white-pine on the forearm of the Cape. Yet in the northwest part of Eastham, near the Camp Ground, we saw, the next summer, some quite rural, and even sylvan retreats, for the Cape, where small rustling groves of oaks and locusts and whispering pines, on perfectly level ground, made a little paradise. The locusts, both transplanted and growing naturally about the houses there, appeared to flourish better than any other tree. There were thin belts of wood in Wellfleet and Truro, a mile or more from the Atlantic, but, for the most part, we could see the horizon through them, or, if extensive, the trees were not large. Both oaks and pines had often the same flat look with the apple-trees. Commonly, the oak woods twenty-five years old were a mere scraggy shrubbery nine or ten feet high, and we could frequently reach to their topmost leaf. Much that is called “woods” was about half as high as this, — only patches of shrub-oak, bayberry, beach-plum, and wild roses, overrun with woodbine. When the roses were in bloom, these patches in the midst of the sand displayed such a profusion of blossoms, mingled with the aroma of the bayberry, that no Italian or other artificial rose-garden could equal them. They were perfectly Elysian, and realized my idea of an oasis in the desert. Huckleberry-bushes were very abundant,

and the next summer they bore a remarkable quantity of that kind of gall called Huckleberry-apple, forming quite handsome though monstrous blossoms. But it must be added, that this shrubbery swarmed with wood-ticks, sometimes very troublesome parasites, and which it takes very horny fingers to crack.



A Truro footpath

The inhabitants of these towns have a great regard for a tree, though their standard for one is necessarily neither large nor high; and when they tell you of the large trees that once grew here, you must think of them, not as absolutely large, but large compared with

the present generation. Their "brave old oaks," of which they speak with so much respect, and which they will point out to you as relics of the primitive forest, one hundred or one hundred and fifty, ay, for aught they know, two hundred years old, have a ridiculously dwarfish appearance, which excites a smile in the beholder. The largest and most venerable which they will show you in such a case are, perhaps, not more than twenty or twenty-five feet high. I was especially amused by the Liliputian old oaks in the south part of Truro. To the inexperienced eye, which appreciated their proportions only, they might appear vast as the tree which saved his royal majesty, but measured, they were dwarfed at once almost into lichens which a deer might eat up in a morning. Yet they will tell you that large schooners were once built of timber which grew in Wellfleet. The old houses also are built of the timber of the Cape; but instead of the forests in the midst of which they originally stood, barren heaths, with poverty-grass for heather, now stretch away on every side. The modern houses are built of what is called "dimension timber," *imported* from Maine, all ready to be set up, so that commonly they do not touch it again with an axe. Almost all the wood used for fuel is imported by vessels or currents, and of course all the coal. I was told that probably a quarter of the fuel and a considerable part of the lumber used in North Truro was drift-wood. Many get *all* their fuel from the beach.

Of birds not found in the interior of the State, — at least in my neighborhood, — I heard, in the summer, the Black-throated Bunting (*Fringilla Americana*) amid the shrubbery, and in the open land the Upland Plover (*Totanus Bartramius*), whose quivering notes were ever and anon prolonged into a clear, somewhat plaintive, yet hawk-like scream, which sounded at a very indefinite distance. The bird may have been in the next field, though it sounded a mile off.

To-day we were walking through Truro, a town of about eighteen hundred inhabitants. We had already come to Pamet River, which empties into the Bay. This was the limit of the Pilgrims' journey up the Cape from Provincetown, when seeking a place for settlement. It rises in a hollow within a few rods of the Atlantic, and one who lives near its source told us that in high tides the sea leaked through, yet the wind and waves preserve intact the barrier between them, and

thus the whole river is steadily driven westward butt-end foremost, — fountain-head, channel, and light-house at the mouth, all together.

Early in the afternoon we reached the Highland Light, whose white tower we had seen rising out of the bank in front of us for the last mile or two. It is fourteen miles from the Nauset Lights, on what is called the Clay Pounds, an immense bed of clay abutting on the Atlantic, and, as the keeper told us, stretching quite across the Cape, which is here only about two miles wide. We perceived at once a difference in the soil, for there was an interruption of the desert, and a slight appearance of a sod under our feet, such as we had not seen for the last two days.

After arranging to lodge at the light-house, we rambled across the Cape to the Bay, over a singularly bleak and barren-looking country, consisting of rounded hills and hollows, called by geologists diluvial elevations and depressions, — a kind of scenery which has been compared to a chopped sea, though this suggests too sudden a transition. There is a delineation of this very landscape in Hitchcock's Report on the Geology of Massachusetts, a work which, by its size at least, reminds one of a diluvial elevation itself. Looking southward from the light-house, the Cape appeared like an elevated plateau, sloping very regularly, though slightly, downward from the edge of the bank on the Atlantic side, about one hundred and fifty feet above the ocean, to that on the Bay side. On traversing this we found it to be interrupted by broad valleys or gullies, which become the hollows in the bank when the sea has worn up to them. They are commonly at right angles with the shore, and often extend quite across the Cape. Some of the valleys, however, are circular, a hundred feet deep without any outlet, as if the Cape had sunk in those places, or its sands had run out. The few scattered houses which we passed, being placed at the bottom of the hollows for shelter and fertility, were, for the most part, concealed entirely, as much as if they had been swallowed up in the earth. Even a village with its meeting-house, which we had left little more than a stone's throw behind, had sunk into the earth, spire and all, and we saw only the surface of the upland and the sea on either hand. When approaching it, we had mistaken the belfry for a summer-house on the plain. We began to think that we might tumble into a village

before we were aware of it, as into an ant-lion's hole, and be drawn into the sand irrecoverably. The most conspicuous objects on the land were a distant windmill, or a meeting-house standing alone, for only they could afford to occupy an exposed place. A great part of the township, however, is a barren, heath-like plain, and perhaps one third of it lies in common, though the property of individuals. The author of the old "Description of Truro," speaking of the soil, says: "The snow, which would be of essential service to it provided it lay level and covered the ground, is blown into drifts and into the sea." This peculiar open country, with here and there a patch of shrubbery, extends as much as seven miles, or from Pamet River on the south to High Head on the north, and from Ocean to Bay. To walk over it makes on a stranger such an impression as being at sea, and he finds it impossible to estimate distances in any weather. A windmill or a herd of cows may seem to be far away in the horizon, yet, after going a few rods, he will be close upon them. He is also deluded by other kinds of mirage. When, in the summer, I saw a family a-blueberrying a mile off, walking about amid the dwarfish bushes which did not come up higher than their ankles, they seemed to me to be a race of giants, twenty feet high at least.

The highest and sandiest portion next the Atlantic was thinly covered with Beach-grass and Indigo-weed. Next to this the surface of the upland generally consisted of white sand and gravel, like coarse salt, through which a scanty vegetation found its way up. It will give an ornithologist some idea of its barrenness if I mention that the next June, the month of grass. I found a night-hawk's eggs there, and that almost any square rod thereabouts, taken at random, would be an eligible site for such a deposit. The kildeer-plover, which loves a similar locality, also drops its eggs there, and fills the air above with its din. This upland also produced *Cladonia* lichens, poverty-grass, savory-leaved aster (*Diplopappus linariifolius*), mouse-ear, bear-berry, &c. On a few hillsides the savory-leaved aster and mouse-ear alone made quite a dense sward, said to be very pretty when the aster is in bloom. In some parts the two species of poverty-grass (*Hudsonia tomentosa* and *ericoides*), which deserve a better name, reign for miles in littli hemispherical tufts or islets, like moss, scattered over the waste. They linger in bloom there till the middle of

July. Occasionally near the beach these rounded beds, as also those of the sea-sandwort (*Honkenya peploides*), were filled with sand within an inch of their tops, and were hard, like large ant-hills, while the surrounding sand was soft. In summer, if the poverty-grass grows at the head of a Hollow looking toward the sea, in a bleak position where the wind rushes up, the northern or exposed half of the tuft is sometimes all black and dead like an oven-broom, while the opposite half is yellow with blossoms, the whole hillside thus presenting a remarkable contrast when seen from the poverty-stricken and the flourishing side. This plant, which in many places would be esteemed an ornament, is here despised by many on account of its being associated with barrenness. It might well be adopted for the Barnstable coat-of-arms, in a field *sableux*. I should be proud of it. Here and there were tracts of Beach-grass mingled with the Sea-side Goldenrod and Beach-pea, which reminded us still more forcibly of the ocean.



Truro meeting-house on the hill

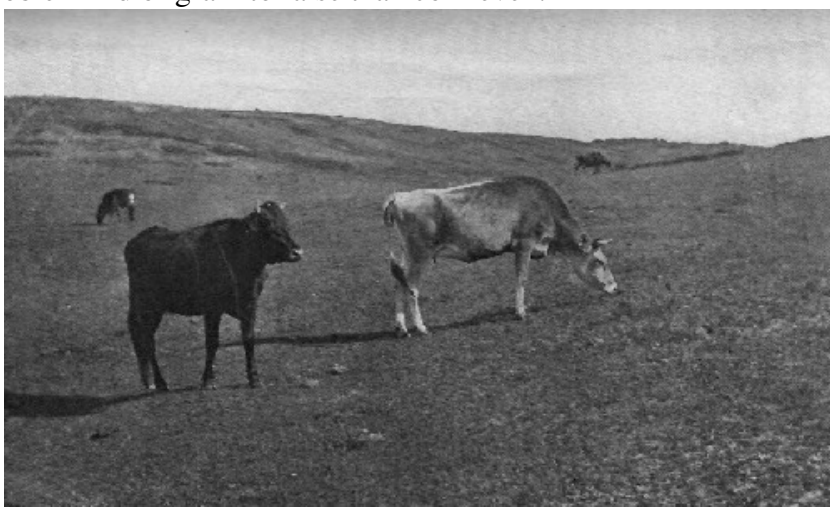
We read that there was not a brook in Truro. Yet there were deer here once, which must often have panted in vain; but I am pretty sure that I afterward saw a small fresh-water brook emptying into the south side of Pamet River, though I was so heedless as not to taste it. At any rate, a little boy near by told me that he drank at it. There was not a tree as far as we could see, and that was many miles each way,

the general level of the upland being about the same everywhere. Even from the Atlantic side we overlooked the Bay, and saw to Manomet Point in Plymouth, and better from that side because it was the highest. The almost universal bareness and smoothness of the landscape were as agreeable as novel, making it so much the more like the deck of a vessel. We saw vessels sailing south into the Bay, on the one hand, and north along the Atlantic shore, on the other, all with an aft wind.

The single road which runs lengthwise the Cape, now winding over the plain, now through the shrubbery which scrapes the wheels of the stage, was a mere cart-track in the sand, commonly without any fences to confine it, and continually changing from this side to that, to harder ground, or sometimes to avoid the tide. But the inhabitants travel the waste here and there pilgrim-wise and staff in hand, by narrow footpaths, through which the sand flows out and reveals the nakedness of the land. We shuddered at the thought of living there and taking our afternoon walks over those barren swells, where we could overlook every step of our walk before taking it, and would have to pray for a fog or a snow-storm to conceal our destiny. The walker there must soon eat his heart.

In the north part of the town there is no house from shore to shore for several miles, and it is as wild and solitary as the Western Prairies — used to be. Indeed, one who has seen every house in Truro will be surprised to hear of the number of the inhabitants, but perhaps five hundred of the men and boys of this small town were then abroad on their fishing grounds. Only a few men stay at home to till the sand or watch for blackfish. The farmers are fishermen-farmers and understand better ploughing the sea than the land. They do not disturb their sands much, though there is a plenty of sea-weed in the creeks, to say nothing of blackfish occasionally rotting the shore. Between the Pond and East Harbor Village there was an interesting plantation of pitch-pines, twenty or thirty acres in extent, like those which we had already seen from the stage. One who lived near said that the land was purchased by two men for a shilling or twenty-five cents an acre. Some is not considered worth writing a deed for. This soil or sand, which was partially covered with poverty and beach grass, sorrel, &c., was furrowed at intervals of about four feet and the

seed dropped by a machine. The pines had come up admirably and grown the first year three or four inches, and the second six inches and more. Where the seed had been lately planted the white sand was freshly exposed in an endless furrow winding round and round the sides of the deep hollows, in a vertical spiral manner, which produced a very singular effect, as if you were looking into the reverse side of a vast banded shield. This experiment, so important to the Cape, appeared very successful, and perhaps the time will come when the greater part of this kind of land in Barnstable County will be thus covered with an artificial pine forest, as has been done in some parts of France. In that country 12,500 acres of downs had been thus covered in 1811 near Bayonne. They are called *pignadas*, and according to Loudon "constitute the principal riches of the inhabitants, where there was a drifting desert before." It seemed a nobler kind of grain to raise than corn even.



A herd of cows

A few years ago Truro was remarkable among the Cape towns for the number of sheep raised in it; but I was told that at this time only two men kept sheep in the town, and in 1855, a Truro boy ten years old told me that he had never seen one. They were formerly pastured on the unfenced lands or general fields, but now the owners were more particular to assert their rights, and it cost too much for fencing. The rails are cedar from Maine, and two rails will answer for ordinary purposes, but four are required for sheep. This was the

reason assigned by one who had formerly kept them for not keeping them any longer. Fencing stuff is so expensive that I saw fences made with only one rail, and very often the rail when split was carefully tied with a string. In one of the villages I saw the next summer a cow tethered by a rope six rods long, the rope long in proportion as the feed was short and thin. Sixty rods, ay, all the cables of the Cape, would have been no more than fair. Tethered in the desert for fear that she would get into Arabia Felix! I helped a man weigh a bundle of hay which he was selling to his neighbor, holding one end of a pole from which it swung by a steel-yard hook, and this was just half his whole crop. In short, the country looked so barren that I several times refrained from asking the inhabitants for a string or a piece of wrapping-paper, for fear I should rob them, for they plainly were obliged to import these things as well as rails, and where there were no newsboys, I did not see what they would do for waste paper.

The objects around us, the make-shifts of fishermen ashore, often made us look down to see if we were standing on terra firma. In the wells everywhere a block and tackle were used to raise the bucket, instead of a windlass, and by almost every house was laid up a spar or a plank or two full of auger-holes, saved from a wreck. The windmills were partly built of these, and they were worked into the public bridges. The light-house keeper, who was having his barn shingled, told me casually that he had made three thousand good shingles for that purpose out of a mast. You would sometimes see an old oar used for a rail. Frequently also some fair-weather finery ripped off a vessel by a storm near the coast was nailed up against an outhouse. I saw fastened to a shed near the lighthouse a long new sign with the words "ANGLO SAXON" on it in large gilt letters, as if it were a useless part which the ship could afford to lose, or which the sailors had discharged at the same time with the pilot. But it interested somewhat as if it had been a part of the Argo, clipped off in passing through the Symplegades.

To the fisherman, the Cape itself is a sort of store-ship laden with supplies, — a safer and larger craft which carries the women and children, the old men and the sick; and indeed sea-phrases are as common on it as on board a vessel. Thus is it ever with a sea-going

people. The old Northmen used to speak of the "keel-ridge" of the country, that is, the ridge of the Doffrafield Mountains, as if the land were a boat turned bottom up. I was frequently reminded of the Northmen here. The inhabitants of the Cape are often at once farmers and sea-rovers; they are more than vikings or kings of the bays, for their sway extends over the open sea also. A farmer in Wellfleet, at whose house I afterward spent a night, who had raised fifty bushels of potatoes the previous year, which is a large crop for the Cape, and had extensive salt-works, pointed to his schooner, which lay in sight, in which he and his man and boy occasionally ran down the coast a-trading as far as the Capes of Virginia. This was his market-cart, and his hired man knew how to steer her. Thus he drove two teams a-field,

"ere the high *seas* appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the mom."

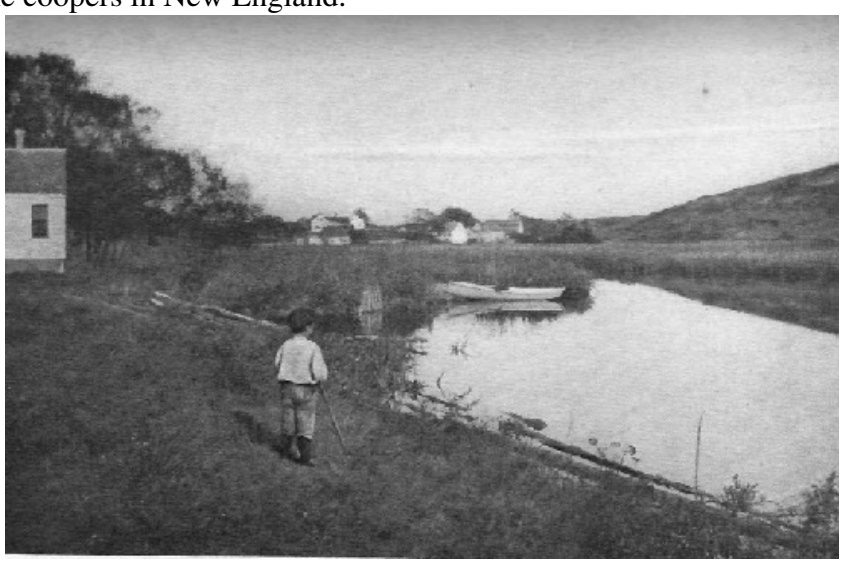
Though probably he would not hear much of the "gray fly" on his way to Virginia.

A great proportion of the inhabitants of the Cape are always thus abroad about their teaming on some ocean highway or other, and the history of one of their ordinary trips would cast the Argonautic expedition into the shade. I have just heard of a Cape Cod captain who was expected home in the beginning of the winter from the West Indies, but was long since given up for lost, till his relations at length have heard with joy, that, after getting within forty miles of Cape Cod light, he was driven back by nine successive gales to Key West, between Florida and Cuba, and was once again shaping his course for home. Thus he spent his winter. In ancient times the adventures of these two or three men and boys would have been made the basis of a myth, but now such tales are crowded into a line of shorthand signs, like an algebraic formula in the shipping news. "Wherever over the world," said Palfrey in his oration at Barnstable, "you see the stars and stripes floating, you may have good hope that beneath them some one will be found who can tell you the soundings of Barnstable, or Wellfleet, or Chatham Harbor."

I passed by the home of somebody's (or everybody's) Uncle Bill,

one day over on the Plymouth shore. It was a schooner half keeled-up on the mud: we aroused the master out of a sound sleep at noonday, by thumping on the bottom of his vessel till he presented himself at the hatchway, for we wanted to borrow his clam-digger. Meaning to make him a call, I looked out the next morning, and lo! he had run over to "the Pines" the evening before, fearing an easterly storm. He outrode the *great* gale in the spring of 1851, dashing about alone in Plymouth Bay. He goes after rockweed, lighters vessels, and saves wrecks. I still saw him lying in the mud over at "the Pines" in the horizon, which place he could not leave if he would till flood tide. But he would not then probably. This waiting for the tide is a singular feature in life by the sea-shore. A frequent answer is, "Well! you can't start for two hours yet." It is something new to a landsman, and at first he is not disposed to wait. History says that "two inhabitants of Truro were the first who adventured to the Falkland Isles in pursuit of whales. This voyage was undertaken in the year 1774, by the advice of Admiral Montague of the British navy, and was crowned with success."

At the Pond Village we saw a pond three eighths of a mile long densely filled with cat-tail flags, seven feet high, — enough for all the coopers in New England.



Pond Village

The western shore was nearly as sandy as the eastern, but the water was much smoother, and the bottom was partially covered with the slender grass-like seaweed (*Zostera*), which we had not seen on the Atlantic side; there were also a few rude sheds for trying fish on the beach there, which made it appear less wild. In the few marshes on this side we afterward saw Samphire, Rosemary, and other plants new to us inlanders.

In the summer and fall sometimes, hundreds of blackfish (the Social Whale, *Globicephalus Melas* of De Kay; called also Black Whale-fish, Howling Whale, Bottlehead, etc.), fifteen feet or more in length, are driven ashore in a single school here. I witnessed such a scene in July, 1855. A carpenter who was working at the lighthouse arriving early in the morning remarked that he did not know but he had lost fifty dollars by coming to his work; for as he came along the Bay side he heard them driving a school of blackfish ashore, and he had debated with himself whether he should not go and join them and take his share, but had concluded to come to his work. After breakfast I came over to this place, about two miles distant, and near the beach met some of the fishermen returning from their chase. Looking up and down the shore, I could see about a mile south some large black masses on the sand, which I knew must be blackfish, and a man or two about them. As I walked along towards them I soon came to a huge carcass whose head was gone and whose blubber had been stripped off some weeks before; the tide was just beginning to move it, and the stench compelled me to go a long way round. When I came to Great Hollow I found a fisherman and some boys on the watch, and counted about thirty blackfish, just killed, with many lance wounds, and the water was more or less bloody around. They were partly on shore and partly in the water, held by a rope round their tails till the tide should leave them. A boat had been somewhat stove by the tail of one. They were a smooth shining black, like India-rubber, and had remarkably simple and lumpish forms for animated creatures, with a blunt round snout or head, whale-like, and simple stiff-looking flippers. The largest were about fifteen feet long, but one or two were only five feet long, and still without teeth. The fisherman slashed one with his jackknife, to show me how thick the blubber was, — about three inches; and as I passed my finger

through the cut it was covered thick with oil. The blubber looked like pork, and this man said that when they were trying it the boys would sometimes come round with a piece of bread in one hand, and take a piece of blubber in the other to eat with it, preferring it to pork scraps. He also cut into the flesh beneath, which was firm and red like beef, and he said that for his part he preferred it when fresh to beef. It is stated that in 1812 blackfish were used as food by the poor of Bretagne. They were waiting for the tide to leave these fishes high and dry, that they might strip off the blubber and carry it to their try-works in their boats, where they try it on the beach. They get commonly a barrel of oil, worth fifteen or twenty dollars, to a fish. There were many lances and harpoons in the boats, — much slenderer instruments than I had expected. An old man came along the beach with a horse and wagon distributing the dinners of the fishermen, which their wives had put up in little pails and jugs, and which he had collected in the Pond Village, and for this service, I suppose, he received a share of the oil. If one could not tell his own pail, he took the first he came to.

As I stood there they raised the cry of "another school," and we could see their black backs and their blowing about a mile northward, as they went leaping over the sea like horses. Some boats were already in pursuit there, driving them toward the beach. Other fishermen and boys running up began to jump into the boats and push them off from where I stood, and I might have gone too had I chosen. Soon there were twenty-five or thirty boats in pursuit, some large ones under sail, and others rowing with might and main, keeping outside of the school, those nearest to the fishes striking on the sides of their boats and blowing horns to drive them on to the beach. It was an exciting race. If they succeed in driving them ashore each boat takes one share, and then each man, but if they are compelled to strike them off shore each boat's company take what they strike. I walked rapidly along the shore toward the north, while the fishermen were rowing still more swiftly to join their companions, and a little boy who walked by my side was congratulating himself that his father's boat was beating another one. An old blind fisherman whom we met, inquired, "Where are they? I can't see. Have they got them?" In the mean while the fishes had turned and were escaping northward

toward Provincetown, only occasionally the back of one being seen. So the nearest crews were compelled to strike them, and we saw several boats soon made fast, each to its fish, which, four or five rods ahead, was drawing it like a race-horse straight toward the beach, leaping half out of water, blowing blood and water from its hole, and leaving a streak of foam behind. But they went ashore too far north for us, though we could see the fishermen leap out and lance them on the sand. It was just like pictures of whaling which I have seen, and a fisherman told me that it was nearly as dangerous. In his first trial he had been much excited, and in his haste had used a lance with its scabbard on, but nevertheless had thrust it quite through his fish.

I learned that a few days before this one hundred and eighty blackfish had been driven ashore in one school at Eastham, a little farther south, and that the keeper of Billingsgate Point light went out one morning about the same time and cut his initials on the backs of a large school which had run ashore in the night, and sold his right to them to Provincetown for one thousand dollars, and probably Provincetown made as much more. Another fisherman told me that nineteen years ago three hundred and eighty were driven ashore in one school at Great Hollow. In the Naturalists' Library, it is said that, in the winter of 1809-10, one thousand one hundred and ten "approached the shore of Hralfiord, Iceland, and were captured." De Kay says it is not known why they are stranded. But one fisherman declared to me that they ran ashore in pursuit of squid, and that they generally came on the coast about the last of July.

About a week afterward, when I came to this shore, it was strewn, as far as I could see with a glass, with the carcasses of blackfish stripped of their blubber and their heads cut off; the latter lying higher up. Walking on the beach was out of the question on account of the stench. Between Provincetown and Truro they lay in the very path of the stage. Yet no steps were taken to abate the nuisance, and men were catching lobsters as usual just off the shore. I was told that they did sometimes tow them out and sink them; yet I wondered where they got the stones to sink them with. Of course they might be made into guano, and Cape Cod is not so fertile that her inhabitants can afford to do without this manure, — to say nothing of the diseases they may produce.

After my return home, wishing to learn what was known about the Blackfish, I had recourse to the reports of the zoological surveys of the State, and I found that Storer had rightfully omitted it in his Report on the Fishes, since it is not a fish; so I turned to Emmons's Report of the Mammalia, but was surprised to find that the seals and whales were omitted by him, because he had had no opportunity to observe them. Considering how this State has risen and thriven by its fisheries. — that the legislature which authorized the Zoological Survey sat under the emblem of a codfish, — that Nantucket and New Bedford are within our limits, — that an early riser may find a thousand or fifteen hundred dollars' worth of blackfish on the shore in a morning, — that the Pilgrims saw the Indians cutting up a blackfish on the shore at Eastham, and called a part of that shore "Grampus Bay," from the number of blackfish they found there, before they got to Plymouth, — and that from that time to this these fishes have continued to enrich one or two counties almost annually, and that their decaying carcasses were now poisoning the air of one county for more than thirty miles, — I thought it remarkable that neither the popular nor scientific name was to be found in a report on our mammalia, — a catalogue of the productions of our land and water.

We had here, as well as all across the Cape, a fair view of Provincetown, five or six miles distant over the water toward the west, under its shrubby sand-hills, with its harbor now full of vessels whose masts mingled with the spires of its churches, and gave it the appearance of a quite large seaport town.

The inhabitants of all the lower Cape towns enjoy thus the prospect of two seas. Standing on the western or larboard shore, and looking; across to where the distant mainland looms, they can say. This is Massachusetts Bay; and then, after an hour's sauntering walk, they may stand on the starboard side, beyond which no land is seen to loom, and say, This is the Atlantic Ocean.

On our way back to the lighthouse, by whose white-washed tower we steered as securely as the mariner by its light at night, we passed through a graveyard, which apparently was saved from being blown away by its slates, for they had enabled a thick bed of huckleberry-bushes to root themselves amid the graves. We thought it would be

worth the while to read the epitaphs where so many were lost at sea; however, as not only their lives, but commonly their bodies also, were lost or not identified, there were fewer epitaphs of this sort than we expected, though there were not a few. Their graveyard is the ocean. Near the eastern side we started up a fox in a hollow, the only kind of wild quadruped, if I except a skunk in a salt-marsh, that we saw in all our walk (unless painted and box tortoises may be called quadrupeds). He was a large, plump, shaggy fellow, like a yellow dog, with, as usual, a white tip to his tail, and looked as if he fared well on the Cape. He cantered away into the shrub-oaks and bayberry-bushes which chanced to grow there, but were hardly high enough to conceal him. I saw another the next summer leaping over the top of a beach-plum a little farther north, a small arc of his course (which I trust is not yet run), from which I endeavored in vain to calculate his whole orbit: there were too many unknown attractions to be allowed for. I also saw the exuviae of a third fast sinking into the sand, and added the skull to my collection. Hence I concluded that they must be plenty thereabouts; but a traveller may meet with more than an inhabitant, since he is more likely to take an unfrequented route across the country. They told me that in some years they died off in great numbers by a kind of madness, under the effect of which they were seen whirling round and round as if in pursuit of their tails. In Crantz's account of Greenland, he says: "They (the foxes) live upon birds and their eggs, and, when they can't get them, upon crowberries, mussels, crabs, and what the sea casts out."

Just before reaching the light-house, we saw the sun set in the Bay, — for standing on that narrow Cape was, as I have said, like being on the deck of a vessel, or rather at the masthead of a man-of-war, thirty miles at sea, though we knew that at the same moment the sun was setting behind our native hills, which were just below the horizon in that direction. This sight drove everything else quite out of our heads, and Homer and the Ocean came in again with a rush, —

[Greek: En d epes Ôkeanô lamron phaos êelioio,]

the shining torch of the sun fell into the ocean.

VIII. THE HIGHLAND LIGHT

This light-house, known to mariners as the Cape Cod or Highland Light, is one of our "primary sea-coast lights," and is usually the first seen by those approaching the entrance of Massachusetts Bay from Europe. It is forty-three miles from Cape Ann Light, and forty-one from Boston Light. It stands about twenty rods from the edge of the bank, which is here formed of clay. I borrowed the plane and square, level and dividers, of a carpenter who was shingling a barn near by, and using one of those shingles made of a mast, contrived a rude sort of quadrant, with pins for sights and pivots, and got the angle of elevation of the Bank opposite the light-house, and with a couple of cod-lines the length of its slope, and so measured its height on the shingle. It rises one hundred and ten feet above its immediate base, or about one hundred and twenty-three feet above mean low water. Graham, who has carefully surveyed the extremity of the Cape, makes it one hundred and thirty feet. The mixed sand and clay lay at an angle of forty degrees with the horizon, where I measured it, but the clay is generally much steeper. No cow nor hen ever gets down it. Half a mile farther south the bank is fifteen or twenty-five feet higher, and that appeared to be the highest land in North Truro. Even this vast clay bank is fast wearing away. Small streams of water trickling down it at intervals of two or three rods, have left the intermediate clay in the form of steep Gothic roofs fifty feet high or more, the ridges as sharp and rugged-looking as rocks; and in one place the bank is curiously eaten out in the form of a large semicircular crater.



Dragging a dory up on the beach

According to the light-house keeper, the Cape is wasting here on both sides, though most on the eastern. In some places it had lost many rods within the last year, and, erelong, the light-house must be moved. We calculated, *from his data*, how soon the Cape would be quite worn away at this point, "for," said he, "I can remember sixty years back." We were even more surprised at this last announcement, — that is, at the slow waste of life and energy in our informant, for we had taken him to be not more than forty, — than at the rapid wasting of the Cape, and we thought that he stood a fair chance to outlive the former.

Between this October and June of the next year I found that the bank had lost about forty feet in one place, opposite the light-house, and it was cracked more than forty feet farther from the edge at the last date, the shore being strewn with the recent rubbish. But I judged that generally it was not wearing away here at the rate of more than six feet annually. Any conclusions drawn from the observations of a few years or one generation only are likely to prove false, and the Cape may balk expectation by its durability. In some places even a wrecker's foot-path down the bank lasts several years. One old inhabitant told us that when the light-house was built, in 1798, it was calculated that it would stand forty-five years, allowing the bank to waste one length of fence each year, "but," said he, "there it is" (or rather another near the same site, about twenty rods from the edge of

the bank).

The sea is not gaining on the Cape everywhere, for one man told me of a vessel wrecked long ago on the north of Provincetown whose "bones" (this was his word) are still visible many rods within the present line of the beach, half buried in sand. Perchance they lie alongside the timbers of a whale. The general statement of the inhabitants is that the Cape is wasting on both sides, but extending itself on particular points on the south and west, as at Chatham and Monomoy Beaches, and at Billingsgate, Long, and Race Points. James Freeman stated in his day that above three miles had been added to Monomoy Beach during the previous fifty years, and it is said to be still extending as fast as ever. A writer in the Massachusetts Magazine, in the last century, tells us that "when the English first settled upon the Cape, there was an island off Chatham, at three leagues' distance, called Webbs' Island, containing twenty acres, covered with red-cedar or savin. The inhabitants of Nantucket used to carry wood from it"; but he adds that in his day a large rock alone marked the spot, and the water was six fathoms deep there. The entrance to Nauset Harbor, which was once in Eastham, has now travelled south into Orleans. The islands in Wellfleet Harbor once formed a continuous beach, though now small vessels pass between them. And so of many other parts of this coast.

Perhaps what the Ocean takes from one part of the Cape it gives to another, — robs Peter to pay Paul. On the eastern side the sea appears to be everywhere encroaching on the land. Not only the land is undermined, and its ruins carried off by currents, but the sand is blown from the beach directly up the steep bank where it is one hundred and fifty feet high, and covers the original surface there many feet deep. If you sit on the edge you will have ocular demonstration of this by soon getting your eyes full. Thus the bank preserves its height as fast as it is worn away. This sand is steadily travelling westward at a rapid rate, "more than a hundred yards," says one writer, within the memory of inhabitants now living; so that in some places peat-meadows are buried deep under the sand, and the peat is cut through it; and in one place a large peat-meadow has made its appearance on the shore in the bank covered many feet deep, and peat has been cut there. This accounts for that great pebble of peat

which we saw in the surf. The old oysterman had told us that many years ago he lost a "crittur" by her being mired in a swamp near the Atlantic side east of his house, and twenty years ago he lost the swamp itself entirely, but has since seen signs of it appearing on the beach. He also said that he had seen cedar stumps "as big as cart-wheels"(!) on the bottom of the Bay, three miles off Billingsate Point, when leaning over the side of his boat in pleasant weather, and that that was dry land not long ago. Another told us that a log canoe known to have been buried many years before on the Bay side at East Harbor in Truro, where the Cape is extremely narrow, appeared at length on the Atlantic side, the Cape having rolled over it, and an old woman said,— "Now, you see, it is true what I told you, that the Cape is moving."

The bars along the coast shift with every storm, and in many places there is occasionally none at all. We ourselves observed the effect of a single storm with a high tide in the night, in July, 1855. It moved the sand on the beach opposite the light-house to the depth of six feet, and three rods in width as far as we could see north and south, and carried it bodily off no one knows exactly where, laying bare in one place a large rock five feet high which was invisible before, and narrowing the beach to that extent. There is usually, as I have said, no bathing on the back-side of the Cape, on account of the undertow, but when we were there last, the sea had, three months before, cast up a bar near this lighthouse, two miles long and ten rods wide, over which the tide did not flow, leaving a narrow cove, then a quarter of a mile long, between it and the shore, which afforded excellent bathing. This cove had from time to time been closed up as the bar travelled northward, in one instance imprisoning four or five hundred whiting and cod, which died there, and the water as often turned fresh, and finally gave place to sand. This bar, the inhabitants assured us, might be wholly removed, and the water six feet deep there in two or three days.

The light-house keeper said that when the wind blowed strong on to the shore, the waves ate fast into the bank, but when it blowed off they took no sand away; for in the former case the wind heaped up the surface of the water next to the beach, and to preserve its equilibrium a strong undertow immediately set back again into the

sea which carried with it the sand and whatever else was in the way, and left the beach hard to walk on; but in the latter case the undertow set on and carried the sand with it, so that it was particularly difficult for shipwrecked men to get to land when the wind blowed on to the shore, but easier when it blowed off. This undertow, meeting the next surface wave on the bar which itself has made, forms part of the dam over which the latter breaks, as over an upright wall. The sea thus plays with the land holding a sand-bar in its mouth awhile before it swallows it, as a cat plays with a mouse; but the fatal gripe is sure to come at last. The sea sends its rapacious east wind to rob the land, but before the former has got far with its prey, the land sends its honest west wind to recover some of its own. But, according to Lieutenant Davis, the forms, extent, and distribution of sand-bars and banks are principally determined, not by winds and waves but by tides.

Our host said that you would be surprised if you were on the beach when the wind blew a hurricane directly on to it, to see that none of the drift-wood came ashore, but all was carried directly northward and parallel with the shore as fast as a man can walk, by the inshore current, which sets strongly in that direction at flood tide. The strongest swimmers also are carried along with it, and never gain an inch toward the beach. Even a large rock has been moved half a mile northward along-the beach. He assured us that the sea was never still on the back-side of the Cape, but ran commonly as high as your head, so that a great part of the time you could not launch a boat there, and even in the calmest weather the waves run six or eight feet up the beach, though then you could get off on a plank. Champlain and Pourtrincourt could not land here in 1606, on account of the swell (*la houlle*), yet the savages came off to them in a canoe. In the Sieur de la Borde's "Relation des Caraibes," my edition of which was published at Amsterdam in 1711, at page 530 he says: —

"Couroumon a Caraibe, also a star [*i.e.* a god], makes the great *lames á la mer*, and overturns canoes. *Lames á la mer* are the long *vagues* which are not broken (*entrecoupées*), and such as one sees come to land all in one piece, from one end of a beach to another, so that, however little wind there may be, a shallop or a canoe could hardly land (*aborder terre*) without turning over, or being filled with

water."

But on the Bay side the water even at its edge is often as smooth and still as in a pond. Commonly there are no boats used along this beach. There was a boat belonging to the Highland Light which the next keeper after he had been there a year had not launched, though he said that there was good fishing just off the shore. Generally the Life Boats cannot be used when needed. When the waves run very high it is impossible to get a boat off, however skilfully you steer it, for it will often be completely covered by the curving edge of the approaching breaker as by an arch, and so filled with water, or it will be lifted up by its bows, turned directly over backwards, and all the contents spilled out. A spar thirty feet long is served in the same way.

I heard of a party who went off fishing back of Wellfleet some years ago, in two boats, in calm weather, who, when they had laden their boats with fish, and approached the land again, found such a swell breaking on it, though there was no wind, that they were afraid to enter it. At first they thought to pull for Provincetown, but night was coming on, and that was many miles distant. Their case seemed a desperate one. As often as they approached the shore and saw the terrible breakers that intervened, they were deterred. In short, they were thoroughly frightened. Finally, having thrown their fish overboard, those in one boat chose a favorable opportunity, and succeeded, by skill and good luck, in reaching the land, but they were unwilling to take the responsibility of telling the others when to come in, and as the other helmsman was inexperienced, their boat was swamped at once, yet all managed to save themselves.

Much smaller waves soon make a boat "nail-sick," as the phrase is. The keeper said that after a long and strong blow there would be three large waves, each successively larger than the last, and then no large ones for some time, and that, when they wished to land in a boat, they came in on the last and largest wave. Sir Thomas Browne (as quoted in Brand's Popular Antiquities, p. 372), on the subject of the tenth wave being "greater or more dangerous than any other," after quoting Ovid, —

"Qui venit hic fluctus, fluctus supereminet omnes

Posterior nono est, undecimo que prior," —

says, "Which, notwithstanding, is evidently false; nor can it be made out either by observation either upon the shore or the ocean, as we have with diligence explored in both. And surely in vain we expect regularity in the waves of the sea, or in the particular motions thereof, as we may in its general reciprocations, whose causes are constant, and effects therefore correspondent; whereas its fluctuations are but motions subservient, which winds, storms, shores, shelves, and every interjacency, irregulates."

We read that the Clay Pounds, were so called "because vessels have had the misfortune to be pounded against it in gales of wind," which we regard as a doubtful derivation. There are small ponds here, upheld by the clay, which were formerly called the Clay Pits. Perhaps this, or Clay Ponds, is the origin of the name. Water is found in the clay quite near the surface; but we heard of one man who had sunk a well in the sand close by, "till he could see stars at noonday," without finding any. Over this bare Highland the wind has full sweep. Even in July it blows the wings over the heads of the young turkeys, which do not know enough to head against it; and in gales the doors and windows are blown in, and you must hold on to the lighthouse to prevent being blown into the Atlantic. They who merely keep out on the beach in a storm in the winter are sometimes rewarded by the Humane Society. If you would feel the full force of a tempest, take up your residence on the top of Mount Washington, or at the Highland Light, in Truro.

It was said in 1794 that more vessels were cast away on the east shore of Truro than anywhere in Barnstable County. Notwithstanding that this light-house has since been erected, after almost every storm we read of one or more vessels wrecked here, and sometimes more than a dozen wrecks are visible from this point at one time. The inhabitants hear the crash of vessels going to pieces as they sit round their hearths, and they commonly date from some memorable shipwreck. If the history of this beach could be written from beginning to end, it would be a thrilling page in the history of commerce.

Truro was settled in the year 1700 as *Dangerfield*. This was a very

appropriate name, for I afterward read on a monument in the graveyard, near Pamet River, the following inscription: —

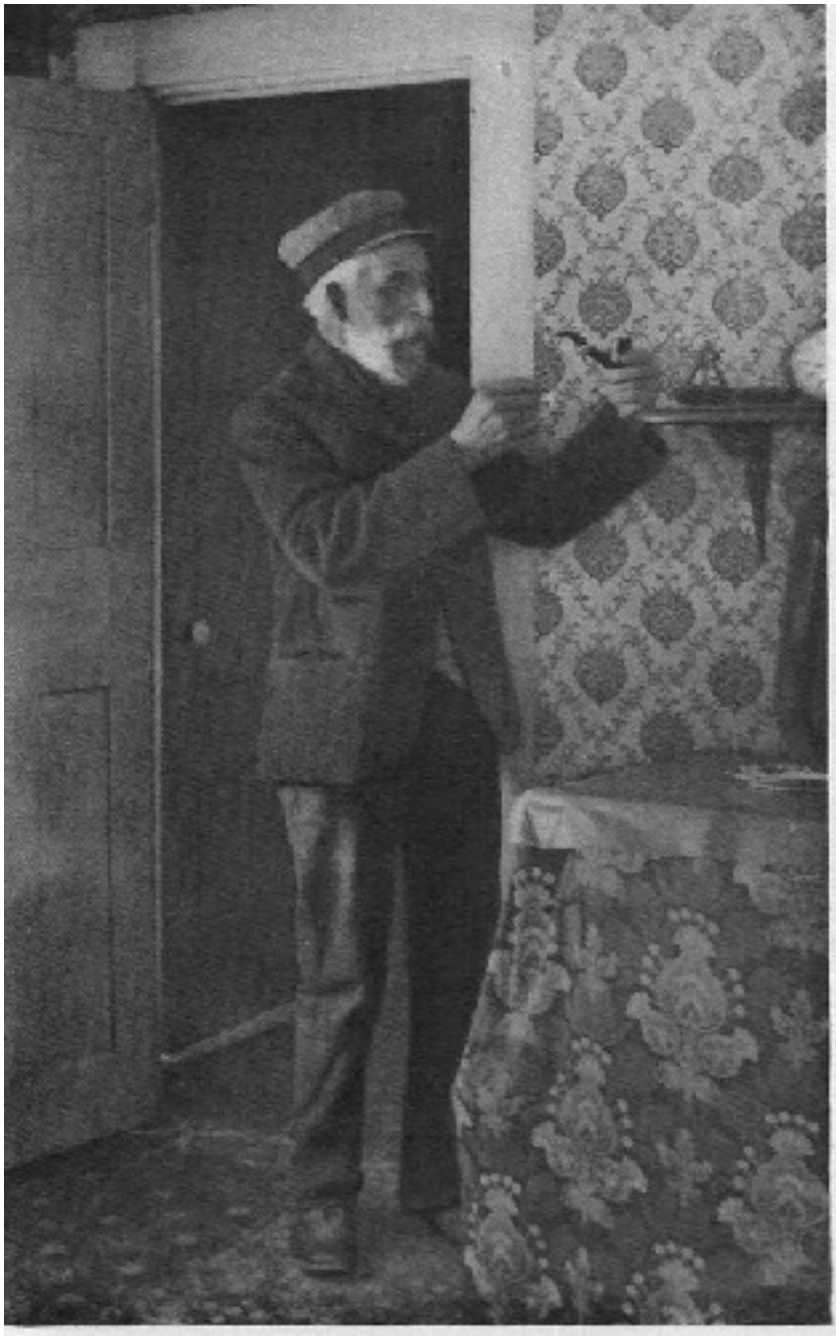
Sacred
to the memory of
57 citizens of Truro,
who were lost in seven
vessels, which
foundered at sea in
the memorable gale
of Oct. 3d, 1841

.

Their names and ages by families were recorded on different sides of the stone. They are said to have been lost on George's Bank, and I was told that only one vessel drifted ashore on the backside of the Cape, with the boys locked into the cabin and drowned. It is said that the homes of all were "within a circuit of two miles." Twenty-eight inhabitants of Dennis were lost in the same gale; and I read that "in one day, immediately after this storm, nearly or quite one hundred bodies were taken up and buried on Cape Cod." The Truro Insurance Company failed for want of skippers to take charge of its vessels. But the surviving inhabitants went a-fishing again the next year as usual. I found that it would not do to speak of shipwrecks there, for almost every family has lost some of its members at sea. "Who lives in that house?" I inquired. "Three widows," was the reply. The stranger and the inhabitant view the shore with very different eyes. The former may have come to see and admire the ocean in a storm; but the latter looks on it as the scene where his nearest relatives were wrecked. When I remarked to an old wrecker partially blind, who was sitting on the edge of the bank smoking a pipe, which he had just lit with a match of dried beach-grass, that I supposed he liked to hear the sound of the surf, he answered: "No, I do not like to hear the sound of the surf." He had lost at least one son in "the memorable gale," and could tell many a tale of the shipwrecks which he had witnessed there.

In the year 1717, a noted pirate named Bellamy was led on to the

bar off Wellfleet by the captain of a *snow* which he had taken, to whom he had offered his vessel again if he would pilot him into Provincetown Harbor. Tradition says that the latter threw over a burning tar-barrel in the night, which drifted ashore, and the pirates followed it. A storm coming on, their whole fleet was wrecked, and more than a hundred dead bodies lay along the shore. Six who escaped shipwreck were executed. "At times to this day" (1793), says the historian of Wellfleet, "there are King William and Queen Mary's coppers picked up, and pieces of silver called cob-money. The violence of the seas moves the sands on the outer bar, so that at times the iron caboose of the ship [that is, Bellamy's] at low ebbs has been seen." Another tells us that, "For many years after this shipwreck, a man of a very singular and frightful aspect used every spring and autumn to be seen travelling on the Cape, who was supposed to have been one of Bellamy's crew. The presumption is that he went to some place where money had been secreted by the pirates, to get such a supply as his exigencies required. When he died, many pieces of gold were found in a girdle which he constantly wore."



An old wrecker at home

As I was walking on the beach here in my last visit, looking for

shells and pebbles, just after that storm, which I have mentioned as moving the sand to a great depth, not knowing but I might find some cob-money, I did actually pick up a French crown piece, worth about a dollar and six cents, near high-water mark, on the still moist sand, just under the abrupt, caving base of the bank. It was of a dark slate color, and looked like a flat pebble, but still bore a very distinct and handsome head of Louis XV., and the usual legend on the reverse. *Sit Nomen Domini Benedictum* (Blessed be the Name of the Lord), a pleasing sentiment to read in the sands of the sea-shore, whatever it might be stamped on, and I also made out the date, 1741. Of course, I thought at first that it was that same old button which I have found so many times, but my knife soon showed the silver. Afterward, rambling on the bars at low tide, I cheated my companion by holding up round shells (*Scutelloe*) between my fingers, whereupon he quickly stripped and came off to me.

In the Revolution, a British ship of war called the Somerset was wrecked near the Clay Pounds, and all on board, some hundreds in number, were taken prisoners. My informant said that he had never seen any mention of this in the histories, but that at any rate he knew of a silver watch, which one of those prisoners by accident left there, which was still going to tell the story. But this event is noticed by some writers.

The next summer I saw a sloop from Chatham dragging for anchors and chains just oft' this shore. She had her boats out at the work while she shuffled about on various tacks, and, when anything was found, drew up to hoist it on board. It is a singular employment, at which men are regularly hired and paid for their industry, to hunt to-day in pleasant weather for anchors which have been lost, — the sunken faith and hope of mariners, to which they trusted in vain; now, perchance, it is the rusty one of some old pirate's ship or Norman fisherman, whose cable parted here two hundred years ago; and now the best bower anchor of a Canton or a California ship, which has gone about her business. If the roadsteads of the spiritual ocean could be thus dragged, what rusty flukes of hope deceived and parted chain-cables of faith might again be windlassed aboard! enough to sink the finder's craft, or stock new navies to the end of time. The bottom of the sea is strewn with anchors, some deeper and

some shallower, and alternately covered and uncovered by the sand, perchance with a small length of iron cable still attached, — to which where is the other end? So many unconcluded tales to be continued another time. So, if we had diving-bells adapted to the spiritual deeps, we should see anchors with their cables attached, as thick as eels in vinegar, all wriggling vainly toward their holding-ground. But that is not treasure for us which another man has lost; rather it is for us to seek what no other man has found or can find, — not be Chatham men, dragging for anchors.

The annals of this voracious beach! who could write them, unless it were a shipwrecked sailor? How many who have seen it have seen it only in the midst of danger and distress, the last strip of earth which their mortal eyes beheld. Think of the amount of suffering which a single strand has witnessed. The ancients would have represented it as a sea-monster with open jaws, more terrible than Scylla and Charybdis. An inhabitant of Truro told me that about a fortnight after the *St. John* was wrecked at Cohasset he found two bodies on the shore at the Clay Pounds. They were those of a man, and a corpulent woman. The man had thick boots on, though his head was off, but "it was alongside." It took the finder some weeks to get over the sight. Perhaps they were man and wife, and whom God had joined the ocean currents had not put asunder. Yet by what slight accidents at first may they have been associated in their drifting. Some of the bodies of those passengers were picked up far out at sea, boxed up and sunk; some brought ashore and buried. There are more consequences to a shipwreck than the underwriters notice. The Gulf Stream may return some to their native shores, or drop them in some out-of-the-way cave of Ocean, where time and the elements will write new riddles with their bones. — But to return to land again.

In this bank, above the clay, I counted in the summer, two hundred holes of the Bank Swallow within a space six rods long, and there were at least one thousand old birds within three times that distance, twittering over the surf. I had never associated them in my thoughts with the beach before. One little boy who had been a-birds-nesting had got eighty swallows' eggs for his share! Tell it not to the Humane Society. There were many young birds on the clay beneath, which had tumbled out and died. Also there were many Crow-

blackbirds hopping about in the dry fields, and the Upland Plover were breeding close by the light-house. The keeper had once cut off one's wing while mowing, as she sat on her eggs there. This is also a favorite resort for gunners in the fall to shoot the Golden Plover. As around the shores of a pond are seen devil's-needles, butterflies, etc., so here, to my surprise, I saw at the same season great devil's-needles of a size proportionably larger, or nearly as big as my finger, incessantly coasting up and down the edge of the bank, and butterflies also were hovering over it, and I never saw so many dorr-bugs and beetles of various kinds as strewed the beach. They had apparently flown over the bank in the night, and could not get up again, and some had perhaps fallen into the sea and were washed ashore. They may have been in part attracted by the light-house lamps.

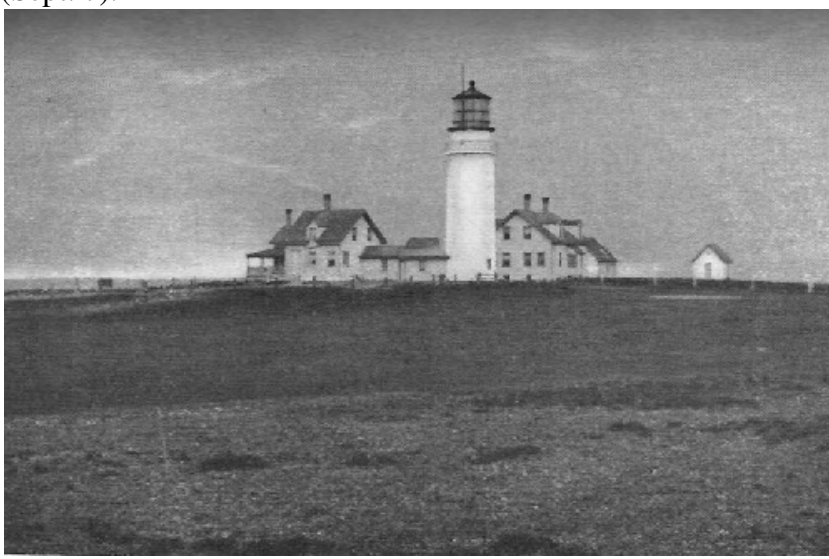
The Clay Pounds are a more fertile tract than usual. We saw some fine patches of roots and corn here. As generally on the Cape, the plants had little stalk or leaf, but ran remarkably to seed. The corn was hardly more than half as high as in the interior, yet the ears were large and full, and one farmer told us that he could raise forty bushels on an acre without manure, and sixty with it. The heads of the rye also were remarkably large. The Shadbush (*Amelanchier*), Beach Plums, and Blueberries (*Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum*), like the apple-trees and oaks, were very dwarfish, spreading over the sand, but at the same time very fruitful. The blueberry was but an inch or two high, and its fruit often rested on the ground, so that you did not suspect the presence of the bushes, even on those bare hills, until you were treading on them. I thought that this fertility must be owing mainly to the abundance of moisture in the atmosphere, for I observed that what little grass there was was remarkably laden with dew in the morning, and in summer dense imprisoning fogs frequently last till midday, turning one's beard into a wet napkin about his throat, and the oldest inhabitant may lose his way within a stone's throw of his house or be obliged to follow the beach for a guide. The brick house attached to the light-house was exceedingly damp at that season, and, writing-paper lost all its stiffness in it. It was impossible to dry your towel after bathing, or to press flowers without their mildewing. The air was so moist that we rarely wished

to drink, though we could at all times taste the salt on our lips. Salt was rarely used at table, and our host told us that his cattle invariably refused it when it was offered them, they got so much with their grass and at every breath, but he said that a sick horse or one just from the country would sometimes take a hearty draught of salt water, and seemed to like it and be the better for it.

It was surprising to see how much water was contained in the terminal bud of the sea-side golden-rod, standing in the sand early in July, and also how turnips, beets, carrots, etc., flourished even in pure sand. A man travelling by the shore near there not long before us noticed something green growing in the pure sand of the beach, just at high-water mark, and on approaching found it to be a bed of beets flourishing vigorously, probably from seed washed out of the *Franklin*. Also beets and turnips came up in the sea-weed used for manure in many parts of the Cape. This suggests how various plants may have been dispersed over the world to distant islands and continents. Vessels, with seeds in their cargoes, destined for particular ports, where perhaps they were not needed, have been cast away on desolate islands, and though their crews perished, some of their seeds have been preserved. Out of many kinds a few would find a soil and climate adapted to them, become naturalized, and perhaps drive out the native plants at last, and so fit the land for the habitation of man. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, and for the time lamentable shipwrecks may thus contribute a new vegetable to a continent's stock, and prove on the whole a lasting blessing to its inhabitants. Or winds and currents might effect the same without the intervention of man. What indeed are the various succulent plants which grow on the beach but such beds of beets and turnips, sprung originally from seeds which perhaps were cast on the waters for this end, though we do not know the *Franklin* which they came out of? In ancient times some Mr. Bell (?) was sailing this way in his ark with seeds of rocket, salt-wort, sandwort, beachgrass, samphire, bayberry, poverty-grass, etc., all nicely labelled with directions, intending to establish a nursery somewhere; and did not a nursery get established, though he thought that he had failed?

About the light-house I observed in the summer the pretty *Polygala polygama*, spreading ray-wise flat on the ground, white

pasture thistles (*Cirsium pumilum*), and amid the shrubbery the *Smilax glauca*, which is commonly said not to grow so far north; near the edge of the banks about half a mile southward, the broom crow-berry (*Empetrum Conradii*), for which Plymouth is the only locality in Massachusetts usually named, forms pretty green mounds four or five feet in diameter by one foot high, — soft, springy beds for the wayfarer. I saw it afterward in Provincetown, but prettiest of all the scarlet pimpernel, or poor-man's weather-glass (*Anagallis-arvensis*), greets you in fair weather on almost every square yard of sand. From Yarmouth, I have received the *Chrysopsis falcata* (golden aster), and *Vaccinium stamineum* (Deerberry or Squaw Huckleberry), with fruit not edible, sometimes as large as a cranberry (Sept. 7).



The Highland Light

The Highland Light-house, where we were staying, is a substantial-looking building of brick, painted white, and surmounted by an iron cap. Attached to it is the dwelling of the keeper, one story high, also of brick, and built by government. As we were going to spend the night in a light-house, we wished to make the most of so novel an experience, and therefore told our host that we would like to accompany him when he went to light up. At rather early candle-light he lighted a small Japan lamp, allowing it to smoke rather more

than we like on ordinary occasions, and told us to follow him. He led the way first through his bedroom, which was placed nearest to the light-house, and then through a long, narrow, covered passage-way, between whitewashed walls like a prison entry, into the lower part of the light-house, where many great butts of oil were arranged around; thence we ascended by a winding and open iron stairway, with a steadily increasing scent of oil and lamp-smoke, to a trap-door in an iron floor, and through this into the lantern. It was a neat building, with everything in apple-pie order, and no danger of anything; rusting there for want of oil. The light consisted of fifteen argand lamps, placed within smooth concave reflectors twenty-one inches in diameter, and arranged in two horizontal circles one above the other, facing every way excepting directly down the Cape. These were surrounded, at a distance of two or three feet, by large plate-glass windows, which defied the storms, with iron sashes, on which rested the iron cap. All the iron work, except the floor, was painted white. And thus the light-house was completed. We walked slowly round in that narrow space as the keeper lighted each lamp in succession, conversing with him at the same moment that many a sailor on the deep witnessed the lighting of the Highland Light. His duty was to fill and trim and light his lamps, and keep bright the reflectors. He filled them every morning, and trimmed them commonly once in the course of the night. He complained of the quality of the oil which was furnished. This house consumes about eight hundred gallons in a year, which cost not far from one dollar a gallon; but perhaps a few lives would be saved if better oil were provided. Another light-house keeper said that the same proportion of winter-strained oil was sent to the southernmost light-house in the Union as to the most northern. Formerly, when this light-house had windows with small and thin panes, a severe storm would sometimes break the glass, and then they were obliged to put up a wooden shutter in haste to save their lights and reflectors, — and sometimes in tempests, when the mariner stood most in need of their guidance, they had thus nearly converted the light-house into a dark lantern, which emitted only a few feeble rays, and those commonly on the land or lee side. He spoke of the anxiety and sense of responsibility which he felt in cold and stormy nights in the winter; when he knew that many a poor

fellow was depending on him, and his lamps burned dimly, the oil being chilled. Sometimes he was obliged to warm the oil in a kettle in his house at midnight, and fill his lamps over again, — for he could not have a fire in the light-house, it produced such a sweat on the windows. His successor told me that he could not keep too hot a fire in such a case. All this because the oil was poor. The government lighting the mariners on its wintry coast with summer-strained oil, to save expense! That were surely a summer-strained mercy.

This keeper's successor, who kindly entertained me the next year stated that one extremely cold night, when this and all the neighboring lights were burning summer oil, but he had been provident enough to reserve a little winter oil against emergencies, he was waked up with anxiety, and found that his oil was congealed, and his lights almost extinguished; and when, after many hours' exertion, he had succeeded in replenishing his reservoirs with winter oil at the wick end, and with difficulty had made them burn, he looked out and found that the other lights in the neighborhood, which were usually visible to him, had gone out, and he heard afterward that the Pamet River and Billingsgate Lights also had been extinguished.

Our host said that the frost, too, on the windows caused him much trouble, and in sultry summer nights the moths covered them and dimmed his lights; sometimes even small birds flew against the thick plate glass, and were found on the ground beneath in the morning with their necks broken. In the spring of 1855 he found nineteen small yellow-birds, perhaps goldfinches or myrtle-birds, thus lying dead around the light-house; and sometimes in the fall he had seen where a golden plover had struck the glass in the night, and left the down and the fatty part of its breast on it.

Thus he struggled, by every method, to keep his light shining before men. Surely the light-house keeper has a responsible, if an easy, office. When his lamp goes out, he goes out; or, at most, only one such accident is pardoned.

I thought it a pity that some poor student did not live there, to profit by all that light, since he would not rob the mariner. "Well," he said, "I do sometimes come up here and read the newspaper when they are noisy down below." Think of fifteen argand lamps to read

the newspaper by! Government oil! — light, enough, perchance, to read the Constitution by! I thought that he should read nothing less than his Bible by that light. I had a classmate who fitted for college by the lamps of a light-house, which was more light, we think, than the University afforded.

When we had come down and walked a dozen rods from the light-house, we found that we could not get the full strength of its light on the narrow strip of land between it and the shore, being too low for the focus, and we saw only so many feeble and rayless stars; but at forty rods inland we could see to read, though we were still indebted to only one lamp. Each reflector sent forth a separate "fan" of light, — one shone on the windmill, and one in the hollow, while the intervening spaces were in shadow. This light is said to be visible twenty nautical miles and more from an observer fifteen feet above the level of the sea. We could see the revolving light at Race Point, the end of the Cape, about nine miles distant, and also the light on Long Point, at the entrance of Provincetown Harbor, and one of the distant Plymouth Harbor Lights, across the Bay, nearly in a range with the last, like a star in the horizon. The keeper thought that the other Plymouth Light was concealed by being exactly in a range with the Long Point Light. He told us that the mariner was sometimes led astray by a mackerel fisher's lantern, who was afraid of being run down in the night, or even by a cottager's light, mistaking them for some well-known light on the coast, and, when he discovered his mistake, was wont to curse the prudent fisher or the wakeful cottager without reason.

Though it was once declared that Providence placed this mass of clay here on purpose to erect a light-house on, the keeper said that the light-house should have been erected half a mile farther south, where the coast begins to bend, and where the light could be seen at the same time with the Nauset Lights, and distinguished from them. They now talk of building one there. It happens that the present one is the more useless now, so near the extremity of the Cape, because other light-houses have since been erected there.

Among the many regulations of the Light-house Board, hanging against the wall here, many of them excellent, perhaps, if there were a regiment stationed here to attend to them, there is one requiring the

keeper to keep an account of the number of vessels which pass his light during the day. But there are a hundred vessels in sight at once, steering in all directions, many on the very verge of the horizon, and he must have more eyes than Argus, and be a good deal farther-sighted, to tell which are passing his light. It is an employment in some respects best suited to the habits of the gulls which coast up and down here, and circle over the sea.

I was told by the next keeper, that on the 8th of June following, a particularly clear and beautiful morning, he rose about half an hour before sunrise, and having a little time to spare, for his custom was to extinguish his lights at sunrise, walked down toward the shore to see what he might find. When he got to the edge of the bank he looked up, and, to his astonishment, saw the sun rising, and already part way above the horizon. Thinking that his clock was wrong, he made haste back, and though it was still too early by the clock, extinguished his lamps, and when he had got through and come down, he looked out the window, and, to his still greater astonishment, saw the sun just where it was before, two-thirds above the horizon. He showed me where its rays fell on the wall across the room. He proceeded to make a fire, and when he had done, there was the sun still at the same height. Whereupon, not trusting to his own eyes any longer, he called up his wife to look at it, and she saw it also. There were vessels in sight on the ocean, and their crews, too, he said, must have seen it, for its rays fell on them. It remained at that height for about fifteen minutes by the clock, and then rose as usual, and nothing else extraordinary happened during that day. Though accustomed to the coast, he had never witnessed nor heard of such a phenomenon before. I suggested that there might have been a cloud in the horizon invisible to him, which rose with the sun, and his clock was only as accurate as the average; or perhaps, as he denied the possibility of this, it was such a looming of the sun as is said to occur at Lake Superior and elsewhere. Sir John Franklin, for instance, says in his Narrative, that when he was on the shore of the Polar Sea, the horizontal refraction varied so much one morning that "the upper limb of the sun twice appeared at the horizon before it finally rose."

He certainly must be a son of Aurora to whom the sun looms, when there are so many millions to whom it *glooms* rather, or who

never see it till an hour *after* it has risen. But it behooves us old stagers to keep our lamps trimmed and burning to the last, and not trust to the sun's looming.

This keeper remarked that the centre of the flame should be exactly opposite the centre of the reflectors, and that accordingly, if he was not careful to turn down his wicks in the morning, the sun falling on the reflectors on the south side of the building would set fire to them, like a burning-glass, in the coldest day, and he would look up at noon and see them all lighted! When your light is ready to give light, it is readiest to receive it, and the sun will light it. His successor said that he had never known them to blaze in such a case, but merely to smoke.

I saw that this was a place of wonders. In a sea turn or shallow fog while I was there the next summer, it being clear overhead, the edge of the bank twenty rods distant, appeared like a mountain pasture in the horizon. I was completely deceived by it, and I could then understand why mariners sometimes ran ashore in such cases, especially in the night, supposing it to be far away, though they could see the land. Once since this, being in a large oyster boat two or three hundred miles from here, in a dark night, when there was a thin veil of mist on land and water, we came so near to running on to the land before our skipper was aware of it, that the first warning was my hearing the sound of the surf under my elbow. I could almost have jumped ashore, and we were obliged to go about very suddenly to prevent striking. The distant light for which we were steering, supposing it a light-house five or six miles off, came through the cracks of a fisherman's bunk not more than six rods distant.

The keeper entertained us handsomely in his solitary little ocean house. He was a man of singular patience and intelligence, who, when our queries struck him, rung as clear as a bell in response. The light-house lamps a few feet distant shone full into my chamber, and made it as bright as day, so I knew exactly how the Highland Light bore all that night, and I was in no danger of being wrecked. Unlike the last, this was as still as a summer night. I thought, as I lay there, half awake and half asleep, looking upward through the window at the lights above my head, how many sleepless eyes from far out on the Ocean stream — mariners of all nations spinning their yarns

through the various watches of the night — were directed toward my couch.

The light-house has since been rebuilt, and shows a *Fresnel* light.

IX. THE SEA AND THE DESERT

The light-house lamps were still burning, though now with a silvery lustre, when I rose to see the sun come out of the Ocean; for he still rose eastward of us; but I was convinced that he must have come out of a dry bed beyond that stream, though he seemed to come out of the water.

"The sun once more touched the fields,
Mounting to heaven from the fair flowing
Deep-running Ocean."

Now we saw countless sails of mackerel fishers abroad on the deep, one fleet in the north just pouring round the Cape, another standing down toward Chatham, and our host's son went off to join some lagging member of the first which had not yet left the Bay.

Before we left the light-house we were obliged to anoint our shoes faithfully with tallow, for walking on the beach, in the salt water and the sand, had turned them red and crisp. To counterbalance this, I have remarked that the seashore, even where muddy, as it is not here, is singularly clean; for notwithstanding the spattering of the water and mud and squirting of the clams while walking to and from the boat, your best black pants retain no stain nor dirt, such as they would acquire from walking in the country.

We have heard that a few days after this, when the Provincetown Bank was robbed, speedy emissaries from Provincetown made particular inquiries concerning us at this light-house. Indeed, they traced us all the way down the Cape, and concluded that we came by this unusual route down the back-side and on foot, in order that we might discover a way to get off with our booty when we had committed the robbery. The Cape is so long and narrow, and so bare withal, that it is wellnigh impossible for a stranger to visit it without the knowledge of its inhabitants generally, unless he is wrecked on to it in the night. So, when this robbery occurred, all their suspicions seem to have at once centred on us two travellers who had just passed down it. If we had not chanced to leave the Cape so soon, we

should probably have been arrested. The real robbers were two young men from Worcester County who travelled with a centre-bit, and are said to have done their work very neatly. But the only bank that we pried into was the great Cape Cod sand-bank, and we robbed it only of an old French crown piece, some shells and pebbles, and the materials of this story.

Again we took to the beach for another day (October 13), walking along the shore of the resounding sea, determined to get it into us. We wished to associate with the Ocean until it lost the pond-like look which it wears to a country-man. We still thought that we could see the other side. Its surface was still more sparkling than the day before, and we beheld "the countless smilings of the ocean waves"; though some of them were pretty broad grins, for still the wind blew and the billows broke in foam along the beach. The nearest beach to us on the other side, whither we looked, due east, was on the coast of Galicia, in Spain, whose capital is Santiago, though by old poets' reckoning it should have been Atlantis or the Hesperides; but heaven is found to be farther west now. At first we were abreast of that part of Portugal *entre Douro e Mino*, and then Galicia and the port of Pontevedra opened to us as we walked along; but we did not enter, the breakers ran so high. The bold headland of Cape Finisterre, a little north of east, jutted toward us next, with its vain brag, for we flung back,— "Here is Cape Cod, — Cape Land's-Beginning." A little indentation toward the north, — for the land loomed to our imaginations by a common mirage, — we knew was the Bay of Biscay, and we sang: —

"There we lay, till next day.
In the Bay of Biscay O!"

A little south of east was Palos, where Columbus weighed anchor, and farther yet the pillars which Hercules set up; concerning which when we inquired at the top of our voices what was written on them, — for we had the morning sun in our faces, and could not see distinctly, — the inhabitants shouted *Ne plus ultra* (no more beyond), but the wind bore to us the truth only, *plus ultra* (more beyond), and over the Bay westward was echoed *ultra* (beyond). We spoke to

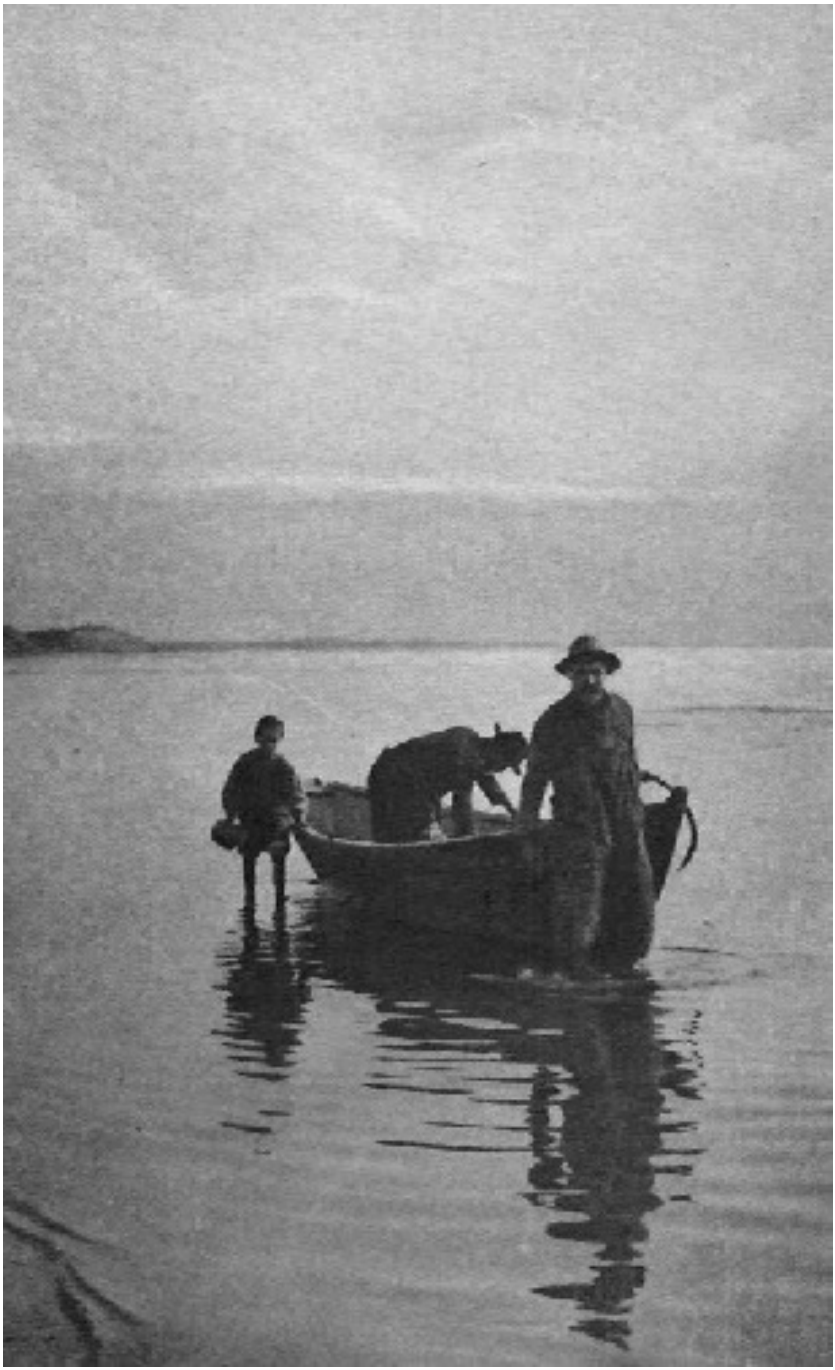
them through the surf about the Far West, the true Hesperia, [Greek: eô peras] or end of the day, the This Side Sundown, where the sun was extinguished in the *Pacific*, and we advised them to pull up stakes and plant those pillars of theirs on the shore of California, whither all our folks were gone, — the only *ne* plus ultra now. Whereat they looked crestfallen on their cliffs, for we had taken the wind out of all their sails.

We could not perceive that any of their leavings washed up here, though we picked up a child's toy, a small dismantled boat, which may have been lost at Pontevedra.

The Cape became narrower and narrower as we approached its wrist between Truro and Provincetown, and the shore inclined more decidedly to the west. At the head of East Harbor Creek, the Atlantic is separated but by half a dozen rods of sand from the tide-waters of the Bay. From the Clay Pounds the bank flatted off for the last ten miles to the extremity at Race Point, though the highest parts, which are called "islands" from their appearance at a distance on the sea, were still seventy or eighty feet above the Atlantic, and afforded a good view of the latter, as well as a constant view of the Bay, there being no trees nor a hill sufficient to interrupt it. Also the sands began to invade the land more and more, until finally they had entire possession from sea to sea, at the narrowest part. For three or four miles between Truro and Provincetown there were no inhabitants from shore to shore, and there were but three or four houses for twice that distance.

As we plodded along, either by the edge of the ocean, where the sand was rapidly drinking up the last wave that wet it, or over the sand-hills of the bank, the mackerel fleet continued to pour round the Cape north of us, ten or fifteen miles distant, in countless numbers, schooner after schooner, till they made a city on the water. They were so thick that many appeared to be afoul of one another; now all standing on this tack, now on that. We saw how well the New-Englanders had followed up Captain John Smith's suggestions with regard to the fisheries, made in 1616, — to what a pitch they had carried "this contemptible trade of fish," as he significantly styles it, and were now equal to the Hollanders whose example he holds up for the English to emulate; notwithstanding that "in this faculty," as

he says, “the former are so naturalized, and of their vents so certainly acquainted, as there is no likelihood they will ever be paralleled, having two or three thousand busses, flat-bottoms, sword-pinks, todes, and such like, that breeds them sailors, mariners, soldiers, and merchants, never to be wrought out of that trade and fit for any other.” We thought that it would take all these names and more to describe the numerous craft which we saw. Even then, some years before our “renowned sires” with their “peerless dames” stepped on Plymouth Rock, he wrote, “Newfoundland doth yearly freight neir eight hundred sail of ships with a silly, lean, skinny, poor-john, and cor fish,” though all their supplies must be annually transported from Europe. Why not plant a colony here then, and raise those supplies on the spot? “Of all the four parts of the world,” says he, “that I have yet seen, not inhabited, could I have but means to transport a colony, I would rather live here than anywhere. And if it did not maintain itself, were we but once indifferently well fitted, let us starve.” Then “fishing before your doors,” you “may every night sleep quietly ashore, with good cheer and what fires you will, or, when you please, with your wives and family.” Already he anticipates “the new towns in New England in memory of their old,” — and who knows what may be discovered in the “heart and entrails” of the land, “seeing even the very edges,” etc., etc.



Towing along shore

All this has been accomplished, and more, and where is Holland now? Verily the Dutch have taken it. There was no long interval between the suggestion of Smith and the eulogy of Burke.

Still one after another the mackerel schooners hove in sight round the head of the Cape, "whitening all the sea road," and we watched each one for a moment with an undivided interest. It seemed a pretty sport. Here in the country it is only a few idle boys or loafers that go a-fishing on a rainy day; but there it appeared as if every able-bodied man and helpful boy in the Bay had gone out on a pleasure excursion in their yachts, and all would at last land and have a chowder on the Cape. The gazetteer tells you gravely how many of the men and boys of these towns are engaged in the whale, cod, and mackerel fishery, how many go to the banks of Newfoundland, or the coast of Labrador, the Straits of Belle Isle or the Bay of Chaleurs (Shalore the sailors call it); as if I were to reckon up the number of boys in Concord who are engaged during the summer in the perch, pickerel, bream, hornpout, and shiner fishery, of which no one keeps the statistics, — though I think that it is pursued with as much profit to the moral and intellectual man (or boy), and certainly with less danger to the physical one.

One of my playmates, who was apprenticed to a printer, and was somewhat of a wag, asked his master one afternoon if he might go a-fishing, and his master consented. He was gone three months. When he came back, he said that he had been to the Grand Banks, and went to setting type again as if only an afternoon had intervened.

I confess I was surprised to find that so many men spent their whole day, ay, their whole lives almost, a-fishing. It is remarkable what a serious business men make of getting their dinners, and how universally shiftlessness and a grovelling taste take refuge in a merely ant-like industry. Better go without your dinner, I thought, than be thus everlastingly fishing for it like a cormorant. Of course, *viewed from the shore*, our pursuits in the country appear not a whit less frivolous.

I once sailed three miles on a mackerel cruise myself. It was a Sunday evening after a very warm day in which there had been frequent thunder-showers, and I had walked along the shore from Cohasset to Duxbury. I wished to get over from the last place to

Clark's Island, but no boat could stir, they said, at that stage of the tide, they being left high on the mud. At length I learned that the tavern-keeper, Winsor, was going out mackerelling with seven men that evening, and would take me. When there had been due delay, we one after another straggled down to the shore in a leisurely manner, as if waiting for the tide still, and in India-rubber boots, or carrying our shoes in our hands, waded to the boats, each of the crew bearing an armful of wood, and one a bucket of new potatoes besides. Then they resolved that each should bring one more armful of wood, and that would be enough. They had already got a barrel of water, and had some more in the schooner. We shoved the boats a dozen rods over the mud and water till they floated, then rowing half a mile to the vessel climbed aboard, and there we were in a mackerel schooner, a fine stout vessel of forty-three tons, whose name I forget. The baits were not dry on the hooks. There was the mill in which they ground the mackerel, and the trough to hold it, and the long-handled dipper to cast it overboard with; and already in the harbor we saw the surface rippled with schools of small mackerel, the real *Scomber vernalis*. The crew proceeded leisurely to weigh anchor and raise their two sails, there being a fair but very slight wind; — and the sun now setting clear and shining on the vessel after the thundershowers, I thought that I could not have commenced the voyage under more favorable auspices. They had four dories and commonly fished in them, else they fished on the starboard side aft where their fines hung ready, two to a man. The boom swung round once or twice, and Winsor cast overboard the foul juice of mackerel mixed with rain-water which remained in his trough, and then we gathered about the helmsman and told stories. I remember that the compass was affected by iron in its neighborhood and varied a few degrees. There was one among us just returned from California, who was now going as passenger for his health and amusement. They expected to be gone about a week, to begin fishing the next morning, and to carry their fish fresh to Boston. They landed me at Clark's Island, where the Pilgrims landed, for my companions wished to get some milk for the voyage. But I had seen the whole of it. The rest was only going to sea and catching the mackerel. Moreover, it was as well that I did not remain with them, considering the small quantity

of supplies they had taken.

Now I saw the mackerel fleet *on its fishing-ground*, though I was not at first aware of it. So my experience was complete.

It was even more cold and windy to-day than before, and we were frequently glad to take shelter behind a sand-hill. None of the elements were resting. On the beach there is a ceaseless activity, always something going on, in storm and in calm, winter and summer, night and day. Even the sedentary man here enjoys a breadth of view which is almost equivalent to motion. In clear weather the laziest may look across the Bay as far as Plymouth at a glance, or over the Atlantic as far as human vision reaches, merely raising his eyelids; or if he is too lazy to look after all, he can hardly help hearing the ceaseless dash and roar of the breakers. The restless ocean may at any moment cast up a whale or a wrecked vessel at your feet. All the reporters in the world, the most rapid stenographers, could not report the news it brings. No creature could move slowly where there was so much life around. The few wreckers were either going or coming, and the ships and the sand-pipers, and the screaming gulls overhead; nothing stood still but the shore. The little beach-birds trotted past close to the water's edge, or paused but an instant to swallow their food, keeping time with the elements. I wondered how they ever got used to the sea, that they ventured so near the waves. Such tiny inhabitants the land brought forth! except one fox. And what could a fox do, looking on the Atlantic from that high bank? What is the sea to a fox? Sometimes we met a wrecker with his cart and dog, — and his dog's faint bark at us wayfarers, heard through the roaring of the surf, sounded ridiculously faint. To see a little trembling dainty-footed cur stand on the margin of the ocean, and ineffectually bark at a beach-bird, amid the roar of the Atlantic! Come with design to bark at a whale, perchance! That sound will do for farmyards. All the dogs looked out of place there, naked and as if shuddering at the vastness; and I thought that they would not have been there had it not been for the countenance of their masters. Still less could you think of a cat bending her steps that way, and shaking her wet foot over the Atlantic; yet even this happens sometimes, they tell me. In summer I saw the tender young of the Piping Plover, like chickens just hatched, mere pinches of

down on two legs, running in troops, with a faint peep, along the edge of the waves. I used to see packs of half-wild dogs haunting the lonely beach on the south shore of Staten Island, in New York Bay, for the sake of the carrion there cast up; and I remember that once, when for a long time I had heard a furious barking in the tall grass of the marsh, a pack of half a dozen large dogs burst forth on to the beach, pursuing a little one which ran straight to me for protection, and I afforded it with some stones, though at some risk to myself; but the next day the little one was the first to bark at me. under these circumstances I could not but remember the words of the poet: —

"Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As *his* ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

"Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not."

Sometimes, when I was approaching the carcass of a horse or ox which lay on the beach there, where there was no living creature in sight, a dog would unexpectedly emerge from it and slink away with a mouthful of offal.

The sea-shore is a sort of neutral ground, a most advantageous point from which to contemplate this world. It is even a trivial place. The waves forever rolling to the land are too far-travelled and untamable to be familiar. Creeping along the endless beach amid the sun-squall and the foam, it occurs to us that we, too, are the product of sea-slime.

It is a wild, rank place, and there is no flattery in it. Strewn with crabs, horse-shoes, and razor-clams, and whatever the sea casts up,

— a vast *morgue*, where famished dogs may range in packs, and crows come daily to glean the pittance which the tide leaves them. The carcasses of men and beasts together lie stately up upon its shelf, rotting and bleaching in the sun and waves, and each tide turns them in their beds, and tucks fresh sand under them. There is naked Nature, inhumanly sincere, wasting no thought on man, nibbling at the cliffy shore where gulls wheel amid the spray.

We saw this forenoon what, at a distance, looked like a bleached log with a branch still left on it. It proved to be one of the principal bones of a whale, whose carcass, having been stripped of blubber at sea and cut adrift, had been washed up some months before. It chanced that this was the most conclusive evidence which we met with to prove, what the Copenhagen antiquaries assert, that these shores were the *Furdustrandas* which Thorhall, the companion of Thorfinn during his expedition to Vinland in 1007. sailed past in disgust. It appears that after they had left the Cape and explored the country about Straum-Fiordr (Buzzards' Bay!), Thorhall, who was disappointed at not getting any wine to drink there, determined to sail north again in search of Vinland. Though the antiquaries have given us the original Icelandic. I prefer to quote their translation, since theirs is the only Latin which I know to have been aimed at Cape Cod.

"Cum parati erant, sublato
velo, cecinit Thorhallus:
Eò redeamus, ubi conterranei
sunt nostri! faciamus aliter,
expansi arenosi peritum,
lata navis explorare curricula:
dum procellam incitantes gladii
moræ impatientes, qui terram
collaudant, Furdustrandas
inhabitant et coquunt balænas."

In other words: "When they were ready and their sail hoisted, Thorhall sang: Let us return thither where our fellow-countrymen are. Let us make a bird skilful to fly through the heaven of sand, to

explore the broad track of ships; while warriors who impel to the tempest of swords, who praise the land, inhabit Wonder-Strands, *and cook whales*.'" And so he sailed north past Cape Cod, as the antiquaries say, "and was shipwrecked on to Ireland."

Though once there were more whales cast up here, I think that it was never more wild than now. We do not associate the idea of antiquity with the ocean, nor wonder how it looked a thousand years ago, as we do of the land, for it was equally wild and unfathomable always. The Indians have left no traces on its surface, but it is the same to the civilized man and the savage. The aspect of the shore only has changed. The ocean is a wilderness reaching round the globe, wilder than a Bengal jungle, and fuller of monsters, washing the very wharves of our cities and the gardens of our sea-side residences. Serpents, bears, hyenas, tigers, rapidly vanish as civilization advances, but the most populous and civilized city cannot scare a shark far from its wharves. It is no further advanced than Singapore, with its tigers, in this respect. The Boston papers had never told me that there were seals in the harbor. I had always associated these with the Esquimaux and other outlandish people. Yet from the parlor windows all along the coast you may see families of them sporting on the flats. They were as strange to me as the merman would be. Ladies who never walk in the woods, sail over the sea. To go to sea! Why, it is to have the experience of Noah, — to realize the deluge. Every vessel is an ark.

We saw no fences as we walked the beach, no birchen *riders*, highest of rails, projecting into the sea to keep the cows from wading round, nothing to remind us that man was proprietor of the shore. Yet a Truro man did tell us that owners of land on the east side of that town were regarded as owning the beach, in order that they might have the control of it so far as to defend themselves against the encroachments of the sand and the beach-grass, — for even this friend is sometimes regarded as a foe; but he said that this was not the case on the Bay side. Also I have seen in sheltered parts of the Bay temporary fences running to low-water mark, the posts being set in sills or sleepers placed transversely.

After we had been walking many hours, the mackerel fleet still hovered in the northern horizon nearly in the same direction, but

farther off, hull down. Though their sails were set they never sailed away, nor yet came to anchor, but stood on various tacks as close together as vessels in a haven, and we in our ignorance thought that they were contending patiently with adverse winds, beating eastward; but we learned afterward that they were even then on their fishing-ground, and that they caught mackerel without taking in their mainsails or coming to anchor, "a smart breeze" (thence called a mackerel breeze) "being," as one says, "considered most favorable" for this purpose. We counted about two hundred sail of mackerel fishers within one small arc of the horizon, and a nearly equal number had disappeared southward. Thus they hovered about the extremity of the Cape, like moths round a candle; the lights at Race Point and Long Point being bright candles for them at night, — and at this distance they looked fair and white, as if they had not yet flown into the light, but nearer at hand afterward, we saw how some had formerly singed their wings and bodies.

A village seems thus, where its able-bodied men are all ploughing the ocean together, as a common field. In North Truro the women and girls may sit at their doors, and see where their husbands and brothers are harvesting their mackerel fifteen or twenty miles off, on the sea, with hundreds of white harvest wagons, just as in the country the farmers' wives sometimes see their husbands working in a distant hillside field. But the sound of no dinner-horn can reach the fisher's ear.

Having passed the narrowest part of the waist of the Cape, though still in Truro, for this township is about twelve miles long on the shore, we crossed over to the Bay side, not half a mile distant, in order to spend the noon on the nearest shrubby sand-hill in Provincetown, called Mount Ararat, which rises one hundred feet above the ocean. On our way thither we had occasion to admire the various beautiful forms and colors of the sand, and we noticed an interesting mirage, which I have since found that Hitchcock also observed on the sands of the Cape. We were crossing a shallow valley in the Desert, where the smooth and spotless sand sloped upward by a small angle to the horizon on every side, and at the lowest part was a long chain of clear but shallow pools. As we were approaching these for a drink in a diagonal direction across the

valley, they appeared inclined at a slight but decided angle to the horizon, though they were plainly and broadly connected with one another, and there was not the least ripple to suggest a current; so that by the time we had reached a convenient part of one we seemed to have ascended several feet. They appeared to lie by magic on the side of the vale, like a mirror left in a slanting position. It was a very pretty mirage for a Provincetown desert, but not amounting to what, in Sanscrit, is called "the thirst of the gazelle," as there was real water here for a base, and we were able to quench our thirst after all.

Professor Rafn, of Copenhagen, thinks that the mirage which I noticed, but which an old inhabitant of Provincetown, to whom I mentioned it, had never seen nor heard of, had something to do with the name "Furdustrandas," i.e. Wonder-Strands, given, as I have said, in the old Icelandic account of Thorfinn's expedition to Vinland in the year 1007, to a part of the coast on which he landed. But these sands are more remarkable for their length than for their mirage, which is common to all deserts, and the reason for the name which the Northmen them-selves give,— "because it took a long time to sail by them," — is sufficient and more applicable to these shores. However, if you should sail all the way from Greenland to Buzzards' Bay along the coast, you would get sight of a good many sandy beaches. But whether Thorfinn saw the mirage here or not, Thor-eau, one of the same family, did; and perchance it was because Lief the Lucky had, in a previous voyage, taken Thor-er and his people off the rock in the middle of the sea, that Thor-eau was born to see it.

This was not the only mirage which I saw on the Cape. That half of the beach next the bank is commonly level, or nearly so, while the other slopes downward to the water. As I was walking upon the edge of the bank in Wellfleet at sundown, it seemed to me that the inside half of the beach sloped upward toward the water to meet the other, forming a ridge ten or twelve feet high the whole length of the shore, but higher always opposite to where I stood; and I was not convinced of the contrary till I descended the bank, though the shaded outlines left by the waves of a previous tide but half-way down the apparent declivity might have taught me better. A stranger may easily detect what is strange to the oldest inhabitant, for the strange is his province. The old oysterman, speaking of gull-shooting, had said that

you must aim under, when firing down the bank.

A neighbor tells me that one August, looking through a glass from Naushon to some vessels which were sailing along near Martha's Vineyard, the water about them appeared perfectly smooth, so that they were reflected in it, and yet their full sails proved that it must be rippled, and they who were with him thought that it was mirage, *i.e.* a reflection from a haze.

From the above-mentioned sand-hill we over-looked Provincetown and its harbor, now emptied of vessels, and also a wide expanse of ocean. As we did not wish to enter Provincetown before night, though it was cold and windy, we returned across the Deserts to the Atlantic side, and walked along the beach again nearly to Race Point, being still greedy of the sea influence. All the while it was not so calm as the reader may suppose, but it was blow, blow, blow, — roar, roar, roar, — tramp, tramp, tramp, — without interruption. The shore now trended nearly east and west.

Before sunset, having already seen the mackerel fleet returning into the Bay, we left the sea-shore on the north of Provincetown, and made our way across the Desert to the eastern extremity of the town. From the first high sand-hill, covered with beach-grass and bushes to its top, on the edge of the desert, we overlooked the shrubby hill and swamp country which surrounds Provincetown on the north, and protects it, in some measure, from the invading sand. Notwithstanding the universal barrenness, and the contiguity of the desert, I never saw an autumnal landscape so beautifully painted as this was. It was like the richest rug imaginable spread over an uneven surface; no damask nor velvet, nor Tyrian dye or stuffs, nor the work of any loom, could ever match it. There was the incredibly bright red of the Huckleberry, and the reddish brown of the Bayberry, mingled with the bright and living green of small Pitch-Pines, and also the duller green of the Bayberry, Boxberry, and Plum, the yellowish green of the Shrub-oaks, and the various golden and yellow and fawn-colored tints of the Birch and Maple and Aspen, — each making its own figure, and, in the midst, the few yellow sand-slides on the sides of the hills looked like the white floor seen through rents in the rug. Coming from the country as I did, and many autumnal woods as I had seen, this was perhaps the most novel and remarkable

sight that I saw on the Cape. Probably the brightness of the tints was enhanced by contrast with the sand which surrounded this tract. This was a part of the furniture of Cape Cod. We had for days walked up the long and bleak piazza which runs along her Atlantic side, then over the sanded floor of her halls, and now we were being introduced into her boudoir. The hundred white sails crowding round Long Point into Provincetown Harbor, seen over the painted hills in front, looked like toy ships upon a mantel-piece.

The peculiarity of this autumnal landscape consisted in the lowness and thickness of the shrubbery, no less than in the brightness of the tints. It was like a thick stuff of worsted or a fleece, and looked as if a giant could take it up by the hem, or rather the tasselled fringe which trailed out on the sand, and shake it, though it needed not to be shaken. But no doubt the dust would fly in that case, for not a little has accumulated underneath it. Was it not such an autumnal landscape as this which suggested our high-colored rugs and carpets? Hereafter when I look on a richer rug than usual, and study its figures, I shall think, there are the huckleberry hills, and there the denser swamps of boxberry and blueberry: there the shrub-oak patches and the bayberries, there the maples and the birches and the pines. What other dyes are to be compared to these? They were warmer colors than I had associated with the New England coast.

After threading a swamp full of boxberry, and climbing several hills covered with shrub-oaks, without a path, where shipwrecked men would be in danger of perishing in the night, we came down upon the eastern extremity of the four planks which run the whole length of Provincetown street. This, which is the last town on the Cape, lies mainly in one street along the curving beach fronting the southeast. The sand-hills, covered with shrubbery and interposed with swamps and ponds, rose immediately behind it in the form of a crescent, which is from half a mile to a mile or more wide in the middle, and beyond these is the desert, which is the greater part of its territory, stretching to the sea on the east and west and north. The town is compactly built in the narrow space, from ten to fifty rods deep, between the harbor and the sand-hills, and contained at that time about twenty-six hundred inhabitants. The houses, in which a more modern and pretending style has at length prevailed over the

fisherman's hut, stand on the inner or plank side of the street, and the fish and store houses, with the picturesque-looking windmills of the Salt-works, on the water side. The narrow portion of the beach between, forming the street, about eighteen feet wide, the only one where one carriage could pass another, if there was more than one carriage in the town, looked much "heavier" than any portion of the beach or the desert which we had walked on, it being above the reach of the highest tide, and the sand being kept loose by the occasional passage of a traveller. We learned that the four planks on which we were walking had been bought by the town's share of the Surplus Revenue, the disposition of which was a bone of contention between the inhabitants, till they wisely resolved thus to put it under foot. Yet some, it was said, were so provoked because they did not receive their particular share in money, that they persisted in walking in the sand a long time after the sidewalk was built. This is the only instance which I happen to know in which the surplus revenue proved a blessing to any town. A surplus revenue of dollars from the treasury to stem the greater evil of a surplus revenue of sand from the ocean. They expected to make a hard road by the time these planks were worn out. Indeed, they have already done so since we were there, and have almost forgotten their sandy baptism.

As we passed along we observed the inhabitants engaged in curing either fish or the coarse salt hay which they had brought home and spread on the beach before their doors, looking as yellow as if they had raked it out of the sea. The front-yard plots appeared like what indeed they were, portions of the beach fenced in, with Beach-grass growing in them, as if they were sometimes covered by the tide. You might still pick up shells and pebbles there. There were a few trees among the houses, especially silver abeles, willows, and balm-of-Gileads; and one man showed me a young oak which he had transplanted from behind the town, thinking it an apple-tree. But every man to his trade. Though he had little woodcraft, he was not the less weatherwise, and gave us one piece of information; viz., he had observed that when a thunder-cloud came up with a flood-tide it did not rain. This was the most completely maritime town that we were ever in. It was merely a good harbor, surrounded by land dry, if not firm, — an inhabited beach, whereon fishermen cured and stored

their fish, without any back country. When ashore the inhabitants still walk on planks. A few small patches have been reclaimed from the swamps, containing commonly half a dozen square rods only each. We saw one which was fenced with four lengths of rail; also a fence made wholly of hogshead-staves stuck in the ground. These, and such as these, were all the cultivated and cultivable land in Provincetown. We were told that there were thirty or forty acres in all, but we did not discover a quarter part so much, and that was well dusted with sand, and looked as if the desert was claiming it. They are now turning some of their swamps into Cranberry Meadows on quite an extensive scale.



A cranberry meadow

Yet far from being out of the way. Provincetown is directly in the way of the navigator, and he is lucky who does not run afoul of it in the dark. It is situated on one of the highways of commerce, and men from all parts of the globe touch there in the course of a year.

The mackerel fleet had nearly all got in before us, it being Saturday night, excepting that division which had stood down towards Chatham in the morning; and from a hill where we went to see the sun set in the Bay we counted two hundred goodly looking schooners at anchor in the harbor at various distances from the shore, and more were yet coming round the Cape. As each came to anchor,

it took in sail and swung round in the wind, and lowered its boat. They belonged chiefly to Wellfleet, Truro, and Cape Ann. This was that city of canvas which we had seen hull down in the horizon. Near at hand, and under bare poles, they were unexpectedly black-looking vessels, [Greek: melaiuai nêes.] A fisherman told us that there were fifteen hundred vessels in the mackerel fleet, and that he had counted three hundred and fifty in Provincetown Harbor at one time. Being obliged to anchor at a considerable distance from the shore on account of the shallowness of the water, they made the impression of a larger fleet than the vessels at the wharves of a large city. As they had been manoeuvring out there all day seemingly for our entertainment, while we were walking north-westward along the Atlantic, so now we found them flocking into Provincetown Harbor at night, just as we arrived, as if to meet us, and exhibit themselves close at hand. Standing by Race Point and Long Point with various speed, they reminded me of fowls coming home to roost.

These were genuine New England vessels. It is stated in the Journal of Moses Prince, a brother of the annalist, under date of 1721, at which time he visited Gloucester, that the first vessel of the class called schooner was built at Gloucester about eight years before, by Andrew Robinson; and late in the same century one Cotton Tufts gives us the tradition with some particulars, which he learned on a visit to the same place. According to the latter, Robinson having constructed a vessel which he masted and rigged in a peculiar manner, on her going off the stocks a bystander cried out, "*O, how she scoons!*" whereat Robinson replied, "*A schooner let her be!*" "From which time," says Tufts, "vessels thus masted and rigged have gone by the name of schooners; before which, vessels of this description were not known in Europe." (See Mass. Hist. Coll., Vol. IX., 1st Series, and Vol. I., 4th Series.) Yet I can hardly believe this, for a schooner has always seemed to me — the typical vessel.

According to C. E. Potter of Manchester, New Hampshire, the very word *schooner* is of New England origin, being from the Indian *schoon* or *scoot*, meaning to rush, as Schoodic, from *scoot* and *anke*, a place where water rushes. N. B. Somebody of Gloucester was to read a paper on this matter before a genealogical society, in Boston, March 3, 1859, according to the *Boston Journal*, q. v.

Nearly all who come out must walk on the four planks which I have mentioned, so that you are pretty sure to meet all the inhabitants of Provincetown who come out in the course of a day, provided you keep out yourself. This evening the planks were crowded with mackerel fishers, to whom we gave and from whom we took the wall, as we returned to our hotel. This hotel was kept by a tailor, his shop on the one side of the door, his hotel on the other, and his day seemed to be divided between carving meat and carving broadcloth.

The next morning, though it was still more cold and blustering than the day before, we took to the Deserts again, for we spent our days wholly out of doors, in the sun when there was any, and in the wind which never failed. After threading the shrubby hill country at the southwest end of the town, west of the Shank-Painter Swamp, whose expressive name — for we understood it at first as a landsman naturally would — gave it importance in our eyes, we crossed the sands to the shore south of Race Point and three miles distant, and thence roamed round eastward through the desert to where we had left the sea the evening before. We travelled five or six miles after we got out there, on a curving line, and might have gone nine or ten, over vast platters of pure sand, from the midst of which we could not see a particle of vegetation, excepting the distant thin fields of Beach-grass, which crowned and made the ridges toward which the sand sloped upward on each side; — all the while in the face of a cutting wind as cold as January; indeed, we experienced no weather so cold as this for nearly two months afterward. This desert extends from the extremity of the Cape, through Provincetown into Truro, and many a time as we were traversing it we were reminded of "Riley's Narrative" of his captivity in the sands of Arabia, notwithstanding the cold. Our eyes magnified the patches of Beach-grass into cornfields in the horizon, and we probably exaggerated the height of the ridges on account of the mirage. I was pleased to learn afterward, from Kalm's Travels in North America, that the inhabitants of the Lower St. Lawrence call this grass (*Calamagrostis arenaria*), and also Sea-lyme grass (*Elymus arenarius*), *seigle de me*; and he adds, "I have been assured that these plants grow in great plenty in Newfoundland, and on other North American shores; the places covered with them looking, at a distance, like cornfields;

which might explain the passage in our northern accounts [he wrote in 1749] of the excellent wine land [*Vinland det goda*, Translator], which mentions that they had found whole fields of wheat growing wild."

The Beach-grass is "two to four feet high, of a seagreen color," and it is said to be widely diffused over the world. In the Hebrides it is used for mats, pack-saddles, bags, hats, etc.; paper has been made of it at Dorchester in this State, and cattle eat it when tender. It has heads somewhat like rye, from six inches to a foot in length, and it is propagated both by roots and seeds. To express its love for sand, some botanists have called it *Psamma arenaria*, which is the Greek for sand, qualified by the Latin for sandy, — or sandy sand. As it is blown about by the wind, while it is held fast by its roots, it describes myriad circles in the sand as accurately as if they were made by compasses.

It was the dreariest scenery imaginable. The only animals which we saw on the sand at that time were spiders, which are to be found almost everywhere whether on snow or ice-water or sand, — and a venomous-looking, long, narrow worm, one of the myriapods, or thousand-legs. We were surprised to see spider-holes in that flowing sand with an edge as firm as that of a stoned well.

In June this sand was scored with the tracks of turtles both large and small, which had been out in the night, leading to and from the swamps. I was told by a *terroe filius* who has a "farm" on the edge of the desert, and is familiar with the fame of Provincetown, that one man had caught twenty-five snapping-turtles there the previous spring. His own method of catching them was to put a toad on a mackerel-hook and cast it into a pond, tying the line to a stump or stake on shore. Invariably the turtle when hooked crawled up the line to the stump, and was found waiting there by his captor, however long afterward. He also said that minks, muskrats, foxes, coons, and wild mice were found there, but no squirrels. We heard of sea-turtle as large as a barrel being found on the beach and on East Harbor marsh, but whether they were native there, or had been lost out of some vessel, did not appear. Perhaps they were the Salt-water Terrapin, or else the Smooth Terrapin, found thus far north. Many toads were met with where there was nothing but sand and beach-

grass. In Truro I had been surprised at the number of large light-colored toads everywhere hopping over the dry and sandy fields, their color corresponding to that of the sand. Snakes also are common on these pure sand beaches, and I have never been so much troubled by mosquitoes as in such localities. At the same season strawberries grew there abundantly in the little hollows on the edge of the desert standing amid the beach-grass in the sand, and the fruit of the shadbush or Amelanchier, which the inhabitants call Josh-pears (some think from juicy?), is very abundant on the hills. I fell in with an obliging man who conducted me to the best locality for strawberries. He said that he would not have shown me the place if he had not seen that I was a stranger, and could not anticipate him another year; I therefore feel bound in honor not to reveal it. When we came to a pond, he being the native did the honors and carried me over on his shoulders, like Sindbad. One good turn deserves another, and if he ever comes our way I will do as much for him.

In one place we saw numerous dead tops of trees projecting through the otherwise uninterrupted desert, where, as we afterward learned, thirty or forty years before a flourishing forest had stood, and now, as the trees were laid bare from year to year, the inhabitants cut off their tops for fuel.

We saw nobody that day outside of the town; it was too wintry for such as had seen the Backside before, or for the greater number who never desire to see it, to venture out; and we saw hardly a track to show that any had ever crossed this desert. Yet I was told that some are always out on the Back-side night and day in severe weather, looking for wrecks, in order that they may get the job of discharging the cargo, or the like, — and thus shipwrecked men are succored. But, generally speaking, the inhabitants rarely visit these sands. One who had lived in Provincetown thirty years told me that he had not been through to the north side within that time. Sometimes the natives themselves come near perishing by losing their way in snow-storms behind the town.

The wind was not a Sirocco or Simoon, such as we associate with the desert, but a New England northeaster, — and we sought shelter in vain under the sand-hills, for it blew all about them, rounding them into cones, and was sure to find us out on whichever side we

sat. From time to time we lay down and drank at little pools in the sand, filled with pure fresh water, all that was left, probably, of a pond or swamp. The air was filled with dust like snow, and cutting sand which made the face tingle, and we saw what it must be to face it when the weather was drier, and, if possible, windier still, — to face a migrating sand-bar in the air, which has picked up its duds and is off, — to be whipped with a cat, not o' nine-tails, but of a myriad of tails, and each one a sting to it. A Mr. Whitman, a former minister of Wellfleet, used to write to his inland friends that the blowing sand scratched the windows so that he was obliged to have one new pane set every week, that he might see out.

On the edge of the shrubby woods the sand had the appearance of an inundation which was overwhelming them, terminating in an abrupt bank many feet higher than the surface on which they stood, and having partially buried the out-side trees. The moving sand-hills of England, called Dunes or Downs, to which these have been likened, are either formed of sand cast up by the sea, or of sand taken from the land itself in the first place by the wind, and driven still farther inward. It is here a tide of sand impelled by waves and wind, slowly flowing from the sea toward the town. The northeast winds are said to be the strongest, but the northwest to move most sand, because they are the driest. On the shore of the Bay of Biscay many villages were formerly destroyed in this way. Some of the ridges of beach-grass which we saw were planted by government many years ago, to preserve the harbor of Provincetown and the extremity of the Cape. I talked with some who had been employed in the planting. In the "Description of the Eastern Coast," which I have already referred to, it is said: "Beach-grass during the spring and summer grows about two feet and a half. If surrounded by naked beach, the storms of autumn and winter heap up the sand on all sides, and cause it to rise nearly to the top of the plant. In the ensuing spring the grass mounts anew; is again covered with sand in the winter; and thus a hill or ridge continues to ascend as long as there is a sufficient base to support it, or till the circumscribing sand, being also covered with beach-grass, will no longer yield to the force of the winds." Sand-hills formed in this way are sometimes one hundred feet high and of every variety of form, like snow-drifts, or Arab tents, and are

continually shifting. The grass roots itself very firmly. When I endeavored to pull it up, it usually broke off ten inches or a foot below the surface, at what had been the surface the year before, as appeared by the numerous offshoots there, it being a straight, hard, round shoot, showing by its length how much the sand had accumulated the last year; and sometimes the dead stubs of a previous season were pulled up with it from still deeper in the sand, with their own more decayed shoot attached, — so that the age of a sand-hill, and its rate of increase for several years, is pretty accurately recorded in this way.



The sand dunes drifting in upon the trees

Old Gerard, the English herbalist, says, p. 1250: “I find mention in Stowe’s Chronicle, in Anno 1555, of a certain pulse or pease, as they term it, wherewith the poor people at that time, there being a great dearth, were miraculously helped: he thus mentions it. In the month of August (saith he), in Suffolke, at a place by the sea side all of hard stone and pibble, called in those parts a shelf, lying between the towns of Orford and Aldborough, where neither grew grass nor any earth was ever seen; it chanced in this barren place suddenly to spring up without any tillage or sowing, great abundance of peason, whereof the poor gathered (as men judged) above one hundred quarters, yet remained some ripe and some blossoming, as many as

ever there were before: to the which place rode the Bishop of Norwich and the Lord Willoughby, with others in great number, who found nothing but hard, rocky stone the space of three yards under the roots of these peason, which roots were great and long, and very sweet." He tells us also that Gesner learned from Dr. Cajus that there were enough there to supply thousands of men. He goes on to say that "they without doubt grew there many years before, but were not observed till hunger made them take notice of them, and quickened their invention, which commonly in our people is very dull, especially in finding out food of this nature. My worshipful friend Dr. Argent hath told me that many years ago he was in this place, and caused his man to pull among the beach with his hands, and follow the roots so long until he got some equal in length unto his height, yet could come to no ends of them." Gerard never saw them, and is not certain what kind they were.

In Dwight's Travels in New England it is stated that the inhabitants of Truro were formerly regularly warned under the authority of law in the month of April yearly, to plant beachgrass, as elsewhere they are warned to repair the highways. They dug up the grass in bunches, which were afterward divided into several smaller ones, and set about three feet apart, in rows, so arranged as to break joints and obstruct the passage of the wind. It spread itself rapidly, the weight of the seeds when ripe bending the heads of the grass, and so dropping directly by its side and vegetating there. In this way, for instance, they built up again that part of the Cape between Truro and Provincetown where the sea broke over in the last century. They have now a public road near there, made by laying sods, which were full of roots, bottom upward and close together on the sand, double in the middle of the track, then spreading brush evenly over the sand on each side for half a dozen feet, planting beachgrass on the banks in regular rows, as above described, and sticking a fence of brush against the hollows.

The attention of the general government was first attracted to the danger which threatened Cape Cod Harbor from the inroads of the sand, about thirty years ago, and commissioners were at that time appointed by Massachusetts, to examine the premises. They reported in June, 1825, that, owing to "the trees and brush having been cut

down, and the beach-grass destroyed on the seaward side of the Cape, opposite the Harbor," the original surface of the ground had been broken up and removed by the wind toward the Harbor, — during the previous fourteen years, — over an extent of "one half a mile in breadth, and about four and a half miles in length."— "The space where a few years since were some of the highest lands on the Cape, covered with trees and bushes," presenting "an extensive waste of undulating sand "; — and that, during the previous twelve months, the sand "had approached the Harbor an average distance of fifty rods, for an extent of four and a half miles!" and unless some measures were adopted to check its progress, it would in a few years destroy both the harbor and the town. They therefore recommended that beach-grass be set out on a curving line over a space ten rods wide and four and a half miles long, and that cattle, horses, and sheep be prohibited from going abroad, and the inhabitants from cutting the brush.

I was told that about thirty thousand dollars in all had been appropriated to this object, though it was complained that a great part of this was spent foolishly, as the public money is wont to be. Some say that while the government is planting beach-grass behind the town for the protection of the harbor, the inhabitants are rolling the sand into the harbor in wheelbarrows, in order to make house-lots. The Patent-Office has recently imported the seed of this grass from Holland, and distributed it over the country, but probably we have as much as the Hollanders.

Thus Cape Cod is anchored to the heavens, as it were, by a myriad little cables of beach-grass, and, if they should fail, would become a total wreck, and erelong go to the bottom. Formerly, the cows were permitted to go at large, and they ate many strands of the cable by which the Cape is moored, and well-nigh set it adrift, as the bull did the boat which was moored with a grass rope; but now they are not permitted to wander.

A portion of Truro which has considerable taxable property on it has lately been added to Provincetown, and I was told by a Truro man that his townsmen talked of petitioning the legislature to set off the next mile of their territory also to Provincetown, in order that she might have her share of the lean as well as the fat, and take care of

the road through it; for its whole value is literally to hold the Cape together, and even this it has not always done. But Provincetown strenuously declines the gift.

The wind blowed so hard from the northeast that, cold as it was, we resolved to see the breakers on the Atlantic side, whose din we had heard all the morning; so we kept on eastward through the Desert, till we struck the shore again northeast of Provincetown, and exposed ourselves to the full force of the piercing blast. There are extensive shoals there over which the sea broke with great force. For half a mile from the shore it was one mass of white breakers, which, with the wind, made such a din that we could hardly hear ourselves speak. Of this part of the coast it is said: “A northeast storm, the most violent and fatal to seamen, as it is frequently accompanied with snow, blows directly on the land: a strong current sets along the shore; add to which that ships, during the operation of such a storm, endeavor to work northward, that they may get into the bay. Should they be unable to weather Race Point, the wind drives them on the shore, and a shipwreck is inevitable. Accordingly, the strand is everywhere covered with the fragments of vessels.” But since the Highland Light was erected, this part of the coast is less dangerous, and it is said that more shipwrecks occur south of that light, where they were scarcely known before.



The

white breakers on the Atlantic side

This was the stormiest sea that we witnessed, — more *tumultuous*, my companion affirmed, than the rapids of Niagara, and, of course, on a far greater scale. It was the ocean in a gale, a clear, cold day, with only one sail in sight, which labored much, as if it were anxiously seeking a harbor. It was high tide when we reached the shore, and in one place, for a considerable distance, each wave dashed up so high that it was difficult to pass between it and the bank. Further south, where the bank was higher, it would have been dangerous to attempt it. A native of the Cape has told me that, many years ago, three boys, his playmates, having gone to this beach in Wellfleet to visit a wreck, when the sea receded ran down to the wreck, and when it came in ran before it to the bank, but the sea following fast at their heels, caused the bank to cave and bury them alive.

It was the roaring sea, [Greek: thalassa êchêessa, —
amphi de t akrai
Êiones booôsin, erenomenês alos exô.]

And the summits of the bank
Around resound, the sea being vomited forth.

As we stood looking on this scene we were gradually convinced that fishing here and in a pond were not, in all respects, the same, and that he who waits for fair weather and a calm sea may never see the glancing skin of a mackerel, and get no nearer to a cod than the wooden emblem in the State House.

Having lingered on the shore till we were well-nigh chilled to death by the wind, and were ready to take shelter in a Charity-house, we turned our weather-beaten faces toward Provincetown and the Bay again, having now more than doubled the Cape.

I. e. a vessel.

The sea, which is arched over its sandy bottom like a heaven.

Battle.

X. PROVINCETOWN

Early the next morning I walked into a fish-house near our hotel, where three or four men were engaged in trundling out the pickled fish on barrows, and spreading them to dry. They told me that a vessel had lately come in from the Banks with forty-four thousand codfish. Timothy Dwight says that, just before he arrived at Provincetown, "a schooner come in from the Great Bank with fifty-six thousand fish, almost one thousand five hundred quintals, taken in a single voyage; the main deck being, on her return, eight inches under water in calm weather." The cod in this fish-house, just out of the pickle, lay packed several feet deep, and three or four men stood on them in cowhide boots, pitching them on to the barrows with an instrument which had a single iron point. One young man, who chewed tobacco, spat on the fish repeatedly. Well, sir, thought I, when that older man sees you he will speak to you. But presently I saw the older man do the same thing. It reminded me of the figs of Smyrna. "How long does it take to cure these fish? I asked.

"Two good drying days, sir," was the answer.

I walked across the street again into the hotel to breakfast, and mine host inquired if I would take "hashed fish or beans." I took beans, though they never were a favorite dish of mine. I found next summer that this was still the only alternative proposed here, and the landlord was still ringing the changes on these two words. In the former dish there was a remarkable proportion of fish. As you travel inland the potato predominates. It chanced that I did not taste fresh fish of any kind on the Cape, and I was assured that they were not so much used there as in the country. That is where they are cured, and where, sometimes, travellers are cured of eating them. No fresh meat was slaughtered in Provincetown, but the little that was used at the public houses was brought from Boston by the steamer.



In Provincetown harbor

A great many of the houses here were surrounded by fish-flakes close up to the sills on all sides, with only a narrow passage two or three feet wide, to the front door; so that instead of looking out into a flower or grass plot, you looked on to so many square rods of cod turned wrong side outwards. These parterres were said to be least like a flower-garden in a good drying day in mid-summer. There were flakes of every age and pattern, and some so rusty and overgrown with lichens that they looked as if they might have served the founders of the fishery here. Some had broken down under the weight of successive harvests. The principal employment of the inhabitants at this time seemed to be to trundle out their fish and spread them in the morning, and bring them in at night. I saw how many a loafer who chanced to be out early enough got a job at wheeling out the fish of his neighbor who was anxious to improve the whole of a fair day. Now, then, I knew where salt fish were caught. They were everywhere lying on their backs, their collar-bones standing out like the lapels of a man-o'-war-man's jacket, and inviting all things to come and rest in their bosoms; and all things, with a few exceptions, accepted the invitation. I think, by the way, that if you should wrap a large salt fish round a small boy, he would have a coat of such a fashion as I have seen many a one wear to muster. Salt fish were stacked up on the wharves, looking like corded

wood, maple and yellow birch with the bark left on. I mistook them for this at first, and such in one sense they were, — fuel to maintain our vital fires, — an eastern wood which grew on the Grand Banks. Some were stacked in the form of huge flower-pots, being laid in small circles with the tails outwards, each circle successively larger than the preceding until the pile was three or four feet high, when the circles rapidly diminished, so as to form a conical roof. On the shores of New Brunswick this is covered with birch-bark, and stones are placed upon it, and being thus rendered impervious to the rain, it is left to season before being packed for exportation.

It is rumored that in the fall the cows here are sometimes fed on cod's-heads! The godlike part of the cod, which, like the human head, is curiously and wonderfully made, forsooth has but little less brain in it, — coming; to such an end I to be craunched by cows I I felt my own skull crack from sympathy. What if the heads of men were to be cut off to feed the cows of a superior order of beings who inhabit the islands in the ether? Away goes your fine brain, the house of thought and instinct, to swell the cud of a ruminant animal! — However, an inhabitant assured me that they did not make a practice of feeding cows on cod's-heads; the cows merely would eat them sometimes; but I might live there all my days and never see it done. A cow wanting salt would also sometimes lick out all the soft part of a cod on the flakes. This he would have me believe was the foundation of this fish-story.

It has been a constant traveller's tale and perhaps slander, now for thousands of years, the Latins and Greeks have repeated it, that this or that nation feeds its cattle, or horses, or sheep, on fish, as may be seen in OElian and Pliny, but in the Journal of Nearchus, who was Alexander's admiral, and made a voyage from the Indus to the Euphrates three hundred and twenty-six years before Christ, it is said that the inhabitants of a portion of the intermediate coast, whom he called Ichthyophagi or Fish-eaters, not only ate fishes raw and also dried and pounded in a whale's vertebra for a mortar and made into a paste, but gave them to their cattle, there being no grass on the coast; and several modern travellers — Braybosa, Niebuhr, and others — make the same report. Therefore in balancing the evidence I am still in doubt about the Provincetown cows. As for other domestic

animals. Captain King in his continuation of Captain Cook's Journal in 1779, says of the dogs of Kamtschatka, "Their food in the winter consists entirely of the heads, entrail, and backbones of salmon, which are put aside and dried for that purpose; and with this diet they are fed but sparingly." (Cook's Journal, Vol. VII., p. 315.)

As we are treating of fishy matters, let me insert what Pliny says, that "the commanders of the fleets of Alexander the Great have related that the Gedrosi, who dwell on the banks of the river Arabis, are in the habit of making the doors of their houses with the jaw-bones of fishes, and raftering the roofs with their bones." Strabo tells the same of the Ichthyophagi. "Hardouin remarks that the Basques of his day were in the habit of fencing their gardens with the ribs of the whale, which sometimes exceeded twenty feet in length; and Cuvier says that at the present time the jaw-bone of the whale is used in Norway for the purpose of making beams or posts for buildings." (Bohn's ed., trans, of Pliny, Vol. II., p. 361.) Herodotus says the inhabitants on Lake Prasias in Thrace (living on piles) "give fish for fodder to their horses and beasts of burden."

Provincetown was apparently what is called a flourishing town. Some of the inhabitants asked me if I did not think that they appeared to be well off generally. I said that I did, and asked how many there were in the almshouse. "O, only one or two, infirm or idiotic," answered they. The outward aspect of the houses and shops frequently suggested a poverty which their interior comfort and even richness disproved. You might meet a lady daintily dressed in the Sabbath morning, wading in among the sandhills, from church, where there appeared no house fit to receive her, yet no doubt the interior of the house answered to the exterior of the lady. As for the interior of the inhabitants I am still in the dark about it. I had a little intercourse with some whom I met in the street, and was often agreeably disappointed by discovering the intelligence of rough, and what would be considered unpromising specimens. Nay, I ventured to call on one citizen the next summer, by special invitation. I found him sitting in his front doorway, that Sabbath evening, prepared for me to come in unto him; but unfortunately for his reputation for keeping open house, there was stretched across his gateway a circular cobweb of the largest kind and quite entire. This looked so ominous

that I actually turned aside and went in the back way.

This Monday morning was beautifully mild and calm, both on land and water, promising us a smooth passage across the Bay, and the fishermen feared that it would not be so good a drying day as the cold and windy one which preceded it. There could hardly have been a greater contrast. This was the first of the Indian summer days, though at a late hour in the morning we found the wells in the sand behind the town still covered with ice, which had formed in the night. What with wind and sun my most prominent feature fairly cast its slough. But I assure you it will take more than two good drying days to cure me of rambling. After making an excursion among the hills in the neighborhood of the Shank-Painter Swamp, and getting a little work done in its line, we took our seat upon the highest sand-hill overlooking the town, in mid-air, on a long plank stretched across between two hillocks of sand, where some boys were endeavoring in vain to fly their kite; and there we remained the rest of that forenoon looking out over the placid harbor, and watching for the first appearance of the steamer from Wellfleet, that we might be in readiness to go on board when we heard the whistle off Long Point.

We got what we could out of the boys in the meanwhile. Provincetown boys are of course all sailors and have sailors' eyes. When we were at the Highland Light the last summer, seven or eight miles from Provincetown Harbor, and wished to know one Sunday morning if the *Olata*, a well-known yacht, had got in from Boston, so that we could return in her, a Provincetown boy about ten years old, who chanced to be at the table, remarked that she had. I asked him how he knew. "I just saw her come in," said he. When I expressed surprise that he could distinguish her from other vessels so far, he said that there were not so many of those two-topsail schooners about but that he could tell her. Palfrey said, in his oration at Barnstable, the duck does not take to the water with a surer instinct than the Barnstable boy. [He might have said the Cape Cod boy as well.] He leaps from his leading-strings into the shrouds, it is but a bound from the mother's lap to the masthead. He boxes the compass in his infant soliloquies. He can hand, reef, and steer by the time he flies a kite.

This was the very day one would have chosen to sit upon a hill overlooking sea and land, and muse there. The mackerel fleet was rapidly taking its departure, one schooner after another, and standing round the Cape, like fowls leaving their roosts in the morning to disperse themselves in distant fields. The turtle-like sheds of the salt-works were crowded into every nook in the hills, immediately behind the town, and their now idle windmills lined the shore. It was worth the while to see by what coarse and simple chemistry this almost necessary of life is obtained, with the sun for journeyman, and a single apprentice to do the chores for a large establishment. It is a sort of tropical labor, pursued too in the sunniest season; more interesting than gold or diamond-washing, which, I fancy, it somewhat resembles at a distance. In the production of the necessaries of life Nature is ready enough to assist man. So at the potash works which I have seen at Hull, where they burn the stems of the kelp and boil the ashes. Verily, chemistry is not a splitting of hairs when you have got half a dozen raw Irishmen in the laboratory. It is said, that owing to the reflection of the sun from the sand-hills, and there being absolutely no fresh water emptying into the harbor, the same number of superficial feet yields more salt here than in any other part of the county. A little rain is considered necessary to clear the air, and make salt fast and good, for as paint does not dry, so water does not evaporate in dog-day weather. But they were now, as elsewhere on the Cape, breaking up their salt-works and selling them for lumber.

From that elevation we could overlook the operations of the inhabitants almost as completely as if the roofs had been taken off. They were busily covering the wicker-worked flakes about their houses with salted fish, and we now saw that the back yards were improved for this purpose as much as the front; where one man's fish ended another's began. In almost every yard we detected some little building from which these treasures were being trundled forth and systematically spread, and we saw that there was an art as well as a knack even in spreading fish, and that a division of labor was profitably practised. One man was withdrawing his fishes a few inches beyond the nose of his neighbor's cow which had stretched her neck over a paling to get at them. It seemed a quite domestic

employment, like drying clothes, and indeed in some parts of the county the women take part in it.

I noticed in several places on the Cape a sort of clothes-*flakes*. They spread brush on the ground, and fence it round, and then lay their clothes on it, to keep them from the sand. This is a Cape Cod clothes-yard.

The sand is the great enemy here. The tops of some of the hills were enclosed and a board put up, forbidding all persons entering the enclosure, lest their feet should disturb the sand, and set it a-blowing or a-sliding. The inhabitants are obliged to get leave from the authorities to cut wood behind the town for fish-flakes, bean-poles, pea-brush, and the like, though, as we were told, they may transplant trees from one part of the township to another without leave. The sand drifts like snow, and sometimes the lower story of a house is concealed by it, though it is kept off by a wall. The houses were formerly built on piles, in order that the driving sand might pass under them. We saw a few old ones here still standing on their piles, but they were boarded up now, being protected by their younger neighbors. There was a school-house, just under the hill on which we sat, filled with sand up to the tops of the desks, and of course the master and scholars had fled. Perhaps they had imprudently left the windows open one day, or neglected to mend a broken pane. Yet in one place was advertised "Fine sand for sale here," — I could hardly believe my eyes, — probably some of the street sifted, — a good instance of the fact that a man confers a value on the most worthless thing by mixing himself with it, according to which rule we must have conferred a value on the whole back-side of Cape Cod; — but I thought that if they could have advertised "Fat Soil," or perhaps "Fine sand got rid of," ay, and "Shoes emptied here," it would have been more alluring. As we looked down on the town, I thought that I saw one man, who probably lived beyond the extremity of the planking, steering and tacking for it in a sort of snow-shoes, but I may have been mistaken. In some pictures of Provincetown the persons of the inhabitants are not drawn below the ankles, so much being supposed to be buried in the sand. Nevertheless, natives of Provincetown assured me that they could walk in the middle of the road without trouble even in slippers, for they had learned how to put

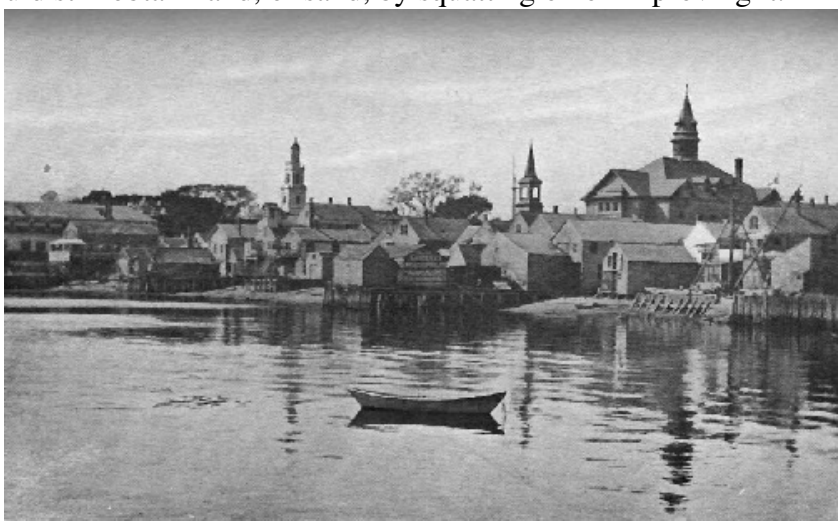
their feet down and lift them up without taking in any sand. One man said that he should be surprised if he found half a dozen grains of sand in his pumps at night, and stated, moreover, that the young ladies had a dexterous way of emptying their shoes at each step, which it would take a stranger a long time to learn. The tires of the stage-wheels were about five inches wide; and the wagon-tires generally on the Cape are an inch or two wider, as the sand is an inch or two deeper than elsewhere. I saw a baby's wagon with tires six inches wide to keep it near the surface. The more tired the wheels, the less tired the horses. Yet all the time that we were in Provincetown, which was two days and nights, we saw only one horse and cart, and they were conveying a coffin. They did not try such experiments there on common occasions. The next summer I saw only the two-wheeled horse-cart which conveyed me thirty rods into the harbor on my way to the steamer. Yet we read that there were two horses and two yoke of oxen here in 1791, and we were told that there were several more when we were there, beside the stage team. In Barber's Historical Collections, it is said, "So rarely are wheel-carriages seen in the place that they are a matter of some curiosity to the younger part of the community. A lad who understood navigating the ocean much better than land travel, on seeing a man driving a wagon in the street, expressed his surprise at his being able to drive so straight without the assistance of a rudder." There was no rattle of carts, and there would have been no rattle if there had been any carts. Some saddle-horses that passed the hotel in the evening merely made the sand fly with a rustling sound like a writer sanding his paper copiously, but there was no sound of their tread. No doubt there are more horses and carts there at present, A sleigh is never seen, or at least is a great novelty on the Cape, the snow being either absorbed by the sand or blown into drifts.

Nevertheless, the inhabitants of the Cape generally do not complain of their "soil," but will tell you that it is good enough for them to dry their fish on.

Notwithstanding all this sand, we counted three meeting-houses, and four school-houses nearly as large, on this street, though some had a tight board fence about them to preserve the plot within level and hard. Similar fences, even within a foot of many of the houses,

gave the town a less cheerful and hospitable appearance than it would otherwise have had. They told us that, on the whole, the sand had made no progress for the last ten years, the cows being no longer permitted to go at large, and every means being taken to stop the sandy tide.

In 1727 Provincetown was "invested with peculiar privileges." for its encouragement. Once or twice it was nearly abandoned; but now lots on the street fetch a high price, though titles to them were first obtained by possession and improvement, and they are still transferred by quitclaim deeds merely, the township being the property of the State. But though lots were so valuable on the street, you might in many places throw a stone over them to where a man could still obtain land, or sand, by squatting on or improving it.



Provincetown — A bit of the village from the wharf

Stones are very rare on the Cape. I saw a very few small stones used for pavements and for bank walls, in one or two places in my walk, but they are so scarce that, as I was informed, vessels have been forbidden to take them from the beach for ballast, and therefore their crews used to land at night and steal them. I did not hear of a rod of regular stone wall below Orleans. Yet I saw one man underpinning a new house in Eastham with some "rocks," as he called them, which he said a neighbor had collected with great pains in the course of years, and finally made over to him. This I thought

was a gift worthy of being recorded, — equal to a transfer of California "rocks," almost. Another man who was assisting him, and who seemed to be a close observer of nature, hinted to me the locality of a rock in that neighborhood which was "forty-two paces in circumference and fifteen feet high," for he saw that I was a stranger, and, probably, would not carry it off. Yet I suspect that the locality of the few large rocks on the forearm of the Cape is well known to the inhabitants generally. I even met with one man who had got a smattering of mineralogy, but where he picked it up I could not guess. I thought that he would meet with some interesting geological nuts for him to crack, if he should ever visit the mainland, Cohasset, or Marblehead for instance.

The well stones at the Highland Light were brought from Hingham, but the wells and cellars of the Cape are generally built of brick, which also are imported. The cellars, as well as the wells, are made in a circular form, to prevent the sand from pressing in the wall. The former are only from nine to twelve feet in diameter, and are said to be very cheap, since a single tier of brick will suffice for a cellar of even larger dimensions. Of course, if you live in the sand, you will not require a large cellar to hold your roots. In Provincetown, when formerly they suffered the sand to drive under their houses, obliterating all rudiments of a cellar, they did not raise a vegetable to put into one. One farmer in Wellfleet, who raised fifty bushels of potatoes, showed me his cellar under a corner of his house, not more than nine feet in diameter, looking like a cistern: but he had another of the same size under his barn.

You need dig only a few feet almost anywhere near the shore of the Cape to find fresh water. But that which we tasted was invariably poor. though the inhabitants called it good, as if they were comparing it with salt water. In the account of Truro, it is said. "Wells dug near the shore are dry at low water, or rather at what is called young flood, but are replenished with the flowing of the tide," — the salt water, which is lowest in the sand, apparently forcing the fresh up. When you express your surprise at the greenness of a Provincetown garden on the beach, in a dry season, they will sometimes tell you that the tide forces the moisture up to them. It is an interesting fact that low sand-bars in the midst of the ocean, perhaps even those which are

laid bare only at low tide, are reservoirs of fresh water at which the thirsty mariner can supply himself. They appear, like huge sponges, to hold the rain and dew which fall on them, and which, by capillary attraction, are prevented from mingling with the surrounding brine.

The Harbor of Provincetown — which, as well as the greater part of the Bay, and a wide expanse of ocean, we overlooked from our perch — is deservedly famous. It opens to the south, is free from rocks, and is never frozen over. It is said that the only ice seen in it drifts in sometimes from Barnstable or Plymouth. Dwight remarks that "The storms which prevail on the American coast generally come from the east; and there is no other harbor on a windward shore within two hundred miles." J. D. Graham, who has made a very minute and thorough survey of this harbor and the adjacent waters, states that "its capacity, depth of water, excellent anchorage, and the complete shelter it affords from all winds, combine to render it one of the most valuable ship harbors on our coast." It is *the* harbor of the Cape and of the fishermen of Massachusetts generally. It was known to navigators several years at least before the settlement of Plymouth. In Captain John Smith's map of New England, dated 1614. it bears the name of Milford Haven, and Massachusetts Bay that of Stuard's Bay. His Highness, Prince Charles, changed the name of Cape Cod to Cape James; but even princes have not always power to change a name for the worse, and as Cotton Mather said, Cape Cod is "a name which I suppose it will never lose till shoals of codfish be seen swimming on its highest hills."

Many an early voyager was unexpectedly caught by this hook, and found himself embayed. On successive maps, Cape Cod appears sprinkled over with French, Dutch, and English names, as it made part of New France, New Holland, and New England. On one map Provincetown Harbor is called "Fuic (bownet?) Bay," Barnstable Bay "Staten Bay," and the sea north of it "Mare del Noort," or the North Sea. On another, the extremity of the Cape is called "Staten Hoeck," or the States Hook. On another, by Young, this has Noord Zee, Staten hoeck or Hit hoeck, but the copy at Cambridge has no date; the whole Cape is called "Niew Hollant," (after Hudson); and on another still, the shore between Race Point and Wood End appears to be called "Bevechier." In Champlain's admirable Map of

New France, including the oldest recognizable map of what is now the New England coast with which I am acquainted, Cape Cod is called C. Blan (i.e. Cape White), from the color of its sands, and Massachusetts Bay is Baye Blanche. It was visited by De Monts and Champlain in 1605, and the next year was further explored by Poitrincourt and Champlain. The latter has given a particular account of these explorations in his "Voyages," together with separate charts and soundings of two of its harbors, — *Malle Barre*, the Bad Bar (Nauset Harbor?), a name now applied to what the French called *Cap Baturier*; and *Port Fortune*, apparently Chatham Harbor. Both these names are copied on the map of "Novi Belgii," in Ogilvy's America. He also describes minutely the manners and customs of the savages, and represents by a plate the savages surprising the French and killing five or six of them. The French afterward killed some of the natives, and wished, by way of revenge, to carry off some and make them grind in their hand-mill at Port Royal.

It is remarkable that there is not in English any adequate or correct account of the French exploration of what is now the coast of New England, between 1604 and 1608, though it is conceded that they then made the first permanent European settlement on the continent of North America north of St. Augustine. If the lions had been the painters it would have been otherwise. This omission is probably to be accounted for partly by the fact that the *early edition* of Champlain's "Voyages" had not been consulted for this purpose. This contains by far the most particular, and, I think, the most interesting chapter of what we may call the Ante-Pilgrim history of New England, extending to one hundred and sixty pages quarto; but appears to be unknown equally to the historian and the orator on Plymouth Rock. Bancroft does not mention Champlain at all among the authorities for De Monts's expedition, nor does he say that he ever visited the coast of New England. Though he bore the title of pilot to De Monts, he was, in *another sense*, the leading spirit, as well as the historian of the expedition. Holmes, Hildreth, and Barry, and apparently all our historians who mention Champlain, refer to the edition of 1632, in which all the separate charts of our harbors, etc., and about one-half the narrative, are omitted; for the author explored so many lands afterward that he could afford to forget a part

of what he had done. Hildreth, speaking of De Monts's expedition, says that "he looked into the Penobscot [in 1605], which Pring had discovered two years before," saying nothing about Champlain's extensive exploration of it for De Monts in 1604 (Holmes says 1608, and refers to Purchas); also that he followed in the track of Pring along the coast "to Cape Cod, which he called Malabarre." (Haliburton had made the same statement before him in 1829. He called it Cap Blanc, and Malle Barre (the Bad Bar) was the name given to a harbor on the east side of the Cape). Pring says nothing about a river there. Belknap says that Weymouth discovered it in 1605. Sir F. Gorges, says, in his narration (Maine Hist. Coll., Vol. II., p. 19), 1658, that Pring in 1606 "made a perfect discovery of all the rivers and harbors." This is the most I can find. Bancroft makes Champlain to have dis-covered more western rivers in Maine, not naming the Penobscot; he, however, must have been the discoverer of distances on this river (see Belknap, p. 147). Pring was absent from England only about six months, and sailed by this part of Cape Cod (Malabarre) be-cause it yielded no sassafras, while the French, who probably had not heard of Pring, were patiently for years exploring the coast in search of a place of settlement, sounding and surveying its harbors.

John Smith's map, published in 1616, from observations in 1614-15, is by many regarded as the oldest map of New England. It is the first that was made after this country was called New England, for he so called it; but in Champlain's "Voyages," edition 1613 (and Lescarbot, in 1612, quotes a still earlier account of his voyage), there is a map of it made when it was known to Christendom as New France, called *Carte Géographique de la Nouvelle Franse faictte par le Sieur de Champlain Saint Tongois Cappitaine ordinaire pour le roi en la Marine, — faict l'en 1612*, from his observations between 1604 and 1607; a map extending from Labrador to Cape Cod and westward *to the Great Lakes*, and crowded with information, geographical, ethnographical, zoölogical, and botanical. He even gives the variation of the compass as observed by himself at that date on many parts of the coast. This, taken together with the many *separate charts* of harbors and their soundings on a large scale, which this volume contains, — among the rest. *Qui ni be quy*

(Kennebec), *Chouacoit R.* (Saco R.), *Le Beau port, Port St. Louis* (near Cape Ann), and others on our coast, — but *which are not in the edition of 1632*, makes this a completer map of the New England and adjacent northern coast than was made for half a century afterward, almost, we might be allowed to say, till another Frenchman, Des Barres, made another for us, which only our late Coast Survey has superseded. Most of the maps of this coast made for a long time after betray their indebtedness to Champlain. He was a skilful navigator, a man of science, and geographer to the King of France. He crossed the Atlantic about twenty times, and made nothing of it; often in a small vessel in which few would dare to go to sea today; and on one occasion making the voyage from Tadoussac to St. Malo in eighteen days. He was in this neighborhood, that is, between Annapolis, Nova Scotia, and Cape Cod, observing the land and its inhabitants, and making a map of the coast, from May, 1604, to September, 1607, *or about three and a half years*, and he has described minutely his method of surveying harbors. By his own account, a part of his map was engraved in 1604 (?). When Pont-Grave and others returned to France in 1606, he remained at Port Royal with Poitrincourt, "in order," says he, "by the aid of God, to finish the chart of the coasts which I had begun"; and again in his volume, printed before John Smith visited this part of America, he says: "It seems to me that I have done my duty as far as I could, if I have not forgotten to put in my said chart whatever I saw, and give a particular knowledge to the public of what had never been described nor discovered so particularly as I have done it, although some other may have heretofore written of it; but it was a very small affair in comparison with what we have discovered within the last ten years."

It is not generally remembered, if known, by the descendants of the Pilgrims, that when their forefathers were spending their first memorable winter in the New World, they had for neighbors a colony of French no further off than Port Royal (Annapolis, Nova Scotia), three hundred miles distant (Prince seems to make it about five hundred miles); where, in spite of many vicissitudes, they had been for fifteen years. They built a grist-mill there as early as 1606; also made bricks and turpentine on a stream, Williamson says, in 1606. De Monts, who was a Protestant, brought his minister with

him, who came to blows with the Catholic priest on the subject of religion. Though these founders of Acadie endured no less than the Pilgrims, and about the same proportion of them — thirty-five out of seventy-nine (Williamson's Maine says thirty-six out of seventy) — died the first winter at St. Croix, 1604-5, sixteen years earlier, no orator, to my knowledge, has ever celebrated their enterprise (Williamson's History of Maine does considerably), while the trials which their successors and descendants endured at the hands of the English have furnished a theme for both the historian and poet. (See Bancroft's History and Longfellow's Evangeline.) The remains at their fort at St. Croix were discovered at the end of the last century, and helped decide where the true St. Croix, our boundary, was.

The very gravestones of those Frenchmen are probably older than the oldest English monument in New England north of the Elizabeth Islands, or perhaps anywhere in New England, for if there are any traces of Gosnold's storehouse left, his strong works are gone. Bancroft says, advisedly, in 1834, "It requires a believing eye to discern the ruins of the fort"; and that there were no ruins of a fort in 1837. Dr. Charles T. Jackson tells me that, in the course of a geological survey in 1827, he discovered a gravestone, a slab of trap rock, on Goat Island, opposite Annapolis (Port Royal), in Nova Scotia, bearing a Masonic coat-of-arms and the date 1606, which is fourteen years earlier than the landing of the Pilgrims. This was left in the possession of Judge Haliburton, of Nova Scotia.

There were Jesuit priests in what has since been called New England, converting the savages at Mount Desert, then St. Savior, in 1613, — having come over to Port Royal in 1611, though they were almost immediately interrupted by the English, years before the Pilgrims came hither to enjoy their own religion. This according to Champlain. Charlevoix says the same; and after coming from France in 1611, went west from Port Royal along the coast as far as the Kennebec in 1612, and was often carried from Port Royal to Mount Desert.

Indeed, the Englishman's history of *New* England commences only when it ceases to be *New* France. Though Cabot was the first to discover the continent of North America, Champlain, in the edition of his "Voyages" printed in 1632, after the English had for a season

got possession of Quebec and Port Royal, complains with no little justice: "The common consent of all Europe is to represent New France as extending at least to the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth degrees of latitude, as appears by the maps of the world printed in Spain, Italy, Holland, Flanders, Germany, and England, until they possessed themselves of the coasts of New France, where are Acadie, the Etchemins (Maine and New Brunswick), the Almouchicois (Massachusetts?), and the Great River St. Lawrence, where they have imposed, according to their fancy, such names as New England, Scotland, and others; but it is not easy to efface the memory of a thing which is known to all Christendom."

That Cabot merely landed on the uninhabitable shore of Labrador, gave the English no just title to New England, or to the United States, generally, any more than to Patagonia. His careful biographer (Biddle) is not certain in what voyage he ran down the coast of the United States as is reported, and no one tells us what he saw. Miller, in the New York Hist. Coll., Vol. I., p. 28, says he does not appear to have landed anywhere. Contrast with this Verrazzani's tarrying fifteen days at one place on the New England coast, and making frequent excursions into the interior thence. It chances that the latter's letter to Francis I., in 1524, contains "the earliest original account extant of the Atlantic coast of the United States"; and even from that time the northern part of it began to be called *La Terra Francese*, or French Land. A part of it was called New Holland before it was called New England. The English were very back-ward to explore and settle the continent which they had stumbled upon. The French preceded them both in their attempts to colonize the continent of North America (Carolina and Florida, 1562-4), and in their first permanent settlement (Port Royal, 1605); and the right of possession, naturally enough, was the one which England mainly respected and recognized in the case of Spain, of Portugal, and also of France, from the time of Henry VII.

The explorations of the French gave to the world the first valuable maps of these coasts. Denys of Honfleur made a map of the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1506. No sooner had Cartier explored the St. Lawrence, in 1535, than there began to be published by his countrymen remarkably accurate charts of that river as far up as

Montreal. It is almost all of the continent north of Florida that you recognize on charts for more than a generation afterward, — though Verrazzani's rude plot (made under French auspices) was regarded by Hackluyt, more than fifty years after his voyage (in 1524), as the most accurate representation of our coast. The French trail is distinct. They went measuring and sounding, and when they got home had something to show for their voyages and explorations. There was no danger of their charts being lost, as Cabot's have been.

The most distinguished navigators of that day were Italians, or of Italian descent, and Portuguese. The French and Spaniards, though less advanced in the science of navigation than the former, possessed more imagination and spirit of adventure than the English, and were better fitted to be the explorers of a new continent even as late as 1751.

This spirit it was which so early carried the French to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi on the north, and the Spaniard to the same river on the south. It was long before our frontiers reached their settlements in the west, and a *voyageur* or *coureur de bois* is still our conductor there. Prairie is a French word, as Sierra is a Spanish one. Augustine in Florida, and Santa Fe in New Mexico , both built by the Spaniards, are considered the oldest towns in the United States. Within the memory of the oldest man, the Anglo-Americans were confined between the Appalachian Mountains and the sea, "a space not two hundred miles broad," while the Mississippi was by treaty the eastern boundary of New France. (See the pamphlet on settling the Ohio, London, 1763, bound up with the travels of Sir John Bartram.) So far as inland discovery was concerned, the adventurous spirit of the English was that of sailors who land but for a day, and their enterprise the enterprise of traders. Cabot spoke like an Englishman, as he was, if he said, as one reports, in reference to the discovery of the American Continent, when he found it running toward the north, that it was a great disappointment to him, being in his way to India; but we would rather add to than detract from the fame of so great a discoverer.

Samuel Penhallow, in his history (Boston, 1726), p. 51, speaking of "Port Royal and Nova Scotia," says of the last that its "first seizure was by Sir Sebastian Cobbet for the crown of Great Britain, in the

reign of King Henry VII.; but lay dormant till the year 1621," when Sir William Alexander got a patent of it, and possessed it some years; and afterward Sir David Kirk was proprietor of it, but erelong, "to the surprise of all thinking men, it was given up unto the French."

Even as late as 1633 we find Winthrop, the first Governor of the Massachusetts Colony, who was not the most likely to be misinformed, who, moreover, has the *fame*, at least, of having discovered Wachusett Mountain (discerned it forty miles inland), talking about the "Great Lake" and the "hideous swamps about it," near which the Connecticut and the "Potomack" took their rise; and among the memorable events of the year 1642 he chronicles Darby Field, an Irishman's expedition to the "White hill," from whose top he saw eastward what he "judged to be the Gulf of Canada," and westward what he "judged to be the great lake which Canada River comes out of," and where he found much "Muscovy glass," and "could rive out pieces of forty feet long and seven or eight broad." While the very inhabitants of New England were thus fabling about the country a hundred miles inland, which was a *terra incognita* to them, — or rather many years before the earliest date referred to, — Champlain, the *first Governor of Canada*, not to mention the inland discoveries of Cartier, Roberval, and others, of the preceding century, and his own earlier voyage, had already gone to war against the Iroquois in their forest forts, and penetrated to the Great Lakes and wintered there, before a Pilgrim had heard of New England.

In Champlain's "Voyages," printed in 1613, there is a plate representing a fight in which he aided the Canada Indians against the Iroquois, near the south end of Lake Champlain, in July, 1609, eleven years before the settlement of Plymouth. Bancroft says he joined the Algonquins in an expedition against the Iroquois, or Five Nations, in the northwest of New York. This is that "Great Lake," which the English, hearing some rumor of from the French, long after, locate in an "Imaginary Province called Laconia, and spent several years about 1630 in the vain attempt to discover." (Sir Ferdinand Gorges, in Maine Hist. Coll., Vol. II., p. 68.) Thomas Morton has a chapter on this "Great Lake." In the edition of Champlain's map dated 1632, the Falls of Niagara appear; and in a great lake northwest of *Mer Douce* (Lake Huron) there is an island

represented, over which is written, "*Isle ou il y a une mine de cuivre*,"— "Island where there is a mine of copper." This will do for an offset to our Governor's "Muscovy Glass." Of all these adventures and discoveries we have a minute and faithful account, giving facts and dates as well as charts and soundings, all scientific and Frenchman-like, with scarcely one fable or traveller's story.

Probably Cape Cod was visited by Europeans long before the seventeenth century. It may be that Cabot himself beheld it. Verrazzani, in 1524, according to his own account, spent fifteen days on our coast, in latitude 41 degrees 40 minutes (some suppose in the harbor of Newport), and often went five or six leagues into the interior there, and he says that he sailed thence at once one hundred and fifty leagues northeasterly, *always in sight of the coast*. There is a chart in Hackluyt's "Divers Voyages," made according to Verrazzani's plot, which last is praised for its accuracy by Hackluyt, but I cannot distinguish Cape Cod on it, unless it is the "C. Arenas," which is in the right latitude, though ten degrees west of "Claudia," which is thought to be Block Island.

The "Biographic Universelle" informs us that "An ancient manuscript chart drawn in 1529 by Diego Ribeiro, a Spanish cosmographer, has preserved the memory of the voyage of Gomez [a Portuguese sent out by Charles the Fifth]. One reads in it under (*au dessous*) the place occupied by the States of New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, *Terre d'Etienne Gomez, qu'il découvrit en 1525* (Land of Etienne Gomez, which he discovered in 1525)." This chart, with a memoir, was published at Weimar in the last century.

Jean Alphonse, Roberval's pilot in Canada in 1642, one of the most skilful navigators of his time, and who has given remarkably minute and accurate direction for sailing up the St. Lawrence, showing that he knows what he is talking about, says in his "*Routier*" (it is in Hackluyt), "I have been at a bay as far as the forty-second degree, between Norimbegue [the Penobscot?] and Florida, but I have not explored the bottom of it, and I do not know whether it passes from one land to the other," *i.e.* to Asia. (" J'ai été à une Baye jusques par les 42 degres entre la Norimbegue et la Floride; mais je n'en ai pas cherché le fond, et ne sçais pas si elle passe d'une terre à I'autre.") This may refer to Massachusetts Bay, if not possibly to the

western inclination of the coast a little farther south. When he says, "I have no doubt that the Norimbegue enters into the river of Canada," he is perhaps so interpreting some account which the Indians had given respecting the route from the St. Lawrence to the Atlantic by the St. John, or Penobscot, or possibly even the Hudson River.

We hear rumors of this country of "Norumbega" and its great city from many quarters. In a discourse by a great French sea-captain in Ramusio's third volume (1556-65), this is said to be the name given to the land by its inhabitants, and Verrazzani is called the discoverer of it; another in 1607 makes the natives call it, or the river, Aguncia. It is represented as an island on an accompanying chart. It is frequently spoken of by old writers as a country of indefinite extent, between Canada and Florida, and it appears as a large island with Cape Breton at its eastern extremity, on the map made according to Verrazzani's plot in Hackluyt's "Divers Voyages." These maps and rumors may have been the origin of the notion, common among the early settlers, that New England was an island. The country and city of Norumbega appear about where Maine now is on a map in Ortelius ("Theatrum Orbis Terrarum," Antwerp, 1570), and the "R. Grande" is drawn where the Penobscot or St. John might be.

In 1604, Champlain being sent by the Sieur de Monts to explore the coast of Norumbegue, sailed up the Penobscot twenty-two or twenty-three leagues from "Isle Haute," or till he was stopped by the falls. He says: "I think that this river is that which many pilots and historians call Norumbegue, and which the greater part have described as great and spacious, with numerous islands; and its entrance in the forty-third or forty-third and one half or, according to others, the forty-fourth degree of latitude, more or less." He is convinced that "the greater part" of those who speak of a great city there have never seen it, but repeat a mere rumor, but he thinks that some have seen the mouth of the river since it answers to their description.

Under date of 1607 Champlain writes: "Three or four leagues north of the Cap de Poitrincourt [near the head of the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia] we found a cross, which was very old, covered with moss and almost all decayed, which was an evident sign that there

had formerly been Christians there."

Also the following passage from Lescarbot will show how much the neighboring coasts were frequented by Europeans in the sixteenth century. Speaking of his return from Port Royal to France in 1607, he says: "At last, within four leagues of Campseau [the Gut of Canso], we arrived at a harbor [in Nova Scotia], where a worthy old gentleman from St. John de Lus, named Captain Savale, was fishing, who received us with the utmost courtesy. And as this harbor, which is small, but very good, has no name, I have given it on my geographical chart the name of Savalet. [It is on Champlain's map also.] This worthy man told us that this voyage was the forty-second which he had made to those parts, and yet the Newfoundlanders [*Terre neuviers*] make only one a year. He was wonderfully content with his fishery, and informed us that he made daily fifty crowns' worth of cod, and that his voyage would be worth ten thousand francs. He had sixteen men in his employ; and his vessel was of eighty tons, which could carry a hundred thousand dry cod." (Histoire de la Nouvelle France, 1612.) They dried their fish on the rocks on shore.

The "Isola della Rena" (Sable Island?) appears on the chart of "Nuova Francia" and Norumbega, accompanying the "Discourse" above referred to in Ramusio's third volume, edition 1556-65. Champlain speaks of there being at the Isle of Sable, in 1604, "grass pastured by oxen (*boeufs*) and cows which the Portuguese carried there more than sixty years ago," *i.e.* sixty years before 1613; in a later edition he says, which came out of a Spanish vessel which was lost in endeavoring to settle on the Isle of Sable; and he states that De la Roche's men, who were left on this island seven years from 1598, lived on the flesh of these cattle which they found "*en quantie)*," and built houses out of the wrecks of vessels which came to the island ("perhaps Gilbert's"), there being no wood or stone. Lescarbot says that they lived "on fish and the milk of cows left there about eighty years before by Baron de Leri and Saint Just." Charlevoix says they ate up the cattle and then lived on fish. Haliburton speaks of cattle left there as a rumor. De Leri and Saint Just had suggested plans of colonization on the Isle of Sable as early as 1515 (1508?) according to Bancroft, referring to Charlevoix. These are but a few of the

instances which I might quote.

Cape Cod is commonly said to have been discovered in 1602. We will consider at length under what circumstances, and with what observation and expectations, the first Englishmen whom history clearly discerns approached the coast of New England. According to the accounts of Archer and Brereton (both of whom accompanied Gosnold), on the 26th of March, 1602, old style. Captain Bartholomew Gosnold set sail from Falmouth, England, for the North part of Virginia, in a small bark called the *Concord*, they being in all, says one account, "thirty-two persons, whereof eight mariners and sailors, twelve purposing upon the discovery to return with the ship for England, the rest remain there for population." This is regarded as "the first attempt of the English to make a settlement within the limits of New England." Pursuing a new and a shorter course than the usual one by the Canaries, "the 14th of April following" they had sight of Saint Mary's, an island of the Azores. As their sailors were few and "none of the best" (I use their own phrases), and they were "going upon an unknown coast," they were not "overbold to stand in with the shore but in open weather"; so they made their first discovery of land with the lead. The 23d of April the ocean appeared yellow, but on taking up some of the water in a bucket, "it altered not either in color or taste from the sea azure." The 7th of May they saw divers birds whose names they knew, and many others in their "English tongue of no name." The 8th of May "the water changed to a yellowish green, where at seventy fathoms" they "had ground." The 9th, they had upon their lead "many glittering stones,"— "which might promise some mineral matter in the bottom." The 10th, they were over a bank which they thought to be near the western end of St. John's Island, and saw schools of fish. The 12th, they say, "continually passed fleeting by us sea-oare, which seemed to have their movable course towards the northeast." On the 13th, they observed "great beds of weeds, much wood, and divers things else floating by," and "had smelling of the shore much as from the southern Cape and Andalusia in Spain." On Friday, the 14th, early in the morning they descried land on the north, in the latitude of forty-three degrees, apparently some part of the coast of Maine. Williamson (History of Maine) says it certainly could not

have been south of the central Isle of Shoals. Belknap inclines to think it the south side of Cape Ann. Standing fair along by the shore, about twelve o'clock the same day, they came to anchor and were visited by eight savages, who came off to them "in a Biscay shallop, with sail and oars,"— "an iron grapple, and a kettle of copper." These they at first mistook for "Christians distressed." One of them was "apparelled with a waistcoat and breeches of black serge, made after our sea-fashion, hoes and shoes on his feet; all the rest (saving one that had a pair of breeches of blue cloth) were naked." They appeared to have had dealings with "some Basques of St. John de Luz, and to understand much more than we," say the English, "for want of language, could comprehend." But they soon "set sail westward, leaving them and their coast." (This was a remarkable discovery for discoverers.)

"The 15th day," writes Gabriel Archer, "we had again sight of the land, which made ahead, being as we thought an island, by reason of a large sound that appeared westward between it and the main, for coming to the west end thereof, we did perceive a large opening, we called it Shoal Hope. Near this cape we came to anchor in fifteen fathoms, where we took great store of cod-fish, for which we altered the name and called it Cape Cod. Here we saw skulls of her-ring, mackerel, and other small fish, in great abundance. This is a low sandy shoal, but without danger; also we came to anchor again in sixteen fathoms, fair by the land in the latitude of forty-two degrees. This Cape is well near a mile broad, and lieth northeast by east. The captain went here ashore, and found the ground to be full of peas, strawberries, whortleberries, etc., as then unripe, the sand also by the shore somewhat deep; the firewood there by us taken in was of cypress, birch, witch-hazel, and beach. A young Indian came here to the captain, armed with his bow and arrows, and had certain plates of copper hanging at his ears; he showed a willingness to help us in our occasions."

"The 16th we trended the coast southerly, which was all champaign and full of grass, but the islands somewhat woody."

Or, according to the account of John Brereton, "riding here," that is, where they first communicated with the natives, "in no very good harbor, and withal doubting the weather, about three of the clock the

same day in the afternoon we weighed, and standing southerly off into sea the rest of that day and the night following, with a fresh gale of wind, in the morning we found ourselves embayed with a mighty headland; but coming to an anchor about nine of the clock the same day, within a league of the shore, we hoisted out the one half of our shallop, and Captain Bartholomew Gosnold, myself and three others, went ashore, being a white sandy and very bold shore; and marching all that afternoon with our muskets on our necks, on the highest hills which we saw (the weather very hot), at length we perceived this headland to be parcel of the main, and sundry islands lying almost round about it; so returning towards evening to our shallop (for by that time the other part was brought ashore and set together), we espied an Indian, a young man of proper stature, and of a pleasing countenance, and after some familiarity with him, we left him at the sea side, and returned to our ship, where in five or six hours' absence we had pestered our ship so with codfish, that we threw numbers of them overboard again; and surely I am persuaded that in the months of March, April, and May, there is upon this coast better fishing, and in as great plenty, as in Newfoundland; for the skulls of mackerel, herrings, cod, and other fish, that we daily saw as we went and came from the shore, were wonderful," etc.

"From this place we sailed round about this headland, almost all the points of the compass, the shore very bold; but as no coast is free from dangers, so I am persuaded this is as free as any. The land somewhat low, full of goodly woods, but in some places plain."

It is not quite clear on which side of the Cape they landed. If it was inside, as would appear from Brereton's words, "From this place we sailed round about this headland almost all the points of the compass," it must have been on the western shore either of Truro or Wellfleet. To one sailing south into Barnstable Bay along the Cape, the only "white, sandy, and very bold shore" that appears is in these towns, though the bank is not so high there as on the eastern side. At a distance of four or five miles the sandy cliffs there look like a long fort of yellow sandstone, they are so level and regular, especially in Wellfleet, — the fort of the land defending itself against the encroachments of the Ocean. They are streaked here and there with a reddish sand as if painted. Farther south the shore is more flat, and

less *obviously* and abruptly sandy, and a little tinge of green here and there in the marshes appears to the sailor like a rare and precious emerald. But in the Journal of Pring's Voyage the next year (and Salterne, who was with Pring, had accompanied Gosnold) it is said, "Departing hence [*i.e.* from Savage Rocks] we bore unto that great gulf which Captain Gosnold overshot the year before."

So they sailed round the Cape, calling the southeasterly extremity "Point Cave," till they came to an island which they named Martha's Vineyard (now called No Man's Land), and another on which they dwelt awhile, which they named Elizabeth's Island, in honor of the Queen, one of the group since so called, now known by its Indian name Cuttyhunk. There they built a small storehouse, the first house built by the English in New England, whose cellar could recently still be seen, made partly of stones taken from the beach. Bancroft says (edition of 1837), the ruins of the fort can no longer be discerned. They who were to have remained becoming discontented, all together set sail for England with a load of sassafras and other commodities, on the 18th of June following.

The next year came Martin Pring, looking for sassafras, and thereafter they began to come thick and fast, until long after sassafras had lost its reputation.

These are the oldest acounts which we have of Cape Cod, unless, perchance. Cape Cod is, as some suppose, the same with that "Kial-ar-nes" or Keel-Cape, on which, according to old Icelandic manuscripts, Thorwald, son of Eric the Red, after sailing many days southwest from Greenland, broke his keel in the year 1004; and where, according to another, in some respects less trustworthy manuscript, Thor-finn Karlsefue ("that is, one who promises or is destined to be an able or great man"; he is said to have had a son born in New. England, from whom Thorwaldsen the sculptor was descended), sailing past, in the year 1007, with his wife Gudrida, Snorre Thorbrandson, Biarne Grinolfson, and Thorhall Garnlason, distinguished Norsemen, in three ships containing "one hundred and sixty men and all sorts of live stock" (probably the first Norway rats among the rest), having the land "on the right side" of them, "roved ashore," and found "*Or-oefi* (trackless deserts)," and "*Strand-ir lang-ar ok sand-ar* (long narrow beaches and sand-hills)," and "called the

shores *Furdustrand-ir* (Wonder-Strands), because the sailing by them seemed long."

According to the Icelandic manuscripts, *Thorwald* was the first, then, — unless possibly one Biarne Heriulfson (*i.e.* son of Heriulf) who had been seized with a great desire to travel, sailing from Iceland to Greenland in the year 986 to join his father who had migrated thither, for he had resolved, says the manuscript, "to spend the following winter, like all the preceding ones, with his father," — being driven far to the southwest by a storm, when it cleared up saw the low land of Cape Cod looming faintly in the distance; but this not answering to the description of Greenland, he put his vessel about, and, sailing northward along the coast, at length reached Greenland and his father. At any rate, he may put forth a strong claim to be regarded as the discoverer of the American continent.

These Northmen were a hardy race, whose younger sons inherited the ocean, and traversed it without chart or compass, and they are said to have been "the first who learned the art of sailing on a wind." Moreover, they had a habit of casting their door-posts overboard and settling wherever they went ashore. But as Biarne, and Thorwald, and Thorfinn have not mentioned the latitude and longitude distinctly enough, though we have great respect for them as skilful and adventurous navigators, we must for the present remain in doubt as to what capes they did see. We think that they were considerably further north.

If time and space permitted, I could present the claims of other several worthy persons. Lescarbot, in 1609, asserts that the French sailors had been accustomed to frequent the Newfoundland Banks from time immemorial, "for the codfish with which they feed almost all Europe and supply all sea-going vessels," and accordingly "the language of the nearest lands is half Basque"; and he quotes Postel, a learned but extravagant French author, born in 1510, only six years after the Basques, Bretons, and Normans are said to have discovered the Grand Bank and adjacent islands, as saying, in his *Charte Géographique*, which we have not seen: "Terra haec ob lucrosissimam piscationis utilitatem summa litterarum memoria a Gallis adiri solita, et ante mille sexcentos annos frequentari solita est; sed eo quod sit urbibus inculta et vasta, spreta est." "This land, on

account of its very lucrative fishery, was accustomed to be visited by the Gauls from the very dawn of history, and more than sixteen hundred years ago was accustomed to be frequented; but because it was unadorned with cities, and waste, it was despised."

It is the old story. Bob Smith discovered the mine, but I discovered it to the world. And now Bob Smith is putting in his claim.

But let us not laugh at Postel and his visions. He was perhaps better posted up than we; and if he does seem to draw the long bow, it may be because he had a long way to shoot, — quite across the Atlantic, If America was found and lost again once, as most of us believe, then why not twice? especially as there were likely to be so few records of an earlier discovery. Consider what stuff history is made of, — that for the most part it is merely a story agreed on by posterity. Who will tell us even how many Russians were engaged in the battle of the Chernaya, the other day? Yet no doubt, Mr. Scriblerus, the historian, will fix on a definite number for the schoolboys to commit to their excellent memories. What, then, of the number of Persians at Salamis? The historian whom I read knew as much about the position of the parties and their tactics in the last-mentioned affair, as they who describe a recent battle in an article for the press now-a-days, before the particulars have arrived. I believe that, if I were to live the life of mankind over again myself (which I would not be hired to do), with the Universal History in my hands, I should not be able to tell what was what.

Earlier than the date Postel refers to, at any rate. Cape Cod lay in utter darkness to the civilized world, though even then the sun rose from eastward out of the sea every day, and, rolling over the Cape, went down westward into the Bay. It was even then Cape and Bay, — ay, the Cape of *Codfish*, and the Bay of the *Massachusetts*, perchance.

Quite recently, on the 11th of November, 1620, old style, as is well known, the Pilgrims in the *Mayflower* came to anchor in Cape Cod harbor. They had loosed from Plymouth, England, the 6th of September, and, in the words of "Mourts' Relation," "after many difficulties in boisterous storms, at length, by God's providence, upon the 9th of November, we espied land, which we deemed to be

Cape Cod, and so afterward it proved. Upon the 11th of November we came to anchor in the bay, which is a good harbor and pleasant bay, circled round except in the entrance, which is about four miles over from land to land, compassed about to the very sea with oaks, pines, juniper, sassafras, and other sweet wood. It is a harbor wherein a thousand sail of ships may safely ride. There we relieved ourselves with wood and water, and refreshed our people, while our shallop was fitted to coast the bay, to search for an habitation." There we put up at Fuller's Hotel, passing by the Pilgrim House as too high for us (we learned afterward that we need not have been so particular), and we refreshed ourselves with hashed fish and beans, beside taking in a supply of liquids (which were not intoxicating), while our legs were refitted to coast the back-side. Further say the Pilgrims: "We could not come near the shore by three quarters of an English mile, because of shallow water; which was a great prejudice to us; for our people going on shore were forced to wade a bow-shot or two in going aland, which caused many to get colds and coughs; for it was many times freezing cold weather." They afterwards say: "It brought much weakness amongst us"; and no doubt it led to the death of some at Plymouth.

The harbor of Provincetown is very shallow near the shore, especially about the head, where the Pilgrims landed. When I left this place the next summer, the steamer could not get up to the wharf, but we were carried out to a large boat in a cart as much as thirty rods in shallow water, while a troop of little boys kept us company, wading around, and thence we pulled to the steamer by a rope. The harbor being thus shallow and sandy about the shore, coasters are accustomed to run in here to paint their vessels, which are left high and dry when the tide goes down.

It chanced that the Sunday morning that we were there, I had joined a party of men who were smoking and lolling over a pile of boards on one of the wharves (*nihil humanum a me, etc*.), when our landlord, who was a sort of tithing-man, went off to stop some sailors who were engaged in painting their vessel. Our party was recruited from time to time by other citizens, who came rubbing their eyes as if they had just got out of bed; and one old man remarked to me that it was the custom there to lie abed very late on Sunday, it being a day

of rest. I remarked that, as I thought, they might as well let the men paint, for all us. It was not noisy work, and would not disturb our devotions. But a young man in the company, taking his pipe out of his mouth, said that it was a plain contradiction of the law of God, which he quoted, and if they did not have some such regulation, vessels would run in there to tar, and rig, and paint, and they would have no Sabbath at all. This was a good argument enough, if he had not put it in the name of religion. The next summer, as I sat on a hill there one sultry Sunday afternoon the meeting-house windows being open, my meditations were interrupted by the noise of a preacher who shouted like a boatswain, profaning the quiet atmosphere, and who, I fancied, must have taken off his coat. Few things could have been more disgusting or disheartening. I wished the tithing-man would stop him.



The day of rest

The Pilgrims say: “There was the greatest store of fowl that ever we saw.”

We saw no fowl there, except gulls of various kinds; but the greatest store of them that ever we saw was on a flat but slightly covered with water on the east side of the harbor, and we observed a man who had landed there from a boat creeping along the shore in order to get a shot at them, but they all rose and flew away in a great scattering flock, too soon for him, having apparently got their dinners, though he did not get his.

It is remarkable that the Pilgrims (or their reporter) describe this part of the Cape, not only as well wooded, but as having a deep and excellent soil, and hardly mention the word *sand*. Now what strikes the voyager is the barrenness and desolation of the land. *They* found “the ground or earth sand-hills, much like the downs in Holland, but much better the crust of the earth, a spit’s depth, excellent black earth.” *We* found that the earth had lost its crust, — if, in-deed, it ever had any, — and that there was no soil to speak of. We did not see enough black earth in Provincetown to fill a flower-pot, unless in the swamps. They found it “all wooded with oaks, pines, sassafras, juniper, birch, holly, vines, some ash, walnut; the wood for the most part open and without underwood, fit either to go or ride in.” We saw scarcely anything high enough to be called a tree, except a little low wood at the east end of the town, and the few ornamental trees in its yards, — only a few small specimens of some of the above kinds on the sand-hills in the rear; but it was all thick shrubbery, without any large wood above it, very unfit either to go or ride in. The greater part of the land was a perfect desert of yellow sand, rippled like waves by the wind, in which only a little Beach-grass grew here and there. They say that, just after passing the head of East Harbor Creek, the boughs and bushes “tore” their “very armor in pieces” (the same thing happened to such armor as we wore, when out of curiosity we took to the bushes); or they came to deep valleys, “full of brush, wood-gaile, and long grass,” and “found springs of fresh water.”

For the most part we saw neither bough nor bush, not so much as a shrub to tear our clothes against if we would, and a sheep would lose none of its fleece, even if it found herbage enough to make fleece grow there. We saw rather beach and poverty-grass, and

merely sorrel enough to color the surface. I suppose, then, by Woodgaile they mean the Bay berry.

All accounts agree in affirming that this part of the Cape was *comparatively* well wooded a century ago. But notwithstanding the great changes which have taken place in these respects, I cannot but think that we must make some allowance for the greenness of the Pilgrims in these matters, which caused them to see green. We do not believe that the trees were large or the soil was deep here. Their account may be true particularly, but it is generally false. They saw literally, as well as figuratively, but one side of the Cape. They naturally exaggerated the fairness and attractiveness of the land, for they were glad to get to any land at all after that anxious voyage. Everything appeared to them of the color of the rose, and had the scent of juniper and sassafras. Very different is the general and off-hand account given by Captain John Smith, who was on this coast six years earlier, and speaks like an old traveller, voyager, and soldier, who had seen too much of the world to exaggerate, or even to dwell long, on a part of it. In his "Description of New England," printed in 1616, after speaking of Accomack, since called Plymouth, he says: "Cape Cod is the next presents itself, which is only a headland of high hills of sand, overgrown with shrubby pines, *hurts* [i.e. whorts, or whortleberries], and such trash, but an excellent harbor for all weathers. This Cape is made by the main sea on the one side, and a great bay on the other, in form of a sickle." Champlain had already written, "Which we named *Cap Blanc* (Cape White), because they were sands and downs (*sables et dunes*) which appeared thus."

When the Pilgrims get to Plymouth their reporter says again, "The land for the crust of the earth is a spit's depth," — that would seem to be their recipe for an earth's crust,— "excellent black mould and fat in some places." However, according to Bradford himself, whom some consider the author of part of "Mourt's Relation," they who came over in the *Fortune* the next year were somewhat daunted when "they came into the harbor of Cape Cod, and there saw nothing but a naked and barren place." They soon found out their mistake with respect to the goodness of Plymouth soil. Yet when at length, some years later, when they were fully satisfied of the poorness of the

place which they had chosen, “the greater part,” says Bradford, “consented to a removal to a place called Nausett,” they agreed to remove all together to Nauset, now Eastham, which was jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire; and some of the most respectable of the inhabitants of Plymouth did actually remove thither accordingly.

It must be confessed that the Pilgrims possessed but few of the qualities of the modern pioneer. They were not the ancestors of the American backwoodsmen. They did not go at once into the woods with their axes. They were a family and church, and were more anxious to keep together, though it were on the sand, than to explore and colonize a New World. When the above-mentioned company removed to Eastham, the church at Plymouth was left, to use Bradford’s expression, “like an ancient mother grown old, and forsaken of her children.” Though they landed on Clark’s Island in Plymouth harbor, the 9th of December (O. S.), and the 16th all hands came to Plymouth, and the 18th they rambled about the mainland, and the 19th decided to settle there, it was the 8th of January before Francis Billington went with one of the master’s mates to look at the magnificent pond or lake now called “Billington Sea,” about two miles distant, which he had discovered from the top of a tree, and mistook for a great sea. And the 7th of March “Master Carver with five others went to the great ponds which seem to be excellent fishing,” both which points are within the compass of an ordinary afternoon’s ramble, — however wild the country. It is true they were busy at first about their building, and were hindered in that by much foul weather; but a party of emigrants to California or Oregon, with no less work on their hands, — and more hostile Indians, — would do as much exploring the first afternoon, and the Sieur de Champlain would have sought an interview with the savages, and examined the country as far as the Connecticut, and made a map of it, before Billington had climbed his tree. Or contrast them only with the French searching for copper about the Bay of Fundy in 1603, tracing up small streams with Indian guides. Nevertheless, the Pilgrims were pioneers and the ancestors of pioneers, in a far grander enterprise.

By this time we saw the little steamer *Naushon* entering the harbor, and heard the sound of her whistle, and came down from the hills to meet her at the wharf. So we took leave of Cape Cod and its

inhabitants. We liked the manners of the last, what little we saw of them, very much. They were particularly downright and good-humored. The old people appeared remarkably well preserved, as if by the saltness of the atmosphere, and after having once mistaken, we could never be certain whether we were talking to a coeval of our grandparents, or to one of our own age. They are said to be more purely the descendants of the Pilgrims than the inhabitants of any other part of the State. We were told that "sometimes, when the court comes together at Barnstable, they have not a single criminal to try, and the jail is shut up." It was "to let" when we were there. Until quite recently there was no regular lawyer below Orleans. Who then will complain of a few regular man-eating sharks along the back-side?

One of the ministers of Truro, when I asked what the fishermen did in the winter, answered that they did nothing but go a-visiting, sit about and tell stories, — though they worked hard in summer. Yet it is not a long vacation they get. I am sorry that I have not been there in the winter to hear their yarns. Almost every Cape man is Captain of some craft or other, — every man at least who is at the head of his own affairs, though it is not every one that is, for some heads have the force of *Alpha privative*, negativing all the efforts which Nature would fain make through them. The greater number of men are merely corporals. It is worth the while to talk with one whom his neighbors address as Captain, though his craft may have long been sunk, and he may be holding by his teeth to the shattered mast of a pipe alone, and only gets half-seas-over in a figurative sense, now. He is pretty sure to vindicate his right to the title at last, — can tell one or two good stories at least.

For the most part we saw only the back-side of the towns, but our story is true as far as it goes. We might have made more of the Bay side, but we were inclined to open our eyes widest at the Atlantic. We did not care to see those features of the Cape in which it is inferior or merely equal to the mainland, but only those in which it is peculiar or superior. We cannot say how its towns look in front to one who goes to meet them; we went to see the ocean behind them. They were merely the raft on which we stood, and we took notice of the barnacles which adhered to it, and some carvings upon it.

Before we left the wharf we made the acquaintance of a passenger whom we had seen at the hotel. When we asked him which way he came to Provincetown, he answered that he was cast ashore at Wood End, Saturday night, in the same storm in which the *St. John* was wrecked. He had been at work as a carpenter in Maine, and took passage for Boston in a schooner laden with lumber. When the storm came up, they endeavored to get into Provincetown harbor. "It was dark and misty," said he, "and as we were steering for Long Point Light we suddenly saw the land near us, — for our compass was out of order, — varied several degrees [a mariner always casts the blame on his compass], — but there being a mist on shore, we thought it was farther off than it was, and so held on, and we immediately struck on the bar. Says the Captain, 'We are all lost.' Says I to the Captain, 'Now don't let her strike again this way; head her right on.' The Captain thought a moment, and then headed her on. The sea washed completely over us, and wellnigh took the breath out of my body. I held on to the running rigging, but I have learned to hold on to the standing rigging the next time." "Well, were there any drowned?" I asked. "No; we all got safe to a house at Wood End, at midnight, wet to our skins, and half frozen to death." He had apparently spent the time since playing checkers at the hotel, and was congratulating himself on having beaten a tall fellow-boarder at that game. "The vessel is to be sold at auction to-day," he added. (We had heard the sound of the crier's bell which advertised it.) "The Captain is rather down about it, but I tell him to cheer up and he will soon get another vessel."

At that moment the Captain called to him from the wharf. He looked like a man just from the country, with a cap made of a woodchuck's skin, and now that I had heard a part of his history, he appeared singularly destitute, — a Captain without any vessel, only a great-coat! and that perhaps a borrowed one! Not even a dog followed him; only his title stuck to him. I also saw one of the crew. They all had caps of the same pattern, and wore a subdued look, in addition to their naturally aquiline features, as if a breaker — a "comber" — had washed over them. As we passed Wood End, we noticed the pile of lumber on the shore which had made the cargo of their vessel.

About Long Point in the summer you commonly see them catching lobsters for the New York market, from small boats just off the shore, or rather, the lobsters catch themselves, for they cling to the netting on which the bait is placed of their own accord, and thus are drawn up. They sell them fresh for two cents apiece. Man needs to know but little more than a lobster in order to catch him in his traps. The mackerel fleet had been getting to sea, one after another, ever since midnight, and as we were leaving the Cape we passed near to many of them under sail, and got a nearer view than we had had; — half a dozen red-shirted men and boys, leaning over the rail to look at us, the skipper shouting back the number of barrels he had caught, in answer to our inquiry. All sailors pause to watch a steamer, and shout in welcome or derision. In one a large Newfoundland dog put his paws on the rail and stood up as high as any of them, and looked as wise. But the skipper, who did not wish to be seen no better employed than a dog, rapped him on the nose and sent him below. Such is human justice! I thought I could hear him making an effective appeal down there from human to divine justice. He must have had much the cleanest breast of the two.



A Provincetown fishing-vessel

Still, many a mile behind us across the Bay, we saw the white sails of the mackerel fishers hovering round Cape Cod, and when they were all hull-down, and the low extremity of the Cape was also down, their white sails still appeared on both sides of it, around

where it had sunk, like a city on the ocean, proclaiming the rare qualities of Cape Cod Harbor. But before the extremity of the Cape had completely sunk, it appeared like a filmy sliver of land lying flat on the ocean, and later still a mere reflection of a sand-bar on the haze above. Its name suggests a homely truth, but it would be more poetic if it described the impression which it makes on the beholder. Some capes have peculiarly suggestive names. There is Cape Wrath, the northwest point of Scotland, for instance; what a good name for a cape lying far away dark over the water under a lowering sky!

Mild as it was on shore this morning, the wind was cold and piercing on the water. Though it be the hottest day in July on land, and the voyage is to last but four hours, take your thickest clothes with you, for you are about to float over melted icebergs. When I left Boston in the steamboat on the 25th of June the next year, it was a quite warm day on shore. The passengers were dressed in their thinnest clothes, and at first sat under their umbrellas, but when we were fairly out on the Bay, such as had only their coats were suffering with the cold, and sought the shelter of the pilot's house and the warmth of the chimney. But when we approached the harbor of Provincetown, I was surprised to perceive what an influence that low and narrow strip of sand, only a mile or two in width, had over the temperature of the air for many miles around. We penetrated into a sultry atmosphere where our thin coats were once more in fashion, and found the inhabitants sweltering.

Leaving far on one side Manomet Point in Plymouth and the Scituate shore, after being out of sight of land for an hour or two, for it was rather hazy, we neared the Cohasset Rocks again at Minot's Ledge, and saw the great Tupelo-tree on the edge of Scituate, which lifts its dome, like an umbelliferous plant, high over the surrounding forest, and is conspicuous for many miles over land and water. Here was the new iron light-house, then unfinished, in the shape of an egg-shell painted red, and placed high on iron pillars, like the ovum of a sea monster floating on the waves, — destined to be phosphorescent. As we passed it at half-tide we saw the spray tossed up nearly to the shell. A man was to live in that egg-shell day and night, a mile from the shore. When I passed it the next summer it was finished and two men lived in it, and a light-house keeper said that they told him that

in a recent gale it had rocked so as to shake the plates off the table. Think of making your bed thus in the crest of a breaker! To have the waves, like a pack of hungry wolves, eying you always, night and day, and from time to time making a spring at you, almost sure to have you at last. And not one of all those voyagers can come to your relief, — but when your light goes out, it will be a sign that the light of your life has gone out also. What a place to compose a work on breakers! This light-house was the cynosure of all eyes. Every passenger watched it for half an hour at least; yet a colored cook belonging to the boat, whom I had seen come out of his quarters several times to empty his dishes over the side with a flourish, chancing to come out just as we were abreast of this light, and not more than forty rods from it, and were all gazing at it, as he drew back his arm, caught sight of it, and with surprise exclaimed, "What's that?" He had been employed on this boat for a year, and passed this light every weekday, but as he had never chanced to empty his dishes just at that point, had never seen it before. To look at lights was the pilot's business; he minded the kitchen fire. It suggested how little some who voyaged round the world could manage to see. You would almost as easily believe that there are men who never yet chanced to come out at the right time to see the sun. What avails it though a light be placed on the top of a hill, if you spend all your life directly under the hill? It might as well be under a bushel. This light-house, as is well known, was swept away in a storm in April, 1851, and the two men in it, and the next morning not a vestige of it was to be seen from the shore.

A Hull man told me that he helped set up a white-oak pole on Minot's Ledge some years before. It was fifteen inches in diameter, forty-one feet high, sunk four feet in the rock, and was secured by four guys, — but it stood only one year. Stone piled up cob-fashion near the same place stood eight years.

When I crossed the Bay in the *Melrose* in July, we hugged the Scituate shore as long as possible, in order to take advantage of the wind. Far out on the Bay (off this shore) we scared up a brood of young ducks, probably black ones, bred hereabouts, which the packet had frequently disturbed in her trips. A townsman, who was making the voyage for the first time, walked slowly round into the rear of the

helmsman, when we were in the middle of the Bay, and looking out over the sea, before he sat down there, remarked with as much originality as was possible for one who used a borrowed expression, "This is a great country." He had been a timber merchant, and I afterwards saw him taking the diameter of the mainmast with his stick, and estimating its height. I returned from the same excursion in the *Olata*, a very handsome and swift-sailing yacht, which left Provincetown at the same time with two other packets, the *Melrose* and *Frolic*. At first there was scarcely a breath of air stirring, and we loitered about Long Point for an hour in company, — with our heads over the rail watching the great sand-circles and the fishes at the bottom in calm water fifteen feet deep. But after clearing the Cape we rigged a flying-jib, and, as the Captain had prophesied, soon showed our consorts our heels. There was a steamer six or eight miles northward, near the Cape, towing a large ship toward Boston. Its smoke stretched perfectly horizontal several miles over the sea, and by a sudden change in its direction, warned us of a change in the wind before we felt it. The steamer appeared very far from the ship, and some young men who had frequently used the Captain's glass, but did not suspect that the vessels were connected, expressed surprise that they kept about the same distance apart for so many hours. At which the Captain dryly remarked, that probably they would never get any nearer together. As long as the wind held we kept pace with the steamer, but at length it died away almost entirely, and the flying-jib did all the work. When we passed the light-boat at Minot's Ledge, the *Melrose* and *Frolic* were just visible ten miles astern.

Consider the islands bearing the names of all the saints, bristling with forts like chestnuts-burs, or *echinidoe*, yet the police will not let a couple of Irishmen have a private sparring-match on one of them, as it is a government monopoly; all the great seaports are in a boxing attitude, and you must sail prudently between two tiers of stony knuckles before you come to feel the warmth of their breasts.

The Bermudas are said to have been discovered by a Spanish ship of that name which was wrecked on them, "which till then," says Sir John Smith, "for six thousand years had been nameless." The English did not stumble upon them in their first voyages to Virginia; and the

first Englishman who was ever there was wrecked on them in 1593. Smith says, "No place known hath better walls nor a broader ditch." Yet at the very first planting of them with some sixty persons, in 1612, the first Governor, the same year, "built and laid the foundation of eight or nine forts." To be ready, one would say, to entertain the first ship's company that should be next shipwrecked on to them. It would have been more sensible to have built as many "Charity-houses." These are the vexed Bermoothees.

Our great sails caught all the air there was, and our low and narrow hull caused the least possible friction. Coming up the harbor against the stream we swept by everything. Some young men returning from a fishing excursion came to the side of their smack, while we were thus steadily drawing by them, and, bowing, observed, with the best possible grace, "We give it up." Yet sometimes we were nearly at a standstill. The sailors watched (two) objects on the shore to ascertain whether we advanced or receded. In the harbor it was like the evening of a holiday. The Eastern steamboat passed us with music and a cheer, as if they were going to a ball, when they might be going to — Davy's locker.

I heard a boy telling the story of Nix's mate to some girls as we passed that spot. That was the name of a sailor hung there, he said.— "If I am guilty, this island will remain; but if I am innocent it will be washed away," and now it is all washed away!

Next (?) came the fort on George's Island. These are bungling contrivances: not our *fortes* but our *foibles*. Wolfe sailed by the strongest fort in North America in the dark, and took it.

I admired the skill with which the vessel was at last brought to her place in the dock, near the end of Long Wharf. It was candle-light, and my eyes could not distinguish the wharves jutting out towards us, but it appeared like an even line of shore densely crowded with shipping. You could not have guessed within a quarter of a mile of Long Wharf. Nevertheless, we were to be blown to a crevice amid them, — steering right into the maze. Down goes the mainsail, and only the jib draws us along. Now we are within four rods of the shipping, having already dodged several outsiders; but it is still only a maze of spars, and rigging, and hulls, — not a crack can be seen. Down goes the jib, but still we advance. The Captain stands aft with

one hand on the tiller, and the other holding his night-glass, — his son stands on the bowsprit straining his eyes, — the passengers feel their hearts halfway to their mouths, expecting a crash. "Do you see any room there?" asks the Captain, quietly. He must make up his mind in five seconds, else he will carry away that vessel's bowsprit, or lose his own. "Yes, sir, here is a place for us"; and in three minutes more we are fast to the wharf in a little gap between two bigger vessels.

And now we were in Boston. Whoever has been down to the end of Long Wharf, and walked through Quincy Market, has seen Boston.

Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, New Orleans, and the rest, are the names of wharves projecting into the sea (surrounded by the shops and dwellings of the merchants), good places to take in and to discharge a cargo (to land the products of other climes and load the exports of our own). I see a great many barrels and fig-drums, — piles of wood for umbrella-sticks, — blocks of granite and ice, — great heaps of goods, and the means of packing and conveying them, — much wrapping-paper and twine, — many crates and hogsheads and trucks, — and that is Boston. The more barrels, the more Boston. The museums and scientific societies and libraries are accidental. They gather around the sands to save carting. The wharf-rats and customhouse officers, and broken-down poets, seeking a fortune amid the barrels. Their better or worse lyceums, and preachings, and doctorings, these, too, are accidental, and the malls of commons are always small potatoes. When I go to Boston, I naturally go straight through the city (taking the Market in my way), down to the end of Long Wharf, and look off, for I have no cousins in the back alleys, — and there I see a great many countrymen in their shirt-sleeves from Maine, and Pennsylvania, and all along shore and in shore, and some foreigners beside, loading and unloading and steering their teams about, as at a country fair.

When we reached Boston that October, I had a gill of Provincetown sand in my shoes, and at Concord there was still enough left to sand my pages for many a day; and I seemed to hear the sea roar, as if I lived in a shell, for a week afterward.

The places which I have described may seem strange and remote

to my townsmen, — indeed, from Boston to Provincetown is twice as far as from England to France; yet step into the cars, and in six hours you may stand on those four planks, and see the Cape which Gosnold is said to have discovered, and which I have so poorly described. If you had started when I first advised you, you might have seen our tracks in the sand, still fresh, and reaching all the way from the Nauset Lights to Race Point, some thirty miles, — for at every step we made an impression on the Cape, though we were not aware of it, and though our account may have made no impression on your minds. But what is our account? In it there is no roar, no beach-birds, no tow-cloth.

We often love to think now of the life of men on beaches, — at least in midsummer, when the weather is serene; their sunny lives on the sand, amid the beach-grass and the bayberries, their companion a cow, their wealth a jag of driftwood or a few beach-plums, and their music the surf and the peep of the beach-bird.

We went to see the Ocean, and that is probably the best place of all our coast to go to. If you go by water, you may experience what it is to leave and to approach these shores; you may see the Stormy Petrel by the way, [Greek: thalassodroma,] running over the sea, and if the weather is but a little thick, may lose sight of the land in mid-passage. I do not know where there is another beach in the Atlantic States, attached to the mainland, so long, and at the same time so straight, and completely uninterrupted by creeks or coves or fresh-water rivers or marshes; for though there may be clear places on the map, they would probably be found by the foot traveller to be intersected by creeks and marshes; certainly there is none where there is a double way, such as I have described, a beach and a bank, which at the same time shows you the land and the sea, and part of the time two seas. The Great South Beach of Long Island, which I have since visited, is longer still without an inlet, but it is literally a mere sand-bar, exposed, several miles from the Island, and not the edge of a continent wasting before the assaults of the Ocean. Though wild and desolate, as it wants the bold bank, it possesses but half the grandeur of Cape Cod in my eyes, nor is the imagination contented with its southern aspect. The only other beaches of great length on our Atlantic coast, which I have heard sailors speak of, are those of

Barnegat on the Jersey shore, and Currituck between Virginia and North Carolina; but these, like the last, are low and narrow sandbars, lying off the coast, and separated from the mainland by lagoons. Besides, as you go farther south, the tides are feebler, and cease to add variety and grandeur to the shore. On the Pacific side of our country also no doubt there is good walking to be found; a recent writer and dweller there tells us that "the coast from Cape Disappointment (or the Columbia River) to Cape Flattery (at the Strait of Juan de Fuca) is nearly north and south, and can be travelled almost its entire length on a beautiful sand-beach," with the exception of two bays, four or five rivers, and a few points jutting into the sea. The common shell-fish found there seem to be often of corresponding types, if not identical species, with those of Cape Cod. The beach which I have described, however, is not hard enough for carriages, but must be explored on foot. When one carriage has passed along, a following one sinks deeper still in its rut. It has at present no name any more than fame. That portion south of Nauset Harbor is commonly called Chatham Beach. The part in Eastham is called Nauset Beach, and off Wellfleet and Truro the Back-side, or sometimes, perhaps, Cape Cod Beach. I think that part which extends without interruption from Nauset Harbor to Race Point should be called Cape Cod Beach, and do so speak of it.

One of the most attractive points for visitors is in the northeast part of Wellfleet, where accommodations (I mean for men and women of tolerable health and habits) could probably be had within half a mile of the sea-shore. It best combines the country and the seaside. Though the Ocean is out of sight, its faintest murmur is audible, and you have only to climb a hill to find yourself on its brink. It is but a step from the glassy surface of the Herring Ponds to the big Atlantic Pond where the waves never cease to break. Or perhaps the Highland Light in Truro may compete with this locality, for there, there is a more uninterrupted view of the Ocean and the Bay, and in the summer there is always some air stirring on the edge of the bank there, so that the inhabitants know not what hot weather is. As for the view, the keeper of the light, with one or more of his family, walks out to the edge of the bank after every meal to look off, just as if they had not lived there all their days. In short, it will wear

well. And what picture will you substitute for that, upon your walls? But ladies cannot get down the bank there at present without the aid of a block and tackle.

Most persons visit the sea-side in warm weather, when fogs are frequent, and the atmosphere is wont to be thick, and the charm of the sea is to some extent lost. But I suspect that the fall is the best season, for then the atmosphere is more transparent, and it is a greater pleasure to look out over the sea. The clear and bracing air, and the storms of autumn and winter even, are necessary in order that we may get the impression which the sea is calculated to make. In October, when the weather is not intolerably cold, and the landscape wears its autumnal tints, such as, methinks, only a Cape Cod landscape ever wears, especially if you have a storm during your stay, — that I am convinced is the best time to visit this shore. In autumn, even in August, the thoughtful days begin, and we can walk anywhere with profit. Beside, an outward cold and dreariness, which make it necessary to seek shelter at night, lend a spirit of adventure to a walk.

The time must come when this coast will be a place of resort for those New-Englanders who really wish to visit the sea-side. At present it is wholly unknown to the fashionable world, and probably it will never be agreeable to them. If it is merely a ten-pin alley, or a circular railway, or an ocean of mint-julep, that the visitor is in search of, — if he thinks more of the wine than the brine, as I suspect some do at Newport, — I trust that for a long time he will be disappointed here. But this shore will never be more attractive than it is now. Such beaches as are fashionable are here made and unmade in a day, I may almost say, by the sea shifting its sands. Lynn and Nantasket! this bare and bended arm it is that makes the bay in which they lie so snugly. What are springs and waterfalls? Here is the spring of springs, the waterfall of waterfalls. A storm in the fall or winter is the time to visit it; a light-house or a fisherman's hut the true hotel. A man may stand there and put all America behind him.

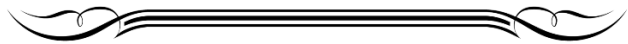
It is remarkable that the first, if not the only, part of New England which Cartier saw was Vermont (he also saw the mountains of New York), from Montreal Mountain, in 1535, sixty-seven years before Gosnold saw Cape Cod. *If seeing is discovering*, — and that is *all*

that it is proved that Cabot knew of the coast of the United States, — then Cartier (to omit Verrazani and Gomez) was the discoverer of New England rather than Gosnold, who is commonly so styled.

"Savage Rock," which some have supposed to be, from the name, the *Salvages*, a ledge about two miles off Rockland, Cape Ann, was probably the *Nubble*, a large, high rock near the shore, on the east side of York Harbor, Maine. The first land made by Gosnold is presumed by experienced navigators to be Cape Elizabeth, on the same coast. (See Babson's History of Gloucester, Massachusetts.)

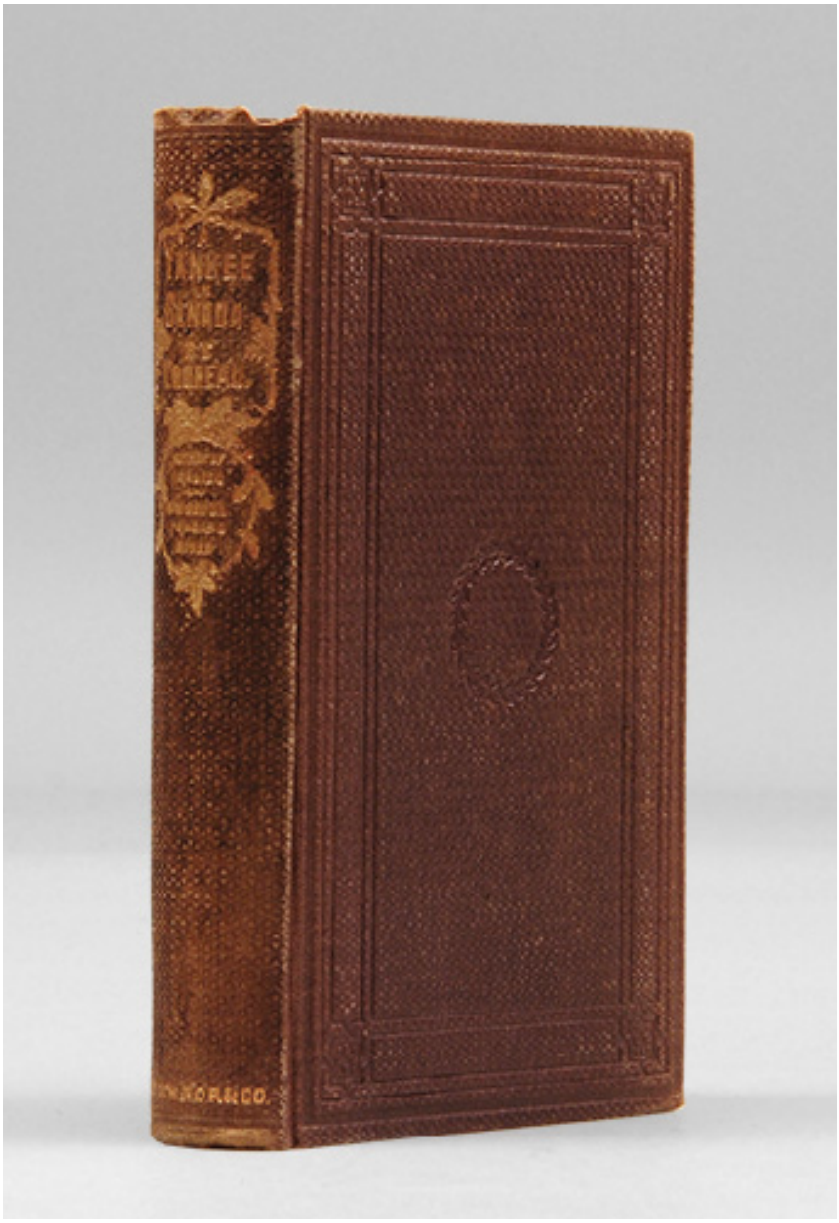
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THE END



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The first edition

New England is by some affirmed to be an island, bounded on the north with the River Canada (so called from Monsieur Cane). — Josselyn's Rarities.

And still older, in Thomas Morton's "New English Canaan," published in 1632, it is said, on page 97, "From this Lake [Erocoise] Northwards is derived the famous River of Canada, so named, of Monsier de Cane, a French Lord, who first planted a colony of French in America."

CHAPTER I. CONCORD TO MONTREAL

I fear that I have not got much to say about Canada, not having seen much; what I got by going to Canada was a cold. I left Concord, Massachusetts, Wednesday morning, September 25th, 1850, for Quebec. Fare, seven dollars there and back; distance from Boston, five hundred and ten miles; being obliged to leave Montreal on the return as soon as Friday, October 4th, or within ten days. I will not stop to tell the reader the names of my fellow-travelers; there were said to be fifteen hundred of them. I wished only to be set down in Canada, and take one honest walk there as I might in Concord woods of an afternoon.

The country was new to me beyond Fitchburg. In Ashburnham and afterward, as we were whirled rapidly along, I noticed the woodbine (*Ampelopsis quinquefolia*), its leaves now changed, for the most part on dead trees, draping them like a red scarf. It was a little exciting, suggesting bloodshed, or at least a military life, like an epaulet or sash, as if it were dyed with the blood of the trees whose wounds it was inadequate to stanch. For now the bloody autumn was come, and an Indian warfare was waged through the forest. These military trees appeared very numerous, for our rapid progress connected those that were even some miles apart. Does the woodbine prefer the elm? The first view of Monadnock was obtained five or six miles this side of Fitzwilliam, but nearest and best at Troy and beyond. Then there were the Troy cuts and embankments. Keene Street strikes the traveler favorably, it is so wide, level, straight, and long. I have heard one of my relatives, who was born and bred there, say that you could see a chicken run across it a mile off. I have also been told that when this town was settled they laid out a street four rods wide, but at a subsequent meeting of the proprietors one rose and remarked, “We have plenty of land, why not make the street eight rods wide?” and so they voted that it should be eight rods wide, and the town is known far and near for its handsome street. It was a cheap way of securing comfort, as well as fame, and I wish that all new towns would take pattern from this. It is best to lay our plans widely in youth, for then land is cheap, and it is but too easy to

contract our views afterward. Youths so laid out, with broad avenues and parks, that they may make handsome and liberal old men! Show me a youth whose mind is like some Washington city of magnificent distances, prepared for the most remotely successful and glorious life after all, when those spaces shall be built over and the idea of the founder be realized. I trust that every New England boy will begin by laying out a Keene Street through his head, eight rods wide. I know one such Washington city of a man, whose lots as yet are only surveyed and staked out, and, except a cluster of shanties here and there, only the Capitol stands there for all structures, and any day you may see from afar his princely idea borne coachwise along the spacious but yet empty avenues. Keene is built on a remarkably large and level interval, like the bed of a lake, and the surrounding hills, which are remote from its street, must afford some good walks. The scenery of mountain towns is commonly too much crowded. A town which is built on a plain of some extent, with an open horizon, and surrounded by hills at a distance, affords the best walks and views.

As we travel northwest up the country, sugar maples, beeches, birches, hemlocks, spruce, butternuts, and ash trees prevail more and more. To the rapid traveler the number of elms in a town is the measure of its civility. One man in the cars has a bottle full of some liquor. The whole company smile whenever it is exhibited. I find no difficulty in containing myself. The Westmoreland country looked attractive. I heard a passenger giving the very obvious derivation of this name, Westmore-land, as if it were purely American, and he had made a discovery; but I thought of "my cousin Westmoreland" in England. Every one will remember the approach to Bellows Falls, under a high cliff which rises from the Connecticut. I was disappointed in the size of the river here; it appeared shrunk to a mere mountain-stream. The water was evidently very low. The rivers which we had crossed this forenoon possessed more of the character of mountain-streams than those in the vicinity of Concord, and I was surprised to see everywhere traces of recent freshets, which had carried away bridges and injured the railroad, though I had heard nothing of it. In Ludlow, Mount Holly, and beyond, there is interesting mountain scenery, not rugged and stupendous, but such as you could easily ramble over, — long, narrow, mountain vales

through which to see the horizon. You are in the midst of the Green Mountains. A few more elevated blue peaks are seen from the neighborhood of Mount Holly; perhaps Killington Peak is one. Sometimes, as on the Western Railroad, you are whirled over mountainous embankments, from which the scared horses in the valleys appear diminished to hounds. All the hills blush; I think that autumn must be the best season to journey over even the *Green* Mountains. You frequently exclaim to yourself, What *red* maples! The sugar maple is not so red. You see some of the latter with rosy spots or cheeks only, blushing on one side like fruit, while all the rest of the tree is green, proving either some partiality in the light or frosts or some prematurity in particular branches. Tall and slender ash trees, whose foliage is turned to a dark mulberry color, are frequent. The butternut, which is a remarkably spreading tree, is turned completely yellow, thus proving its relation to the hickories. I was also struck by the bright yellow tints of the yellow birch. The sugar maple is remarkable for its clean ankle. The groves of these trees looked like vast forest sheds, their branches stopping short at a uniform height, four or five feet from the ground, like eaves, as if they had been trimmed by art, so that you could look under and through the whole grove with its leafy canopy, as under a tent whose curtain is raised.

As you approach Lake Champlain you begin to see the New York mountains. The first view of the lake at Vergennes is impressive, but rather from association than from any peculiarity in the scenery. It lies there so small (not appearing in that proportion to the width of the State that it does on the map), but beautifully quiet, like a picture of the Lake of Lucerne on a music-box, where you trace the name of Lucerne among the foliage; far more ideal than ever it looked on the map. It does not say, "Here I am, Lake Champlain," as the conductor might for it, but having studied the geography thirty years, you crossed over a hill one afternoon and beheld it. But it is only a glimpse that you get here. At Burlington you rush to a wharf and go on board a steamboat, two hundred and thirty-two miles from Boston. We left Concord at twenty minutes before eight in the morning, and were in Burlington about six at night, but too late to see the lake. We got our first fair view of the lake at dawn, just

before reaching Plattsburg, and saw blue ranges of mountains on either hand, in New York and in Vermont, the former especially grand. A few white schooners, like gulls, were seen in the distance, for it is not waste and solitary like a lake in Tartary; but it was such a view as leaves not much to be said; indeed, I have postponed Lake Champlain to another day.

The oldest reference to these waters that I have yet seen is in the account of Cartier's discovery and exploration of the St. Lawrence in 1535. Samuel Champlain actually discovered and paddled up the lake in July, 1609, eleven years before the settlement of Plymouth, accompanying a war-party of the Canadian Indians against the Iroquois. He describes the islands in it as not inhabited, although they are pleasant, — on account of the continual wars of the Indians, in consequence of which they withdraw from the rivers and lakes into the depths of the land, that they may not be surprised. "Continuing our course," says he, "in this lake, on the western side, viewing the country, I saw on the eastern side very high mountains, where there was snow on the summit. I inquired of the savages if those places were inhabited. They replied that they were, and that they were Iroquois, and that in those places there were beautiful valleys and plains fertile in corn, such as I have eaten in this country, with an infinity of other fruits." This is the earliest account of what is now Vermont.

The number of French-Canadian gentlemen and ladies among the passengers, and the sound of the French language, advertised us by this time that we were being whirled towards some foreign vortex. And now we have left Rouse's Point, and entered the Sorel River, and passed the invisible barrier between the States and Canada. The shores of the Sorel, Richelieu, or St. John's River are flat and reedy, where I had expected something more rough and mountainous for a natural boundary between two nations. Yet I saw a difference at once, in the few huts, in the pirogues on the shore, and as it were, in the shore itself. This was an interesting scenery to me, and the very reeds or rushes in the shallow water and the tree-tops in the swamps have left a pleasing impression. We had still a distant view behind us of two or three blue mountains in Vermont and New York. About nine o'clock in the forenoon we reached St. John's, an old frontier

post three hundred and six miles from Boston, and twenty-four from Montreal. We now discovered that we were in a foreign country, in a station-house of another nation. This building was a barn-like structure, looking as if it were the work of the villagers combined, like a log house in a new settlement. My attention was caught by the double advertisements in French and English fastened to its posts, by the formality of the English, and the covert or open reference to their queen and the British lion. No gentlemanly conductor appeared, none whom you would know to be the conductor by his dress and demeanor; but ere long we began to see here and there a solid, red-faced, burly-looking Englishman, a little pursy perhaps, who made us ashamed of ourselves and our thin and nervous countrymen, — a grandfatherly personage, at home in his greatcoat, who looked as if he might be a stage proprietor, certainly a railroad director, and knew, or had a right to know, when the cars did start. Then there were two or three pale-faced, black-eyed, loquacious Canadian-French gentlemen there, shrugging their shoulders; pitted as if they had all had the small-pox. In the meanwhile some soldiers, redcoats, belonging to the barracks near by, were turned out to be drilled. At every important point in our route the soldiers showed themselves ready for us; though they were evidently rather raw recruits here, they manœuvred far better than our soldiers; yet, as usual, I heard some Yankees talk as if they were no great shakes, and they had seen the Acton Blues manœuvre as well. The officers spoke sharply to them, and appeared to be doing their part thoroughly. I heard one suddenly coming to the rear, exclaim, "Michael Donouy, take his name!" though I could not see what the latter did or omitted to do. It was whispered that Michael Donouy would have to suffer for that. I heard some of our party discussing the possibility of their driving these troops off the field with their umbrellas. I thought that the Yankee, though undisciplined, had this advantage at least, that he especially is a man who, everywhere and under all circumstances, is fully resolved to better his condition essentially, and therefore he could afford to be beaten at first; while the virtue of the Irishman, and to a great extent the Englishman, consists in merely maintaining his ground or condition. The Canadians here, a rather poor-looking race, clad in gray homespun, which gave them the appearance of being

covered with dust, were riding about in caleches and small one-horse carts called charettes. The Yankees assumed that all the riders were racing, or at least exhibiting the paces of their horses, and saluted them accordingly. We saw but little of the village here, for nobody could tell us when the cars would start; that was kept a profound secret, perhaps for political reasons; and therefore we were tied to our seats. The inhabitants of St. John's and vicinity are described by an English traveler as "singularly unprepossessing," and before completing his period he adds, "besides, they are generally very much disaffected to the British crown." I suspect that that "besides" should have been a because.

At length, about noon, the cars began to roll towards La Prairie. The whole distance of fifteen miles was over a remarkably level country, resembling a Western prairie, with the mountains about Chambly visible in the northeast. This novel but monotonous scenery was exciting. At La Prairie we first took notice of the tinned roofs, but above all of the St. Lawrence, which looked like a lake; in fact it is considerably expanded here; it was nine miles across diagonally to Montreal. Mount Royal in the rear of the city, and the island of St. Helen's opposite to it, were now conspicuous. We could also see the Sault St. Louis about five miles up the river, and the Sault Norman still farther eastward. The former are described as the most considerable rapids in the St. Lawrence; but we could see merely a gleam of light there as from a cobweb in the sun. Soon the city of Montreal was discovered with its tin roofs shining afar. Their reflections fell on the eye like a clash of cymbals on the ear. Above all the church of Notre Dame was conspicuous, and anon the Bonsecours market-house, occupying a commanding position on the quay, in the rear of the shipping. This city makes the more favorable impression from being approached by water, and also being built of stone, a gray limestone found on the island. Here, after traveling directly inland the whole breadth of New England, we had struck upon a city's harbor, — it made on me the impression of a seaport, — to which ships of six hundred tons can ascend, and where vessels drawing fifteen feet lie close to the wharf, five hundred and forty miles from the Gulf, the St. Lawrence being here two miles wide. There was a great crowd assembled on the ferry-boat wharf and on

the quay to receive the Yankees, and flags of all colors were streaming from the vessels to celebrate their arrival. When the gun was fired, the gentry hurrahed again and again, and then the Canadian caleche-drivers, who were most interested in the matter, and who, I perceived, were separated from the former by a fence, hurrahed their welcome; first the broadcloth, then the homespun.

It was early in the afternoon when we stepped ashore. With a single companion, I soon found my way to the church of Notre Dame. I saw that it was of great size and signified something. It is said to be the largest ecclesiastical structure in North America, and can seat ten thousand. It is two hundred and fifty-five and a half feet long, and the groined ceiling is eighty feet above your head. The Catholic are the only churches which I have seen worth remembering, which are not almost wholly profane. I do not speak only of the rich and splendid like this, but of the humblest of them as well. Coming from the hurrahing mob and the rattling carriages, we pushed aside the listed door of this church, and found ourselves instantly in an atmosphere which might be sacred to thought and religion, if one had any. There sat one or two women who had stolen a moment from the concerns of the day, as they were passing; but, if there had been fifty people there, it would still have been the most solitary place imaginable. They did not look up at us, nor did one regard another. We walked softly down the broad aisle with our hats in our hands. Presently came in a troop of Canadians, in their homespun, who had come to the city in the boat with us, and one and all kneeled down in the aisle before the high altar to their devotions, somewhat awkwardly, as cattle prepare to lie down, and there we left them. As if you were to catch some farmer's sons from Marlborough, come to cattle-show, silently kneeling in Concord meeting-house some Wednesday! Would there not soon be a mob peeping in at the windows? It is true, these Roman Catholics, priests and all, impress me as a people who have fallen far behind the significance of their symbols. It is as if an ox had strayed into a church and were trying to bethink himself. Nevertheless, they are capable of reverence; but we Yankees are a people in whom this sentiment has nearly died out, and in this respect we cannot bethink ourselves even as oxen. I did not mind the pictures nor the candles, whether tallow or tin. Those of

the former which I looked at appeared tawdry. It matters little to me whether the pictures are by a neophyte of the Algonquin or the Italian tribe. But I was impressed by the quiet, religious atmosphere of the place. It was a great cave in the midst of a city; and what were the altars and the tinsel but the sparkling stalactites, into which you entered in a moment, and where the still atmosphere and the sombre light disposed to serious and profitable thought? Such a cave at hand, which you can enter any day, is worth a thousand of our churches which are open only Sundays, hardly long enough for an airing, and then filled with a bustling congregation, — a church where the priest is the least part, where you do your own preaching, where the universe preaches to you and can be heard. I am not sure but this Catholic religion would be an admirable one if the priest were quite omitted. I think that I might go to church myself some Monday, if I lived in a city where there was such a one to go to. In Concord, to be sure, we do not need such. Our forests are such a church, far grander and more sacred. We dare not leave *our* meeting-houses open for fear they would be profaned. Such a cave, such a shrine, in one of our groves, for instance, how long would it be respected? for what purposes would it be entered, by such baboons as we are? I think of its value not only to religion, but to philosophy and to poetry; besides a reading-room, to have a thinking-room in every city! Perchance the time will come when every house even will have not only its sleeping-rooms, and dining-room, and talking-room or parlor, but its thinking-room also, and the architects will put it into their plans. Let it be furnished and ornamented with whatever conduces to serious and creative thought. I should not object to the holy water, or any other simple symbol, if it were consecrated by the imagination of the worshipers.

I heard that some Yankees bet that the candles were not wax, but tin. A European assured them that they were wax; but, inquiring of the sexton, he was surprised to learn that they were tin filled with oil. The church was too poor to afford wax. As for the Protestant churches, here or elsewhere, they did not interest me, for it is only as caves that churches interest me at all, and in that respect they were inferior.

Montreal makes the impression of a larger city than you had

expected to find, though you may have heard that it contains nearly sixty thousand inhabitants. In the newer parts, it appeared to be growing fast like a small New York, and to be considerably Americanized. The names of the squares reminded you of Paris, — the Champ de Mars, the Place d'Armes, and others, — and you felt as if a French revolution might break out any moment. Glimpses of Mount Royal rising behind the town, and the names of some streets in that direction, make one think of Edinburgh. That hill sets off this city wonderfully. I inquired at a principal bookstore for books published in Montreal. They said that there were none but school-books and the like; they got their books from the States. From time to time we met a priest in the streets, for they are distinguished by their dress, like the *civil* police. Like clergymen generally, with or without the gown, they made on us the impression of effeminacy. We also met some Sisters of Charity, dressed in black, with Shaker-shaped black bonnets and crosses, and cadaverous faces, who looked as if they had almost cried their eyes out, their complexions parboiled with scalding tears; insulting the daylight by their presence, having taken an oath not to smile. By cadaverous I mean that their faces were like the faces of those who have been dead and buried for a year, and then untombed, with the life's grief upon them, and yet, for some unaccountable reason, the process of decay arrested.

"Truth never fails her servant, sir, nor leaves him
With the day's shame upon him."

They waited demurely on the sidewalk while a truck laden with raisins was driven in at the seminary of St. Sulpice, never once lifting their eyes from the ground.

The soldier here, as everywhere in Canada, appeared to be put forward, and by his best foot. They were in the proportion of the soldiers to the laborers in an African ant-hill. The inhabitants evidently rely on them in a great measure for music and entertainment. You would meet with them pacing back and forth before some guard-house or passage-way, guarding, regarding, and disregarding all kinds of law by turns, apparently for the sake of the discipline to themselves, and not because it was important to exclude anybody from entering that way. They reminded me of the men who are paid for piling up bricks and then throwing them down again. On

every prominent ledge you could see England's hands holding the Canadas, and I judged by the redness of her knuckles that she would soon have to let go. In the rear of such a guard-house, in a large graveled square or parade ground, called the Champ de Mars, we saw a large body of soldiers being drilled, we being as yet the only spectators. But they did not appear to notice us any more than the devotees in the church, but were seemingly as indifferent to fewness of spectators as the phenomena of nature are, whatever they might have been thinking under their helmets of the Yankees that were to come. Each man wore white kid gloves. It was one of the most interesting sights which I saw in Canada. The problem appeared to be how to smooth down all individual protuberances or idiosyncrasies, and make a thousand men move as one man, animated by one central will; and there was some approach to success. They obeyed the signals of a commander who stood at a great distance, wand in hand; and the precision, and promptness, and harmony of their movements could not easily have been matched. The harmony was far more remarkable than that of any choir or band, and obtained, no doubt, at a greater cost. They made on me the impression, not of many individuals, but of one vast centipede of a man, good for all sorts of pulling down; and why not then for some kinds of building up? If men could combine thus earnestly, and patiently, and harmoniously to some really worthy end, what might they not accomplish? They now put their hands, and partially perchance their heads together, and the result is that they are the imperfect tools of an imperfect and tyrannical government. But if they could put their hands and heads and hearts and all together, such a coöperation and harmony would be the very end and success for which government now exists in vain, — a government, as it were, not only with tools, but stock to trade with.

I was obliged to frame some sentences that sounded like French in order to deal with the market-women, who, for the most part, cannot speak English. According to the guidebook the relative population of this city stands nearly thus: two fifths are French-Canadian; nearly one fifth British-Canadian; one and a half fifths English, Irish, and Scotch; somewhat less than one half fifth Germans, United States people, and others. I saw nothing like pie for sale, and no good cake

to put in my bundle, such as you can easily find in our towns, but plenty of fair-looking apples, for which Montreal Island is celebrated, and also pears cheaper and I thought better than ours, and peaches, which, though they were probably brought from the South, were as cheap as they commonly are with us. So imperative is the law of demand and supply that, as I have been told, the market of Montreal is sometimes supplied with green apples from the State of New York some weeks even before they are ripe in the latter place. I saw here the spruce wax which the Canadians chew, done up in little silvered papers, a penny a roll; also a small and shriveled fruit which they called *cerises*, mixed with many little stems, somewhat like raisins, but I soon returned what I had bought, finding them rather insipid, only putting a sample in my pocket. Since my return, I find on comparison that it is the fruit of the sweet viburnum (*Viburnum Lentago*), which with us rarely holds on till it is ripe.

I stood on the deck of the steamer John Munn, late in the afternoon, when the second and third ferry-boats arrived from La Prairie, bringing the remainder of the Yankees. I never saw so many caleches, cabs, charettes, and similar vehicles collected before, and doubt if New York could easily furnish more. The handsome and substantial stone quay which stretches a mile along the riverside and protects the street from the ice was thronged with the citizens who had turned out on foot and in carriages to welcome or to behold the Yankees. It was interesting to see the caleche-drivers dash up and down the slope of the quay with their active little horses. They drive much faster than in our cities. I have been told that some of them come nine miles into the city every morning and return every night, without changing their horses during the day. In the midst of the crowd of carts, I observed one deep one loaded with sheep with their legs tied together, and their bodies piled one upon another, as if the driver had forgotten that they were sheep and not yet mutton, — a sight, I trust, peculiar to Canada, though I fear that it is not.

CHAPTER II. QUEBEC AND MONTMORENCI

About six o'clock we started for Quebec, one hundred and eighty miles distant by the river; gliding past Longueuil and Boucherville on the right, and Pointe aux Trembles, "so called from having been originally covered with aspens," and Bout de l'Isle, or the end of the island, on the left. I repeat these names not merely for want of more substantial facts to record, but because they sounded singularly poetic to my ears. There certainly was no lie in them. They suggested that some simple, and, perchance, heroic human life might have transpired there. There is all the poetry in the world in a name. It is a poem which the mass of men hear and read. What is poetry in the common sense, but a string of such jingling names? I want nothing better than a good word. The name of a thing may easily be more than the thing itself to me. Inexpressibly beautiful appears the recognition by man of the least natural fact, and the allying his life to it. All the world reiterating this slender truth, that aspens once grew there; and the swift inference is that men were there to see them. And so it would be with the names of our native and neighboring villages, if we had not profaned them.

The daylight now failed us, and we went below; but I endeavored to console myself for being obliged to make this voyage by night, by thinking that I did not lose a great deal, the shores being low and rather unattractive, and that the river itself was much the more interesting object. I heard something in the night about the boat being at William Henry, Three Rivers, and in the Richelieu Rapids, but I was still where I had been when I lost sight of Pointe aux Trembles. To hear a man who has been waked up at midnight in the cabin of a steamboat inquiring, "Waiter, where are we now?" is as if, at any moment of the earth's revolution round the sun, or of the system round its centre, one were to raise himself up and inquire of one of the deck hands, "Where are we now?"

I went on deck at daybreak, when we were thirty or forty miles above Quebec. The banks were now higher and more interesting. There was an "uninterrupted succession of whitewashed cottages," on each side of the river. This is what every traveler tells. But it is

not to be taken as an evidence of the populousness of the country in general, hardly even of the river-banks. They have presented a similar appearance for a hundred years. The Swedish traveler and naturalist Kalm, who descended the river in 1749, says, "It could really be called a village, beginning at Montreal and ending at Quebec, which is a distance of more than one hundred and eighty miles; for the farmhouses are never above five arpents, and sometimes but three asunder, a few places excepted." Even in 1684 Hontan said that the houses were not more than a gunshot apart at most. Ere long we passed Cape Rouge, eight miles above Quebec, the mouth of the Chaudière on the opposite or south side; New Liverpool Cove with its lumber-rafts and some shipping; then Sillery and Wolfe's Cove and the Heights of Abraham on the north, with now a view of Cape Diamond, and the citadel in front. The approach to Quebec was very imposing. It was about six o'clock in the morning when we arrived. There is but a single street under the cliff on the south side of the cape, which was made by blasting the rocks and filling up the river. Three-story houses did not rise more than one fifth or one sixth the way up the nearly perpendicular rock, whose summit is three hundred and forty-five feet above the water. We saw, as we glided past, the sign on the side of the precipice, part way up, pointing to the spot where Montgomery was killed in 1775. Formerly it was the custom for those who went to Quebec for the first time to be ducked, or else pay a fine. Not even the Governor-General escaped. But we were too many to be ducked, even if the custom had not been abolished.

Here we were, in the harbor of Quebec, still three hundred and sixty miles from the mouth of the St. Lawrence, in a basin two miles across, where the greatest depth is twenty-eight fathoms, and though the water is fresh, the tide rises seventeen to twenty-four feet, — a harbor "large and deep enough," says a British traveler, "to hold the English navy." I may as well state that, in 1844, the county of Quebec contained about forty-five thousand inhabitants (the city and suburbs having about forty-three thousand), — about twenty-eight thousand being Canadians of French origin; eight thousand British; over seven thousand natives of Ireland; one thousand five hundred natives of England; the rest Scotch and others. Thirty-six thousand

belong to the Church of Rome.

Separating ourselves from the crowd, we walked up a narrow street, thence ascended by some wooden steps, called the Break-neck Stairs, into another steep, narrow, and zigzag street, blasted through the rock, which last led through a low, massive stone portal, called Prescott Gate, the principal thoroughfare into the Upper Town. This passage was defended by cannon, with a guard-house over it, a sentinel at his post, and other soldiers at hand ready to relieve him. I rubbed my eyes to be sure that I was in the Nineteenth Century, and was not entering one of those portals which sometimes adorn the frontispieces of new editions of old black-letter volumes. I thought it would be a good place to read Froissart's Chronicles. It was such a reminiscence of the Middle Ages as Scott's novels. Men apparently dwelt there for security! Peace be unto them! As if the inhabitants of New York were to go over to Castle William to live! What a place it must be to bring up children! Being safe through the gate, we naturally took the street which was steepest, and after a few turns found ourselves on the Durham Terrace, a wooden platform on the site of the old castle of St. Louis, still one hundred and fifteen feet below the summit of the citadel, overlooking the Lower Town, the wharf where we had landed, the harbor, the Isle of Orleans, and the river and surrounding country to a great distance. It was literally a *splendid* view. We could see, six or seven miles distant, in the northeast, an indentation in the lofty shore of the northern channel, apparently on one side of the harbor, which marked the mouth of the Montmorenci, whose celebrated fall was only a few rods in the rear.

At a shoe-shop, whither we were directed for this purpose, we got some of our American money changed into English. I found that American hard money would have answered as well, excepting cents, which fell very fast before their pennies, it taking two of the former to make one of the latter, and often the penny, which had cost us two cents, did us the service of one cent only. Moreover, our robust cents were compelled to meet on even terms a crew of vile half-penny tokens, and Bungtown coppers, which had more brass in their composition, and so perchance made their way in the world. Wishing to get into the citadel, we were directed to the Jesuits' Barracks, — a good part of the public buildings here are barracks, — to get a pass

of the Town Major. We did not heed the sentries at the gate, nor did they us, and what under the sun they were placed there for, unless to hinder a free circulation of the air, was not apparent. There we saw soldiers eating their breakfasts in their mess-room, from bare wooden tables in camp fashion. We were continually meeting with soldiers in the streets, carrying funny little tin pails of all shapes, even semicircular, as if made to pack conveniently. I supposed that they contained their dinners, — so many slices of bread and butter to each, perchance. Sometimes they were carrying some kind of military chest on a sort of bier or hand-barrow, with a springy, undulating, military step, all passengers giving way to them, even the charette-drivers stopping for them to pass, — as if the battle were being lost from an inadequate supply of powder. There was a regiment of Highlanders, and, as I understood, of Royal Irish, in the city; and by this time there was a regiment of Yankees also. I had already observed, looking up even from the water, the head and shoulders of some General Poniatowsky, with an enormous cocked hat and gun, peering over the roof of a house, away up where the chimney caps commonly are with us, as it were a caricature of war and military awfulness; but I had not gone far up St. Louis Street before my riddle was solved, by the apparition of a real live Highlander under a cocked hat, and with his knees out, standing and marching sentinel on the ramparts, between St. Louis and St. John's Gate. (It must be a holy war that is waged there.) We stood close by without fear and looked at him. His legs were somewhat tanned, and the hair had begun to grow on them, as some of our wise men predict that it will in such cases, but I did not think they were remarkable in any respect. Notwithstanding all his warlike gear, when I inquired of him the way to the Plains of Abraham, he could not answer me without betraying some bashfulness through his broad Scotch. Soon after, we passed another of these creatures standing sentry at the St. Louis Gate, who let us go by without shooting us, or even demanding the countersign. We then began to go through the gate, which was so thick and tunnel-like as to remind me of those lines in Claudian's "Old Man of Verona," about the getting out of the gate being the greater part of a journey; — as you might imagine yourself crawling through an architectural vignette *at the end* of a black-letter volume.

We were then reminded that we had been in a fortress, from which we emerged by numerous zigzags in a ditch-like road, going a considerable distance to advance a few rods, where they could have shot us two or three times over, if their minds had been disposed as their guns were. The greatest, or rather the most prominent, part of this city was constructed with the design to offer the deadest resistance to leaden and iron missiles that might be cast against it. But it is a remarkable meteorological and psychological fact, that it is rarely known to rain lead with much violence, except on places so constructed. Keeping on about a mile we came to the Plains of Abraham, — for having got through with the Saints, we came next to the Patriarchs. Here the Highland regiment was being reviewed, while the band stood on one side and played — methinks it was *La Claire Fontaine*, the national air of the Canadian French. This is the site where a real battle once took place, to commemorate which they have had a sham fight here almost every day since. The Highlanders manœuvred very well, and if the precision of their movements was less remarkable, they did not appear so stiffly erect as the English or Royal Irish, but had a more elastic and graceful gait, like a herd of their own red deer, or as if accustomed to stepping down the sides of mountains. But they made a sad impression on the whole, for it was obvious that all true manhood was in the process of being drilled out of them. I have no doubt that soldiers well drilled are, as a class, peculiarly destitute of originality and independence. The officers appeared like men dressed above their condition. It is impossible to give the soldier a good education without making him a deserter. His natural foe is the government that drills him. What would any philanthropist who felt an interest in these men's welfare naturally do, but first of all teach them so to respect themselves that they could not be hired for this work, whatever might be the consequences to this government or that? — not drill a few, but educate all. I observed one older man among them, gray as a wharf-rat, and supple as the devil, marching lock-step with the rest, who would have to pay for that elastic gait.

We returned to the citadel along the heights, plucking such flowers as grew there. There was an abundance of succory still in blossom, broad-leaved goldenrod, buttercups, thorn bushes, Canada

thistles, and ivy, on the very summit of Cape Diamond. I also found the bladder campion in the neighborhood. We there enjoyed an extensive view, which I will describe in another place. Our pass, which stated that all the rules were "to be strictly enforced," as if they were determined to keep up the semblance of reality to the last gasp, opened to us the Dalhousie Gate, and we were conducted over the citadel by a bare-legged Highlander in cocked hat and full regimentals. He told us that he had been here about three years, and had formerly been stationed at Gibraltar. As if his regiment, having perchance been nestled amid the rocks of Edinburgh Castle, must flit from rock to rock thenceforth over the earth's surface, like a bald eagle, or other bird of prey, from eyrie to eyrie. As we were going out, we met the Yankees coming in, in a body headed by a red-coated officer called the commandant, and escorted by many citizens, both English and French-Canadian. I therefore immediately fell into the procession, and went round the citadel again with more intelligent guides, carrying, as before, all my effects with me. Seeing that nobody walked with the red-coated commandant, I attached myself to him, and though I was not what is called well-dressed, he did not know whether to repel me or not, for I talked like one who was not aware of any deficiency in that respect. Probably there was not one among all the Yankees who went to Canada this time, who was not more splendidly dressed than I was. It would have been a poor story if I had not enjoyed some distinction. I had on my "bad-weather clothes," like Olaf Trygvesson the Northman, when he went to the Thing in England, where, by the way, he won his bride. As we stood by the thirty-two-pounder on the summit of Cape Diamond, which is fired three times a day, the commandant told me that it would carry to the Isle of Orleans, four miles distant, and that no hostile vessel could come round the island. I now saw the subterranean or rather "casemated" barracks of the soldiers, which I had not noticed before, though I might have walked over them. They had very narrow windows, serving as loop-holes for musketry, and small iron chimneys rising above the ground. There we saw the soldiers at home and in an undress, splitting wood, — I looked to see whether with swords or axes, — and in various ways endeavoring to realize that their nation was now at peace with this part of the world. A part

of each regiment, chiefly officers, are allowed to marry. A grandfatherly, would-be witty Englishman could give a Yankee whom he was patronizing no reason for the bare knees of the Highlanders, other than oddity. The rock within the citadel is a little convex, so that shells falling on it would roll toward the circumference, where the barracks of the soldiers and officers are; it has been proposed, therefore, to make it slightly concave, so that they may roll into the centre, where they would be comparatively harmless; and it is estimated that to do this would cost twenty thousand pounds sterling. It may be well to remember this when I build my next house, and have the roof "all correct" for bomb-shells.

At mid-afternoon we made haste down Sault-au-Matelot Street, towards the Falls of Montmorenci, about eight miles down the St. Lawrence, on the north side, leaving the further examination of Quebec till our return. On our way, we saw men in the streets sawing logs pit-fashion, and afterward, with a common wood-saw and horse, cutting the planks into squares for paving the streets. This looked very shiftless, especially in a country abounding in water-power, and reminded me that I was no longer in Yankeeland. I found, on inquiry, that the excuse for this was that labor was so cheap; and I thought, with some pain, how cheap men are here! I have since learned that the English traveler Warburton remarked, soon after landing at Quebec, that everything was cheap there but men. That must be the difference between going thither from New and from Old England. I had already observed the dogs harnessed to their little milk-carts, which contain a single large can, lying asleep in the gutters regardless of the horses, while they rested from their labors, at different stages of the ascent in the Upper Town. I was surprised at the regular and extensive use made of these animals for drawing not only milk but groceries, wood, etc. It reminded me that the dog commonly is not put to any use. Cats catch mice; but dogs only worry the cats. Kalm, a hundred years ago, saw sledges here for ladies to ride in, drawn by a pair of dogs. He says, "A middle-sized dog is sufficient to draw a single person, when the roads are good;" and he was told by old people that horses were very scarce in their youth, and almost all the land-carriage was then effected by dogs. They made me think of the Esquimaux, who, in fact, are the next

people on the north. Charlevoix says that the first horses were introduced in 1665.

We crossed Dorchester Bridge, over the St. Charles, the little river in which Cartier, the discoverer of the St. Lawrence, put his ships, and spent the winter of 1535, and found ourselves on an excellent macadamized road, called Le Chemin de Beauport. We had left Concord Wednesday morning, and we endeavored to realize that now, Friday morning, we were taking a walk in Canada, in the Seigniory of Beauport, a foreign country, which a few days before had seemed almost as far off as England and France. Instead of rambling to Flint's Pond or the Sudbury meadows, we found ourselves, after being a little detained in cars and steamboats, — after spending half a night at Burlington, and half a day at Montreal, — taking a walk down the bank of the St. Lawrence to the Falls of Montmorenci and elsewhere. Well, I thought to myself, here I am in a foreign country; let me have my eyes about me, and take it all in. It already looked and felt a good deal colder than it had in New England, as we might have expected it would. I realized fully that I was four degrees nearer the pole, and shuddered at the thought; and I wondered if it were possible that the peaches might not be all gone when I returned. It was an atmosphere that made me think of the fur-trade, which is so interesting a department in Canada, for I had for all head-covering a thin palm-leaf hat without lining, that cost twenty-five cents, and over my coat one of those unspeakably cheap, as well as thin, brown linen sacks of the Oak Hall pattern, which every summer appear all over New England, thick as the leaves upon the trees. It was a thoroughly Yankee costume, which some of my fellow-travelers wore in the cars to save their coats a dusting. I wore mine, at first, because it looked better than the coat it covered, and last, because two coats were warmer than one, though one was thin and dirty. I never wear my best coat on a journey, though perchance I could show a certificate to prove that I have a more costly one, at least, at home, if that were all that a gentleman required. It is not wise for a traveler to go dressed. I should no more think of it than of putting on a clean dicky and blacking my shoes to go a-fishing; as if you were going out to dine, when, in fact, the genuine traveler is going out to work hard, and fare harder, — to eat a crust by the

wayside whenever he can get it. Honest traveling is about as dirty work as you can do, and a man needs a pair of overalls for it. As for blacking my shoes in such a case, I should as soon think of blacking my face. I carry a piece of tallow to preserve the leather and keep out the water; that's all; and many an officious shoe-black, who carried off my shoes when I was slumbering, mistaking me for a gentleman, has had occasion to repent it before he produced a gloss on them.

My pack, in fact, was soon made, for I keep a short list of those articles which, from frequent experience, I have found indispensable to the foot-traveler; and, when I am about to start, I have only to consult that, to be sure that nothing is omitted, and, what is more important, nothing superfluous inserted. Most of my fellow-travelers carried carpet-bags, or valises. Sometimes one had two or three ponderous yellow valises in his clutch, at each hitch of the cars, as if we were going to have another rush for seats; and when there was a rush in earnest, — and there were not a few, — I would see my man in the crowd, with two or three affectionate lusty fellows along each side of his arm, between his shoulder and his valises, which last held them tight to his back, like the nut on the end of a screw. I could not help asking in my mind, What so great cause for showing Canada to those valises, when perhaps your very nieces had to stay at home for want of an escort? I should have liked to be present when the custom-house officer came aboard of him, and asked him to declare upon his honor if he had anything but wearing apparel in them. Even the elephant carries but a small trunk on his journeys. The perfection of traveling is to travel without baggage. After considerable reflection and experience, I have concluded that the best bag for the foot-traveler is made with a handkerchief, or, if he study appearances, a piece of stiff brown paper, well tied up, with a fresh piece within to put outside when the first is torn. That is good for both town and country, and none will know but you are carrying home the silk for a new gown for your wife, when it may be a dirty shirt. A bundle which you can carry literally under your arm, and which will shrink and swell with its contents. I never found the carpet-bag of equal capacity which was not a bundle of itself. We styled ourselves the Knights of the Umbrella and the Bundle; for, wherever we went, whether to Notre Dame or Mount Royal or the

Champ de Mars, to the Town Major's or the Bishop's Palace, to the Citadel, with a bare-legged Highlander for our escort, or to the Plains of Abraham, to dinner or to bed, the umbrella and the bundle went with us; for we wished to be ready to digress at any moment. We made it our home nowhere in particular, but everywhere where our umbrella and bundle were. It would have been an amusing circumstance, if the mayor of one of those cities had politely asked us where we were staying. We could only have answered that we were staying with his honor for the time being. I was amused when, after our return, some green ones inquired if we found it easy to get accommodated; as if we went abroad to get accommodated, when we can get that at home.

We met with many charettes, bringing wood and stone to the city. The most ordinary-looking horses traveled faster than ours, or perhaps they were ordinary-looking because, as I am told, the Canadians do not use the curry-comb. Moreover, it is said that on the approach of winter their horses acquire an increased quantity of hair, to protect them from the cold. If this be true, some of our horses would make you think winter were approaching, even in midsummer. We soon began to see women and girls at work in the fields, digging potatoes alone, or bundling up the grain which the men cut. They appeared in rude health, with a great deal of color in their cheeks, and, if their occupation had made them coarse, it impressed me as better in its effects than making shirts at fourpence apiece, or doing nothing at all — unless it be chewing slate-pencils — with still smaller results. They were much more agreeable objects, with their great broad-brimmed hats and flowing dresses, than the men and boys. We afterwards saw them doing various other kinds of work; indeed, I thought that we saw more women at work out of doors than men. On our return, we observed in this town a girl, with Indian boots nearly two feet high, taking the harness off a dog.

The purity and transparency of the atmosphere were wonderful. When we had been walking an hour, we were surprised, on turning round, to see how near the city, with its glittering tin roofs, still looked. A village ten miles off did not appear to be more than three or four. I was convinced that you could see objects distinctly there much farther than here. It is true the villages are of a dazzling white,

but the dazzle is to be referred, perhaps, to the transparency of the atmosphere as much as to the whitewash.

We were now fairly in the village of Beauport, though there was still but one road. The houses stood close upon this, without any front yards, and at an angle with it, as if they had dropped down, being set with more reference to the road which the sun travels. It being about sundown, and the falls not far off, we began to look round for a lodging, for we preferred to put up at a private house, that we might see more of the inhabitants. We inquired first at the most promising-looking houses, — if, indeed, any were promising. When we knocked, they shouted some French word for come in, perhaps *Entrez*, and we asked for a lodging in English; but we found, unexpectedly, that they spoke French only. Then we went along and tried another house, being generally saluted by a rush of two or three little curs, which readily distinguished a foreigner, and which we were prepared now to hear bark in French. Our first question would be "Parlez-vous Anglais?" but the invariable answer was "Non, monsieur;" and we soon found that the inhabitants were exclusively French Canadians, and nobody spoke English at all, any more than in France; that, in fact, we were in a foreign country, where the inhabitants uttered not one familiar sound to us. Then we tried by turns to talk French with them, in which we succeeded sometimes pretty well, but for the most part pretty ill. "Pouvez-vous nous donner un lit cette nuit?" we would ask, and then they would answer with French volubility, so that we could catch only a word here and there. We could understand the women and children generally better than the men, and they us; and thus, after a while, we would learn that they had no more beds than they used.

So we were compelled to inquire, "Y a-t-il une maison publique ici?" (*auberge* we should have said, perhaps, for they seemed never to have heard of the other), and they answered at length that there was no tavern, unless we could get lodgings at the mill, *le moulin*, which we had passed; or they would direct us to a grocery, and almost every house had a small grocery at one end of it. We called on the public notary or village lawyer, but he had no more beds nor English than the rest. At one house there was so good a misunderstanding at once established through the politeness of all

parties, that we were encouraged to walk in and sit down, and ask for a glass of water; and having drank their water, we thought it was as good as to have tasted their salt. When our host and his wife spoke of their poor accommodations, meaning for themselves, we assured them that they were good enough, for we thought that they were only apologizing for the poorness of the accommodations they were about to offer us, and we did not discover our mistake till they took us up a ladder into a loft, and showed to our eyes what they had been laboring in vain to communicate to our brains through our ears, that they had but that one apartment with its few beds for the whole family. We made our *adieus* forthwith, and with gravity, perceiving the literal signification of that word. We were finally taken in at a sort of public house, whose master worked for Patterson, the proprietor of the extensive sawmills driven by a portion of the Montmorenci stolen from the fall, whose roar we now heard. We here talked, or murdered, French all the evening, with the master of the house and his family, and probably had a more amusing time than if we had completely understood one another. At length they showed us to a bed in their best chamber, very high to get into, with a low wooden rail to it. It had no cotton sheets, but coarse, home-made, dark-colored linen ones. Afterward, we had to do with sheets still coarser than these, and nearly the color of our blankets. There was a large open buffet loaded with crockery in one corner of the room, as if to display their wealth to travelers, and pictures of Scripture scenes, French, Italian, and Spanish, hung around. Our hostess came back directly to inquire if we would have brandy for breakfast. The next morning, when I asked their names, she took down the temperance pledges of herself and husband and children, which were hanging against the wall. They were Jean Baptiste Binet and his wife, Geneviève Binet. Jean Baptiste is the sobriquet of the French Canadians.

After breakfast we proceeded to the fall, which was within half a mile, and at this distance its rustling sound, like the wind among the leaves, filled all the air. We were disappointed to find that we were in some measure shut out from the west side of the fall by the private grounds and fences of Patterson, who appropriates not only a part of the water for his mill, but a still larger part of the prospect, so that we

were obliged to trespass. This gentleman's mansion-house and grounds were formerly occupied by the Duke of Kent, father to Queen Victoria. It appeared to me in bad taste for an individual, though he were the father of Queen Victoria, to obtrude himself with his land titles, or at least his fences, on so remarkable a natural phenomenon, which should, in every sense, belong to mankind. Some falls should even be kept sacred from the intrusion of mills and factories, as water privileges in another than the millwright's sense. This small river falls perpendicularly nearly two hundred and fifty feet at one pitch. The St. Lawrence falls only one hundred and sixty-four feet at Niagara. It is a very simple and noble fall, and leaves nothing to be desired; but the most that I could say of it would only have the force of one other testimony to assure the reader that it is there. We looked directly down on it from the point of a projecting rock, and saw far below us, on a low promontory, the grass kept fresh and green by the perpetual drizzle, looking like moss. The rock is a kind of slate, in the crevices of which grew ferns and goldenrods. The prevailing trees on the shores were spruce and arbor-vitæ, — the latter very large and now full of fruit, — also aspens, alders, and the mountain-ash with its berries. Every emigrant who arrives in this country by way of the St. Lawrence, as he opens a point of the Isle of Orleans, sees the Montmorenci tumbling into the Great River thus magnificently in a vast white sheet, making its contribution with emphasis. Roberval's pilot, Jean Alphonse, saw this fall thus, and described it, in 1542. It is a splendid introduction to the scenery of Quebec. Instead of an artificial fountain in its square, Quebec has this magnificent natural waterfall, to adorn one side of its harbor. Within the mouth of the chasm below, which can be entered only at ebb-tide, we had a grand view at once of Quebec and of the fall. Kalm says that the noise of the fall is sometimes heard at Quebec, about eight miles distant, and is a sign of a northeast wind. The side of this chasm, of soft and crumbling slate too steep to climb, was among the memorable features of the scene. In the winter of 1829 the frozen spray of the fall, descending on the ice of the St. Lawrence, made a hill one hundred and twenty-six feet high. It is an annual phenomenon which some think may help explain the formation of glaciers.

In the vicinity of the fall we began to notice what looked like our red-fruited thorn bushes, grown to the size of ordinary apple trees, very common, and full of large red or yellow fruit, which the inhabitants called *pommettes*, but I did not learn that they were put to any use.

CHAPTER III. ST. ANNE

By the middle of the forenoon, though it was a rainy day, we were once more on our way down the north bank of the St. Lawrence, in a northeasterly direction, toward the Falls of St. Anne, which are about thirty miles from Quebec. The settled, more level, and fertile portion of Canada East may be described rudely as a triangle, with its apex slanting toward the northeast, about one hundred miles wide at its base, and from two to three or even four hundred miles long, if you reckon its narrow northeastern extremity; it being the immediate valley of the St. Lawrence and its tributaries, rising by a single or by successive terraces toward the mountains on either hand. Though the words Canada East on the map stretch over many rivers and lakes and unexplored wildernesses, the actual Canada, which might be the colored portion of the map, is but a little clearing on the banks of the river, which one of those syllables would more than cover. The banks of the St. Lawrence are rather low from Montreal to the Richelieu Rapids, about forty miles above Quebec. Thence they rise gradually to Cape Diamond, or Quebec. Where we now were, eight miles northeast of Quebec, the mountains which form the northern side of this triangle were only five or six miles distant from the river, gradually departing farther and farther from it, on the west, till they reach the Ottawa, and making haste to meet it on the east, at Cape Tourmente, now in plain sight about twenty miles distant. So that we were traveling in a very narrow and sharp triangle between the mountains and the river, tilted up toward the mountains on the north, never losing sight of our great fellow-traveler on our right. According to Bouchette's Topographical Description of the Canadas, we were in the Seigniory of the Côte de Beaupré, in the county of Montmorenci, and the district of Quebec, — in that part of Canada which was the first to be settled, and where the face of the country and the population have undergone the least change from the beginning, where the influence of the States and of Europe is least felt, and the inhabitants see little or nothing of the world over the walls of Quebec. This Seigniory was granted in 1636, and is now the property of the Seminary of Quebec. It is the most mountainous one

in the province. There are some half a dozen parishes in it, each containing a church, parsonage-house, gristmill, and several sawmills. We were now in the most westerly parish, called Ange Gardien, or the Guardian Angel, which is bounded on the west by the Montmorenci. The north bank of the St. Lawrence here is formed on a grand scale. It slopes gently, either directly from the shore or from the edge of an interval, till, at the distance of about a mile, it attains the height of four or five hundred feet. The single road runs along the side of the slope two or three hundred feet above the river at first, and from a quarter of a mile to a mile distant from it, and affords fine views of the north channel, which is about a mile wide, and of the beautiful Isle of Orleans, about twenty miles long by five wide, where grow the best apples and plums in the Quebec district.

Though there was but this single road, it was a continuous village for as far as we walked this day and the next, or about thirty miles down the river, the houses being as near together all the way as in the middle of one of our smallest straggling country villages, and we could never tell by their number when we were on the skirts of a parish, for the road never ran through the fields or woods. We were told that it was just six miles from one parish church to another. I thought that we saw every house in Ange Gardien. Therefore, as it was a muddy day, we never got out of the mud, nor out of the village, unless we got over the fence; then, indeed, if it was on the north side, we were out of the civilized world. There were sometimes a few more houses near the church, it is true, but we had only to go a quarter of a mile from the road, to the top of the bank, to find ourselves on the verge of the uninhabited, and, for the most part, unexplored wilderness stretching toward Hudson's Bay. The farms accordingly were extremely long and narrow, each having a frontage on the river. Bouchette accounts for this peculiar manner of laying out a village by referring to "the social character of the Canadian peasant, who is singularly fond of neighborhood," also to the advantage arising from a concentration of strength in Indian times. Each farm, called *terre*, he says, is, in nine cases out of ten, three arpents wide by thirty deep, that is, very nearly thirty-five by three hundred and forty-nine of our rods; sometimes one half arpent by thirty, or one to sixty; sometimes, in fact, a few yards by half a mile.

Of course it costs more for fences. A remarkable difference between the Canadian and the New England character appears from the fact that, in 1745, the French government were obliged to pass a law forbidding the farmers or *censitaires* building on land less than one and a half arpents front by thirty or forty deep, under a certain penalty, in order to compel emigration, and bring the seigneur's estates all under cultivation; and it is thought that they have now less reluctance to leave the paternal roof than formerly, "removing beyond the sight of the parish spire, or the sound of the parish bell." But I find that in the previous or seventeenth century, the complaint, often renewed, was of a totally opposite character, namely, that the inhabitants dispersed and exposed themselves to the Iroquois. Accordingly, about 1664, the king was obliged to order that "they should make no more clearings except one next to another, and that they should reduce their parishes to the form of the parishes in France as much as possible." The Canadians of those days, at least, possessed a roving spirit of adventure which carried them further, in exposure to hardship and danger, than ever the New England colonist went, and led them, though not to clear and colonize the wilderness, yet to range over it as *coureurs de bois*, or runners of the woods, or, as Hontan prefers to call them, *coureurs de risques*, runners of risks; to say nothing of their enterprising priesthood; and Charlevoix thinks that if the authorities had taken the right steps to prevent the youth from ranging the woods (*de courir les bois*), they would have had an excellent militia to fight the Indians and English.

The road in this clayey-looking soil was exceedingly muddy in consequence of the night's rain. We met an old woman directing her dog, which was harnessed to a little cart, to the least muddy part of it. It was a beggarly sight. But harnessed to the cart as he was, we heard him barking after we had passed, though we looked anywhere but to the cart to see where the dog was that barked. The houses commonly fronted the south, whatever angle they might make with the road; and frequently they had no door nor cheerful window on the road side. Half the time they stood fifteen to forty rods from the road, and there was no very obvious passage to them, so that you would suppose that there must be another road running by them. They were of stone, rather coarsely mortared, but neatly whitewashed, almost invariably

one story high and long in proportion to their height, with a shingled roof, the shingles being pointed, for ornament, at the eaves, like the pickets of a fence, and also one row halfway up the roof. The gables sometimes projected a foot or two at the ridge-pole only. Yet they were very humble and unpretending dwellings. They commonly had the date of their erection on them. The windows opened in the middle, like blinds, and were frequently provided with solid shutters. Sometimes, when we walked along the back side of a house which stood near the road, we observed stout stakes leaning against it, by which the shutters, now pushed half open, were fastened at night; within, the houses were neatly ceiled with wood not painted. The oven was commonly out of doors, built of stone and mortar, frequently on a raised platform of planks. The cellar was often on the opposite side of the road, in front of or behind the houses, looking like an ice-house with us, with a lattice door for summer. The very few mechanics whom we met had an old-Bettyish look, in their aprons and *bonnets rouges* like fools' caps. The men wore commonly the same *bonnet rouge*, or red woolen or worsted cap, or sometimes blue or gray, looking to us as if they had got up with their night-caps on, and, in fact, I afterwards found that they had. Their clothes were of the cloth of the country, *étoffe du pays*, gray or some other plain color. The women looked stout, with gowns that stood out stiffly, also, for the most part, apparently of some home-made stuff. We also saw some specimens of the more characteristic winter dress of the Canadian, and I have since frequently detected him in New England by his coarse gray homespun capote and picturesque red sash, and his well-furred cap, made to protect his ears against the severity of his climate.

It drizzled all day, so that the roads did not improve. We began now to meet with wooden crosses frequently, by the roadside, about a dozen feet high, often old and toppling down, sometimes standing in a square wooden platform, sometimes in a pile of stones, with a little niche containing a picture of the Virgin and Child, or of Christ alone, sometimes with a string of beads, and covered with a piece of glass to keep out the rain, with the words, *Pour la Vierge*, or INRI, on them. Frequently, on the cross-bar, there would be quite a collection of symbolical knickknacks, looking like an Italian's board;

the representation in wood of a hand, a hammer, spikes, pincers, a flask of vinegar, a ladder, etc., the whole, perchance, surmounted by a weathercock; but I could not look at an honest weathercock in this walk without mistrusting that there was some covert reference in it to St. Peter. From time to time we passed a little one-story chapel-like building, with a tin-roofed spire, a shrine, perhaps it would be called, close to the path-side, with a lattice door, through which we could see an altar, and pictures about the walls; equally open, through rain and shine, though there was no getting into it. At these places the inhabitants kneeled and perhaps breathed a short prayer. We saw one schoolhouse in our walk, and listened to the sounds which issued from it; but it appeared like a place where the process, not of enlightening, but of obfuscating the mind was going on, and the pupils received only so much light as could penetrate the shadow of the Catholic Church. The churches were very picturesque, and their interior much more showy than the dwelling-houses promised. They were of stone, for it was ordered, in 1699, that that should be their material. They had tinned spires, and quaint ornaments. That of Ange Gardien had a dial on it, with the Middle Age Roman numerals on its face, and some images in niches on the outside. Probably its counterpart has existed in Normandy for a thousand years. At the church of Château Richer, which is the next parish to Ange Gardien, we read, looking over the wall, the inscriptions in the adjacent churchyard, which began with *Ici gît* or *Repose*, and one over a boy contained *Priez pour lui*. This answered as well as Père la Chaise. We knocked at the door of the curé's house here, when a sleek, friar-like personage, in his sacerdotal robe, appeared. To our "Parlez-vous Anglais?" even he answered, "Non, monsieur;" but at last we made him understand what we wanted. It was to find the ruins of the old *château*. "Ah! oui! oui!" he exclaimed, and, donning his coat, hastened forth, and conducted us to a small heap of rubbish which we had already examined. He said that fifteen years before, it was *plus considérable*. Seeing at that moment three little red birds fly out of a crevice in the ruins, up into an arbor-vitæ tree which grew out of them, I asked him their names, in such French as I could muster, but he neither understood me nor ornithology; he only inquired where we had *appris à parler Français*; we told him, *dans les États-Unis*; and

so we bowed him into his house again. I was surprised to find a man wearing a black coat, and with apparently no work to do, even in that part of the world.

The universal salutation from the inhabitants whom we met was *bon jour*, at the same time touching the hat; with *bon jour*, and touching your hat, you may go smoothly through all Canada East. A little boy, meeting us, would remark, "Bon jour, monsieur; le chemin est mauvais" (Good morning, sir; it is bad walking). Sir Francis Head says that the immigrant is forward to "appreciate the happiness of living in a land in which the old country's servile custom of touching the hat does not exist," but he was thinking of Canada West, of course. It would, indeed, be a serious bore to be obliged to touch your hat several times a day. A Yankee has not leisure for it.

We saw peas, and even beans, collected into heaps in the fields. The former are an important crop here, and, I suppose, are not so much infested by the weevil as with us. There were plenty of apples, very fair and sound, by the roadside, but they were so small as to suggest the origin of the apple in the crab. There was also a small, red fruit which they called *snells*, and another, also red and very acid, whose name a little boy wrote for me, "*pinbéna*." It is probably the same with, or similar to, the *pembina* of the voyageurs, a species of viburnum, which, according to Richardson, has given its name to many of the rivers of Rupert's Land. The forest trees were spruce, arbor-vitæ, firs, birches, beeches, two or three kinds of maple, basswood, wild cherry, aspens, etc., but no pitch pines (*Pinus rigida*). I saw very few, if any, trees which had been set out for shade or ornament. The water was commonly running streams or springs in the bank by the roadside, and was excellent. The parishes are commonly separated by a stream, and frequently the farms. I noticed that the fields were furrowed or thrown into beds seven or eight feet wide to dry the soil.

At the Rivière du Sault à la Puce, which, I suppose, means the River of the Fall of the Flea, was advertised in English, as the sportsmen are English, "The best Snipe-shooting grounds," over the door of a small public house. These words being English affected me as if I had been absent now ten years from my country, and for so long had not heard the sound of my native language, and every one

of them was as interesting to me as if I had been a snipe-shooter, and they had been snipes. The prunella, or self-heal, in the grass here, was an old acquaintance. We frequently saw the inhabitants washing or cooking for their pigs, and in one place hackling flax by the roadside. It was pleasant to see these usually domestic operations carried on out of doors, even in that cold country.

At twilight we reached a bridge over a little river, the boundary between Château Richer and St. Anne, *le premier pont de Ste. Anne*, and at dark the church of *La Bonne Ste. Anne*. Formerly vessels from France, when they came in sight of this church, gave "a general discharge of their artillery," as a sign of joy that they had escaped all the dangers of the river. Though all the while we had grand views of the adjacent country far up and down the river, and, for the most part, when we turned about, of Quebec in the horizon behind us, and we never beheld it without new surprise and admiration; yet, throughout our walk, the Great River of Canada on our right hand was the main feature in the landscape, and this expands so rapidly below the Isle of Orleans, and creates such a breadth of level horizon above its waters in that direction, that, looking down the river as we approached the extremity of that island, the St. Lawrence seemed to be opening into the ocean, though we were still about three hundred and twenty-five miles from what can be called its mouth.

When we inquired here for a *maison publique* we were directed apparently to that private house where we were most likely to find entertainment. There were no guide-boards where we walked, because there was but one road; there were no shops nor signs, because there were no artisans to speak of, and the people raised their own provisions; and there were no taverns, because there were no travelers. We here bespoke lodging and breakfast. They had, as usual, a large, old-fashioned, two-storied box stove in the middle of the room, out of which, in due time, there was sure to be forthcoming a supper, breakfast, or dinner. The lower half held the fire, the upper the hot air, and as it was a cool Canadian evening, this was a comforting sight to us. Being four or five feet high it warmed the whole person as you stood by it. The stove was plainly a very important article of furniture in Canada, and was not set aside during the summer. Its size, and the respect which was paid to it, told of the

severe winters which it had seen and prevailed over. The master of the house, in his long-pointed red woolen cap, had a thoroughly antique physiognomy of the old Norman stamp. He might have come over with Jacques Cartier. His was the hardest French to understand of any we had heard yet, for there was a great difference between one speaker and another, and this man talked with a pipe in his mouth beside, — a kind of tobacco French. I asked him what he called his dog. He shouted *Brock*! (the name of the breed). We like to hear the cat called *min*, "Min! min! min!" I inquired if we could cross the river here to the Isle of Orleans, thinking to return that way when we had been to the falls. He answered, "S'il ne fait pas un trop grand vent" (If there is not too much wind). They use small boats, or pirogues, and the waves are often too high for them. He wore, as usual, something between a moccasin and a boot, which he called *bottes Indiennes*, Indian boots, and had made himself. The tops were of calf or sheepskin, and the soles of cowhide turned up like a moccasin. They were yellow or reddish, the leather never having been tanned nor colored. The women wore the same. He told us that he had traveled ten leagues due north into the bush. He had been to the Falls of St. Anne, and said that they were more beautiful, but not greater, than Montmorenci, *plus beau, mais non plus grand, que Montmorenci*. As soon as we had retired, the family commenced their devotions. A little boy officiated, and for a long time we heard him muttering over his prayers.

In the morning, after a breakfast of tea, maple-sugar, bread and butter, and what I suppose is called *potage* (potatoes and meat boiled with flour), the universal dish as we found, perhaps the national one, I ran over to the Church of La Bonne Ste. Anne, whose matin bell we had heard, it being Sunday morning. Our book said that this church had "long been an object of interest, from the miraculous cures said to have been wrought on visitors to the shrine." There was a profusion of gilding, and I counted more than twenty-five crutches suspended on the walls, some for grown persons, some for children, which it was to be inferred so many sick had been able to dispense with; but they looked as if they had been made to order by the carpenter who made the church. There were one or two villagers at their devotions at that early hour, who did not look up, but when they

had sat a long time with their little book before the picture of one saint, went to another. Our whole walk was through a thoroughly Catholic country, and there was no trace of any other religion. I doubt if there are any more simple and unsophisticated Catholics anywhere. Emery de Caen, Champlain's contemporary, told the Huguenot sailors that "Monseigneur the Duke de Ventadour (Viceroy) did not wish that they should sing psalms in the Great River."

On our way to the falls, we met the habitans coming to the Church of La Bonne Ste. Anne, walking or riding in charettes by families. I remarked that they were universally of small stature. The toll-man at the bridge over the St. Anne was the first man we had chanced to meet, since we left Quebec, who could speak a word of English. How good French the inhabitants of this part of Canada speak, I am not competent to say; I only know that it is not made impure by being mixed with English. I do not know why it should not be as good as is spoken in Normandy. Charlevoix, who was here a hundred years ago, observes, "The French language is nowhere spoken with greater purity, there being no accent perceptible;" and Potherie said "they had no dialect, which, indeed, is generally lost in a colony."

The falls, which we were in search of, are three miles up the St. Anne. We followed for a short distance a foot-path up the east bank of this river, through handsome sugar maple and arbor-vitæ groves. Having lost the path which led to a house where we were to get further directions, we dashed at once into the woods, steering by guess and by compass, climbing directly through woods a steep hill, or mountain, five or six hundred feet high, which was, in fact, only the bank of the St. Lawrence. Beyond this we by good luck fell into another path, and following this or a branch of it, at our discretion, through a forest consisting of large white pines, — the first we had seen in our walk, — we at length heard the roar of falling water, and came out at the head of the Falls of St. Anne. We had descended into a ravine or cleft in the mountain, whose walls rose still a hundred feet above us, though we were near its top, and we now stood on a very rocky shore, where the water had lately flowed a dozen feet higher, as appeared by the stones and driftwood, and large birches twisted and splintered as a farmer twists a withe. Here the river, one

or two hundred feet wide, came flowing rapidly over a rocky bed out of that interesting wilderness which stretches toward Hudson's Bay and Davis's Straits. Ha-ha Bay, on the Saguenay, was about one hundred miles north of where we stood. Looking on the map, I find that the first country on the north which bears a name is that part of Rupert's Land called East Main. This river, called after the holy Anne, flowing from such a direction, here tumbled over a precipice, at present by three channels, how far down I do not know, but far enough for all our purposes, and to as good a distance as if twice as far. It matters little whether you call it one, or two, or three hundred feet; at any rate, it was a sufficient water privilege for us. I crossed the principal channel directly over the verge of the fall, where it was contracted to about fifteen feet in width, by a dead tree which had been dropped across and secured in a cleft of the opposite rock, and a smaller one a few feet higher, which served for a hand-rail. This bridge was rotten as well as small and slippery, being stripped of bark, and I was obliged to seize a moment to pass when the falling water did not surge over it, and midway, though at the expense of wet feet, I looked down probably more than a hundred feet, into the mist and foam below. This gave me the freedom of an island of precipitous rock by which I descended as by giant steps, — the rock being composed of large cubical masses, clothed with delicate close-hugging lichens of various colors, kept fresh and bright by the moisture, — till I viewed the first fall from the front, and looked down still deeper to where the second and third channels fell into a remarkably large circular basin worn in the stone. The falling water seemed to jar the very rocks, and the noise to be ever increasing. The vista down-stream was through a narrow and deep cleft in the mountain, all white suds at the bottom; but a sudden angle in this gorge prevented my seeing through to the bottom of the fall. Returning to the shore, I made my way down-stream through the forest to see how far the fall extended, and how the river came out of that adventure. It was to clamber along the side of a precipitous mountain of loose mossy rocks, covered with a damp primitive forest, and terminating at the bottom in an abrupt precipice over the stream. This was the east side of the fall. At length, after a quarter of a mile, I got down to still water, and, on looking up through the

winding gorge, I could just see to the foot of the fall which I had before examined; while from the opposite side of the stream, here much contracted, rose a perpendicular wall, I will not venture to say how many hundred feet, but only that it was the highest perpendicular wall of bare rock that I ever saw. In front of me tumbled in from the summit of the cliff a tributary stream, making a beautiful cascade, which was a remarkable fall in itself, and there was a cleft in this precipice, apparently four or five feet wide, perfectly straight up and down from top to bottom, which, from its cavernous depth and darkness, appeared merely as *a black streak*. This precipice is not sloped, nor is the material soft and crumbling slate as at Montmorenci, but it rises perpendicular, like the side of a mountain fortress, and is cracked into vast cubical masses of gray and black rock shining with moisture, as if it were the ruin of an ancient wall built by Titans. Birches, spruces, mountain-ashes with their bright red berries, arbor-vitæs, white pines, alders, etc., overhung this chasm on the very verge of the cliff and in the crevices, and here and there were buttresses of rock supporting trees part way down, yet so as to enhance, not injure, the effect of the bare rock. Take it altogether, it was a most wild and rugged and stupendous chasm, so deep and narrow, where a river had worn itself a passage through a mountain of rock, and all around was the comparatively untrodden wilderness.

This was the limit of our walk down the St. Lawrence. Early in the afternoon we began to retrace our steps, not being able to cross the north channel and return by the Isle of Orleans, on account of the *trop grand vent*, or too great wind. Though the waves did run pretty high, it was evident that the inhabitants of Montmorenci County were no sailors, and made but little use of the river. When we reached the bridge between St. Anne and Château Richer, I ran back a little way to ask a man in the field the name of the river which we were crossing, but for a long time I could not make out what he said, for he was one of the more unintelligible Jacques Cartier men. At last it flashed upon me that it was *La Rivière au Chien*, or the Dog River, which my eyes beheld, which brought to my mind the life of the Canadian voyageur and *coureur de bois*, a more western and wilder Arcadia, methinks, than the world has ever seen; for the Greeks, with

all their wood and river gods, were not so qualified to name the natural features of a country as the ancestors of these French Canadians; and if any people had a right to substitute their own for the Indian names, it was they. They have preceded the pioneer on our own frontiers, and named the *prairie* for us. *La Rivière au Chien* cannot, by any license of language, be translated into Dog River, for that is not such a giving it to the dogs, and recognizing their place in creation, as the French implies. One of the tributaries of the St. Anne is named *La Rivière de la Rose*; and farther east are *La Rivière de la Blondelle* and *La Rivière de la Friponne*. Their very *rivière* meanders more than our *river*.

Yet the impression which this country made on me was commonly different from this. To a traveler from the Old World, Canada East may appear like a new country, and its inhabitants like colonists, but to me, coming from New England and being a very green traveler withal, — notwithstanding what I have said about Hudson's Bay, — it appeared as old as Normandy itself, and realized much that I had heard of Europe and the Middle Ages. Even the names of humble Canadian villages affected me as if they had been those of the renowned cities of antiquity. To be told by a habitan, when I asked the name of a village in sight, that it is *St. Feréol* or *St. Anne*, the *Guardian Angel* or the *Holy Joseph's*; or of a mountain, that it was *Bélange* or *St. Hyacinthe*! As soon as you leave the States, these saintly names begin. *St. Johns* is the first town you stop at (fortunately we did not see it), and thenceforward, the names of the mountains, and streams, and villages reel, if I may so speak, with the intoxication of poetry, — *Chambly*, *Longueuil*, *Pointe aux Trembles*, *Bartholomy*, etc., etc.; as if it needed only a little foreign accent, a few more liquids and vowels perchance in the language, to make us locate our ideals at once. I began to dream of Provence and the Troubadours, and of places and things which have no existence on the earth. They veiled the Indian and the primitive forest, and the woods toward Hudson's Bay were only as the forests of France and Germany. I could not at once bring myself to believe that the inhabitants who pronounced daily those beautiful and, to me, significant names lead as prosaic lives as we of New England. In short, the Canada which I saw was not merely a place for railroads to

terminate in and for criminals to run to.

When I asked the man to whom I have referred, if there were any falls on the Rivière au Chien, — for I saw that it came over the same high bank with the Montmorenci and St. Anne, — he answered that there were. How far? I inquired. "Trois quatres lieue." How high? "Je pense-quatre-vingt-dix pieds;" that is, ninety feet. We turned aside to look at the falls of the Rivière du Sault à la Puce, half a mile from the road, which before we had passed in our haste and ignorance, and we pronounced them as beautiful as any that we saw; yet they seemed to make no account of them there, and, when first we inquired the way to the falls, directed us to Montmorenci, seven miles distant. It was evident that this was the country for waterfalls; that every stream that empties into the St. Lawrence, for some hundreds of miles, must have a great fall or cascade on it, and in its passage through the mountains was, for a short distance, a small Saguenay, with its upright walls. This fall of La Puce, the least remarkable of the four which we visited in this vicinity, we had never heard of till we came to Canada, and yet, so far as I know, there is nothing of the kind in New England to be compared with it. Most travelers in Canada would not hear of it, though they might go so near as to hear it. Since my return I find that in the topographical description of the country mention is made of "two or three romantic falls" on this stream, though we saw and heard of but this one. Ask the inhabitants respecting any stream, if there is a fall on it, and they will perchance tell you of something as interesting as Bashpish or the Catskill, which no traveler has ever seen, or if they have not found it, you may possibly trace up the stream and discover it yourself. Falls there are a drug, and we became quite dissipated in respect to them. We had drank too much of them. Beside these which I have referred to, there are a thousand other falls on the St. Lawrence and its tributaries which I have not seen nor heard of; and above all there is one which I have heard of, called Niagara, so that I think that this river must be the most remarkable for its falls of any in the world.

At a house near the western boundary of Château Richer, whose master was said to speak a very little English, having recently lived at Quebec, we got lodging for the night. As usual, we had to go down a lane to get round to the south side of the house, where the door

was, away from the road. For these Canadian houses have no front door, properly speaking. Every part is for the use of the occupant exclusively, and no part has reference to the traveler or to travel. Every New England house, on the contrary, has a front and principal door opening to the great world, though it may be on the cold side, for it stands on the highway of nations, and the road which runs by it comes from the Old World and goes to the far West; but the Canadian's door opens into his backyard and farm alone, and the road which runs behind his house leads only from the church of one saint to that of another. We found a large family, hired men, wife, and children, just eating their supper. They prepared some for us afterwards. The hired men were a merry crew of short, black-eyed fellows, and the wife a thin-faced, sharp-featured French-Canadian woman. Our host's English staggered us rather more than any French we had heard yet; indeed, we found that even we spoke better French than he did English, and we concluded that a less crime would be committed on the whole if we spoke French with him, and in no respect aided or abetted his attempts to speak English. We had a long and merry chat with the family this Sunday evening in their spacious kitchen. While my companion smoked a pipe and parlez-vous'd with one party, I parleyed and gesticulated to another. The whole family was enlisted, and I kept a little girl writing what was otherwise unintelligible. The geography getting obscure, we called for chalk, and the greasy oiled table-cloth having been wiped, — for it needed no French, but only a sentence from the universal language of looks on my part, to indicate that it needed it, — we drew the St. Lawrence, with its parishes, thereon, and thenceforward went on swimmingly, by turns handling the chalk and committing to the table-cloth what would otherwise have been left in a limbo of unintelligibility. This was greatly to the entertainment of all parties. I was amused to hear how much use they made of the word oui in conversation with one another. After repeated single insertions of it, one would suddenly throw back his head at the same time with his chair, and exclaim rapidly, "Oui! oui! oui! oui!" like a Yankee driving pigs. Our host told us that the farms thereabouts were generally two acres or three hundred and sixty French feet wide, by one and a half leagues (?), or a little more than four and a half of our

miles deep. This use of the word *acre* as long measure arises from the fact that the French acre or arpent, the arpent of Paris, makes a square of ten perches, of eighteen feet each, on a side, a Paris foot being equal to 1.06575 English feet. He said that the wood was cut off about one mile from the river. The rest was "bush," and beyond that the "Queen's bush." Old as the country is, each landholder bounds on the primitive forest, and fuel bears no price. As I had forgotten the French for *sickle*, they went out in the evening to the barn and got one, and so clenched the certainty of our understanding one another. Then, wishing to learn if they used the cradle, and not knowing any French word for this instrument, I set up the knives and forks on the blade of the sickle to represent one; at which they all exclaimed that they knew and had used it. When *snells* were mentioned they went out in the dark and plucked some. They were pretty good. They said they had three kinds of plums growing wild, — blue, white, and red, the two former much alike and the best. Also they asked me if I would have *des pommes*, some apples, and got me some. They were exceedingly fair and glossy, and it was evident that there was no worm in them; but they were as hard almost as a stone, as if the season was too short to mellow them. We had seen no soft and yellow apples by the roadside. I declined eating one, much as I admired it, observing that it would be good *dans le printemps*, in the spring. In the morning when the mistress had set the eggs a-frying she nodded to a thick-set, jolly-looking fellow, who rolled up his sleeves, seized the long-handled griddle, and commenced a series of revolutions and evolutions with it, ever and anon tossing its contents into the air, where they turned completely topsy-turvy and came down t'other side up; and this he repeated till they were done. That appeared to be his duty when eggs were concerned. I did not chance to witness this performance, but my companion did, and he pronounced it a masterpiece in its way. This man's farm, with the buildings, cost seven hundred pounds; some smaller ones, two hundred.

In 1827, Montmorenci County, to which the Isle of Orleans has since been added, was nearly as large as Massachusetts, being the eighth county out of forty (in Lower Canada) in extent; but by far the greater part still must continue to be waste land, lying as it were

under the walls of Quebec.

I quote these old statistics, not merely because of the difficulty of obtaining more recent ones, but also because I saw there so little evidence of any recent growth. There were in this county, at the same date, five Roman Catholic churches, and no others, five cures and five presbyteries, two schools, two corn-mills, four sawmills, one carding-mill, — no medical man or notary or lawyer, — five shopkeepers, four taverns (we saw no sign of any, though, after a little hesitation, we were sometimes directed to some undistinguished hut as such), thirty artisans, and five river crafts, whose tonnage amounted to sixty-nine tons! This, notwithstanding that it has a frontage of more than thirty miles on the river, and the population is almost wholly confined to its banks. This describes nearly enough what we saw. But double some of these figures, which, however, its growth will not warrant, and you have described a poverty which not even its severity of climate and ruggedness of soil will suffice to account for. The principal productions were wheat, potatoes, oats, hay, peas, flax, maple-sugar, etc., etc.; linen cloth, or *étoffe du pays*, flannel, and homespun, or *petite étoffe*.

In Lower Canada, according to Bouchette, there are two tenures, — the feudal and the socage. *Tenanciers*, *censitaires*, or holders of land *en roture* pay a small annual rent to the seigneurs, to which "is added some articles of provision, such as a couple of fowls, or a goose, or a bushel of wheat." "They are also bound to grind their corn at the *moulin banal*, or the lord's mill, where one fourteenth part of it is taken for his use" as toll. He says that the toll is one twelfth in the United States where competition exists. It is not permitted to exceed one sixteenth in Massachusetts. But worse than this monopolizing of mill rents is what are called *lods et ventes*, or mutation fines, — according to which the seigneur has "a right to a twelfth part of the purchase-money of every estate within his seigniory that changes its owner by sale." This is over and above the sum paid to the seller. In such cases, moreover, "the lord possesses the *droit de retrait*, which is the privilege of preemption at the highest bidden price within forty days after the sale has taken place," — a right which, however, is said to be seldom exercised. "Lands held by Roman Catholics are further subject to the payment to their

curates of one twenty-sixth part of all the grain produced upon them, and to occasional assessments for building and repairing churches," etc., — a tax to which they are not subject if the proprietors change their faith; but they are not the less attached to their church in consequence. There are, however, various modifications of the feudal tenure. Under the socage tenure, which is that of the townships or more recent settlements, English, Irish, Scotch, and others, and generally of Canada West, the landholder is wholly unshackled by such conditions as I have quoted, and "is bound to no other obligations than those of allegiance to the king and obedience to the laws." Throughout Canada "a freehold of forty shillings yearly value, or the payment of ten pounds rent annually, is the qualification for voters." In 1846 more than one sixth of the whole population of Canada East were qualified to vote for members of Parliament, — a greater proportion than enjoy a similar privilege in the United States.

The population which we had seen the last two days — I mean the habitans of Montmorenci County — appeared very inferior, intellectually and even physically, to that of New England. In some respects they were incredibly filthy. It was evident that they had not advanced since the settlement of the country, that they were quite behind the age, and fairly represented their ancestors in Normandy a thousand years ago. Even in respect to the common arts of life, they are not so far advanced as a frontier town in the West three years old. They have no money invested in railroad stock, and probably never will have. If they have got a French phrase for a railroad, it is as much as you can expect of them. They are very far from a revolution, have no quarrel with Church or State, but their vice and their virtue is content. As for annexation, they have never dreamed of it; indeed, they have not a clear idea what or where the States are. The English government has been remarkably liberal to its Catholic subjects in Canada, permitting them to wear their own fetters, both political and religious, as far as was possible for subjects. Their government is even too good for them. Parliament passed "an act [in 1825] to provide for the extinction of feudal and seigniorial rights and burdens on lands in Lower Canada, and for the gradual conversion of those tenures into the tenure of free and common socage," etc. But as late as 1831, at least, the design of the act was likely to be frustrated,

owing to the reluctance of the seigniors and peasants. It has been observed by another that the French Canadians do not extend nor perpetuate their influence. The British, Irish, and other immigrants, who have settled the townships, are found to have imitated the American settlers and not the French. They reminded me in this of the Indians, whom they were slow to displace, and to whose habits of life they themselves more readily conformed than the Indians to theirs. The Governor-General Denouville remarked, in 1685, that some had long thought that it was necessary to bring the Indians near them in order to Frenchify (*franciser*) them, but that they had every reason to think themselves in an error; for those who had come near them and were even collected in villages in the midst of the colony had not become French, but the French who had haunted them had become savages. Kalm said, "Though many nations imitate the French customs, yet I observed, on the contrary, that the French in Canada, in many respects, follow the customs of the Indians, with whom they converse every day. They make use of the tobacco-pipes, shoes, garters, and girdles of the Indians. They follow the Indian way of making war with exactness; they mix the same things with tobacco [he might have said that both French and English learned the use itself of this weed of the Indian]; they make use of the Indian bark-boats, and row them in the Indian way; they wrap square pieces of cloth round their feet instead of stockings; and have adopted many other Indian fashions." Thus, while the descendants of the Pilgrims are teaching the English to make pegged boots, the descendants of the French in Canada are wearing the Indian moccasin still. The French, to their credit be it said, to a certain extent respected the Indians as a separate and independent people, and spoke of them and contrasted themselves with them as the English have never done. They not only went to war with them as allies, but they lived at home with them as neighbors. In 1627 the French king declared "that the descendants" of the French, settled in New France, "and the savages who should be brought to the knowledge of the faith, and should make profession of it, should be counted and reputed French born (*Naturels François*); and as such could emigrate to France, when it seemed good to them, and there acquire, will, inherit, etc., etc., without obtaining letters of naturalization." When the English had

possession of Quebec, in 1630, the Indians, attempting to practice the same familiarity with them that they had with the French, were driven out of their houses with blows; which accident taught them a difference between the two races, and attached them yet more to the French. The impression made on me was that the French Canadians were even sharing the fate of the Indians, or at least gradually disappearing in what is called the Saxon current.

The English did not come to America from a mere love of adventure, nor to truck with or convert the savages, nor to hold offices under the crown, as the French to a great extent did, but to live in earnest and with freedom. The latter overran a great extent of country, selling strong water, and collecting its furs, and converting its inhabitants, — or at least baptizing its dying infants (*enfans moribonds*), — without *improving* it. First went the *coureur de bois* with the *eau de vie*; then followed, if he did not precede, the heroic missionary with the *eau d'immortalité*. It was freedom to hunt, and fish, and convert, not to work, that they sought. Hontan says that the *coureurs de bois* lived like sailors ashore. In no part of the Seventeenth Century could the French be said to have had a foothold in Canada; they held only by the fur of the wild animals which they were exterminating. To enable the poor seigneurs to get their living, it was permitted by a decree passed in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, in 1685, "to all nobles and gentlemen settled in Canada, to engage in commerce, without being called to account or reputed to have done anything derogatory." The reader can infer to what extent they had engaged in agriculture, and how their farms must have shone by this time. The New England youth, on the other hand, were never *coureurs de bois* nor *voyageurs*, but backwoodsmen and sailors rather. Of all nations the English undoubtedly have proved hitherto that they had the most business here.

Yet I am not sure but I have most sympathy with that spirit of adventure which distinguished the French and Spaniards of those days, and made them especially the explorers of the American Continent, — which so early carried the former to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi on the north, and the latter to the same river on the south. It was long before our frontiers reached their settlements in the West. So far as inland discovery was concerned, the adventurous

spirit of the English was that of sailors who land but for a day, and their enterprise the enterprise of traders.

There was apparently a greater equality of condition among the habitans of Montmorenci County than in New England. They are an almost exclusively agricultural, and so far independent population, each family producing nearly all the necessaries of life for itself. If the Canadian wants energy, perchance he possesses those virtues, social and others, which the Yankee lacks, in which case he cannot be regarded as a poor man. 69

CHAPTER IV. THE WALLS OF QUEBEC

After spending the night at a farmhouse in Château Richer, about a dozen miles northeast of Quebec, we set out on our return to the city. We stopped at the next house, a picturesque old stone mill, over the *Chipré*, — for so the name sounded, — such as you will nowhere see in the States, and asked the millers the age of the mill. They went upstairs to call the master; but the crabbed old miser asked why we wanted to know, and would tell us only for some compensation. I wanted French to give him a piece of my mind. I had got enough to talk on a pinch, but not to quarrel, so I had to come away, looking all I would have said. This was the utmost incivility we met with in Canada. In Beauport, within a few miles of Quebec, we turned aside to look at a church which was just being completed, — a very large and handsome edifice of stone, with a green bough stuck in its gable, of some significance to Catholics. The comparative wealth of the Church in this country was apparent; for in this village we did not see one good house besides. They were all humble cottages; and yet this appeared to me a more imposing structure than any church in Boston. But I am no judge of these things.

Reëntering Quebec through St. John's Gate, we took a caleche in Market Square for the Falls of the Chaudière, about nine miles southwest of the city, for which we were to pay so much, besides forty sous for tolls. The driver, as usual, spoke French only. The number of these vehicles is very great for so small a town. They are like one of our chaises that has lost its top, only stouter and longer in the body, with a seat for the driver where the dasher is with us, and broad leather ears on each side to protect the riders from the wheel and keep children from falling out. They had an easy jaunting look, which, as our hours were numbered, persuaded us to be riders. We met with them on every road near Quebec these days, each with its complement of two inquisitive-looking foreigners and a Canadian driver, the former evidently enjoying their novel experience, for commonly it is only the horse whose language you do not understand; but they were one remove further from him by the intervention of an equally unintelligible driver. We crossed the St.

Lawrence to Point Levi in a French-Canadian ferry-boat, which was inconvenient and dirty, and managed with great noise and bustle. The current was very strong and tumultuous; and the boat tossed enough to make some sick, though it was only a mile across; yet the wind was not to be compared with that of the day before, and we saw that the Canadians had a good excuse for not taking us over to the Isle of Orleans in a pirogue, however shiftless they may be for not having provided any other conveyance. The route which we took to the Chaudière did not afford us those views of Quebec which we had expected, and the country and inhabitants appeared less interesting to a traveler than those we had seen. The Falls of the Chaudière are three miles from its mouth on the south side of the St. Lawrence. Though they were the largest which I saw in Canada, I was not proportionately interested by them, probably from satiety. I did not see any peculiar propriety in the name *Chaudière*, or caldron. I saw here the most brilliant rainbow that I ever imagined. It was just across the stream below the precipice, formed on the mist which this tremendous fall produced; and I stood on a level with the keystone of its arch. It was not a few faint prismatic colors merely, but a full semicircle, only four or five rods in diameter, though as wide as usual, so intensely bright as to pain the eye, and apparently as substantial as an arch of stone. It changed its position and colors as we moved, and was the brighter because the sun shone so clearly and the mist was so thick. Evidently a picture painted on mist for the men and animals that came to the falls to look at; but for what special purpose beyond this, I know not. At the farthest point in this ride, and when most inland, unexpectedly at a turn in the road we descried the frowning citadel of Quebec in the horizon, like the beak of a bird of prey. We returned by the river road under the bank, which is very high, abrupt, and rocky. When we were opposite to Quebec, I was surprised to see that in the Lower Town, under the shadow of the rock, the lamps were lit, twinkling not unlike crystals in a cavern, while the citadel high above, and we, too, on the south shore, were in broad daylight. As we were too late for the ferry-boat that night, we put up at a *maison de pension* at Point Levi. The usual two-story stove was here placed against an opening in the partition shaped like a fireplace, and so warmed several rooms. We could not understand

their French here very well, but the *potage* was just like what we had had before. There were many small chambers with doorways, but no doors. The walls of our chamber, all around and overhead, were neatly ceiled, and the timbers cased with wood unpainted. The pillows were checkered and tasseled, and the usual long-pointed red woolen or worsted nightcap was placed on each. I pulled mine out to see how it was made. It was in the form of a double cone, one end tucked into the other; just such, it appeared, as I saw men wearing all day in the streets. Probably I should have put it on if the cold had been then, as it is sometimes there, thirty or forty degrees below zero.

When we landed at Quebec the next morning a man lay on his back on the wharf, apparently dying, in the midst of a crowd and directly in the path of the horses, groaning, "O ma conscience!" I thought that he pronounced his French more distinctly than any I heard, as if the dying had already acquired the accents of a universal language. Having secured the only unengaged berths in the Lord Sydenham steamer, which was to leave Quebec before sundown, and being resolved, now that I had seen somewhat of the country, to get an idea of the city, I proceeded to walk round the Upper Town, or fortified portion, which is two miles and three quarters in circuit, alone, as near as I could get to the cliff and the walls, like a rat looking for a hole; going round by the southwest, where there is but a single street between the cliff and the water, and up the long wooden stairs, through the suburbs northward to the King's Woodyard, which I thought must have been a long way from his fireplace, and under the cliffs of the St. Charles, where the drains issue under the walls, and the walls are loopholed for musketry; so returning by Mountain Street and Prescott Gate to the Upper Town. Having found my way by an obscure passage near the St. Louis Gate to the glacis on the north of the citadel proper, — I believe that I was the only visitor then in the city who got in there, — I enjoyed a prospect nearly as good as from within the citadel itself, which I had explored some days before. As I walked on the glacis I heard the sound of a bagpipe from the soldiers' dwellings in the rock, and was further soothed and affected by the sight of a soldier's cat walking up a cleated plank into a high loophole designed for *mus-catry*, as serene as Wisdom herself, and with a gracefully waving motion of her tail, as if her ways were

ways of pleasantness and all her paths were peace. Scaling a slat fence, where a small force might have checked me, I got out of the esplanade into the Governor's Garden, and read the well-known inscription on Wolfe and Montcalm's monument, which for saying much in little, and that to the purpose, undoubtedly deserved the prize medal which it received: —

MORTEM . VIRTUS . COMMUNEM .
FAMAM . HISTORIA .
MONUMENTUM . POSTERITAS .
DEDIT

(Valor gave them one death, history one fame, posterity one monument.) The Government Garden has for nosegays, amid kitchen vegetables, beside the common garden flowers, the usual complement of cannon directed toward some future and possible enemy. I then returned up St. Louis Street to the esplanade and ramparts there, and went round the Upper Town once more, though I was very tired, this time on the *inside* of the wall; for I knew that the wall was the main thing in Quebec, and had cost a great deal of money, and therefore I must make the most of it. In fact, these are the only remarkable walls we have in North America, though we have a good deal of Virginia fence, it is true. Moreover, I cannot say but I yielded in some measure to the soldier instinct, and, having but a short time to spare, thought it best to examine the wall thoroughly, that I might be the better prepared if I should ever be called that way again in the service of my country. I committed all the gates to memory, in their order, which did not cost me so much trouble as it would have done at the hundred-gated city, there being only five; nor were they so hard to remember as those seven of Bœotian Thebes; and, moreover, I thought that, if seven champions were enough against the latter, one would be enough against Quebec, though he bore for all armor and device only an umbrella and a bundle. I took the nunneries as I went, for I had learned to distinguish them by the blinds; and I observed also the foundling hospitals and the convents, and whatever was attached to, or in the vicinity of the walls. All the rest I omitted, as naturally as one would the inside of an inedible

shell-fish. These were the only pearls, and the wall the only mother-of-pearl for me. Quebec is chiefly famous for the thickness of its parietal bones. The technical terms of its conchology may stagger a beginner a little at first, such as *banlieue*, *esplanade*, *glacis*, *ravelin*, *cavalier*, etc., etc., but with the aid of a comprehensive dictionary you soon learn the nature of your ground. I was surprised at the extent of the artillery barracks, built so long ago, — *Casernes Nouvelles*, they used to be called, — nearly six hundred feet in length by forty in depth, where the sentries, like peripatetic philosophers, were so absorbed in thought as not to notice me when I passed in and out at the gates. Within are "small arms of every description, sufficient for the equipment of twenty thousand men," so arranged as to give a startling *coup d'œil* to strangers. I did not enter, not wishing to get a black eye; for they are said to be "in a state of complete repair and readiness for immediate use." Here, for a short time, I lost sight of the wall, but I recovered it again on emerging from the barrack yard. There I met with a Scotchman who appeared to have business with the wall, like myself; and, being thus mutually drawn together by a similarity of tastes, we had a little conversation *sub moenibus*, that is, by an angle of the wall, which sheltered us. He lived about thirty miles northwest of Quebec; had been nineteen years in the country; said he was disappointed that he was not brought to America after all, but found himself still under British rule and where his own language was not spoken; that many Scotch, Irish, and English were disappointed in like manner, and either went to the States or pushed up the river to Canada West, nearer to the States, and where their language was spoken. He talked of visiting the States some time; and, as he seemed ignorant of geography, I warned him that it was one thing to visit the State of Massachusetts, and another to visit the State of California. He said it was colder there than usual at that season, and he was lucky to have brought his thick togue, or frock-coat, with him; thought it would snow, and then be pleasant and warm. That is the way we are always thinking. However, his words were music to me in my thin hat and sack.

At the ramparts on the cliff near the old Parliament House I counted twenty-four thirty-two-pounders in a row, pointed over the harbor, with their balls piled pyramid-wise between them, — there

are said to be in all about one hundred and eighty guns mounted at Quebec, — all which were faithfully kept dusted by officials, in accordance with the motto, "In time of peace prepare for war;" but I saw no preparations for peace: she was plainly an uninvited guest.

Having thus completed the circuit of this fortress, both within and without, I went no farther by the wall for fear that I should become wall-eyed. However, I think that I deserve to be made a member of the Royal Sappers and Miners.

In short, I observed everywhere the most perfect arrangements for keeping a wall in order, not even permitting the lichens to grow on it, which some think an ornament; but then I saw no cultivation nor pasturing within it to pay for the outlay, and cattle were strictly forbidden to feed on the glacis under the severest penalties. Where the dogs get their milk I don't know, and I fear it is bloody at best.

The citadel of Quebec says, "I *will* live here, and you shan't prevent me." To which you return, that you have not the slightest objection; live and let live. The Martello towers looked, for all the world, exactly like abandoned windmills which had not had a grist to grind these hundred years. Indeed, the whole castle here was a "folly," — England's folly, — and, in more senses than one, a castle in the air. The inhabitants and the government are gradually waking up to a sense of this truth; for I heard something said about their abandoning the wall around the Upper Town, and confining the fortifications to the citadel of forty acres. Of course they will finally reduce their intrenchments to the circumference of their own brave hearts.

The most modern fortifications have an air of antiquity about them; they have the aspect of ruins in better or worse repair from the day they are built, because they are not really the work of this age. The very place where the soldier resides has a peculiar tendency to become old and dilapidated, as the word *barrack* implies. I couple all fortifications in my mind with the dismantled Spanish forts to be found in so many parts of the world; and if in any place they are not actually dismantled, it is because that there the intellect of the inhabitants is dismantled. The commanding officer of an old fort near Valdivia in South America, when a traveler remarked to him that, with one discharge, his gun-carriages would certainly fall to pieces,

gravely replied, “No, I am sure, sir, they would stand two.” Perhaps the guns of Quebec would stand three. Such structures carry us back to the Middle Ages, the siege of Jerusalem, and St. Jean d’Acre, and the days of the Bucaniers. In the armory of the citadel they showed me a clumsy implement, long since useless, which they called a Lombard gun. I thought that their whole citadel was such a Lombard gun, fit object for the museums of the curious. Such works do not consist with the development of the intellect. Huge stone structures of all kinds, both in their erection and by their influence when erected, rather oppress than liberate the mind. They are tombs for the souls of men, as frequently for their bodies also. The sentinel with his musket beside a man with his umbrella is spectral. There is not sufficient reason for his existence. Does my friend there, with a bullet resting on half an ounce of powder, think that he needs that argument in conversing with me? The fort was the first institution that was founded here, and it is amusing to read in Champlain how assiduously they worked at it almost from the first day of the settlement. The founders of the colony thought this an excellent site for a wall, — and no doubt it was a better site, in some respects, for a wall than for a city, — but it chanced that a city got behind it. It chanced, too, that a Lower Town got before it, and clung like an oyster to the outside of the crags, as you may see at low tide. It is as if you were to come to a country village surrounded by palisades in the old Indian fashion, — interesting only as a relic of antiquity and barbarism. A fortified town is like a man cased in the heavy armor of antiquity, with a horse-load of broadswords and small arms slung to him, endeavoring to go about his business. Or is this an indispensable machinery for the good government of the country? The inhabitants of California succeed pretty well, and are doing better and better every day, without any such institution. What use has this fortress served, to look at it even from the soldiers’ point of view? At first the French took care of it; yet Wolfe sailed by it with impunity, and took the town of Quebec without experiencing any hindrance at last from its fortifications. They were only the bone for which the parties fought. Then the English began to take care of it. So of any fort in the world, — that in Boston Harbor, for instance. We shall at length hear that an enemy sailed by it in the night, for it

cannot sail itself, and both it and its inhabitants are always benighted. How often we read that the enemy occupied a position which commanded the old, and so the fort was evacuated! Have not the schoolhouse and the printing-press occupied a position which commands such a fort as this?

However, this is a ruin kept in remarkably good repair. There are some eight hundred or thousand men there to exhibit it. One regiment goes bare-legged to increase the attraction. If you wish to study the muscles of the leg about the knee, repair to Quebec. This universal exhibition in Canada of the tools and sinews of war reminded me of the keeper of a menagerie showing his animals' claws. It was the English leopard showing his claws. Always the royal something or other; as at the menagerie, the Royal Bengal Tiger. Silliman states that "the cold is so intense in the winter nights, particularly on Cape Diamond, that the sentinels cannot stand it more than one hour, and are relieved at the expiration of that time;" "and even, as it is said, at much shorter intervals, in case of the most extreme cold." What a natural or unnatural fool must that soldier be — to say nothing of his government — who, when quicksilver is freezing and blood is ceasing to be quick, will stand to have his face frozen, watching the walls of Quebec, though, so far as they are concerned, both honest and dishonest men all the world over have been in their beds nearly half a century, — or at least for that space travelers have visited Quebec only as they would read history! I shall never again wake up in a colder night than usual, but I shall think how rapidly the sentinels are relieving one another on the walls of Quebec, their quicksilver being all frozen, as if apprehensive that some hostile Wolfe may even then be scaling the Heights of Abraham, or some persevering Arnold about to issue from the wilderness; some Malay or Japanese, perchance, coming round by the northwest coast, have chosen that moment to assault the citadel! Why, I should as soon expect to find the sentinels still relieving one another on the walls of Nineveh, which have so long been buried to the world. What a troublesome thing a wall is! I thought it was to defend me, and not I it! Of course, if they had no wall, they would not need to have any sentinels.

You might venture to advertise this farm as well fenced with

substantial stone walls (saying nothing about the eight hundred Highlanders and Royal Irish who are required to keep them from toppling down); stock and tools to go with the land if desired. But it would not be wise for the seller to exhibit his farm-book.

Why should Canada, wild and unsettled as it is, impress us as an older country than the States, unless because her institutions are old? All things appeared to contend there, as I have implied, with a certain rust of antiquity, such as forms on old armor and iron guns, — the rust of conventions and formalities. It is said that the metallic roofs of Montreal and Quebec keep sound and bright for forty years in some cases. But if the rust was not on the tinned roofs and spires, it was on the inhabitants and their institutions. Yet the work of burnishing goes briskly forward. I imagined that the government vessels at the wharves were laden with rottenstone and oxalic acid, — that is what the first ship from England in the spring comes freighted with, — and the hands of the Colonial legislature are cased in wash-leather. The principal exports must be *gun*ny bags, verdigris, and iron rust. Those who first built this fort, coming from Old France with the memory and tradition of feudal days and customs weighing on them, were unquestionably behind their age; and those who now inhabit and repair it are behind their ancestors or predecessors. Those old chevaliers thought that they could transplant the feudal system to America. It has been set out, but it has not thriven. Notwithstanding that Canada was settled first, and, unlike New England, for a long series of years enjoyed the fostering care of the mother country; notwithstanding that, as Charlevoix tells us, it had more of the ancient *noblesse* among its early settlers than any other of the French colonies, and perhaps than all the others together, there are in both the Canadas but 600,000 of French descent to-day, — about half so many as the population of Massachusetts. The whole population of both Canadas is but about 1,700,000 Canadians, English, Irish, Scotch, Indians, and all, put together! Samuel Laing, in his essay on the Northmen, to whom especially, rather than the Saxons, he refers the energy and indeed the excellence of the English character, observes that, when they occupied Scandinavia, “each man possessed his lot of land without reference to, or acknowledgment of, any other man, without any local chief to whom his military service or other

quit-rent for his land was due, — without tenure from, or duty or obligation to, any superior, real or fictitious, except the general sovereign. The individual settler held his land, as his descendants in Norway still express it, by the same right as the King held his crown, by udal right, or adel, — that is, noble right." The French have occupied Canada, not *udally*, or by noble right, but *feudally*, or by ignoble right. They are a nation of peasants.

It was evident that, both on account of the feudal system and the aristocratic government, a private man was not worth so much in Canada as in the United States; and, if your wealth in any measure consists in manliness, in originality and independence, you had better stay here. How could a peaceable, freethinking man live neighbor to the Forty-ninth Regiment? A New-Englander would naturally be a bad citizen, probably a rebel, there, — certainly if he were already a rebel at home. I suspect that a poor man who is not servile is a much rarer phenomenon there and in England than in the Northern United States. An Englishman, methinks, — not to speak of other European nations, — habitually regards himself merely as a constituent part of the English nation; he is a member of the royal regiment of Englishmen, and is proud of his company, as he has reason to be proud of it. But an American — one who has made a tolerable use of his opportunities — cares, comparatively, little about such things, and is advantageously nearer to the primitive and the ultimate condition of man in these respects. It is a government, that English one, — like most other European ones, — that cannot afford to be forgotten, as you would naturally forget it; under which one cannot be wholesomely neglected, and grow up a man and not an Englishman merely, — cannot be a poet even without danger of being made poet-laureate! Give me a country where it is the most natural thing in the world for a government that does not understand you to let you alone. One would say that a true Englishman could speculate only within bounds. (It is true the Americans have proved that they, in more than one sense, can *speculate* without bounds.) He has to pay his respects to so many things, that, before he knows it, he *may* have paid away all he is worth. What makes the United States government, on the whole, more tolerable — I mean for us lucky white men — is the fact that there is so much less of government

with us. Here it is only once in a month or a year that a man *needs* remember that institution; and those who go to Congress can play the game of the Kilkenny cats there without fatal consequences to those who stay at home, their term is so short; but in Canada you are reminded of the government every day. It parades itself before you. It is not content to be the servant, but will be the master; and every day it goes out to the Plains of Abraham or to the Champ de Mars and exhibits itself and toots. Everywhere there appeared an attempt to make and to preserve trivial and otherwise transient distinctions. In the streets of Montreal and Quebec you met not only with soldiers in red, and shuffling priests in unmistakable black and white, with Sisters of Charity gone into mourning for their deceased relative, — not to mention the nuns of various orders depending on the fashion of a tear, of whom you heard, — but youths belonging to some seminary or other, wearing coats edged with white, who looked as if their expanding hearts were already repressed with a piece of tape. In short, the inhabitants of Canada appeared to be suffering between two fires, — the soldiery and the priesthood. 85

CHAPTER V. THE SCENERY OF QUEBEC; AND THE RIVER ST. LAWRENCE

About twelve o'clock this day, being in the Lower Town, I looked up at the signal-gun by the flagstaff on Cape Diamond, and saw a soldier up in the heavens there making preparations to fire it, — both he and the gun in bold relief against the sky. Soon after, being warned by the boom of the gun to look up again, there was only the cannon in the sky, the smoke just blowing away from it, as if the soldier, having touched it off, had concealed himself for effect, leaving the sound to echo grandly from shore to shore, and far up and down the river. This answered the purpose of a dinner-horn.

There are no such restaurants in Quebec or Montreal as there are in Boston. I hunted an hour or two in vain in this town to find one, till I lost my appetite. In one house, called a restaurant, where lunches were advertised, I found only tables covered with bottles and glasses innumerable, containing apparently a sample of every liquid that has been known since the earth dried up after the flood, but no scent of solid food did I perceive gross enough to excite a hungry mouse. In short, I saw nothing to tempt me there, but a large map of Canada against the wall. In another place I once more got as far as the bottles, and then asked for a bill of fare; was told to walk up stairs; had no bill of fare, nothing but fare. "Have you any pies or puddings?" I inquired, for I am obliged to keep my savageness in check by a low diet. "No, sir; we've nice mutton-chop, roast beef, beefsteak, cutlets," and so on. A burly Englishman, who was in the midst of the siege of a piece of roast beef, and of whom I have never had a front view to this day, turned half round, with his mouth half full, and remarked, "You'll find no pies nor puddings in Quebec, sir; they don't make any here." I found that it was even so, and therefore bought some musty cake and some fruit in the open market-place. This market-place by the waterside, where the old women sat by their tables in the open air, amid a dense crowd jabbering all languages, was the best place in Quebec to observe the people; and the ferry-boats, continually coming and going with their motley

crews and cargoes, added much to the entertainment. I also saw them getting water from the river, for Quebec is supplied with water by cart and barrel. This city impressed me as wholly foreign and French, for I scarcely heard the sound of the English language in the streets. More than three fifths of the inhabitants are of French origin; and if the traveler did not visit the fortifications particularly, he might not be reminded that the English have any foothold here; and, in any case, if he looked no farther than Quebec, they would appear to have planted themselves in Canada only as they have in Spain at Gibraltar; and he who plants upon a rock cannot expect much increase. The novel sights and sounds by the waterside made me think of such ports as Boulogne, Dieppe, Rouen, and Havre-de-Grâce, which I have never seen; but I have no doubt that they present similar scenes. I was much amused from first to last with the sounds made by the charette and caleche drivers. It was that part of their foreign language that you heard the most of, — the French they talked to their horses, — and which they talked the loudest. It was a more novel sound to me than the French of conversation. The streets resounded with the cries, "*Qui donc!*" "*Marche tôt!*" I suspect that many of our horses which came from Canada would prick up their ears at these sounds. Of the shops, I was most attracted by those where furs and Indian works were sold, as containing articles of genuine Canadian manufacture. I have been told that two townsmen of mine, who were interested in horticulture, traveling once in Canada, and being in Quebec, thought it would be a good opportunity to obtain seeds of the real Canada crookneck squash. So they went into a shop where such things were advertised, and inquired for the same. The shopkeeper had the very thing they wanted. "But are you sure," they asked, "that these are the genuine Canada crookneck?" "Oh, yes, gentlemen," answered he, "they are a lot which I have received directly from Boston." I resolved that my Canada crookneck seeds should be such as had grown in Canada.

Too much has not been said about the scenery of Quebec. The fortifications of Cape Diamond are omnipresent. They preside, they frown over the river and surrounding country. You travel ten, twenty, thirty miles up or down the river's banks, you ramble fifteen miles amid the hills on either side, and then, when you have long since

forgotten them, perchance slept on them by the way, at a turn of the road or of your body, there they are still, with their geometry against the sky. The child that is born and brought up thirty miles distant, and has never traveled to the city, reads his country's history, sees the level lines of the citadel amid the cloud-built citadels in the western horizon, and is told that that is Quebec. No wonder if Jacques Cartier's pilot exclaimed in Norman French, "Que bec!" (What a beak!) when he saw this cape, as some suppose. Every modern traveler involuntarily uses a similar expression. Particularly it is said that its sudden apparition on turning Point Levi makes a memorable impression on him who arrives by water. The view from Cape Diamond has been compared by European travelers with the most remarkable views of a similar kind in Europe, such as from Edinburgh Castle, Gibraltar, Cintra, and others, and preferred by many. A main peculiarity in this, compared with other views which I have beheld, is that it is from the ramparts of a fortified city, and not from a solitary and majestic river cape alone, that this view is obtained. I associate the beauty of Quebec with the steel-like and flashing air, which may be peculiar to that season of the year, in which the blue flowers of the succory and some late goldenrods and buttercups on the summit of Cape Diamond were almost my only companions, — the former bluer than the heavens they faced. Yet even I yielded in some degree to the influence of historical associations, and found it hard to attend to the geology of Cape Diamond or the botany of the Plains of Abraham. I still remember the harbor far beneath me, sparkling like silver in the sun, the answering highlands of Point Levi on the southeast, the frowning Cap Tourmente abruptly bounding the seaward view far in the northeast, the villages of Lorette and Charlesbourg on the north, and, further west, the distant Val Cartier, sparkling with white cottages, hardly removed by distance through the clear air, — not to mention a few blue mountains along the horizon in that direction. You look out from the ramparts of the citadel beyond the frontiers of civilization. Yonder small group of hills, according to the guide-book, forms "the portal of the wilds which are trodden only by the feet of the Indian hunters as far as Hudson's Bay." It is but a few years since Bouchette declared that the country ten leagues north of the British capital of

North America was as little known as the middle of Africa. Thus the citadel under my feet, and all historical associations, were swept away again by an influence from the wilds and from Nature, as if the beholder had read her history, — an influence which, like the Great River itself, flowed from the Arctic fastnesses and Western forests with irresistible tide over all.

The most interesting object in Canada to me was the River St. Lawrence, known far and wide, and for centuries, as the Great River. Cartier, its discoverer, sailed up it as far as Montreal in 1535, — nearly a century before the coming of the Pilgrims; and I have seen a pretty accurate map of it so far, containing the city of "Hochelaga" and the river "Saguenay," in Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, printed at Antwerp in 1575, — the first edition having appeared in 1570, — in which the famous cities of "Norumbega" and "Orsinora" stand on the rough-blocked continent where New England is to-day, and the fabulous but unfortunate Isle of Demons, and Frislant, and others, lie off and on in the unfrequented sea, some of them prowling near what is now the course of the Cunard steamers. In this ponderous folio of the "Ptolemy of his age," said to be the first general atlas published after the revival of the sciences in Europe, only one page of which is devoted to the topography of the *Novus Orbis*, the St. Lawrence is the only large river, whether drawn from fancy or from observation, on the east side of North America. It was famous in Europe before the other rivers of North America were heard of, notwithstanding that the mouth of the Mississippi is said to have been discovered first, and its stream was reached by Soto not long after; but the St. Lawrence had attracted settlers to its cold shores long before the Mississippi, or even the Hudson, was known to the world. Schoolcraft was misled by Gallatin into saying that Narvaez discovered the Mississippi. De Vega does *not* say so. The first explorers declared that the summer in that country was as warm as France, and they named one of the bays in the Gulf of St. Lawrence the Bay of Chaleur, or of warmth; but they said nothing about the winter being as cold as Greenland. In the manuscript account of Cartier's second voyage, attributed by some to that navigator himself, it is called "the greatest river, without comparison, that is known to have ever been seen." The savages told him that it

was the "chemin du Canada," — the highway to Canada,— "which goes so far that no man had ever been to the end that they had heard." The Saguenay, one of its tributaries, which the panorama has made known to New England within three years, is described by Cartier, in 1535, and still more particularly by Jean Alphonse, in 1542, who adds, "I think that this river comes from the sea of Cathay, for in this place there issues a strong current, and there runs there a terrible tide." The early explorers saw many whales and other sea-monsters far up the St. Lawrence. Champlain, in his map, represents a whale spouting in the harbor of Quebec, three hundred and sixty miles from what is called the mouth of the river; and Charlevoix takes his reader to the summit of Cape Diamond to see the "porpoises, white as snow," sporting on the surface of the harbor of Quebec. And Boucher says in 1664, "from there [Tadoussac] to Montreal is found a great quantity of *Marsouins blancs*." Several whales have been taken pretty high up the river since I was there. P. A. Gosse, in his "Canadian Naturalist," p. (London, 1840), speaks of "the white dolphin of the St. Lawrence (*Delphinus Canadensis*)," as considered different from those of the sea. "The Natural History Society of Montreal offered a prize, a few years ago, for an essay on the *Cetacea* of the St. Lawrence, which was, I believe, handed in." In Champlain's day it was commonly called "the Great River of Canada." More than one nation has claimed it. In Ogilby's "America of 1670," in the map *Novi Belgii*, it is called "De Groote River van Niew Nederlandt." It bears different names in different parts of its course, as it flows through what were formerly the territories of different nations. From the Gulf to Lake Ontario it is called at present the St. Lawrence; from Montreal to the same place it is frequently called the Cateraqui; and higher up it is known successively as the Niagara, Detroit, St. Clair, St. Mary's, and St. Louis rivers. Humboldt, speaking of the Orinoco, says that this name is unknown in the interior of the country; so likewise the tribes that dwell about the sources of the St. Lawrence have never heard the name which it bears in the lower part of its course. It rises near another father of waters, — the Mississippi, — issuing from a remarkable spring far up in the woods, called Lake Superior, fifteen hundred miles in circumference; and several other springs there are thereabouts which

feed it. It makes such a noise in its tumbling down at one place as is heard all round the world. Bouchette, the Surveyor-General of the Canadas, calls it "the most splendid river on the globe;" says that it is two thousand statute miles long (more recent geographers make it four or five hundred miles longer); that at the Rivière du Sud it is eleven miles wide; at the Traverse, thirteen; at the Paps of Matane, twenty-five; at the Seven Islands, seventy-three; and at its mouth, from Cape Rosier to the Mingan Settlements in Labrador, near one hundred and five (?) miles wide. According to Captain Bayfield's recent chart it is about *ninety-six* geographical miles wide at the latter place, measuring at right angles with the stream. It has much the largest estuary, regarding both length and breadth, of any river on the globe. Humboldt says that the River Plate, which has the broadest estuary of the South American rivers, is ninety-two geographical miles wide at its mouth; also he found the Orinoco to be more than three miles wide at five hundred and sixty miles from its mouth; but he does not tell us that ships of six hundred tons can sail up it so far, as they can up the St. Lawrence to Montreal, — an equal distance. If he had described a fleet of such ships at anchor in a city's port so far inland, we should have got a very different idea of the Orinoco. Perhaps Charlevoix describes the St. Lawrence truly as the most *navigable* river in the world. Between Montreal and Quebec it averages about two miles wide. The tide is felt as far up as Three Rivers, four hundred and thirty-two miles, which is as far as from Boston to Washington. As far up as Cap aux Oyes, sixty or seventy miles below Quebec, Kalm found a great part of the plants near the shore to be marine, as glasswort (*Salicornia*), seaside pease (*Pisum maritimum*), sea-milkwort (*Glaux*), beach-grass (*Psamma arenaria*), seaside plantain (*Plantago maritima*), the sea-rocket (*Bunias cakile*), etc.

The geographer Guyot observes that the Marañon is three thousand miles long, and gathers its waters from a surface of a million and a half square miles; that the Mississippi is also three thousand miles long, but its basin covers only from eight to nine hundred thousand square miles; that the St. Lawrence is eighteen hundred miles long, and its basin covers more than a million square miles (Darby says five hundred thousand); and speaking of the lakes,

he adds, "These vast fresh-water seas, together with the St. Lawrence, cover a surface of nearly one hundred thousand square miles, and it has been calculated that they contain about one half of all the fresh water on the surface of our planet." But all these calculations are necessarily very rude and inaccurate. Its tributaries, the Ottawa, St. Maurice, and Saguenay, are great rivers themselves. The latter is said to be more than one thousand (?) feet deep at its mouth, while its cliffs rise perpendicularly an equal distance above its surface. Pilots say there are no soundings till one hundred and fifty miles up the St. Lawrence. The greatest sounding in the river, given on Bayfield's chart of the gulf and river, is two hundred and twenty-eight fathoms. McTaggart, an engineer, observes that "the Ottawa is larger than all the rivers in Great Britain, were they running in one." The traveler Grey writes: "A dozen Danubes, Rhines, Taguses, and Thameses would be nothing to twenty miles of fresh water in breadth [as where he happened to be], from ten to forty fathoms in depth." And again: "There is not perhaps in the whole extent of this immense continent so fine an approach to it as by the river St. Lawrence. In the Southern States you have, in general, a level country for many miles inland; here you are introduced at once into a majestic scenery, where everything is on a grand scale, — mountains, woods, lakes, rivers, precipices, waterfalls."

We have not yet the data for a minute comparison of the St. Lawrence with the South American rivers; but it is obvious that, taking it in connection with its lakes, its estuary, and its falls, it easily bears off the palm from all the rivers on the globe; for though, as Bouchette observes, it may not carry to the ocean a greater volume of water than the Amazon and Mississippi, its surface and cubic mass are far greater than theirs. But, unfortunately, this noble river is closed by ice from the beginning of December to the middle of April. The arrival of the first vessel from England when the ice breaks up is, therefore, a great event, as when the salmon, shad, and alewives come up a river in the spring to relieve the famishing inhabitants on its banks. Who can say what would have been the history of this continent if, as has been suggested, this river had emptied into the sea where New York stands!

After visiting the Museum and taking one more look at the wall, I

made haste to the Lord Sydenham steamer, which at five o'clock was to leave for Montreal. I had already taken a seat on deck, but finding that I had still an hour and a half to spare, and remembering that large map of Canada which I had seen in the parlor of the restaurant in my search after pudding, and realizing that I might never see the like out of the country, I returned thither, asked liberty to look at the map, rolled up the mahogany table, put my handkerchief on it, stood on it, and copied all I wanted before the maid came in and said to me standing on the table, "Some gentlemen want the room, sir;" and I retreated without having broken the neck of a single bottle, or my own, very thankful and willing to pay for all the solid food I had got. We were soon abreast of Cap Rouge, eight miles above Quebec, after we got under weigh. It was in this place, then called *Fort du France Roy*, that the Sieur de Roberval with his company, having sent home two of his three ships, spent the winter of 1542-43. It appears that they fared in the following manner (I translate from the original): "Each mess had only two loaves, weighing each a pound, and half a pound of beef. They ate pork for dinner, with half a pound of butter, and beef for supper, with about two handfuls of beans without butter. Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays they ate salted cod, and sometimes green, for dinner, with butter; and porpoise and beans for supper. Monsieur Roberval administered good justice, and punished each according to his offense. One, named Michel Gaillon, was hung for theft; John of Nantes was put in irons and imprisoned for his fault; and others were likewise put in irons; and many were whipped, both men and women; by which means they lived in peace and tranquillity." In an account of a voyage up this river, printed in the Jesuit Relations in the year 1664, it is said: "It was an interesting navigation for us in ascending the river from Cap Tourmente to Quebec, to see on this side and on that, for the space of eight leagues, the farms and the houses of the company, built by our French, all along these shores. On the right, the seigniories of Beauport, of Notre Dame des Anges; and on the left, this beautiful Isle of Orleans." The same traveler names among the fruits of the country observed at the Isles of Richelieu, at the head of Lake St. Peter, "kinds (*des espèces*) of little apples or haws (*senelles*), and of pears, which only ripen with the frost."

Night came on before we had passed the high banks. We had come from Montreal to Quebec in one night. The return voyage, against the stream, takes but an hour longer. Jacques Cartier, the first white man who is known to have ascended this river, thus speaks of his voyage from what is now Quebec to the foot of Lake St. Peter, or about half-way to Montreal: "From the said day, the 19th, even to the 28th of the said month [September, 1535], we had been navigating up the said river without losing hour or day, during which time we had seen and found as much country and lands as level as we could desire, full of the most beautiful trees in the world," which he goes on to describe. But we merely slept and woke again to find that we had passed through all that country which he was eight days in sailing through. He must have had a troubled sleep. We were not long enough on the river to realize that it had length; we got only the impression of its breadth, as if we had passed over a lake a mile or two in breadth and several miles long, though we might thus have slept through a European kingdom. Being at the head of Lake St. Peter, on the above-mentioned 28th of September, dealing with the natives, Cartier says: "We inquired of them by signs if this was the route to Hochelaga [Montreal]; and they answered that it was, and that there were yet three days' journeys to go there." He finally arrived at Hochelaga on the 2d of October.

When I went on deck at dawn we had already passed through Lake St. Peter, and saw islands ahead of us. Our boat advancing with a strong and steady pulse over the calm surface, we felt as if we were permitted to be awake in the scenery of a dream. Many vivacious Lombardy poplars along the distant shores gave them a novel and lively, though artificial, look, and contrasted strangely with the slender and graceful elms on both shores and islands. The church of Varennes, fifteen miles from Montreal, was conspicuous at a great distance before us, appearing to belong to, and rise out of, the river; and now, and before, Mount Royal indicated where the city was. We arrived about seven o'clock, and set forth immediately to ascend the mountain, two miles distant, going across lots in spite of numerous signs threatening the severest penalties to trespassers, past an old building known as the MacTavish property, — Simon MacTavish, I suppose, whom Silliman refers to as "in a sense the founder of the

Northwestern Company." His tomb was behind in the woods, with a remarkably high wall and higher monument. The family returned to Europe. He could not have imagined how dead he would be in a few years, and all the more dead and forgotten for being buried under such a mass of gloomy stone, where not even memory could get at him without a crowbar. Ah! poor man, with that last end of his! However, he may have been the worthiest of mortals for aught that I know. From the mountain-top we got a view of the whole city; the flat, fertile, extensive island; the noble sea of the St. Lawrence swelling into lakes; the mountains about St. Hyacinthe, and in Vermont and New York; and the mouth of the Ottawa in the west, overlooking that St. Anne's where the voyageur sings his "parting hymn," and bids adieu to civilization, — a name, thanks to Moore's verses, the most suggestive of poetic associations of any in Canada. We, too, climbed the hill which Cartier, first of white men, ascended, and named Mont-real (the 3d of October, O. S., 1535), and, like him, "we saw the said river as far as we could see, *grand*, *large*, *et spacieux*, going to the southwest," toward that land whither Donnacona had told the discoverer that he had been a month's journey from Canada, where there grew "*force Canelle et Girofle*," much cinnamon and cloves, and where also, as the natives told him, were three great lakes and afterward *une mer douce*, — a sweet sea, — *de laquelle n'est mention avoir vu le bout*, of which there is no mention to have seen the end. But instead of an Indian town far in the interior of a new world, with guides to show us where the river came from, we found a splendid and bustling stone-built city of white men, and only a few squalid Indians offered to sell us baskets at the Lachine Railroad Depot, and Hochelaga is, perchance, but the fancy name of an engine company or an eating-house.



Montreal from Mount Royal

We left Montreal Wednesday, the 2d of October, late in the afternoon. In the La Prairie cars the Yankees made themselves merry, imitating the cries of the charette-drivers to perfection, greatly to the amusement of some French-Canadian travelers, and they kept it up all the way to Boston. I saw one person on board the boat at St. Johns, and one or two more elsewhere in Canada, wearing homespun gray greatcoats, or capotes, with conical and comical hoods, which fell back between their shoulders like small bags, ready to be turned up over the head when occasion required, though a hat usurped that place now. They looked as if they would be convenient and proper enough as long as the coats were new and tidy, but would soon come to have a beggarly and unsightly look, akin to rags and dust-holes. We reached Burlington early in the morning, where the Yankees tried to pass off their Canada coppers, but the newsboys knew better. Returning through the Green Mountains, I was reminded that I had not seen in Canada such brilliant autumnal tints as I had previously seen in Vermont. Perhaps there was not yet so great and sudden a contrast with the summer heats in the former country as in these mountain valleys. As we were passing through Ashburnham, by a new white house which stood at some distance in a field, one passenger exclaimed, so that all in the car could hear him, “There, there’s not so good a house as that in all Canada!” I did not much

wonder at his remark, for there is a neatness, as well as evident prosperity, a certain elastic easiness of circumstances, so to speak, when not rich, about a New England house, as if the proprietor could at least afford to make repairs in the spring, which the Canadian houses do not suggest. Though of stone, they are no better constructed than a stone barn would be with us; the only building, except the château, on which money and taste are expended, being the church. In Canada an ordinary New England house would be mistaken for the château, and while every village here contains at least several gentlemen or "squires," *there* there is but one to a seigniory.

I got home this Thursday evening, having spent just one week in Canada and traveled eleven hundred miles. The whole expense of this journey, including two guide-books and a map, which cost one dollar twelve and a half cents, was twelve dollars seventy-five cents. I do not suppose that I have seen all British America; that could not be done by a cheap excursion, unless it were a cheap excursion to the Icy Sea, as seen by Hearne or Mackenzie, and then, no doubt, some interesting features would be omitted. I wished to go a little way behind the word *Canadense*, of which naturalists make such frequent use; and I should like still right well to make a longer excursion on foot through the wilder parts of Canada, which perhaps might be called *Iter Canadense*.

THE END

The Essays



Studying at Harvard College between 1833 and 1837, Thoreau lived in Hollis Hall and took courses in rhetoric, classics, philosophy, mathematics and science. A legend proposes that he refused to pay the five-dollar fee for a Harvard diploma.



Hollis Hall today

AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS

IF you have imagined what a divine work is spread out for the poet, and approach this author too, in the hope of finding the field at length fairly entered on, you will hardly dissent from the words of the prologue,

"Ipse semipaganus Ad sacra Vatum carmen affero nostrum ."

Here is none of the interior dignity of Virgil, nor the elegance and fire of Horace, nor will any Sibyl be needed to remind you, that from those older Greek poets, there is a sad descent to Persius . Scarcely can you distinguish one harmonious sound, amid this unmusical bickering with the follies of men.

One sees how music has its place in thought, but hardly as yet in language. When the Muse arrives, we wait for her to remould language, and impart to it her own rhythm. Hitherto the verse groans and labors with its load, but goes not forward blithely, singing by the way. The best ode may be parodied, indeed is itself a parody, and has a poor and trivial sound, like a man stepping on the rounds of a ladder. Homer, and Shakspeare, and Milton, and Marvel, and Wordsworth, are but the rustling of leaves and crackling of twigs in the forest, and not yet the sound of any bird. The Muse has never lifted up her voice to sing. Most of all satire will not be sung. A Juvenal or Persius do not marry music to their verse, but are measured faultfinders at best ; stand but just outside the faults they condemn, and so are concerned rather about the monster they have escaped, than the fair prospect before them. Let them live on an age, not a secular one, and they will have travelled out of his shadow and harm's way, and found other objects to ponder. As long as there is nature, the poet is, as it were, Itarticeps crimints . One sees not but he had best let bad take care of itself, and have to do only with what is beyond suspicion . If you light on the least vestige of truth, and it is the weight of the whole body still which stamps the faintest trace, an

eternity will not suffice to extol it, while no evil is so huge, but you grudge to bestow on it a moment of hate. Truth never turns to rebuke falsehood; her own straightforwardness is the severest correction. Horace would not have written satire so well, if he had not been inspired by it, as by a passion, and fondly cherished his vein. In his odes, the love always exceeds the hate, so that the severest satire still sings itself, and the poet is satisfied, though the folly be not corrected . A sort of necessary order in the development of Genius is, first, Complaint ; second, Plaint ; third, Love. Complaint, which is the condition of Persius, lies not in the province of poetry. Ere long the enjoyment of a superior good would have changed his disgust into regret.

We can never have much sympathy with the complainer ; for after searching nature through, we conclude he must be both plaintiff and defendant too, and so had best come to a settlement without a hearing. I know not but it would be truer to say, that the highest strain of the muse is essentially plaintive. The saint's are still tears of joy. But the divinest poem, or the life of a great man, is the severest satire ; as impersonal as nature herself, and like the sighs of her winds in the woods, which convey ever a slight reproof to the hearer. The greater the genius, the keener the edge of the satire. Hence have we to do only with the rare and fragmentary traits, which least belong to Persius, or, rather, are the properest utterance of his muse ; since that which he says best at any time is what he can best say at all times. The Spectators and Ramblers have not failed to cull some quotable sentences from this garden too, so pleasant is it to meet even the most familiar truths in a new dress, when, if our neighbor had said it, we should have passed it by as hackneyed. Out of these six satires, you may perhaps select some twenty lines, which fit so well as many thoughts, that they will recur to the scholar almost as readily as a natural image; though when translated into familiar language, they lose that insular emphasis, which fitted them for quotation. Such lines as the following no translation can render commonplace. Contrasting the man of true religion with those, that, with jealous privacy, would fain carry on a secret commerce with the gods, he says,

"Hand cuivis promptum est, murmurque humilesque Tollere susurros de templis ; et aperto vivere voto."

To the virtuous man, the universe is the only sanctum sanctorum, and the penetralia of the temple are the broad noon of his existence. Why should he betake himself to a subterranean crypt, as if it were the only holy ground in all the world he had left unprofaned? The obedient soul would only the more discover and familiarize things, and escape more and more into light and air, as having henceforth done with secrecy, so that the universe shall not seem open enough for it. At length, is it neglectful even of that silence which is consistent with true modesty, but by its independence of all confidence in its disclosures, makes that which it imparts so private to the hearer, that it becomes the care of the whole world that modesty be not infringed. To the man who cherishes a secret in his breast, there is a still greater secret unexplored. Our most indifferent acts may be matter for secrecy, but whatever we do with the utmost truthfulness and integrity, by virtue of its pureness, must be transparent as light. In the third satire he asks,

"Est aliquid quo tendis, et in quod dirigis arcum
An passim sequeris corvos, testave, lutove,
Securus quo per ferat, atque ex tempore vivis?"

Language seems to have justice done it, but is obviously cramped and narrowed in its significance, when any meanness is described. The truest construction is not put upon it. What may readily be fashioned into a rule of wisdom, is here thrown in the teeth of the sluggard, and constitutes the front of his offence. Universally, the innocent man will come forth from the sharpest inquisition and lecturings, the combined din of reproof and commendation, with a faint sound of eulogy in his ears. Our vices lie ever in the direction of our virtues, and in their best estate are but plausible imitations of the latter.

Falsehood never attains to the dignity of entire falseness, but is only an inferior sort of truth; if it were more thoroughly false, it would incur danger of becoming true.

"Securus quo pes ferat, atque ex tempore vivit,

is then the motto of a wise man. For first, as the subtle discernment of the language would have taught us, with all his negligence he is still secure; but the sluggard, notwithstanding his heedlessness, is insecure. The life of a wise man is most of all extemporaneous, for he lives out of an eternity that includes all time. He is a child each moment and reflects wisdom. The far darting thought of the child's mind tarries not for the development of manhood ; it lightens itself, and needs not draw down lightning from the clouds. When we bask in a single ray from the mind of Zoroaster, we see how all subsequent time has been an idler, and has no apology for itself. But the cunning mind travels farther back than Zoroaster each instant, and comes quite down to the present with its revelation . All the thrift and industry of thinking give no man any stock in life ; his credit with the inner world is no better, his capital no larger. He must try his fortune again today as yesterday. All questions rely on the present for their solution. Time measures nothing but itself: The word that is written may be postponed, but not that on the life. If this is what the occa sion says, let the occasion say it. From a real sympathy, all the world is forward to plrompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket. In the fifth satire, which is the best, I find,

"Stat contra ratio, et recretam garrit in aurem.
Ne liceat facere id, quod quis vitiabit agendo."

Only they who do not see how anything might be better done are forward to try their hand on it . Even the master workman must be encouraged by the reflection, that his awkwardness will be incompetent to do that harm, to which his skill may fail to do justice. Here is no apology for neglecting to do many things from a sense of our incapacity, -for what deed does not fall maimed and imperfect from our hands?-but only a warning to bungle less. The satires of Persius are the farthest possible from inspired; evidently a chosen, not imposed subject. Perhaps I have given him credit for more

earnestness than is apparent; but certain it is, that that which alone we can call Persius, which is forever independent and consistent, was in earnest, and so sanctions the sober consideration of all. The artist and his work are not to be separated. The most wilfully foolish man cannot stand aloof from his folly, but the deed and the doer together make ever one sober fact . The buffoon may not bribe you to laugh always at his grimaces; they shall sculpture themselves in Egyptian granite, to stand heavy as the pyramids on the ground of his character.

THE SERVICE

I. Qualities of the Recruit

Spes sibi quisque.
Virgil
Each one his own hope.

The brave man is the elder son of creation, who has stept buoyantly into his inheritance, while the coward, who is the younger, waiteth patiently till he decease. He rides as wide of this earth's gravity as a star, and by yielding incessantly to all the impulses of the soul, is constantly drawn upward and becomes a fixed star. His bravery deals not so much in resolute action, as healthy and assured rest; its palmy state is a staying at home and compelling alliance in all directions. So stands his life to heaven, as some fair sunlit tree against the western horizon, and by sunrise is planted on some eastern hill, to glisten in the first rays of the dawn. The brave man braves nothing, nor knows he of his bravery. He is that sixth champion against Thebes, whom, when the proud devices of the rest have been recorded, the poet describes as "bearing a full-orbed shield of solid brass,"

"But there was no device upon its circle,
For not to seem just but to be is his wish."

He does not present a gleaming edge to ward off harm, for that will oftenest attract the lightning, but rather is the all-pervading ether, which the lightning does not strike but purify. So is the profanity of his companion as a flash across the face of his sky, which lights up and reveals its serene depths. Earth cannot shock the heavens, but its dull vapor and foul smoke make a bright cloud spot in the ether, and anon the sun, like a cunning artificer, will cut and paint it, and set it for a jewel in the breast of the sky.

His greatness is not measurable; not such a greatness as when we

would erect a stupendous piece of art, and send far and near for materials, intending to lay the foundations deeper, and rear the structure higher than ever; for hence results only a remarkable bulkiness without grandeur, lacking those true and simple proportions which are independent of size. He was not builded by that unwise generation that would fain have reached the heavens by piling one brick upon another; but by a far wiser, that builded inward and not outward, having found out a shorter way, through the observance of a higher art. The Pyramids some artisan may measure with his line; but if he gives you the dimensions of the Parthenon in feet and inches, the figures will not embrace it like a cord, but dangle from its entablature like an elastic drapery.

His eye is the focus in which all the rays, from whatever side, are collected; for, itself being within and central, the entire circumference is revealed to it. Just as we scan the whole concave of the heavens at a glance, but can compass only one side of the pebble at our feet. So does his discretion give prevalence to his valor. "Discretion is the wise man's soul" says the poet. His prudence may safely go many strides beyond the utmost rashness of the coward; for, while he observes strictly the golden mean, he seems to run through all extremes with impunity. Like the sun, which, to the poor worldling, now appears in the zenith, now in the horizon, and again is faintly reflected from the moon's disk, and has the credit of describing an entire great circle, crossing the quinoctial and solstitial colures, — without detriment to his steadfastness or mediocrity. The golden mean, in ethics, as in physics, is the centre of the system, and that about which all revolve; and, though to a distant and plodding planet it be the uttermost extreme, yet one day, when that planet's year is complete, it will be found to be central. They who are alarmed lest Virtue should so far demean herself as to be extremely good, have not yet wholly embraced her, but described only a slight arc of a few seconds about her; and from so small and ill-defined a curvature, you can calculate no centre whatever; but their mean is no better than meanness, nor their medium than mediocrity.

The coward wants resolution, which the brave man can do without. He recognizes no faith but a creed, thinking this straw, by which he is moored, does him good service, because his sheet-anchor

does not drag. “The house-roof fights with the rain; he who is under shelter does not know it.” In his religion the ligature, which should be muscle and sinew, is rater like that thread which the accomplices of Cylon held in their hands, when they went abroad from the temple of Minerva, — the other end being attached to the statue of the goddess. But frequently, as in their case, the thread breaks, being stretched; and he is left without an asylum.

The divinity in man is the true vestal fire of the temple, which is never permitted to go out, but burns as steadily, and with as pure a flame, on the obscure provincial altars as in Numa’s temple at Rome. In the meanest are all the materials of manhood, only they are not rightly disposed. We say, justly, that the weak person is “flat,” — for, like all flat substances, he does not stand in the direction of his strength, that is, on his edge, but affords a convenient surface to put upon. He slides all the way through life. Most things are strong in one direction; a straw longitudinally; a board in the direction of its edge; a knee transversely to its grain; but the brave man is a perfect sphere, which cannot fall on its flat side, and is equally strong every way. The coward is wretchedly spheroidal at best, too much educated or drawn out on one side, and depressed on the other; or may be likened to a hollow sphere, whose disposition of matter is best when the greatest bulk is intended.

We shall not attain to be spherical by lying on one or the other side for an eternity, but only by resigning ourselves implicitly to the law of gravity in us, shall we find our axis coincident with the celestial axis, and by revolving incessantly through all circles, acquire a perfect sphericity. Mankind, like the earth, revolve mainly from west to east, and so are flattened at the pole. But does not philosophy give hint of a movement commencing to be rotary at the poles too, which in a millennium will have acquired increased rapidity, and help restore an equilibrium? And when at length every star in the nebulæ and Milky Way has looked down with mild radiance for a season, exerting its whole influence as the polar star, the demands of science will in some degree be satisfied.

The grand and majestic have always somewhat of the undulatoriness of the sphere. It is the secret of majesty in the rolling gait of the elephant, and of all grace in action and in art. Always the

line of beauty is a curve. When with pomp a huge sphere is drawn along the streets, by the efforts of a hundred men, I seem to discover each striving to imitate its gait, and keep step with it, — if possible to swell to its own diameter. But onward it moves, and conquers the multitude with its majesty. What shame, then, that our lives, which might so well be the source of planetary motion, and sanction the order of the spheres, should be full of abruptness and angularity, so as not to roll nor move majestically!

The Romans "made Fortune sirname to Fortitude," for fortitude is that alchemy that turns all things to good fortune. The man of fortitude, whom the Latins called fortis is no other than that lucky person whom *fors* favors, or *vir summae fortis*. If we will, every bark may "carry Cæsar and Cæsar's fortune." For an impenetrable shield, stand inside yourself; he was no artist, but an artisan, who first made shields of brass. For armor of proof, *mea virtute me involvo*, — I wrap myself in my virtue;

"Tumble me down, and I will sit
Upon my ruins, smiling yet."

If you let a single ray of light through the shutter, it will go on diffusing itself without limit till it enlighten the world; but the shadow that was never so wide at first, as rapidly contracts till it comes to naught. The shadow of the moon, when it passes nearest the sun, is lost in space ere it can reach our earth to eclipse it. Always the System shines with uninterrupted light; for as the sun is so much alrger than any planet, no shadow can travel far into space. We may bask always in the light of the System, always may step back out of the shade. No man's shadow is as large as his body, if the rays make a right angle with the reflecting surface. Let our lives be passed under the equator, with the sun in the meridian.

There is no ill which may not be dissipated like the dark, if you let in a stronger light upon it. Overcome evil with good. Practice no such narrow economy as they, whose bravery amounts to no more light than a farthing candle, before which most objects cast a shadow wider than themselves.

Nature refuses to sympathize with our sorrow; she has not

provided *for*, but by a thousand contrivances *against* it: she has bevelled the margin of the eyelids, that the tears may not overflow on the cheeks. It was a conceit of Plutarch, accounting for the preference given to signs observed on the left hand, that men may have thought "things terrestrial and mortal directly over against heavenly and divine thing, and do conjecture that the things which to us are on the left hand, the gods send down from their right hand." If we are not blind, we shall see how a right hand is stretched over all, — as well the unlucky as the lucky, — and that the ordering Soul is only right-handed, distributing with one palm all our fates.

What first suggested that necessity was grim, and made fate to be so fatal? The strongest is always the least violent. Necessity is my eastern cushion on which I recline. My eye revels in its prospect as in the summer haze. I ask no more but to be left alone with it. It is the bosom of time and the lap of eternity. To be necessary is to be needful, and necessity is only another name for inflexibility of good. How I welcome my grim fellow, and walk arm in arm with him. Let me too be such a Necessity as he! I love him, he is so flexile, and yields to me as the air to my body. I leap and dance in his midst, and play with his beard till he smiles. I greet thee, my elder brother! who with thy touch ennoblest all things. Then is holiday when naught intervenes betwixt me and thee. Must it be so, — then is it good. The stars are thy interpreters to me.

Over Greece hangs the divine necessity, ever a mellower heaven of itself; whose light gilds the Acropolis and a thousand fanes and groves.

II. What Music Shall We Have?

Each more melodious note I hear
Brings this reproach to me,
That I alone afford the ear,
Who would the music be.

The brave man is the sole patron of music; he recognizes it for his mother tongue; a more mellifluous and articulate language than words, in comparison with which, speech is recent and temporary. It

is his voice. His language must have the same majestic movement and cadence that philosophy assigns to the heavenly bodies. The steady flux of his thought constitutes time in music. The universe falls in and keeps pace with it, which before proceeded singly and discordant. Hence are poetry and song. When Bravery first grew afraid and went to war, it took Music along with it. The soul is delighted still to hear the echo of her own voice. Especially the soldier insists on agreement and harmony always. To secure these he falls out. Indeed, it is that friendship there is in war that makes it chivalrous and heroic. It was the dim sentiment of a noble friendship for the purest soul the world has seen, that gave to Europe a crusading era. War is but the compelling of peace. If the soldier marches to the sack of a town, he must be preceded by drum and trumpet, which shall identify his cause with the accordant universe. All things thus echo back his own spirit, and thus the hostile territory is preoccupied for him. He is no longer insulated, but infinitely related and familiar. The roll-call musters for him all the forces of Nature.

There is as much music in the world as virtue. In a world of peace and love music would be the universal language, and men greet each other in the fields in such accents as a Beethoven now utters at rare intervals from a distance. All things obey music as they obey virtue. It is the herald of virtue. It is God's voice. In it are the centripetal and centrifugal forces. The universe needed only to hear a divine melody, that every star might fall into its proper place, and assume its true sphericity. It entails a surpassing affluence on the meanest thing; riding over the heads of sages, and soothing the din of philosophy. When we listen to it we are so wise that we need not to know. All sounds, and more than all, silence, do fife and drum for us. The least creaking doth whet all our senses, and emit a tremulous light, like the aurora borealis, over things. As polishing expresses the vein in marble, and the grain in wood, so music brings out what of heroic lurks anywhere. It is either a sedative or a tonic to the soul.

I read that "Plato thinks the gods never gave men music, the science of melody and harmony, for mere delectation or to tickle the ear; but that the discordant parts of the circulations and beauteous fabric of the soul, and that of it that roves about the body, and many

times for want of tune and air, breaks forth into many extravagances and excesses, might be sweetly recalled and artfully wound up to their former consent and agreement."

A sudden burst from a horn startles us, as if one had rashly provoked a wild beast. We admire his boldness; he dares wake the echoes which he cannot put to rest. The sound of a bugle in the stillness of the night sends forth its voice to the farthest stars, and marshals them in new order and harmony. Instantly it finds a fit sounding-board in the heavens. The notes flash out on the horizon like heat lightning, quickening the pulse of creation. The heavens say, Now is this my own earth.

To the sensitive soul the Universe has her own fixed measure, which is its measure also, and as this, expressed in the regularity of its pulse, is inseparable from a healthy body, so is its healthiness dependent on the regularity of its rhythm. In all sounds the soul recognizes its own rhythm, and seeks to express its sympathy by a correspondent movement of the limbs. When the body marches to the measure of the soul, then is true courage and invincible strength. The coward would reduce this thrilling sphere-music to a universal wail, — this melodious chant to a nasal cant. He thinks to conciliate all hostile influences by compelling his neighborhood into a partial concord with himself; but his music is no better than a jingle, which is akin to a jar, — jars regularly recurring. He blows a feeble blast of slender melody, because Nature can have no more sympathy with such a soul than it has of cheerful melody in itself. Hence hears he no accordant note in the universe, and is a coward, or consciously outcast and deserted man. But the brave man, without drum or trumpet, compels concord everywhere, by the universality and tunefulness of his soul.

Let not the faithful sorrow that he has no ear for the more fickle and subtle harmonies of creation, if he be awake to the slower measure of virtue and truth. If his pulse does not beat in unison with the musician's quips and turns, it accords with the pulse-beat of the ages.

A man's life should be a stately march to an unheard music; and when to his fellows it may seem irregular and inharmonious, he will be stepping to a livelier measure, which only his nicer ear can detect.

There will be no halt ever, but at most a marching on his post, or such a pause as is richer than any sound, when the deeper melody is no longer heard, but implicitly consented to with the whole life and being. He will take a false step never, even in the most arduous circumstances; for then the music will not fail to swell into greater volume, and rule the movement it inspired.

III. Not How Many, But Where the Enemy Are

— What's brave, what's noble,
Let's do it after the high Roman fashion.
Shakespeare

When my eye falls on the stupendous masses of the clouds, tossed into such irregular greatness across the cope of my sky, I feel that their grandeur is thrown away on the meanness of my employments. In vain the sun, thro' morning and noon rolls defiance to man, and, as he sinks behind his cloudy fortress in the west, challenges him to equal greatness in his career; but from his humbleness he looks up to the domes and minarets and gilded battlements of the Eternal City, and is content to be a suburban dweller outside the walls. We look in vain over earth for a Roman greatness, to take up the gantlet which the heavens throw down. Idomeneus would not have demurred at the freshness of the last morning that rose to us, as unfit occasion to display his valor in; and of some such evening as this, methinks, that Grecian fleet came to anchor in the bay of Aulis. Would that it were to us the eve of a more than ten years' war, — a tithe of whose exploits, and Achillean withdrawals, and godly interferences, would stock a library of Iliads.

Better that we have some of that testy spirit of knight errantry, and if we are so blind as to think the world is not rich enough nowadays to afford a real foe to combat, with our trusty swords and double-handed maces, hew and mangle some unreal phantom of the brain. In the pale and shivering fogs of the morning, gathering them up betimes, and withdrawing sluggishly to their daylight haunts, I see Falsehood sneaking from the full blaze of truth, and with good relish could do execution on their rearward ranks, with the first brand that

came to hand. We too are such puny creatures as to be put to flight by the sun, and suffer our ardor to grow cool in proportion as his increases; our own short-lived chivalry sounds a retreat with the fumes and vapors of the night; and we turn to meet mankind, with its meek face preaching peace, and such non-resistance as the chaff that rides before the whirlwind.

Let not our Peace be proclaimed by the rust on our swords, or our inability to draw them from their scabbards; but let her at least have so much work on her hands as to keep those swords bright and sharp. The very dogs that bay the moon from farmyards o' these nights, do evince more heroism than is tamely barked forth in all the civil exhortations and war sermons of the age. And that day and night, which should be set down indelibly in men's hearts, must be learned from the pages of our almanack. One cannot wonder at the owlish habits of the race, which does not distinguish when its day ends and night begins; for as night is the season of rest, it would be hard to say when its toil ended and its rest began. Not to it

— returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds.

And so the time lapses without epoch or era, and we know some half-score of mornings and evenings by tradition only. Almost the night is grieved and leaves her tears on the forelock of day, that men will not rush to her embrace, and fulfil at length the pledge so forwardly given in the youth of time. Men are a circumstance to themselves, instead of causing the universe to stand around, the mute witness of their manhood, and the stars to forget their sphere music and chant an elegiac strain, that heroism should have departed out of their ranks and gone over to humanity.

It is not enough that our life is an easy one; we must live on the stretch, retiring to our rest like soldiers on the eve of a battle, looking forward with ardor to the strenuous sortie of the morrow. "Sit not

down in the popular seats and common level of virtues, but endeavor to make them heroical. Offer not only peace-offerings but holocausts unto God." To the brave soldier the rust and leisure of peace are harder than the fatigues of war. As our bodies court physical encounters, and languish in the mild and even climate of the tropics, so our souls thrive best on unrest and discontent. The soul is a sterner master than any King Frederick, for a true bravery would subject our bodies to rougher usage than even a grenadier could withstand. We too are dwellers within the purlieus of the camp. When the sun breaks through the morning mist, I seem to hear the din of war louder than when his chariot thundered on the plains of Troy. The thin fields of vapor, spread like gauze over the woods, form extended lawns whereon high tournament is held;

Before each van
Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close.

It behoves us to make life a steady progression, and not be defeated by its opportunities. The stream which first fell a drop from heaven, should be filtered by events till it burst out into springs of greater purity, and extract a diviner flavor from the accidents through which it passes. Shall man wear out sooner than the sun? and not rather dawn as freshly, and with such native dignity stalk down the hills of the East into the bustling vale of life, with as lofty and serene a countenance to roll onward through midday, to a yet fairer and more promising setting? In the crimson colors of the west I discern the budding hues of dawn. To my western brother it is rising pure and bright as it did to me; but only the evening exhibits in the still rear of day, the beauty which through morning and noon escaped me. Is not that which we call the gross atmosphere of evening the accumulated deed of the day, which absorbs the rays of beauty, and shows more richly than the naked promise of the dawn? Let us look to it that by earnest toil in the heat of the noon, we get ready a rich western blaze against the evening.

Nor need we fear that the time will hang heavy when our toil is

done; for our task is not such a piece of day-labor, that a man must be thinking what he shall do next for a livelihood, — but such, that as it began in endeavor, so will it end only when no more in heaven or on earth remains to be endeavored. Effort is the prerogative of virtue. Let not death be the sole task of life, — the moment when we are rescued from death to life, and set to work, — if indeed that can be called a task which all things do but alleviate. Nor will we suffer our hands to lose one jot of their handiness by looking behind to a mean recompense; knowing that our endeavor cannot be thwarted, nor we be cheated of our earnings unless by not earning them. It concerns us, rather, to be somewhat here present, than to leave something behind us; for, if that were to be considered, it is never the deed men praise, but some marble or canvas, which are only a staging to the real work. The hugest and most effective deed may have no sensible result at all on earth, but may paint itself in the heavens with new stars and constellations. When in rare moments our whole being strives with one consent, which we name a yearning, we may not hope that our work will stand in any artist's gallery on earth. The bravest deed, which for the most part is left quite out of history, — which alone wants the staleness of a deed done, and the uncertainty of a deed doing, — is the life of a great man. To perform exploits is to be temporarily bold, as becomes a courage that ebbs and flows, — the soul, quite vanquished by its own deed, subsiding into indifference and cowardice; but the exploit of a brave life consists in its momentary completeness.

Every stroke of the chisel must enter our own flesh and bone; he is a mere idolater and apprentice to art who suffers it to grate dully on marble. For the true art is not merely a sublime consolation and holiday labor, which the gods have given to sickly mortals; but such a masterpiece as you may imagine a dweller on the tablelands of central Asia might produce, with threescore and ten years for canvas, and the faculties of a man for tools, — a human life; wherein you might hope to discover more than the freshness of Guido's Aurora, or the mild light of Titian's landscapes, — no bald imitation nor even rival of Nature, but rather the restored original of which she is the reflection. For such a masterpiece as this, whole galleries of Greece and Italy are a mere mixing of colors and preparatory

quarrying of marble.

Of such sort, then, be our crusade, — which, while it inclines chiefly to the hearty good will and activity of war, rather than the insincerity and sloth of peace, will set an example to both of calmness and energy; — as unconcerned for victory as careless of defeat, — not seeking to lengthen our term of service, nor to cut it short by a reprieve, — but earnestly applying ourselves to the campaign before us. Nor let our warfare be a boorish and uncourteous one, but a higher courtesy attend its higher chivalry, — though not to the slackening of its tougher duties and severer discipline. That so our camp may be a palæstra, wherein the dormant energies and affections of men may tug and wrestle, not to their discomfiture, but to their mutual exercise and development.

What were Godfrey and Gonsalvo unless we breathed a life into them and enacted their exploits as a prelude to our own? The Past is the canvas on which our idea is painted, — the dim prospectus of our future field. We are dreaming of what we are to do. Methinks I hear the clarion sound, and clang of corselet and buckler, from many a silent hamlet of the soul. The signal gun has long since sounded, and we are not yet on our posts. Let us make such haste as the morning, and such delay as the evening.

NATURAL HISTORY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Books of natural history make the most cheerful winter reading. I read in Audubon with a thrill of delight, when the snow covers the ground, of the magnolia, and the Florida keys, and their warm sea-breezes; of the fence-rail, and the cotton-tree, and the migrations of the rice-bird; of the breaking up of winter in Labrador, and the melting of the snow on the forks of the Missouri; and owe an accession of health to these reminiscences of luxuriant nature.

Within the circuit of this plodding life,
There enter moments of an azure hue,
Untarnished fair as is the violet
Or anemone, when the spring strews them
By some meandering rivulet, which make
The best philosophy untrue that aims
But to console man for his grievances.
I have remembered when the winter came,
High in my chamber in the frosty nights,
When in the still light of the cheerful moon,
On every twig and rail and jutting spout,
The icy spears were adding to their length
Against the arrows of the coming sun,
How in the shimmering noon of summer past
Some unrecorded beam slanted across
The upland pastures where the Johnswort grew;
Or heard, amid the verdure of my mind,
The bee's long smothered hum, on the blue flag
Loitering amidst the mead; or busy rill,
Which now through all its course stands still and dumb
Its own memorial, — purling at its play
Along the slopes, and through the meadows next,
Until its youthful sound was hushed at last
In the staid current of the lowland stream;
Or seen the furrows shine but late upturned,

And where the fieldfare followed in the rear,
When all the fields around lay bound and hoar
Beneath a thick integument of snow.
So by God's cheap economy made rich
To go upon my winter's task again.

I am singularly refreshed in winter when I hear of service-berries, poke-weed, juniper. Is not heaven made up of these cheap summer glories? There is a singular health in those words, Labrador and East Main, which no desponding creed recognizes. How much more than Federal are these States. If there were no other vicissitudes than the seasons, our interest would never tire. Much more is adoing than Congress wots of. What journal do the persimmon and the buckeye keep, and the sharp-shinned hawk? What is transpiring from summer to winter in the Carolinas, and the Great Pine Forest, and the Valley of the Mohawk? The merely political aspect of the land is never very cheering; men are degraded when considered as the members of a political organization. On this side all lands present only the symptoms of decay. I see but Bunker Hill and Sing-Sing, the District of Columbia and Sullivan's Island, with a few avenues connecting them. But paltry are they all beside one blast of the east or the south wind which blows over them.

In society you will not find health, but in nature. Unless our feet at least stood in the midst of nature, all our faces would be pale and livid. Society is always diseased, and the best is the most so. There is no scent in it so wholesome as that of the pines, nor any fragrance so penetrating and restorative as the life-everlasting in high pastures. I would keep some book of natural history always by me as a sort of elixir, the reading of which should restore the tone of the system. To the sick, indeed, nature is sick, but to the well, a fountain of health. To him who contemplates a trait of natural beauty no harm nor disappointment can come. The doctrines of despair, of spiritual or political tyranny or servitude, were never taught by such as shared the serenity of nature. Surely good courage will not flag here on the Atlantic border, as long as we are flanked by the Fur Countries. There is enough in that sound to cheer one under any circumstances. The spruce, the hemlock, and the pine will not countenance despair.

Methinks some creeds in vestries and churches do forget the hunter wrapped in furs by the Great Slave Lake, and that the Esquimaux sledges are drawn by dogs, and in the twilight of the northern night, the hunter does not give over to follow the seal and walrus on the ice. They are of sick and diseased imaginations who would toll the world's knell so soon. Cannot these sedentary sects do better than prepare the shrouds and write the epitaphs of those other busy living men? The practical faith of all men belies the preacher's consolation. What is any man's discourse to me, if I am not sensible of something in it as steady and cheery as the creak of crickets? In it the woods must be relieved against the sky. Men tire me when I am not constantly greeted and refreshed as by the flux of sparkling streams. Surely joy is the condition of life. Think of the young fry that leap in ponds, the myriads of insects ushered into being on a summer evening, the incessant note of the hyla with which the woods ring in the spring, the nonchalance of the butterfly carrying accident and change painted in a thousand hues upon its wings, or the brook minnow stoutly stemming the current, the lustre of whose scales worn bright by the attrition is reflected upon the bank.

We fancy that this din of religion, literature, and philosophy, which is heard in pulpits, lyceums, and parlors, vibrates through the universe, and is as catholic a sound as the creaking of the earth's axle; but if a man sleep soundly, he will forget it all between sunset and dawn. It is the three-inch swing of a pendulum in a cupboard, which the great pulse of nature vibrates by and through each instant. When we lift our eyelids and open our ears, it disappears with smoke and rattle like the cars on a railroad. When I detect a beauty in any of the recesses of nature, I am reminded, by the serene and retired spirit in which it requires to be contemplated, of the inexpressible privacy of a life, — how silent and unambitious it is. The beauty there is in mosses must be considered from the holiest, quietest nook. What an admirable training is science for the more active warfare of life. Indeed, the unchallenged bravery, which these studies imply, is far more impressive than the trumpeted valor of the warrior. I am pleased to learn that Thales was up and stirring by night not unfrequently, as his astronomical discoveries prove. Linnaeus, setting out for Lapland, surveys his "comb" and "spare shirt,"

"leathern breeches" and "gauze cap to keep off gnats," with as much complacency as Bonaparte a park of artillery for the Russian campaign. The quiet bravery of the man is admirable. His eye is to take in fish, flower, and bird, quadruped and biped. Science is always brave, for to know, is to know good; doubt and danger quail before her eye. What the coward overlooks in his hurry, she calmly scrutinizes, breaking ground like a pioneer for the array of arts that follow in her train. But cowardice is unscientific; for there cannot be a science of ignorance. There may be a science of bravery, for that advances; but a retreat is rarely well conducted; if it is, then is it an orderly advance in the face of circumstances.

But to draw a little nearer to our promised topics. Entomology extends the limits of being in a new direction, so that I walk in nature with a sense of greater space and freedom. It suggests besides, that the universe is not rough-hewn, but perfect in its details. Nature will bear the closest inspection; she invites us to lay our eye level with the smallest leaf, and take an insect view of its plain. She has no interstices; every part is full of life. I explore, too, with pleasure, the sources of the myriad sounds which crowd the summer noon, and which seem the very grain and stuff of which eternity is made. Who does not remember the shrill roll-call of the harvest fly? There were ears for these sounds in Greece long ago, as Anacreon's ode will show.

"We pronounce thee happy, Cicada,
For on the tops of the trees,
Drinking a little dew,
Like any king thou singest,
For thine are they all,
Whatever thou seest in the fields,
And whatever the woods bear.
Thou art the friend of the husbandmen,
In no respect injuring any one;
And thou art honored among men,
Sweet prophet of summer.
The Muses love thee,
And Phoebus himself loves thee,

And has given thee a shrill song;
Age does not wrack thee,
Thou skilful, earthborn, song-loving,
Unsuffering, bloodless one;
Almost thou art like the gods."

In the autumn days, the creaking of crickets is heard at noon over all the land, and as in summer they are heard chiefly at nightfall, so then by their incessant chirp they usher in the evening of the year. Nor can all the vanities that vex the world alter one whit the measure that night has chosen. Every pulse-beat is in exact time with the cricket's chant and the tickings of the deathwatch in the wall. Alternate with these if you can.

About two hundred and eighty birds either reside permanently in the State, or spend the summer only, or make us a passing visit. Those which spend the winter with us have obtained our warmest sympathy. The nut-hatch and chicadee flitting in company through the dells of the wood, the one harshly scolding at the intruder, the other with a faint lisping note enticing him on; the jay screaming in the orchard; the crow cawing in unison with the storm; the partridge, like a russet link extended over from autumn to spring, preserving unbroken the chain of summers; the hawk with warrior-like firmness abiding the blasts of winter; the robin [Footnote: A white robin, and a white quail have occasionally been seen. It is mentioned in Audubon as remarkable that the nest of a robin should be found on the ground; but this bird seems to be less particular than most in the choice of a building spot. I have seen its nest placed under the thatched roof of a deserted barn, and in one instance, where the adjacent country was nearly destitute of trees, together with two of the phoebe, upon the end of a board in the loft of a saw-mill, but a few feet from the saw, which vibrated several inches with the motion of the machinery.] and lark lurking by warm springs in the woods; the familiar snow-bird culling a few seeds in the garden, or a few crumbs in the yard; and occasionally the shrike, with heedless and unfrozen melody bringing back summer again; —

His steady sails he never furls

At any time o' year,
And perching now on Winter's curls,
He whistles in his ear.

As the spring advances, and the ice is melting in the river, our earliest and straggling visitors make their appearance. Again does the old Teian poet sing, as well for New England as for Greece, in the

RETURN OF SPRING.

"Behold, how Spring appearing,
The Graces send forth roses;
Behold, how the wave of the sea
Is made smooth by the calm;
Behold, how the duck dives;
Behold, how the crane travels;
And Titan shines constantly bright.
The shadows of the clouds are moving;
The works of man shine;
The earth puts forth fruits;
The fruit of the olive puts forth.
The cup of Bacchus is crowned,
Along the leaves, along the branches,
The fruit, bending them down, flourishes."

The ducks alight at this season in the still water, in company with the gulls, which do not fail to improve an east wind to visit our meadows, and swim about by twos and threes, pluming themselves, and diving to peck at the root of the lily, and the cranberries which the frost has not loosened. The first flock of geese is seen beating to north, in long harrows and waving lines; the gingle of the song-sparrow salutes us from the shrubs and fences; the plaintive note of the lark comes clear and sweet from the meadow; and the bluebird, like an azure ray, glances past us in our walk. The fish-hawk, too, is occasionally seen at this season sailing majestically over the water, and he who has once observed it will not soon forget the majesty of its flight. It sails the air like a ship of the line, worthy to struggle with

the elements, falling back from time to time like a ship on its beam ends, and holding its talons up as if ready for the arrows, in the attitude of the national bird. It is a great presence, as of the master of river and forest. Its eye would not quail before the owner of the soil, but make him feel like an intruder on its domains. And then its retreat, sailing so steadily away, is a kind of advance. I have by me one of a pair of ospreys, which have for some years fished in this vicinity, shot by a neighboring pond, measuring more than two feet in length, and six in the stretch of its wings. Nuttall mentions that "The ancients, particularly Aristotle, pretended that the ospreys taught their young to gaze at the sun, and those who were unable to do so were destroyed. Linnaeus even believed, on ancient authority, that one of the feet of this bird had all the toes divided, while the other was partly webbed, so that it could swim with one foot, and grasp a fish with the other." But that educated eye is now dim, and those talons are nerveless. Its shrill scream seems yet to linger in its throat, and the roar of the sea in its wings. There is the tyranny of Jove in its claws, and his wrath in the erectile feathers of the head and neck. It reminds me of the Argonautic expedition, and would inspire the dullest to take flight over Parnassus.

The booming of the bittern, described by Goldsmith and Nuttall, is frequently heard in our fens, in the morning and evening, sounding like a pump, or the chopping of wood in a frosty morning in some distant farm-yard. The manner in which this sound is produced I have not seen anywhere described. On one occasion, the bird has been seen by one of my neighbors to thrust its bill into the water, and suck up as much as it could hold, then raising its head, it pumped it out again with four or five heaves of the neck, throwing it two or three feet, and making the sound each time.

At length the summer's eternity is ushered in by the cackle of the flicker among the oaks on the hill-side, and a new dynasty begins with calm security.

In May and June the woodland quire is in full tune, and given the immense spaces of hollow air, and this curious human ear, one does not see how the void could be better filled.

Each summer sound

Is a summer round.

As the season advances, and those birds which make us but a passing visit depart, the woods become silent again, and but few feathers ruffle the drowsy air. But the solitary rambler may still find a response and expression for every mood in the depths of the wood.

Sometimes-I hear the veery's[+] clarion,
Or brazen trump of the impatient jay,
And in secluded woods the chicadee
Doles out her scanty notes, which sing the praise
Of heroes, and set forth the loveliness
Of virtue evermore.

[Footnote +: This bird, which is so well described by Nuttall, but is apparently unknown by the author of the Report, is one of the most common in the woods in this vicinity, and in Cambridge I have heard the college yard ring with its trill. The boys call it "*yorrick*," from the sound of its querulous and chiding note, as it flits near the traveller through the underwood. The cowbird's egg is occasionally found in its nest, as mentioned by Audubon.]

The phoebe still sings in harmony with the sultry weather by the brink of the pond, nor are the desultory hours of noon in the midst of the village without their minstrel.

Upon the lofty elm-tree sprays
The vireo rings the changes sweet,
During the trivial summer days,
Striving to lift our thoughts above the street.

With the autumn begins in some measure a new spring. The plover is heard whistling high in the air over the dry pastures, the finches flit from tree to tree, the bobolinks and flickers fly in flocks, and the goldfinch rides on the earliest blast, like a winged hyla peeping amid the rustle of the leaves. The crows, too, begin now to congregate; you may stand and count them as they fly low and straggling over the landscape, singly or by twos and threes, at

intervals of half a mile, until a hundred have passed.

I have seen it suggested somewhere that the crow was brought to this country by the white man; but I shall as soon believe that the white man planted these pines and hemlocks. He is no spaniel to follow our steps; but rather flits about the clearings like the dusky spirit of the Indian, reminding me oftener of Philip and Powhatan, than of Winthrop and Smith. He is a relic of the dark ages. By just so slight, by just so lasting a tenure does superstition hold the world ever; there is the rook in England, and the crow in New England.

Thou dusky spirit of the wood,
Bird of an ancient brood,
Flitting thy lonely way,
A meteor in the summer's day,
From wood to wood, from hill to hill,
Low over forest, field, and rill,
What wouldst thou say?
Why shouldst thou haunt the day?
What makes thy melancholy float?
What bravery inspires thy throat,
And bears thee up above the clouds,
Over desponding human crowds,
Which far below
Lay thy haunts low?

The late walker or sailor, in the October evenings, may hear the murmurings of the snipe, circling over the meadows, the most spirit-like sound in nature; and still later in the autumn, when the frosts have tinged the leaves, a solitary loon pays a visit to our retired ponds, where he may lurk undisturbed till the season of moulting is passed, making the woods ring with his wild laughter. This bird, the Great Northern Diver, well deserves its name; for when pursued with a boat, it will dive, and swim like a fish under water, for sixty rods or more, as fast as a boat can be paddled, and its pursuer, if he would discover his game again, must put his ear to the surface to hear where it comes up. When it comes to the surface, it throws the water off with one shake of its wings, and calmly swims about until again

disturbed.

These are the sights and sounds which reach our senses oftenest during the year. But sometimes one hears a quite new note, which has for background other Carolinas and Mexicos than the books describe, and learns that his ornithology has done him no service.

It appears from the Report that there are about forty quadrupeds belonging to the State, and among these one is glad to hear of a few bears, wolves, lynxes, and wildcats.

When our river overflows its banks in the spring, the wind from the meadows is laden with a strong scent of musk, and by its freshness advertises me of an unexplored wildness. Those backwoods are not far off then. I am affected by the sight of the cabins of the musk-rat, made of mud and grass, and raised three or four feet along the river, as when I read of the barrows of Asia. The musk-rat is the beaver of the settled States. Their number has even increased within a few years in this vicinity. Among the rivers which empty into the Merrimack, the Concord is known to the boatmen as a dead stream. The Indians are said to have called it Musketaquid, or Prairie River. Its current being much more sluggish, and its water more muddy than the rest, it abounds more in fish and game of every kind. According to the History of the town, "The fur-trade was here once very important. As early as 1641, a company was formed in the colony, of which Major Willard of Concord was superintendent, and had the exclusive right to trade with the Indians in furs and other articles; and for this right they were obliged to pay into the public treasury one twentieth of all the furs they obtained." There are trappers in our midst still, as well as on the streams of the far West, who night and morning go the round of their traps, without fear of the Indian. One of these takes from one hundred and fifty to two hundred musk-rats in a year, and even thirty-six have been shot by one man in a day. Their fur, which is not nearly as valuable as formerly, is in good condition in the winter and spring only; and upon the breaking up of the ice, when they are driven out of their holes by the water, the greatest number is shot from boats, either swimming or resting on their stools, or slight supports of grass and reeds, by the side of the stream. Though they exhibit considerable cunning at other times, they are easily taken in a trap, which has only

to be placed in their holes, or wherever they frequent, without any bait being used, though it is sometimes rubbed with their musk. In the winter the hunter cuts holes in the ice, and shoots them when they come to the surface. Their burrows are usually in the high banks of the river, with the entrance under water, and rising within to above the level of high water. Sometimes their nests, composed of dried meadow grass and flags, may be discovered where the bank is low and spongy, by the yielding of the ground under the feet. They have from three to seven or eight young in the spring.

Frequently, in the morning or evening, a long ripple is seen in the still water, where a musk-rat is crossing the stream, with only its nose above the surface, and sometimes a green bough in its mouth to build its house with. When it finds itself observed, it will dive and swim five or six rods under water, and at length conceal itself in its hole, or the weeds. It will remain under water for ten minutes at a time, and on one occasion has been seen, when undisturbed, to form an air-bubble under the ice, which contracted and expanded as it breathed at leisure. When it suspects danger on shore, it will stand erect like a squirrel, and survey its neighborhood for several minutes, without moving.

In the fall, if a meadow intervene between their burrows and the stream, they erect cabins of mud and grass, three or four feet high, near its edge. These are not their breeding-places, though young are sometimes found in them in late freshets, but rather their hunting-lodges, to which they resort in the winter with their food, and for shelter. Their food consists chiefly of flags and fresh-water muscles, the shells of the latter being left in large quantities around their lodges in the spring.

The Penobscot Indian wears the entire skin of a musk-rat, with the legs and tail dangling, and the head caught under his girdle, for a pouch, into which he puts his fishing tackle, and essences to scent his traps with.

The bear, wolf, lynx, wildcat, deer, beaver, and marten, have disappeared; the otter is rarely if ever seen here at present; and the mink is less common than formerly.

Perhaps of all our untamed quadrupeds, the fox has obtained the widest and most familiar reputation, from the time of Pilpay and

Aesop to the present day. His recent tracks still give variety to a winter's walk. I tread in the steps of the fox that has gone before me by some hours, or which perhaps I have started, with such a tiptoe of expectation, as if I were on the trail of the Spirit itself which resides in the wood, and expected soon to catch it in its lair. I am curious to know what has determined its graceful curvatures, and how surely they were coincident with the fluctuations of some mind. I know which way a mind wended, what horizon it faced, by the setting of these tracks, and whether it moved slowly or rapidly, by their greater or less intervals and distinctness; for the swiftest step leaves yet a lasting trace. Sometimes you will see the trails of many together, and where they have gambolled and gone through a hundred evolutions, which testify to a singular listlessness and leisure in nature.

When I see a fox run across the pond on the snow, with the carelessness of freedom, or at intervals trace his course in the sunshine along the ridge of a hill, I give up to him sun and earth as to their true proprietor. He does not go in the sun, but it seems to follow him, and there is a visible sympathy between him and it. Sometimes, when the snow lies light, and but five or six inches deep, you may give chase and come up with one on foot. In such a case he will show a remarkable presence of mind, choosing only the safest direction, though he may lose ground by it. Notwithstanding his fright, he will take no step which is not beautiful. His pace is a sort of leopard canter, as if he were in nowise impeded by the snow, but were husbanding his strength all the while. When the ground is uneven, the course is a series of graceful curves, conforming to the shape of the surface. He runs as though there were not a bone in his back. Occasionally dropping his muzzle to the ground for a rod or two, and then tossing his head aloft, when satisfied of his course. When he comes to a declivity, he will put his forefeet together, and slide swiftly down it, shoving the snow before him. He treads so softly that you would hardly hear it from any nearness, and yet with such expression that it would not be quite inaudible at any distance.

* * * * *

Of fishes, seventy-five genera and one hundred and seven species are described in the Report. The fisherman will be startled to learn that there are but about a dozen kinds in the ponds and streams of

any inland town; and almost nothing is known of their habits. Only their names and residence make one love fishes. I would know even the number of their fin-rays, and how many scales compose the lateral line. I am the wiser in respect to all knowledges, and the better qualified for all fortunes, for knowing that there is a minnow in the brook. Methinks I have need even of his sympathy, and to be his fellow in a degree.

I have experienced such simple delight in the trivial matters of fishing
and sporting, formerly, as might have inspired the muse of Homer or Shakspeare; and now, when I turn the pages and ponder the plates of the
Angler's Souvenir, I am fain to exclaim, —

> "Can these things be,
> And overcome us like a summer's cloud?"

Next to nature, it seems as if man's actions were the most natural, they so gently accord with her. The small seines of flax stretched across the shallow and transparent parts of our river, are no more intrusion than the cobweb in the sun. I stay my boat in midcurrent, and look down in the sunny water to see the civil meshes of his nets, and wonder how the blustering people of the town could have done this elvish work. The twine looks like a new river weed, and is to the river as a beautiful memento of man's presence in nature, discovered as silently and delicately as a footprint in the sand.

When the ice is covered with snow, I do not suspect the wealth under my feet; that there is as good as a mine under me wherever I go. How many pickerel are poised on easy fin fathoms below the loaded wain. The revolution of the seasons must be a curious phenomenon to them. At length the sun and wind brush aside their curtain, and they see the heavens again.

Early in the spring, after the ice has melted, is the time for spearing fish. Suddenly the wind shifts from northeast and east to west and south, and every icicle, which has tinkled on the meadow grass so long, trickles down its stem, and seeks its level unerringly

with a million comrades. The steam curls up from every roof and fence.

I see the civil sun drying earth's tears,
  Her tears of joy, which only faster flow.

In the brooks is heard the slight grating sound of small cakes of ice, floating with various speed, full of content and promise, and where the water gurgles under a natural bridge, you may hear these hasty rafts hold conversation in an undertone. Every rill is a channel for the juices of the meadow. In the ponds the ice cracks with a merry and inspiriting din, and down the larger streams is whirled grating hoarsely, and crashing its way along, which was so lately a highway for the woodman's team and the fox, sometimes with the tracks of the skaters still fresh upon it, and the holes cut for pickerel. Town committees anxiously inspect the bridges and causeways, as if by mere eye-force to intercede with the ice, and save the treasury.

The river swelleth more and more,
Like some sweet influence stealing o'er
The passive town; and for a while
Each tussuck makes a tiny isle,
Where, on some friendly Ararat,
Resteth the weary water-rat.

No ripple shows Musketaquid,
Her very current e'en is hid,
As deepest souls do calmest rest,
When thoughts are swelling in the breast,
And she that in the summer's drought
Doth make a rippling and a rout,
Sleeps from Nabshawtuck to the Cliff,
Unruffled by a single skiff.
But by a thousand distant hills
The louder roar a thousand rills,
And many a spring which now is dumb,
And many a stream with smothered hum,

Doth swifter well and faster glide,
Though buried deep beneath the tide.

Our village shows a rural Venice,
Its broad lagoons where yonder fen is;
As lovely as the Bay of Naples
Yon placid cove amid the maples;
And in my neighbor's field of corn
I recognize the Golden Horn.

Here Nature taught from year to year,
When only red men came to hear,
Methinks 'twas in this school of art
Venice and Naples learned their part;
But still their mistress, to my mind,
Her young disciples leaves behind.

The fisherman now repairs and launches his boat. The best time for spearing is at this season, before the weeds have begun to grow, and while the fishes lie in the shallow water, for in summer they prefer the cool depths, and in the autumn they are still more or less concealed by the grass. The first requisite is fuel for your crate; and for this purpose the roots of the pitchpine are commonly used, found under decayed stumps, where the trees have been felled eight or ten years.

With a crate, or jack, made of iron hoops, to contain your fire, and attached to the bow of your boat about three feet from the water, a fish-spear with seven tines, and fourteen feet long, a large basket, or barrow, to carry your fuel and bring back your fish, and a thick outer garment, you are equipped for a cruise. It should be a warm and still evening; and then with a fire crackling merrily at the prow, you may launch forth like a cucullo into the night. The dullest soul cannot go upon such an expedition without some of the spirit of adventure; as if he had stolen the boat of Charon and gone down the Styx on a midnight expedition into the realms of Pluto. And much speculation does this wandering star afford to the musing nightwalker, leading him on and on, jack-o'lantern-like, over the meadows; or, if he is

wiser, he amuses himself with imagining what of human life, far in the silent night, is flitting mothlike round its candle. The silent navigator shoves his craft gently over the water, with a smothered pride and sense of benefaction, as if he were the phosphor, or light-bringer, to these dusky realms, or some sister moon, blessing the spaces with her light. The waters, for a rod or two on either hand and several feet in depth, are lit up with more than noonday distinctness, and he enjoys the opportunity which so many have desired, for the roofs of a city are indeed raised, and he surveys the midnight economy of the fishes. There they lie in every variety of posture; some on their backs, with their white bellies uppermost, some suspended in midwater, some sculling gently along with a dreamy motion of the fins, and others quite active and wide awake, — a scene not unlike what the human city would present. Occasionally he will encounter a turtle selecting the choicest morsels, or a musk-rat resting on a tussuck. He may exercise his dexterity, if he sees fit, on the more distant and active fish, or fork the nearer into his boat, as potatoes out of a pot, or even take the sound sleepers with his hands. But these last accomplishments he will soon learn to dispense with, distinguishing the real object of his pursuit, and find compensation in the beauty and never-ending novelty of his position. The pines growing down to the water's edge will show newly as in the glare of a conflagration; and as he floats under the willows with his light, the song-sparrow will often wake on her perch, and sing that strain at midnight, which she had meditated for the morning. And when he has done, he may have to steer his way home through the dark by the north star, and he will feel himself some degrees nearer to it for having lost his way on the earth.

The fishes commonly taken in this way are pickerel, suckers, perch, eels, pouts, breams, and shiners, — from thirty to sixty weight in a night. Some are hard to be recognized in the unnatural light, especially the perch, which, his dark bands being exaggerated, acquires a ferocious aspect. The number of these transverse bands, which the Report states to be seven, is, however, very variable, for in some of our ponds they have nine and ten even.

* * * * *

It appears that we have eight kinds of tortoises, twelve snakes, —

but one of which is venomous, — nine frogs and toads, nine salamanders, and one lizard, for our neighbors.

I am particularly attracted by the motions of the serpent tribe. They make our hands and feet, the wings of the bird, and the fins of the fish seems very superfluous, as if nature had only indulged her fancy in making them. The black snake will dart into a bush when pursued, and circle round and round with an easy and graceful motion, amid the thin and bare twigs, five or six feet from the ground, as a bird flits from bough to bough, or hang in festoons between the forks. Elasticity and flexibleness in the simpler forms of animal life are equivalent to a complex system of limbs in the higher; and we have only to be as wise and wily as the serpent, to perform as difficult feats without the vulgar assistance of hands and feet.

In May, the snapping turtle, *Emysaurus serpentina,* is frequently taken on the meadows and in the river. The fisherman, taking sight over the calm surface, discovers its snout projecting above the water, at the distance of many rods, and easily secures his prey through its unwillingness to disturb the water by swimming hastily away, for, gradually drawing its head under, it remains resting on some limb or clump of grass. Its eggs, which are buried at a distance from the water, in some soft place, as a pigeon-bed, are frequently devoured by the skunk. It will catch fish by daylight, as a toad catches flies, and is said to emit a transparent fluid from its mouth to attract them.

Nature has taken more care than the fondest parent for the education and refinement of her children. Consider the silent influence which flowers exert, no less upon the ditcher in the meadow than the lady in the bower. When I walk in the woods, I am reminded that a wise purveyor has been there before me; my most delicate experience is typified there. I am struck with the pleasing friendships and unanimities of nature, as when the lichen on the trees takes the form of their leaves. In the most stupendous scenes you will see delicate and fragile features, as slight wreaths of vapor, dewlines, feathery sprays, which suggest a high refinement, a noble blood and breeding, as it were. It is not hard to account for elves and fairies; they represent this light grace, this ethereal gentility. Bring a spray from the wood, or a crystal from the brook, and place it on your mantel, and your household ornaments will seem plebeian beside its

nobler fashion and bearing. It will wave superior there, as if used to a more refined and polished circle. It has a salute and a response to all your enthusiasm and heroism.

In the winter, I stop short in the path to admire how the trees grow up without forethought, regardless of the time and circumstances. They do not wait as man does, but now is the golden age of the sapling. Earth, air, sun, and rain, are occasion enough; they were no better in primeval centuries. The "winter of *their* discontent" never comes. Witness the buds of the native poplar standing gayly out to the frost on the sides of its bare switches. They express a naked confidence. With cheerful heart one could be a sojourner in the wilderness, if he were sure to find there the catkins of the willow or the alder. When I read of them in the accounts of northern adventurers, by Baffin's Bay or Mackenzie's river, I see how even there too I could dwell. They are our little vegetable redeemers. Methinks our virtue will hold out till they come again. They are worthy to have had a greater than Minerva or Ceres for their inventor. Who was the benignant goddess that bestowed them on mankind?

Nature is mythical and mystical always, and works with the license and extravagance of genius. She has her luxurious and florid style as well as art. Having a pilgrim's cup to make, she gives to the whole, stem, bowl, handle, and nose, some fantastic shape, as if it were to be the car of some fabulous marine deity, a Nereus or Triton.

In the winter, the botanist needs not confine himself to his books and herbarium, and give over his out-door pursuits, but may study a new department of vegetable physiology, what may be called crystalline botany, then. The winter of 1837 was unusually favorable for this. In December of that year, the Genius of vegetation seemed to hover by night over its summer haunts with unusual persistency. Such a hoarfrost, as is very uncommon here or anywhere, and whose full effects can never be witnessed after sunrise, occurred several times. As I went forth early on a still and frosty morning, the trees looked like airy creatures of darkness caught napping; on this side huddled together with their gray hairs streaming in a secluded valley, which the sun had not penetrated; on that hurrying off in Indian file along some watercourse, while the shrubs and grasses, like elves and

fairies of the night, sought to hide their diminished heads in the snow. The river, viewed from the high bank, appeared of a yellowish green color, though all the landscape was white. Every tree, shrub, and spire of grass, that could raise its head above the snow, was covered with a dense ice-foliage, answering, as it were, leaf for leaf to its summer dress. Even the fences had put forth leaves in the night. The centre, diverging, and more minute fibres were perfectly distinct, and the edges regularly indented. These leaves were on the side of the twig or stubble opposite to the sun, meeting it for the most part at right angles, and there were others standing out at all possible angles upon these and upon one another, with no twig or stubble supporting them. When the first rays of the sun slanted over the scene, the grasses seemed hung with innumerable jewels, which jingled merrily as they were brushed by the foot of the traveller, and reflected all the hues of the rainbow as he moved from side to side. It struck me that these ghost leaves, and the green ones whose forms they assume, were the creatures of but one law; that in obedience to the same law the vegetable juices swell gradually into the perfect leaf, on the one hand, and the crystalline particles troop to their standard in the same order, on the other. As if the material were indifferent, but the law one and invariable, and every plant in the spring but pushed up into and filled a permanent and eternal mould, which, summer and winter forever, is waiting to be filled.

This foliate structure is common to the coral and the plumage of birds, and to how large a part of animate and inanimate nature. The same independence of law on matter is observable in many other instances, as in the natural rhymes, when some animal form, color, or odor, has its counterpart in some vegetable. As, indeed, all rhymes imply an eternal melody, independent of any particular sense.

As confirmation of the fact, that vegetation is but a kind of crystallization, every one may observe how, upon the edge of the melting frost on the window, the needle-shaped particles are bundled together so as to resemble fields waving with grain, or shocks rising here and there from the stubble; on one side the vegetation of the torrid zone, high-towering palms and widespread banyans, such as are seen in pictures of oriental scenery; on the other, arctic pines stiff frozen, with downcast branches.

Vegetation has been made the type of all growth; but as in crystals the law is more obvious, their material being more simple, and for the most part more transient and fleeting, would it not be as philosophical as convenient to consider all growth, all filling up within the limits of nature, but a crystallization more or less rapid?

On this occasion, in the side of the high bank of the river, wherever the water or other cause had formed a cavity, its throat and outer edge, like the entrance to a citadel, bristled with a glistening ice-armor. In one place you might see minute ostrich-feathers, which seemed the waving plumes of the warriors filing into the fortress; in another, the glancing, fan-shaped banners of the Lilliputian host; and in another, the needle-shaped particles collected into bundles, resembling the plumes of the pine, might pass for a phalanx of spears. From the under side of the ice in the brooks, where there was a thicker ice below, depended a mass of crystallization, four or five inches deep, in the form of prisms, with their lower ends open, which, when the ice was laid on its smooth side, resembled the roofs and steeples of a Gothic city, or the vessels of a crowded haven under a press of canvas. The very mud in the road, where the ice had melted, was crystallized with deep rectilinear fissures, and the crystalline masses in the sides of the ruts resembled exactly asbestos in the disposition of their needles. Around the roots of the stubble and flower-stalks, the frost was gathered into the form of irregular conical shells, or fairy rings. In some places the ice-crystals were lying upon granite rocks, directly over crystals of quartz, the frost-work of a longer night, crystals of a longer period, but to some eye unprejudiced by the short term of human life, melting as fast as the former.

In the Report on the Invertebrate Animals, this singular fact is recorded, which teaches us to put a new value on time and space. “The distribution of the marine shells is well worthy of notice as a geological fact. Cape Cod, the right arm of the Commonwealth, reaches out into the ocean, some fifty or sixty miles. It is nowhere many miles wide; but this narrow point of land has hitherto proved a barrier to the migrations of many species of Mollusca. Several genera and numerous species, which are separated by the intervention of only a few miles of land, are effectually prevented from mingling by

the Cape, and do not pass from one side to the other…. Of the one hundred and ninety-seven marine species, eighty-three do not pass to the south shore, and fifty are not found on the north shore of the Cape."

That common muscle, the *Unio complanalus*, or more properly *fluviatilis*, left in the spring by the musk-rat upon rocks and stumps, appears to have been an important article of food with the Indians. In one place, where they are said to have feasted, they are found in large quantities, at an elevation of thirty feet above the river, filling the soil to the depth of a foot, and mingled with ashes and Indian remains.

The works we have placed at the head of our chapter, with as much license, as the preacher selects his text, are such as imply more labor than enthusiasm. The State wanted complete catalogues of its natural riches, with such additional facts merely as would be directly useful.

The reports on Fishes, Reptiles, Insects, and Invertebrate Animals, however, indicate labor and research, and have a value independent of the object of the legislature.

Those on Herbaceous Plants and Birds cannot be of much value, as long as Bigelow and Nuttall are accessible. They serve but to indicate, with more or less exactness, what species are found in the State. We detect several errors ourselves, and a more practised eye would no doubt expand the list.

The Quadrupeds deserved a more final and instructive report than they have obtained.

These volumes deal much in measurements and minute descriptions, not interesting to the general reader, with only here and there a colored sentence to allure him, like those plants growing in dark forests, which bear only leaves without blossoms. But the ground was comparatively unbroken, and we will not complain of the pioneer, if he raises no flowers with his first crop. Let us not underrate the value of a fact; it will one day flower in a truth. It is astonishing how few facts of importance are added in a century to the natural history of any animal. The natural history of man himself is still being gradually written. Men are knowing enough after their fashion. Every countryman and dairymaid knows that the coats of the fourth stomach of the calf will curdle milk, and what particular

mushroom is a safe and nutritious diet. You cannot go into any field or wood, but it will seem as if every stone had been turned, and the bark on every tree ripped up. But, after all, it is much easier to discover than to see when the cover is off! It has been well said that "the attitude of inspection is prone." Wisdom does not inspect, but behold. We must look a long time before we can see. Slow are the beginnings of philosophy. He has something demoniacal in him, who can discern a law or couple two facts. We can imagine a time when, — "Water runs down hill," — may have been taught in the schools. The true man of science will know nature better by his finer organization; he will smell, taste, see, hear, feel, better than other men. His will be a deeper and finer experience. We do not learn by inference and deduction, and the application of mathematics to philosophy, but by direct intercourse and sympathy. It is with science as with ethics, — we cannot know truth by contrivance and method; the Baconian is as false as any other, and with all the helps of machinery and the arts, the most scientific will still be the healthiest and friendliest man, and possess a more perfect Indian wisdom.

A WALK TO WACHUSETT

The needles of the pine
All to the west incline.

CONCORD, *July* 19, 1842.

Summer and winter our eyes had rested on the dim outline of the mountains in our horizon, to which distance and indistinctness lent a grandeur not their own, so that they served equally to interpret all the allusions of poets and travellers; whether with Homer, on a spring morning, we sat down on the many-peaked Olympus, or, with Virgil and his compeers, roamed the Etrurian and Thessalian hills, or with Humboldt measured the more modern Andes and Teneriffe. Thus we spoke our mind to them, standing on the Concord cliffs. —

With frontier strength ye stand your ground,
With grand content ye circle round,
Tumultuous silence for all sound,
Ye distant nursery of rills,
Monadnock, and the Peterboro' hills;
Like some vast fleet,
Sailing through rain and sleet,
Through winter's cold and summer's heat;
Still holding on, upon your high emprise,
Until ye find a shore amid the skies;
Not skulking close to land,
With cargo contraband.
For they who sent a venture out by ye
Have set the sun to see
Their honesty.
Ships of the line, each one,
Ye to the westward run,
Always before the gale,
Under a press of sail,

With weight of metal all untold.
I seem to feel ye, in my firm seat here,
Immeasurable depth of hold,
And breadth of beam, and length of running gear.

Methinks ye take luxurious pleasure
In your novel western leisure;
So cool your brows, and freshly blue,
As Time had nought for ye to do;
For ye lie at your length,
An unappropriated strength,
Unhewn primeval timber,
For knees so stiff, for masts so limber;
The stock of which new earths are made,
One day to be our western trade,
Fit for the stanchions of a world
Which through the seas of space is hurled.

While we enjoy a lingering ray,
Ye still o'ertop the western day,
Reposing yonder, on God's croft,
Like solid stacks of hay.
Edged with silver, and with gold,
The clouds hang o'er in damask fold,
And with such depth of amber light
The west is dight,
Where still a few rays slant,
That even heaven seems extravagant.
On the earth's edge mountains and trees
Stand as they were on air graven,
Or as the vessels in a haven
Await the morning breeze.
I fancy even
Through your defiles windeth the way to heaven;
And yonder still, in spite of history's page,
Linger the golden and the silver age;
Upon the laboring gale

The news of future centuries is brought,
And of new dynasties of thought,
From your remotest vale.

But special I remember thee,
Wachusett, who like me
Standest alone without society.
Thy far blue eye,
A remnant of the sky,
Seen through the clearing or the gorge,
Or from the windows on the forge,
Doth leaven all it passes by.
Nothing is true,
But stands 'tween me and you,
Thou western pioneer,
Who know'st not shame nor fear,
By venturous spirit driven,
Under the eaves of heaven,
And can'st expand thee there,
And breathe enough of air?
Upholding heaven, holding down earth,
Thy pastime from thy birth,
Not steadied by the one, nor leaning on the other;
May I approve myself thy worthy brother!

At length, like Rasselas, and other inhabitants of happy valleys, we resolved to scale the blue wall which bound the western horizon, though not without misgivings, that thereafter no visible fairy land would exist for us. But we will not leap at once to our journey's end, though near, but imitate Homer, who conducts his reader over the plain, and along the resounding sea, though it be but to the tent of Achilles. In the spaces of thought are the reaches of land and water, where men go and come. The landscape lies far and fair within, and the deepest thinker is the farthest travelled.

At a cool and early hour on a pleasant morning in July, my companion and I passed rapidly through Acton and Stow, stopping to rest and refresh us on the bank of a small stream, a tributary of the

Assabet, in the latter town. As we traversed the cool woods of Acton, with stout staves in our hands, we were cheered by the song of the red-eye, the thrushes, the phoebe, and the cuckoo; and as we passed through the open country, we inhaled the fresh scent of every field, and all nature lay passive, to be viewed and travelled. Every rail, every farm-house, seen dimly in the twilight, every tinkling sound told of peace and purity, and we moved happily along the dank roads, enjoying not such privacy as the day leaves when it withdraws, but such as it has not profaned. It was solitude with light; which is better than darkness. But anon, the sound of the mower's rifle was heard in the fields, and this, too, mingled with the lowing kine.

This part of our route lay through the country of hops, which plant perhaps supplies the want of the vine in American scenery, and may remind the traveller of Italy, and the South of France, whether he traverses the country when the hop-fields, as then, present solid and regular masses of verdure, hanging in graceful festoons from pole to pole; the cool coverts where lurk the gales which refresh the wayfarer; or in September, when the women and children, and the neighbors from far and near, are gathered to pick the hops into long troughs; or later still, when the poles stand piled in vast pyramids in the yards, or lie in heaps by the roadside.

The culture of the hop, with the processes of picking, drying in the kiln, and packing for the market, as well as the uses to which it is applied, so analogous to the culture and uses of the grape, may afford a theme for future poets.

The mower in the adjacent meadow could not tell us the name of the brook on whose banks we had rested, or whether it had any, but his younger companion, perhaps his brother, knew that it was Great Brook. Though they stood very near together in the field, the things they knew were very far apart; nor did they suspect each other's reserved knowledge, till the stranger came by. In Bolton, while we rested on the rails of a cottage fence, the strains of music which issued from within, probably in compliment to us, sojourners, reminded us that thus far men were fed by the accustomed pleasures. So soon did we, wayfarers, begin to learn that man's life is rounded with the same few facts, the same simple relations everywhere, and it

is vain to travel to find it new. The flowers grow more various ways than he. But coming soon to higher land, which afforded a prospect of the mountains, we thought we had not travelled in vain, if it were only to hear a truer and wilder pronunciation of their names, from the lips of the inhabitants; not *Way*-tatic, *Way*-chusett, but *Wor*-tatic, *Wor*-chusett. It made us ashamed of our tame and civil pronunciation, and we looked upon them as born and bred farther west than we. Their tongues had a more generous accent than ours, as if breath was cheaper where they wagged. A countryman, who speaks but seldom, talks copiously, as it were, as his wife sets cream and cheese before you without stint. Before noon we had reached the highlands overlooking the valley of Lancaster, (affording the first fair and open prospect into the west,) and there, on the top of a hill, in the shade of some oaks, near to where a spring bubbled out from a leaden pipe, we rested during the heat of the day, reading Virgil, and enjoying the scenery. It was such a place as one feels to be on the outside of the earth, for from it we could, in some measure, see the form and structure of the globe. There lay Wachusett, the object of our journey, lowering upon us with unchanged proportions, though with a less ethereal aspect than had greeted our morning gaze, while further north, in successive order, slumbered its sister mountains along the horizon.

We could get no further into the Aeneid than

— atque altae moenia Romae, — and the wall of high Rome,

before we were constrained to reflect by what myriad tests a work of genius has to be tried; that Virgil, away in Rome, two thousand years off, should have to unfold his meaning, the inspiration of Italian vales, to the pilgrim on New England hills. This life so raw and modern, that so civil and ancient; and yet we read Virgil, mainly to be reminded of the identity of human nature in all ages, and, by the poet's own account, we are both the children of a late age, and live equally under the reign of Jupiter.

"He shook honey from the leaves, and removed fire,
And stayed the wine, everywhere flowing in rivers;
That experience, by meditating, might invent various arts
By degrees, and seek the blade of corn in furrows,

And strike out hidden fire from the veins of the flint."

The old world stands serenely behind the new, as one mountain yonder towers behind another, more dim and distant. Rome imposes her story still upon this late generation. The very children in the school we had that morning passed, had gone through her wars, and recited her alarms, ere they had heard of the wars of neighboring Lancaster. The roving eye still rests inevitably on her hills, and she still holds up the skirts of the sky on that side, and makes the past remote.

The lay of the land hereabouts is well worthy the attention of the traveller. The hill on which we were resting made part of an extensive range, running from southwest to northeast, across the country, and separating the waters of the Nashua from those of the Concord, whose banks we had left in the morning; and by bearing in mind this fact, we could easily determine whither each brook was bound that crossed our path. Parallel to this, and fifteen miles further west, beyond the deep and broad valley in which lie Groton, Shirley, Lancaster, and Boylston, runs the Wachusett range, in the same general direction. The descent into the valley on the Nashua side, is by far the most sudden; and a couple of miles brought us to the southern branch of the Nashua, a shallow but rapid stream, flowing between high and gravelly banks. But we soon learned that there were no *gelidae valles* into which we had descended, and missing the coolness of the morning air, feared it had become the sun's turn to try his power upon us.

"The sultry sun had gained the middle sky,
And not a tree, and not an herb was nigh."

and with melancholy pleasure we echoed the melodious plaint of our fellow-traveller, Hassan, in the desert, —

"Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
When first from Schiraz' walls I bent my way."

The air lay lifeless between the hills, as in a seething caldron, with

no leaf stirring, and instead of the fresh odor of grass and clover, with which we had before been regaled, the dry scent of every herb seemed merely medicinal. Yielding, therefore, to the heat, we strolled into the woods, and along the course of a rivulet, on whose banks we loitered, observing at our leisure the products of these new fields. He who traverses the woodland paths, at this season, will have occasion to remember the small drooping bell-like flowers and slender red stem of the dogs-bane, and the coarser stem and berry of the poke, which are both common in remoter and wilder scenes; and if "the sun casts such a reflecting heat from the sweet fern," as makes him faint, when he is climbing the bare hills, as they complained who first penetrated into these parts, the cool fragrance of the swamp pink restores him again, when traversing the valleys between.

As we went on our way late in the afternoon, we refreshed ourselves by bathing our feet in every rill that crossed the road, and anon, as we were able to walk in the shadows of the hills, recovered our morning elasticity. Passing through Sterling, we reached the banks of the Stillwater, in the western part of the town, at evening, where is a small village collected. We fancied that there was already a certain western look about this place, a smell of pines and roar of water, recently confined by dams, belying its name, which were exceedingly grateful. When the first inroad has been made, a few acres levelled, and a few houses erected, the forest looks wilder than ever. Left to herself, nature is always more or less civilized, and delights in a certain refinement; but where the axe has

encroached upon the edge of the forest, the dead and unsightly limbs of the pine, which she had concealed with green banks of verdure, are exposed to sight. This village had, as yet, no post-office, nor any settled name. In the small villages which we entered, the villagers gazed after us, with a complacent, almost compassionate look, as if we were just making our *debut* in the world at a late hour. "Nevertheless," did they seem to say, "come and study us, and learn men and manners." So is each one's world but a clearing in the forest, so much open and inclosed ground. The landlord had not yet returned from the field with his men, and the cows had yet to be milked. But we remembered the inscription on the wall of the Swedish inn, "You will find at Trolhate excellent bread, meat, and

wine, provided you bring them with you," and were contented. But I must confess it did somewhat disturb our pleasure, in this withdrawn spot, to have our own village newspaper handed us by our host, as if the greatest charm the country offered to the traveller was the facility of communication with the town. Let it recline on its own everlasting hills, and not be looking out from their summits for some petty Boston or New York in the horizon.

At intervals we heard the murmuring of water, and the slumberous breathing of crickets throughout the night; and left the inn the next morning in the gray twilight, after it had been hallowed by the night air, and when only the innocent cows were stirring, with a kind of regret. It was only four miles to the base of the mountain, and the scenery was already more picturesque. Our road lay along the course of the Stillwater, which was brawling at the bottom of a deep ravine, filled with pines and rocks, tumbling fresh from the mountains, so soon, alas! to commence its career of usefulness. At first, a cloud hung between us and the summit, but it was soon blown away. As we gathered the raspberries, which grew abundantly by the roadside, we fancied that that action was consistent with a lofty prudence, as if the traveller who ascends into a mountainous region should fortify himself by eating of such light ambrosial fruits as grow there; and, drinking of the springs which gush out from the mountain sides, as he gradually inhales the subtler and purer atmosphere of those elevated places, thus propitiating the mountain gods, by a sacrifice of their own fruits. The gross products of the plains and valleys are for such as dwell therein; but it seemed to us that the juices of this berry had relation to the thin air of the mountain-tops.

In due time we began to ascend the mountain, passing, first, through a grand sugar maple wood, which bore the marks of the augur, then a denser forest, which gradually became dwarfed, till there were no trees whatever. We at length pitched our tent on the summit. It is but nineteen hundred feet above the village of Princeton, and three thousand above the level of the sea; but by this slight elevation it is infinitely removed from the plain, and when we reached it, we felt a sense of remoteness, as if we had travelled into distant regions, to Arabia Petrea, or the farthest east. A robin upon a staff, was the highest object in sight. Swallows were flying about us,

and the chewink and cuckoo were heard near at hand. The summit consists of a few acres, destitute of trees, covered with bare rocks, interspersed with blueberry bushes, raspberries, gooseberries, strawberries, moss, and a fine wiry grass. The common yellow lily, and dwarf-cornel, grow abundantly in the crevices of the rocks. This clear space, which is gently rounded, is bounded a few feet lower by a thick shrubbery of oaks, with maples, aspens, beeches, cherries, and occasionally a mountain-ash intermingled, among which we found the bright blueberries of the Solomon's Seal, and the fruit of the pyrola. From the foundation of a wooden observatory, which was formerly erected on the highest point, forming a rude, hollow structure of stone, a dozen feet in diameter, and five or six in height, we could see Monadnock, in simple grandeur, in the northwest, rising nearly a thousand feet higher, still the "far blue mountain," though with an altered profile. The first day the weather was so hazy that it was in vain we endeavored to unravel the obscurity. It was like looking into the sky again, and the patches of forest here and there seemed to flit like clouds over a lower heaven. As to voyagers of an aërial Polynesia, the earth seemed like a larger island in the ether; on every side, even as low as we, the sky shutting down, like an unfathomable deep, around it, a blue Pacific island, where who knows what islanders inhabit? and as we sail near its shores we see the waving of trees, and hear the lowing of kine.

We read Virgil and Wordsworth in our tent, with new pleasure there, while, waiting for a clearer atmosphere, nor did the weather prevent our appreciating the simple truth and beauty of Peter Bell:

"And he had lain beside his asses,
On lofty Cheviot hills."

"And he had trudged through Yorkshire dales,
Among the rocks and winding *scars*,
Where deep and low the hamlets lie
Beneath their little patch of sky,
And little lot of stars."

Who knows but this hill may one day be a Helvellyn, or even a

Parnassus, and the Muses haunt here, and other Homers frequent the neighboring plains,

Not unconcerned Wachusett rears his head
  Above the field, so late from nature won,
With patient brow reserved, as one who read
  New annals in the history of man.

The blue-berries which the mountain afforded, added to the milk we had brought, made our frugal supper, while for entertainment the evensong of the wood-thrush rung along the ridge. Our eyes rested on no painted ceiling nor carpeted hall, but on skies of nature's painting, and hills and forests of her embroidery. Before sunset, we rambled along the ridge to the north, while a hawk soared still above us. It was a place where gods might wander, so solemn and solitary, and removed from all contagion with the plain. As the evening came on, the haze was 'condensed in vapor, and the landscape became more distinctly visible, and numerous sheets of water were brought to light.

Et jam summa procul villarum culmina fumant,
Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.

And now the tops of the villas smoke afar off,
And the shadows fall longer from the high mountains.

As we stood on the stone tower while the sun was setting, we saw the shades of night creep gradually over the valleys of the east, and the inhabitants went into their houses, and shut their doors, while the moon silently rose up, and took possession of that part. And then the same scene was repeated on the west side, as far as the Connecticut and the Green Mountains, and the sun's rays fell on us two alone, of all New England men.

It was the night but one before the full of the moon, so bright that we could see to read distinctly by moonlight, and in the evening strolled over the summit without danger. There was, by chance, a fire blazing on Monadnock that night, which lighted up the whole

western horizon, and by making us aware of a community of mountains, made our position seem less solitary. But at length the wind drove us to the shelter of our tent, and we closed its door for the night, and fell asleep.

It was thrilling to hear the wind roar over the rocks, at intervals when we waked, for it had grown quite cold and windy. The night was in its elements, simple even to majesty in that bleak place, — a bright moonlight and a piercing wind. It was at no time darker than twilight within the tent, and we could easily see the moon through its transparent roof as we lay; for there was the moon still above us, with Jupiter and Saturn on either hand, looking down on Wachusett, and it was a satisfaction to know that they were our fellow-travellers still, as high and out of our reach as our own destiny. Truly the stars were given for a consolation to man. We should not know but our life were fated to be always grovelling, but it is permitted to behold them, and surely they are deserving of a fair destiny. We see laws which never fail, of whose failure we never conceived; and their lamps burn all the night, too, as well as all day, — so rich and lavish is that nature which can afford this superfluity of light.

The morning twilight began as soon as the moon had set, and we arose and kindled our fire, whose blaze might have been seen for thirty miles around. As the daylight increased, it was remarkable how rapidly the wind went down. There was no dew on the summit, but coldness supplied its place. When the dawn had reached its prime, we enjoyed the view of a distinct horizon line, and could fancy ourselves at sea, and the distant hills the waves in the horizon, as seen from the deck of a vessel. The cherry-birds flitted around us, the nuthatch and flicker were heard among the bushes, the titmouse perched within a few feet, and the song of the wood-thrush again rung along the ridge. At length we saw the sun rise up out of the sea, and shine on Massachusetts; and from this moment the atmosphere grew more and more transparent till the time of our departure, and we began to realize the extent of the view, and how the earth, in some degree, answered to the heavens in breadth, the white villages to the constellations in the sky. There was little of the sublimity and grandeur which belong to mountain scenery, but an immense landscape to ponder on a summer's day. We could see how ample

and roomy is nature. As far as the eye could reach, there was little life in the landscape; the few birds that flitted past did not crowd. The travellers on the remote highways, which intersect the country on every side, had no fellow-travellers for miles, before or behind. On every side, the eye ranged over successive circles of towns, rising one above another, like the terraces of a vineyard, till they were lost in the horizon. Wachusett is, in fact, the observatory of the State. There lay Massachusetts, spread out before us in its length and breadth, like a map. There was the level horizon, which told of the sea on the east and south, the well-known hills of New Hampshire on the north, and the misty summits of the Hoosac and Green Mountains, first made visible to us the evening before, blue and unsubstantial, like some bank of clouds which the morning wind would dissipate, on the northwest and west. These last distant ranges, on which the eye rests unwearied, commence with an abrupt boulder in the north, beyond the Connecticut, and travel southward, with three or four peaks dimly seen. But Monadnock, rearing its masculine front in the northwest, is the grandest feature. As we beheld it, we knew that it was the height of land between the two rivers, on this side the valley of the Merrimack, or that of the Connecticut, fluctuating with their blue seas of air, — these rival vales, already teeming with Yankee men along their respective streams, born to what destiny who shall tell? Watatic, and the neighboring hills in this State and in New Hampshire, are a continuation of the same elevated range on which we were standing. But that New Hampshire bluff, — that promontory of a State, — lowering day and night on this our State of Massachusetts, will longest haunt our dreams.

We could, at length, realize the place mountains occupy on the land, and how they come into the general scheme of the universe. When first we climb their summits and observe their lesser irregularities, we do not give credit to the comprehensive intelligence which shaped them; but when afterward we behold their outlines in the horizon, we confess that the hand which moulded their opposite slopes, making one to balance the other, worked round a deep centre, and was privy to the plan of the universe. So is the least part of nature in its bearings referred to all space. These lesser mountain

ranges, as well as the Alleghanies, run from northeast to southwest, and parallel with these mountain streams are the more fluent rivers, answering to the general direction of the coast, the bank of the great ocean stream itself. Even the clouds, with their thin bars, fall into the same direction by preference, and such even is the course of the prevailing winds, and the migration of men and birds. A mountain-chain determines many things for the statesman and philosopher. The improvements of civilization rather creep along its sides than cross its summit. How often is it a barrier to prejudice and fanaticism? In passing over these heights of land, through their thin atmosphere, the follies of the plain are refined and purified; and as many species of plants do not scale their summits, so many species of folly no doubt do not cross the Alleghanies; it is only the hardy mountain plant that creeps quite over the ridge, and descends into the valley beyond.

We get a dim notion of the flight of birds, especially of such as fly high in the air, by having ascended a mountain. We can now see what landmarks mountains are to their migrations; how the Catskills and Highlands have hardly sunk to them, when Wachusett and Monadnock open a passage to the northeast; how they are guided, too, in their course by the rivers and valleys; and who knows but by the stars, as well as the mountain ranges, and not by the petty landmarks which we use. The bird whose eye takes in the Green Mountains on the one side, and the ocean on the other, need not be at a loss to find its way.

At noon we descended the mountain, and having returned to the abodes of men, turned our faces to the east again; measuring our progress, from time to time, by the more ethereal hues which the mountain assumed. Passing swiftly through Stillwater and Sterling, as with a downward impetus, we found ourselves almost at home again in the green meadows of Lancaster, so like our own Concord, for both are watered by two streams which unite near their centres, and have many other features in common. There is an unexpected refinement about this scenery; level prairies of great extent, interspersed with elms and hop-fields and groves of trees, give it almost a classic appearance. This, it will be remembered, was the scene of Mrs. Kowlandson's capture, and of other events in the Indian wars, but from this July afternoon, and under that mild

exterior, those times seemed as remote as the irruption of the Goths. They were the dark age of New England. On beholding a picture of a New England village as it then appeared, with a fair open prospect, and a light on trees and river, as if it were broad noon, we find we had not thought the sun shone in those days, or that men lived in broad daylight then. We do not imagine the sun shining on hill and valley during Philip's war, nor on the war-path of Paugus, or Standish, or Church, or Lovell, with serene summer weather, but a dim twilight or night did those events transpire in. They must have fought in the shade of their own dusky deeds.

At length, as we plodded along the dusty roads, our thoughts became as dusty as they; all thought indeed stopped, thinking broke down, or proceeded only passively in a sort of rhythmical cadence of the confused material of thought, and we found ourselves mechanically repeating some familiar measure which timed with our tread; some verse of the Robin Hood ballads, for instance, which one can recommend to travel by.

"Swearers are swift, sayd lyttle John,
As the wind blows over the hill;
For if it be never so loud this night,
To-morrow it may be still."

And so it went up hill and down till a stone interrupted the line, when a new verse was chosen.

"His shoote it was but loosely shot,
  Yet flewe not the arrowe in vaine,
For it met one of the sheriffe's men,
  And William-a-Trent was slaine."

There is, however, this consolation to the most way-worn traveller, upon the dustiest road, that the path his feet describe is so perfectly symbolical of human life, — now climbing the hills, now descending into the vales. From the summits he beholds the heavens and the horizon, from the vales he looks up to the heights again. He is treading his old lessons still, and though he may be very weary and

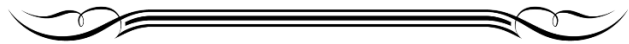
travel-worn, it is yet sincere experience.

Leaving the Nashua, we changed our route a little, and arrived at Stillriver Village, in the western part of Harvard, just as the sun was setting. From this place, which lies to the northward, upon the western slope of the same range of hills on which we had spent the noon before, in the adjacent town, the prospect is beautiful, and the grandeur of the mountain outlines unsurpassed. There was such a repose and quiet here at this hour, as if the very hill-sides were enjoying the scene, and we passed slowly along, looking back over the country we had traversed, and listening to the evening song of the robin, we could not help contrasting the equanimity of nature with the bustle and impatience of man. His words and actions presume always a crisis near at hand, but she is forever silent and unpretending.

And now that we have returned to the desultory life of the plain, let us endeavor to import a little of that mountain grandeur into it. We will remember within what walls we lie, and understand that this level life too has its summit, and why from the mountain-top the deepest valleys have a tinge of blue; that there is elevation in every hour, as no part of the earth is so low that the heavens may not be seen from, and we have only to stand on the summit of our hour to command an uninterrupted horizon.

We rested that night at Harvard, and the next morning, while one bent his steps to the nearer village of Groton, the other took his separate and solitary way to the peaceful meadows of Concord; but let him not forget to record the brave hospitality of a farmer and his wife, who generously entertained him at their board, though the poor wayfarer could only congratulate the one on the continuance of hayweather, and silently accept the kindness of the other. Refreshed by this instance of generosity, no less than by the substantial viands set before him, he pushed forward with new vigor, and reached the banks of the Concord before the sun had climbed many degrees into the heavens.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH



Perhaps no one in English history better represents the heroic character than Sir Walter Raleigh, for Sidney has got to be almost as shadowy as Arthur himself. Raleigh's somewhat antique and Roman virtues appear in his numerous military and naval adventures, in his knightly conduct toward the Queen, in his poems and his employments in the Tower, and not least in his death, but more than all in his constant soldier-like bearing and promise. He was the Bayard of peaceful as well as war like enterprise, and few lives which are the subject of recent and trustworthy history are so agreeable to the imagination. Not withstanding his temporary unpopularity, he especially possessed the prevalent and popular qualities which command the admiration of men. If an English Plutarch were to be written, Raleigh would be the best Greek or Roman among them all. He was one whose virtues if they were not distinctively great yet gave to virtues a current stamp and value as it were by the very grace and loftiness with which he carried them; — one of nature's noblemen who possessed those requisites to true nobility without which no heraldry nor blood can avail. Among savages he would still have been chief. He seems to have had, not a profounder or grander but, so to speak, more nature than other men — a great, irregular, luxuriant nature, fit to be the darling of a people. The enthusiastic and often extravagant, but always hearty and emphatic, tone in which he is spoken of by his contemporaries is not the least remarkable fact about him, and it does not matter much whether the current stories are true or not, since they at least prove his reputation. It is not his praise to have been a saint or a seer in his generation, but "one of the gallantest worthies that ever England bred." The stories about him testify to a character rather than a virtue. As, for instance, that "he was damnable proud. Old Sir Robert Harley of Brampton-Brian Castle (who knew him) would say, 't was a great question, who was the proudest. Sir Walter or Sir Thomas Overbury, but the difference that was, was judged on Sir Thomas's

side;" that "in his youth his companions were boisterous blades, but generally those that had wit;" that on one occasion he beats one of them for making a noise in a tavern, and "seals up his mouth, his upper and nether beard, with hard wax." A young contemporary says, "I have heard his enemies confess that he was one of the weightiest and wisest men that the island ever bred;" and another gives this character of him — "who hath not known or read of this prodigy of wit and fortune, Sir Walter Raleigh, a man unfortunate in nothing else but in the greatness of his wit and advancement, whose eminent worth was such, both in domestic policy, foreign expeditions, and discoveries, in arts and literature, both practic and contemplative, that it might seem at once to conquer example and imitation."

And what we are told of his personal appearance is accordant with the rest, that "he had in the outward man a good presence, in a handsome and well-compacted person;" that "he was a tall, handsome, and bold man;" and his "was thought a very good face," though "his countenance was some what spoiled by the unusual height of his forehead." "He was such a person (every way), that (as King Charles I says of the Lord Strafford) a prince would rather be afraid of, than ashamed of," and had an "awfulness and ascendency in his aspect over other mortals;" and we are not disappointed to learn that he indulged in a splendid dress, and "notwithstanding his so great mastership in style, and his conversation with the learnedest and politest persons, yet he spake broad Devonshire to his dying day."

Such a character as this was well suited to the time in which he lived. His age was an unusually stirring one. The discovery of America and the successful progress of the Reformation opened a field for both the intellectual and physical energies of his generation. The fathers of his age were Calvin and Knox, and Cranmer, and Pizarro, and Garcilaso; and its immediate forefathers were Luther and Raphael, and Bayard and Angelo, and Ariosto, and Copernicus, and Machiavel, and Erasmus, and Cabot, and Ximenes, and Columbus. Its device might have been an anchor, a sword, and a quill. The Pizarro laid by his sword at intervals and took to his letters. The Columbus set sail for newer worlds still, by voyages which needed not the patronage of princes. The Bayard alighted from

his steed to seek adventures no less arduous than heretofore upon the ocean and in the Western world; and the Luther who had reformed religion began now to reform politics and science.

In Raleigh's youth, however it may have concerned him, Camoens was writing a heroic poem in Portugal, and the arts still had their representative in Paul Veronese of Italy. He may have been one to welcome the works of Tasso and Montaigne to England, and when he looked about him he might have found such men as Cervantes and Sidney, men of like pursuits and not altogether dissimilar genius from himself, for his contemporaries, — a Drake to rival him on the sea, and a Hudson in western adventure; a Halley, a Galileo, and a Kepler, for his astronomers; a Bacon, a Behmen, and a Burton, for his philosophers; and a Jonson, a Spenser, and a Shakespeare, his poets for refreshment and inspiration.

But that we may know how worthy he himself was to make one of this illustrious company, and may appreciate the great activity and versatility of his genius, we will glance hastily at the various aspects of his life.

He was a proper knight, a born cavalier, who in the intervals of war betook himself still to the most vigorous arts of peace, though as if diverted from his proper aim. He makes us doubt if there is not some worthier apology for war than has been discovered, for its modes and manners were an instinct with him; and though in his writings he takes frequent occasion sincerely to condemn its folly, and show the better policy and advantage of peace, yet he speaks with the uncertain authority of a warrior still, to whom those juster wars are not simply the dire necessity he would imply.

In whatever he is engaged we seem to see a plume waving over his head, and a sword dangling at his side. Born in 1552, the last year of the reign of Edward VI, we find that not long after, by such instinct as makes the young crab seek the seashore, he has already marched into France, as one of "a troop of a hundred gentlemen volunteers," who are described as "a gallant company, nobly mounted and accoutred, having on their colors the motto, *Finem det mihi virtus* — 'Let valor be my aim.'" And so in fact he marched on through life with this motto in his heart always. All the peace of those days seems to have been but a truce, or casual interruption of

the order of war. War with Spain, especially, was so much the rule rather than the exception that the navigators and commanders of these two nations, when abroad, acted on the presumption that their countries were at war at home, though they had left them at peace; and their respective colonies in America carried on war at their convenience, with no infraction of the treaties between the mother countries.

Raleigh seems to have regarded the Spaniards as his natural enemies, and he was not backward to develop this part of his nature. When England was threatened with foreign invasion, the Queen looked to him especially for advice and assistance; and none was better able to give them than he. We cannot but admire the tone in which he speaks of his island, and how it is to be best defended, and the navy, its chief strength, maintained and improved. He speaks from England as his castle, and his (as no other man's) is the voice of the state; for he does not assert the interests of an individual but of a commonwealth, and we see in him revived a Roman patriotism.

His actions, as they were public and for the public, were fit to be publicly rewarded; and we accordingly read with equanimity of gold chains and monopolies and other emoluments conferred on him from time to time for his various services — his military successes in Ireland, "that commonweal of common woe," as he even then described it; his enterprise in the harbor of Cadiz; his capture of Fayal from the Spaniards; and other exploits which perhaps, more than anything else, got him fame and a name during his lifetime.

If war was his earnest work, it was his pastime too; for in the peaceful intervals we hear of him participating heartily and bearing off the palm in the birthday tournaments and tilting matches of the Queen, where the combatants vied with each other mainly who should come on to the ground in the most splendid dress and equipments. In those tilts it is said that his political rival, Essex, whose wealth enabled him to lead the costliest train, but who ran very ill and was thought the poorest knight of all, was wont to change his suit from orange to green, that it might be said that "There was one in green who ran worse than one in orange."

None of the worthies of that age can be duly appreciated if we neglect to consider them in their relation to the New World. The

stirring spirits stood with but one foot on the land. There were Drake, Hawkins, Hudson, Frobisher, and many others, and their worthy companion was Raleigh. As a navigator and naval commander he had few equals, and if the reader who has at tended to his other actions inquires how he filled up the odd years, he will find that they were spent in numerous voyages to America for the purposes of discovery and colonization. He would be more famous for these enterprises if they were not overshadowed by the number and variety of his pursuits.

His persevering care and oversight as the patron of Virginia, discovered and planted under his auspices in 1584, present him in an interesting light to the American reader. The work of colonization was well suited to his genius; and if the necessity of England herself had not required his attention and presence at this time, he would possibly have realized some of his dreams in plantations and cities on our coast.

England has since felt the benefit of his experience in naval affairs; for he was one of the first to assert their importance to her, and he exerted himself especially for the improvement of naval architecture, on which he has left a treatise. He also composed a discourse on the art of war at sea, a subject which at that time had never been treated.

We can least bear to consider Raleigh as a courtier; though the court of England at that time was a field not altogether unworthy of such a courtier. His competitors for fame and favor there were Burleigh, Leicester, Sussex, Buckingham, and, be it remembered, Sir Philip Sidney, whose *Arcadia* was just finished when Raleigh came to court. Sidney was his natural companion and other self, as it were, as if nature, in her anxiety to confer one specimen of a true knight and courtier on that age, had cast two in the same mould, lest one should miscarry. These two kindred spirits are said to have been mutually attracted toward each other. And there, too, was Queen Elizabeth herself, the center of the court and of the kingdom; to whose service he consecrates himself, not so much as a subject to his sovereign, but as a knight to the service of his mistress. His intercourse with the Queen may well have begun with the incident of the cloak, for such continued to be its character afterward. It has in

the description an air of romance, and might fitly have made a part of his friend Sidney's *Arcadia*. The tale runs that the Queen, walking one day in the midst of her courtiers, came to a miry place, when Raleigh, who was then unknown to her, taking off his rich plush cloak, spread it upon the ground for a foot-cloth.

We are inclined to consider him as some knight, and a knight errant, too, who had strayed into the precincts of the court, and practiced there the arts which he had learned in bower and hall and in the lists. Not but that he knew how to govern states as well as queens, but he brought to the task the gallantry and graces of chivalry, as well as the judgment and experience of a practical modern Englishman. "The Queen" says one, "began to be taken with his elocution, and loved to hear his reasons to his demands; and the truth is she took him for a kind of oracle, which nettled them all." He rose rapidly in her favor, and became her indispensable counselor in all matters which concerned the state, for he was minutely acquainted with the affairs of England, and none better understood her commercial interests. But notwithstanding the advantage of his wisdom to England, we had rather think of him taking counsel with the winds and breakers of the American coast and the roar of the Spanish artillery, than with the Queen. But though he made a good use of his influence (for the most part) when obtained, he could descend to the grossest flattery to obtain this, and we could wish him forever banished from the court, whose favors he so earnestly sought. Yet that he who was one while "the Queen of England's poor captive," could sometimes assume a manly and independent tone with her, appears from his answer when she once exclaimed, on his asking a favor for a friend, "When, Sir Walter, will you cease to be a beggar?" "When your gracious Majesty ceases to be a benefactor."

His court life exhibits him in mean and frivolous relations, which make him lose that respect in our eyes which he had acquired elsewhere.

The base use he made of his recovered influence (after having been banished from the court, and even suffered imprisonment in consequence of the Queen's displeasure) to procure the disgrace and finally the execution of his rival Essex (who had been charged with treason) is the foulest stain upon his escutcheon, the one which it is

hardest to reconcile with the nobleness and generosity which we are inclined to attribute to such a character. Revenge is most unheroic. His acceptance of bribes afterwards for using his influence in behalf of the earl's adherents is not to be excused by the usage of the times. The times may change, but the laws of integrity and magnanimity are immutable. Nor are the terms on which he was the friend of Cecil, from motives of policy merely, more tolerable to consider. Yet we cannot but think that he frequently travelled a higher, though a parallel, course with the mob, and though he had their suffrages, to some extent deserves the praise which Jonson applies to another —

That to the vulgar canst thyself apply,
Treading a better path not contrary.

We gladly make haste to consider him in what the world calls his misfortune, after the death of Elizabeth and the accession of James I, when his essentially nobler nature was separated from the base company of the court and the contaminations which his loyalty could not resist, though tested by imprisonment and the scaffold.

His enemies had already prejudiced the King against him before James's accession to the throne, and when at length the English nobility were presented to his Majesty (who, it will be remembered, was a Scotchman), and Raleigh's name was told, "Raleigh!" exclaimed the King, "O my soule, mon, I have heard *rawly* of thee." His efforts to limit the King's power of introducing Scots into England contributed to increase his jealousy and dislike, and he was shortly after accused by Lord Cobham of participating in a conspiracy to place the Lady Arabella Stuart on the throne. Owing mainly, it is thought, to the King's resentment, he was tried and falsely convicted of high treason; though his accuser retracted in writing his whole accusation before the conclusion of the trial.

In connection with his earlier behavior to Essex, it should be remembered that by his conduct on his own trial he in a great measure removed the ill-will which existed against him on that account. At his trial, which is said to have been most unjustly and insolently conducted by Sir Edward Coke on the part of the Crown, "he answered," says one, "with that temper, wit, learning, courage,

and judgment that, save that it went with the hazard of his life, it was the happiest day that ever he spent." The first two that brought the news of his condemnation to the King were Roger Ashton and a Scotsman, "whereof one affirmed that never any man spake so well in times past, nor would in the world to come; and the other said, that whereas when he saw him first, he was so led with the common hatred that he would have gone a hundred miles to have seen him hanged, he would, ere he parted, have gone a thousand to have saved his life." Another says, "he behaved himself so worthily, so wisely, and so temperately, that in half a day the mind of all the company was changed from the extremest hate to the extremest pity." And another said, "to the lords he was humble, but not prostrate; to the jury affable, but not fawning; to the King's counsel patient, but not yielding to the imputations laid upon him, or neglecting to repel them with the spirit which became an injured and honorable man." And finally he followed the sheriff out of court in the expressive words of Sir Thomas Overbury, "with admirable erection, but yet in such sort as became a man condemned."

Raleigh prepared himself for immediate execution, but after his pretended accomplices had gone through the ceremony of a mock execution and been pardoned by the King, it satisfied the policy of his enemies to retain him a prisoner in the Tower for thirteen years, with the sentence of death still unrevoked. In the meanwhile he solaced himself in his imprisonment with writing a *History of the World* and cultivating poetry and philosophy as the noblest deeds compatible with his confinement.

It is satisfactory to contrast with his mean personal relations while at court his connection in the Tower with the young Prince Henry (whose tastes and aspirations were of a stirring kind), as his friend and instructor. He addresses some of his shorter pieces to the Prince, and in some instances they seem to have been written expressly for his use. He preaches to him as he was well able, from experience, a wiser philosophy than he had himself practiced, and was particularly anxious to correct in him a love of popularity which he had discovered, and to give him useful maxims for his conduct when he should take his father's place.

He lost neither health nor spirits by thirteen years of captivity, but

after having spent this, the literary era of his life, as in the retirement of his study, and having written the history of the Old World, he began to dream of actions which would supply materials to the future historian of the New. It is interesting to consider him, a close prisoner as he was, preparing for voyages and adventures which would require him to roam more broadly than was consistent with the comfort or ambition of his freest contemporaries.

Already in 1595, eight years before his imprisonment, it will be remembered he had undertaken his first voyage to Guiana in person; mainly, it is said, to recover favor with the Queen, but doubtless it was much more to recover favor with himself, and exercise his powers in fields more worthy of him than a corrupt court. He continued to cherish this his favorite project though a prisoner; and at length in the thirteenth year of his imprisonment, through the influence of his friends and his confident assertions respecting the utility of the expedition to the country, he obtained his release, and set sail for Guiana with twelve ships. But unfortunately he neglected to procure a formal pardon from the King, trusting to the opinion of Lord Bacon that this was unnecessary, since the sentence of death against him was virtually annulled, by the lives of others being committed to his hands. Acting on this presumption, and with the best intentions toward his country, and only his usual jealousy of Spain, he undertook to make good his engagements to himself and the world.

It is not easy for us at this day to realize what extravagant expectations Europe had formed respecting the wealth of the New World. We might suppose two whole continents, with their adjacent seas and oceans, equal to the known globe, stretching from pole to pole, and possessing every variety of soil, climate, and productions, lying unexplored today — what would now be the speculations of Broadway and State Street?

The few travellers who had penetrated into the country of Guiana, whither Raleigh was bound, brought back accounts of noble streams flowing through majestic forests, and a depth and luxuriance of soil which made England seem a barren waste in comparison. Its mineral wealth was reported to be as inexhaustible as the cupidity of its discoverers was unbounded. The very surface of the ground was said

to be resplendent with gold, and the men went covered with gold-dust, as Hottentots with grease. Raleigh was informed while at Trinidad, by the Spanish governor, who was his prisoner, that one Juan Martinez had at length penetrated into this country; and the stories told by him of the wealth and extent of its cities surpass the narratives of Marco Polo himself. He is said in particular to have reached the city of Manoa, to which he first gave the name of *El Dorado*, or "The Gilded," the Indians conducting him blindfolded, not removing the veil from his eyes till he was ready to enter the city. It was at noon that he passed the gates, and it took him all that day and the next, walking from sunrise to sunset, before he arrived at the palace of Inga, where he resided for seven months, till he had made himself master of the language of the country. These and even more fanciful accounts had Raleigh heard and pondered, both before and after his first visit to the country. No one was more familiar with the stories, both true and fabulous, respecting the discovery and resources of the New World, and none had a better right than he to know what great commanders and navigators had done there, or anywhere. Such information would naturally flow to him of its own accord. That his ardor and faith were hardly cooled by actual observation may be gathered from the tone of his own description.

He was the first Englishman who ascended the Orinoco, and he thus describes the adjacent country: "On the banks were divers sorts of fruits good to eat, besides flowers and trees of that variety as were sufficient to make ten volumes of herbals. We relieved ourselves many times with the fruits of the country, and sometimes with fowl and fish: we saw birds of all colors, some carnation, some crimson, orange tawny, purple, green, watchet, and of all other sorts, both simple and mixt; as it was unto us a great good passing of the time to behold them, besides the relief we found by killing some store of them with our fowling pieces, without which, having little or no bread, and less drink, but only the thick and troubled water of the river, we had been in a very hard case."

The following is his description of the waterfalls and the province of Canuri, through which last the river runs. "When we were come to the tops of the first hills of the plains adjoining to the river, we beheld that wonderful breach of waters which ran down Caroli: and

might from that mountain see the river how it ran in three parts above twenty miles off; there appeared some ten or twelve overfalls in sight, every one as high over the other as a church tower, which fell with that fury, that the rebound of waters made it seem as if it had been all covered over with a great shower of rain: and in some places we took it at the first for a smoke that had risen over some great town. For mine own part, I was well persuaded from thence to have returned, being a very ill footman; but the rest were all so desirous to go near the said strange thunder of waters, as they drew me on by little and little, into the next valley, where we might better, discern the same. I never saw a more beautiful country, nor more lively prospects, hills so raised here and there over the valleys, the river winding into divers branches, the plains adjoining without bush or stubble, all fair green grass, the ground of hard sand, easy to march on either for horse or foot, the deer crossing in every path, the birds towards the evening singing on every tree with a thousand several tunes, cranes and herons of white, crimson, and carnation perching on the river's side, the air fresh, with a gentle easterly wind; and every stone that we stopped to take up promised either gold or silver by his complexion."

In another place he says: "To conclude, Guiana is a country never sacked, turned, nor wrought; the face of the earth hath not been torn, nor the virtue and salt of the soil spent by manurance."

To the fabulous accounts of preceding adventurers Raleigh added many others equally absurd and poetical, as, for instance, of a tribe "with eyes in their shoulders and their mouths in the middle of their breasts," but, it seems to us, with entire good faith, and no such flagrant intent to deceive as he has been accused of. "Weak policy it would be in me," says he, "to betray myself or my country with imaginations; neither am I so far in love with that lodging, watching, care, peril, diseases, ill savors, bad fare, and many other mischiefs that accompany these voyages, as to woo myself again into any of them, were I not assured that the sun covereth not so much riches in any part of the earth." Some portion of this so prevalent delusion respecting the precious metals is no doubt to be referred to the actual presence of an abundance of mica, slate, and talc and other shining substances in the soil. "We may judge," says Macaulay, "of the

brilliancy of these deceptious appearances, from learning that the natives ascribed the luster of the Magellanic clouds or nebulæ of the southern hemisphere to the bright reflections produced by them." So he was himself most fatally deceived, and that too by the strength and candor no less than the weakness of his nature, for, generally speaking, such things are not to be disbelieved as task our imaginations to conceive of, but such rather as are too easily embraced by the understanding.

It is easy to see that he was tempted, not so much by the luster of the gold, as by the splendor of the enterprise itself. It was the best move that peace allowed. The expeditions to Guiana and the ensuing golden dreams were not wholly unworthy of him, though he accomplished little more in the first voyage than to take formal possession of the country in the name of the Queen, and in the second, of the Spanish town of San Thomé, as his enemies would say, in the name of himself. Perceiving that the Spaniards, who had been secretly informed of his designs through their ambassador in England, were prepared to thwart his endeavors, and resist his progress in the country, he procured the capture of this their principal town, which was also burnt, against his orders.

But it seems that no particular exception is to be taken against these high-handed measures, though his enemies have made the greatest handle of them. His behavior on this occasion was part and parcel of his constant character. It would not be easy to say when he ceased to be an honorable soldier and became a freebooter; nor indeed is it of so much importance to inquire of a man what actions he performed at one and what at another period, as what manner of man he was at all periods. It was after all the same Raleigh who had won so much renown by land and sea, at home and abroad. It was his forte to deal vigorously with men, whether as a statesman, a courtier, a navigator, a planter of colonies, an accused person, a prisoner, an explorer of continents, or a military or naval commander.

And it was a right hero's maxim of his, that "good success admits of no examination;" which, in a liberal sense, is true conduct. That there was no cant in him on the subject of war appears from his saying (which indeed is very true), that "the necessity of war, which among human actions is most lawless, hath some kind of affinity and

near resemblance with the necessity of law." It is to be remembered, too, that if the Spaniards found him a restless and uncompromising enemy, the Indians experienced in him a humane and gentle defender, and on his second visit to Guiana remembered his name and welcomed him with enthusiasm.

We are told that the Spanish ambassador, on receiving intelligence of his doings in that country, rushed into the presence of King James, exclaiming "*Piratas, piratas!*" — "Pirates, pirates!" and the King, to gratify his resentment, without bringing him to trial for this alleged new offence, with characteristic meanness and pusillanimity caused him to be executed upon the old sentence soon after his return to England.

The circumstances of his execution and how he bore himself on that memorable occasion, when the sentence of death passed fifteen years before was revived against him — after as an historian in his confinement he had visited the Old World in his free imagination, and as an unrestrained adventurer the New, with his fleets and in person — are perhaps too well known to be repeated. The reader will excuse our hasty rehearsal of the final scene.

We can pardon, though not without limitations, his supposed attempt at suicide in the prospect of defeat and disgrace; and no one can read his letter to his wife, written while he was contemplating this act, without being reminded of the Roman Cato, and admiring while he condemns him. "I know," says he, "that it is forbidden to destroy ourselves; but I trust it is forbidden in this sort, that we destroy not ourselves despairing of God's mercy." Though his greatness seems to have forsaken him in his feigning himself sick, and the base methods he took to avoid being brought to trial, yet he recovered himself at last, and happily withstood the trials which awaited him. The night before his execution, besides writing letters of farewell to his wife, containing the most practical advice for the conduct of her life, he appears to have spent the time in writing verses on his condition, and among others this couplet, *On the Snuff of a Candle*.

Cowards may fear to die; but courage stout,
Rather than live in snuff, will be put out.

And the following verses, perhaps, for an epitaph on himself:

Even such is time, that takes on trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days!
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
The Lord shall raise me up, I trust!

His execution was appointed on Lord Mayor's day, that the pageants and shows might divert the attention of the people; but those pageants have long since been forgotten, while this tragedy is still remembered. He took a pipe of tobacco before he went to the scaffold, and appeared there with a serene countenance, so that a stranger could not have told which was the condemned person. After exculpating himself in a speech to the people, and without ostentation having felt the edge of the axe, and disposed himself once as he wished to lie, he made a solemn prayer, and being directed to place himself so that his face should look to the east, his characteristic answer was, "It mattered little how the head lay, provided the heart was right." The executioner being overawed was unable at first to perform his office, when Raleigh, slowly raising his head, exclaimed, "Strike away, man, don't be afraid." "He was the most fearless of death," says the bishop who attended him, "that ever was known, and the most resolute and confident, yet with reverence and conscience." But we would not exaggerate the importance of these things. The death scenes of great men are agreeable to consider only when they make another and harmonious chapter of their lives, and we have accompanied our hero thus far because he lived, so to speak, unto the end.

In his *History of the World* occurs this sentence: "O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! Whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty,

and ambition of man, and covered it all over with those two narrow words — *Hic iacet!*"

Perhaps Raleigh was the man of the most general information and universal accomplishment of any in England. Though he excelled greatly in but few departments, yet he reached a more valuable mediocrity in many. "He seemed," said Fuller, "to be like Cato Uticensis, born to that only which he was about." He said he had been "a soldier, a sea-captain, and a courtier," but he had been much more than this. He embraced in his studies music, ornamental gardening, painting, history, antiquities, chemistry, and many arts beside. Especially he is said to have been a great chemist, and studied most in his sea voyages, "when he carried always a trunk of books along with him, and had nothing to divert him," and when also he carried his favorite pictures. In the Tower, too, says one, "he doth spend all the day in distillations;" and that this was more than a temporary recreation appears from the testimony of one who says he was operator to him for twelve years. Here also "he conversed on poetry, philosophy, and literature with Hoskins, his fellow-prisoner," whom Ben Jonson mentions as "the person who had polished him." He was a political economist far in advance of his age, and a sagacious and influential speaker in the House of Commons. Science is indebted to him in more ways than one. In the midst of pressing public cares he interested himself to establish some means of universal communication between men of science for their mutual benefit, and actually set up what he termed "An office of address" for this purpose. As a mathematician, he was the friend of Harriot, Dee, and the Earl of Northumberland. As an antiquarian, he was a member of the first antiquarian society established in England, along with Spelman, Selden, Cotton, Camden, Savile, and Stow. He is said to have been the founder of the Mermaid Club, which met in Fleet Street, to which Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Beaumont, Carew, Donne, etc., belonged. He has the fame of having first introduced the potato from Virginia and the cherry from the Canaries into Ireland, where his garden was; and his manor of Sherborne "he beautified with gardens, and orchards, and groves of much variety and delight." And this fact, evincing his attention to horticulture, is related, that once, on occasion of the Queen's visiting him, he

artificially retarded the ripening of some cherries by stretching a wet canvas over the tree, and removed it on a sunny day, so as to present the fruit ripe to the Queen a month later than usual.

Not to omit a more doubtful but not less celebrated benefit, it is said that on the return of his first colonists from Virginia in 1586 tobacco was first effectually introduced into England, and its use encouraged by his influence and example. And finally, not to be outdone by the quacks, he invented a cordial which became very celebrated, bore his name, and was even administered to the Queen, and to the Prince Henry in his last illness. One Febure writes that "Sir Walter, being a worthy successor of Mithridates, Matheolus, Basil Valentine, Paracelsus, and others, has, he affirms, selected all that is choicest in the animal, vegetable, and mineral world, and moreover manifested so much art and experience in the preparation of this great and admirable cordial as will of itself render him immortal."

We come at last to consider him as a literary man and a writer, concerning which aspect of his life we are least indebted to the historian for our facts.

As he was heroic with the sword, so was he with the pen. *The History of the World*, the task which he selected for his prison hours, was heroic in the undertaking and heroic in the achievement. The easy and cheerful heart with which he endured his confinement, turning his prison into a study, a parlor, and a laboratory, and his prison-yard into a garden, so that men did not so much pity as admire him; the steady purpose with which he set about fighting his battles, prosecuting his discoveries, and gathering his laurels, with the pen, if he might no longer with regiments and fleets — is itself an exploit. In writing the *History of the World* he was indeed at liberty; for he who contemplates truth and universal laws is free, whatever walls immure his body, though to our brave prisoner thus employed, mankind may have seemed but his poor fellow-prisoners still.

Though this remarkable work interests us more, on the whole, as a part of the history of Raleigh than as the *History of the World*, yet it was done like himself, and with no small success. The historian of Greece and Rome is usually unmanned by his subject, as a peasant crouches before lords; but Raleigh, though he succumbs to the

imposing fame of tradition and antediluvian story, and exhibits unnecessary reverence for a prophet or patriarch, from his habit of innate religious courtesy, has done better than this whenever a hero was to be dealt with. He stalks down through the aisles of the past, as through the avenues of a camp, with poets and historians for his heralds and guides; and from whatever side the faintest trump reaches his ear, that way does he promptly turn, though to the neglect of many a gaudy pavilion.

From a work so little read in these days we will venture to quote as specimens the following criticisms on Alexander and the character of Epaminondas. They will, at any rate, teach our lips no bad habits. There is a natural emphasis in his style, like a man's tread, and a breathing space between the sentences, which the best of more modern writing does not furnish. His chapters are like English parks, or rather like a Western forest, where the larger growth keeps down the underwood, and one may ride on horse back through the openings.

"Certainly the things that this King did were marvellous, and would hardly have been undertaken by any man else: and though his father had determined to have invaded the lesser Asia, it is like enough that he would have contented himself with some part thereof, and not have discovered the river of Indus, as this man did. The swift course of victory, wherewith he ran over so large a portion of the world, in so short a space, may justly be imputed unto this, that he was never encountered by an equal spirit, concurring with equal power against him. Hereby it came to pass, that his actions, being limited by no greater opposition than desert places, and the mere length of tedious journeys could make, were like the Colossus of Rhodes, not so much to be admired for the workmanship, though therein also praiseworthy, as for the huge bulk. For certainly the things performed by Xenophon, discover as brave a spirit as Alexander's, and working no less exquisitely, though the effects were less material, as were also the forces and power of command, by which it wrought. But he that would find the exact pattern of a noble commander, must look upon such as Epaminondas, that encountering worthy captains, and those better followed than themselves, have by their singular virtue over-topped their valiant enemies, and still

prevailed over those that would not have yielded one foot to any other. Such as these are do seldom live to obtain great empires; for it is a work of more labor and longer time to master the equal forces of one hardy and well-ordered state, than to tread down and utterly subdue a multitude of servile nations, compounding the body of a gross unwieldy empire. Wherefore these *parvo potentes*, men that with little have done much upon enemies of like ability, are to be regarded as choice examples of worth; but great conquerors, to be rather admired for the substance of their actions, than the exquisite managing: exactness and greatness concurring so seldom, that I can find no instance of both in one, save only that brave Roman, Cæsar."

Of Epaminondas he says, "So died Epaminondas, the worthiest man that ever was bred in that nation of Greece, and hardly to be matched in any age or country; for he equaled all others in the several virtues, which in each of them were singular. His justice, and sincerity, his temperance, wisdom, and high magnanimity, were no way inferior to his military virtue; in every part whereof he so excelled, that he could not properly be called a wary, a valiant, a politic, a bountiful, or an industrious, and a provident captain; all these titles, and many others being due unto him, which with his notable discipline, and good conduct, made a perfect composition of an heroic general. Neither was his private conversation unanswerable to those high parts, which gave him praise abroad. For he was grave, and yet very affable and courteous; resolute in public business, but in his own particular easy, and of much mildness; a lover of his people, bearing with men's infirmities, witty and pleasant in speech, far from insolence, master of his own affections, and furnished with all qualities that might win and keep love. To these graces were added great ability of body, much eloquence and very deep knowledge of philosophy and learning, wherewith his mind being enlightened, rested not in the sweetness of contemplation, but broke forth into such effects as gave unto Thebes which had ever been an underling, a dreadful reputation among all people adjoining, and the highest command in Greece."

For the most part an author only *writes* history, treating it as a dead subject; but Raleigh *tells* it like a fresh story. A man of action himself, he knew when there was an action coming worthy to be

related, and does not disappoint the reader, as is too commonly the case, by recording merely the traditionary admiration or wonder. In commenting upon the military actions of the ancients, he easily and naturally digresses to some perhaps equal action of his own, or within his experience; and he tells how they should have drawn up their fleets or men, with the authority of an admiral or general. The alacrity with which he adverts to some action within his experience, and slides down from the dignified impersonality of the historian into the familiarity and interest of a party and eye-witness, is as attractive as rare. He is often without reproach the Cæsar of his own story. He treats Scipio, Pompey, Hannibal, and the rest quite like equals, and he speaks like an eye-witness, and gives life and reality to the narrative by his very lively understanding and relating of it; especially in those parts in which the mere scholar is most likely to fail. Every reader has observed what a dust the historian commonly raises about the field of battle, to serve as an apology for not making clear the disposition and manœuvring of the parties, so that the clearest idea one gets is of a very vague counteraction or standing over against one another of two forces. In this history we, at least, have faith that these things are right. Our author describes an ancient battle with the vivacity and truth of an eye-witness, and perhaps, in criticizing the disposition of the forces, saying they should have stood thus or so, some times enforces his assertions in some such style as "I remember being in the harbor of Cadiz," etc., so that, as in Herodotus and Thucydides, we associate the historian with the exploits he describes. But this comes not on account of his fame as a writer, but from the conspicuous part he acted on the world's stage, and his name is of equal mark to us with those of his heroes. So in the present instance, not only his valor as a writer, but the part he acted in his generation, the life of the author, seems fit to make the last chapter in the history he is writing. We expect that when his history is brought to a close it will include his own exploits. However, it is hardly a work to be consulted as authority nowadays, except on the subject of its author's character.

The natural breadth and grasp of the man is seen in the preface itself, which is a sermon with human life for its text. In the first books he discusses with childlike earnestness, and an ingenuity

which they little deserved, the absurd and frivolous questions which engaged the theology and philosophy of his day. But even these are recommended by his sincerity and fine imagination, while the subsequent parts, or story itself, have the merit of being far more credible and lifelike than is common. He shows occasionally a poet's imagination, and the innocence and purity of a child (as it were) under a knight's dress, such as were worthy of the friend of Spenser. The nobleness of his nature is everywhere apparent. The gentleness and steady heart with which he cultivates philosophy and poetry in his prison, dissolving in the reader's imagination the very walls and bars by his childlike confidence in truth and his own destiny, are affecting. Even astrology, or, as he has elsewhere called it, "star-learning," comes recommended from his pen, and science will not refuse it.

"And certainly it cannot be doubted," says he, "but the stars are instruments of far greater use, than to give an obscure light, and for men to gaze on after sunset: it being manifest, that the diversity of seasons, the winters and summers, more hot and cold, are not so uncertained by the sun and moon alone, who alway keep one and the same course; but that the stars have also their working therein.

"And if we cannot deny, but that God hath given virtues to springs and fountains, to cold earth, to plants and stones, minerals, and to the excremental parts of the basest living creatures, why should we rob the beautiful stars of their working powers? for seeing they are many in number, and of eminent beauty and magnitude, we may not think, that in the treasury of his wisdom, who is infinite, there can be wanting (even for every star) a peculiar virtue and operation; as every herb, plant, fruit, and flower adorning the face of the earth, hath the like. For as these were not created to beautify the earth alone, and to cover and shadow her dusty face, but otherwise for the use of man and beast, to feed them and cure them; so were not those uncountable glorious bodies set in the firmament, to no other end, than to adorn it; but for instruments and organs of his divine providence, so far as it hath pleased his just will to determine.

"Origen upon this place of Genesis, 'Let there be light in the firmament, &c.' affirmeth, that the stars are not causes (meaning perchance binding causes;) but are as open books, wherein are

contained and set down all things whatsoever to come; but not to be read by the eyes of human wisdom: which latter part I believe well, and the saying of Syracides withal; 'That there are hid yet greater things than these be, and we have seen but a few of his works.' And though, for the capacity of men, we know somewhat, yet in the true and uttermost virtues of herbs and plants, which our selves sow and set, and which grow under our feet, we are in effect ignorant; much more in the powers and working of celestial bodies.… But in this question of fate, the middle course is to be followed, that as with the heathen we do not bind God to his creatures, in this supposed necessity of destiny; and so on the contrary we do not rob those beautiful creatures of their powers and offices.… And that they wholly direct the reasonless mind, I am resolved: for all those which were created mortal, as birds, beasts, and the like, are left to their natural appetites; over all which, celestial bodies (as instruments and executioners of God's providence) have absolute dominion.… And Saint Augustine says, '*Deus regit inferiora corpora per superiora*'; 'God ruleth the bodies below by those above.'… It was therefore truly affirmed, *Sapiens adiuvabit opus astrorum, quemadmodum agricola terrae naturam*; 'A wise man assisteth the work of the stars, as the husbandman helpeth the nature of the soil.'… Lastly, we ought all to know, that God created the stars as he did the rest of the universal; whose influences may be called his reserved and unwritten laws.… But it was well said of Plotinus, that the stars were significant, but not efficient, giving them yet something less than their due: and therefore as I do not consent with them, who would make those glorious creatures of God virtueless: so I think that we derogate from his eternal and absolute power and providence, to ascribe to them the same dominion over our immortal souls, which they have over all bodily substances, and perishable natures: for the souls of men loving and fearing God, receive influence from that divine light itself, whereof the sun's clarity, and that of the stars, is by Plato called but a shadow, *Lumen est umbra Dei, et Deus est lumen luminis*; 'Light is the shadow of God's brightness, who is the light of light.'"

We are reminded by this of Du Bartas's poem on the *Probability of the Celestial Orbs being inhabited*, translated by Sylvester:

I'll ne'er believe that the arch-Architect
With all these fires the heavenly arches deck'd
Only for shew, and with their glistering shields
T' amaze poor shepherds, watching in the fields;
I'll ne'er believe that the least flow'r that pranks
Our garden borders, or the common banks,
And the least stone, that in her warming lap
Our kind nurse Earth doth covetously wrap,
Hath some peculiar virtue of its own,
And that the glorious stars of heav'n have none.

Nor is the following brief review and exaltation of the subject of all history unworthy of a place in this *History of the World*:

"Man, thus compounded and formed by God, was an abstract, or model, or brief story in the universal: … for out of the earth and dust was formed the flesh of man, and therefore heavy and lumpish; the bones of his body we may compare to the hard rocks and stones, and therefore strong and durable; of which Ovid:

Inde genus durum sumus, experiensque laborum,
Et documenta damus qua simus origine nati.

From thence our kind hard-hearted is,
  Enduring pain and care,
Approving, that our bodies of
  A stony nature are.

His blood, which disperseth itself by the branches of veins through all the body, may be resembled to those waters, which are carried by brooks and rivers over all the earth; his breath to the air, his natural heat to the inclosed warmth which the earth hath in itself, which, stirred up by the heat of the sun, assisteth nature in the speedier procreation of those varieties, which the earth bringeth forth; our radical moisture, oil or balsamum (whereon the natural heat feedeth and is maintained) is resembled to the fat and fertility of the earth; the hairs of man's body, which adorns, or overshadows it, to the grass, which covereth the upper face and skin of the earth; our

generative power, to nature, which produceth all things; our determinations, to the light, wandering, and unstable clouds, carried everywhere with uncertain winds; our eyes to the light of the sun and moon; and the beauty of our youth, to the flowers of the spring, which, either in a very short time, or with the sun's heat, dry up and wither away, or the fierce puffs of wind blow them from the stalks; the thoughts of our mind, to the motion of angels; and our pure understanding (formerly called *mens*, and that which always looketh upwards) to those intellectual natures, which are always present with God; and lastly, our immortal souls (while they are righteous) are by God himself beautified with the title of his own image and similitude."

But man is not in all things like nature: "For this tide of man's life, after it once turneth and declineth, ever runneth with a perpetual ebb and falling stream, but never floweth again, our leaf once fallen, springeth no more; neither doth the sun or the summer adorn us again with the garments of new leaves and flowers."

There is a flowing rhythm in some of these sentences like the rippling of rivers, hardly to be matched in any prose or verse. The following is his poem on the decay of Oracles and Pantheism:

"The fire which the Chaldeans worshipped for a god, is crept into every man's chimney, which the lack of fuel starveth, water quencheth, and want of air suffocateth: Jupiter is no more vexed with Juno's jealousies; death hath persuaded him to chastity, and her to patience; and that time which hath devoured itself, hath also eaten up both the bodies and images of him and his; yea, their stately temples of stone and dureful marble. The houses and sumptuous buildings erected to Baal, can no where be found upon the earth; nor any monument of that glorious temple consecrated to Diana. There are none now in Phoenicia, that lament the death of Adonis; nor any in Libya, Creta, Thessalia, or elsewhere, that can ask counsel or help from Jupiter. The great god Pan hath broken his pipes; Apollo's priests are become speechless; and the trade of riddles in oracles, with the devil's telling men's fortunes therein, is taken up by counterfeit Egyptians, and cozening astrologers."

In his *Discourse of War in General* (commencing with almost a heroic verse, "The ordinary theme and argument of history is war,")

are many things well thought, and many more well said. He thus expands the maxim that corporations have no soul: "But no senate nor civil assembly can be under such natural impulses to honor and justice as single persons.… For a majority is nobody when that majority is separated, and a collective body can have no synteresis, or divine ray, which is in the mind of every man, never assenting to evil, but upbraiding and tormenting him when he does it: but the honor and conscience that lies in the majority is too thin and diffusive to be efficacious; for a number can do a great wrong, and call it right, and not one of that majority blush for it. Hence it is, that though a public assembly may lie under great censures, yet each member looks upon himself as little concerned: this must be the reason why a Roman senate should act with less spirit and less honor than any single Roman would do."

He then in the same treatise leaps with easy and almost merry elasticity from the level of his discourse to the heights of his philosophy: "And it is more plain there is not in nature a point of stability to be found; every thing either ascends or declines: when wars are ended abroad, sedition begins at home, and when men are freed from fighting for necessity, they quarrel through ambition."

And he thus concludes this discourse: "We must look a long way back to find the Romans giving laws to nations, and their consuls bringing kings and princes bound in chains to Rome in triumph; to see men go to Greece for wisdom, or Ophir for gold; when now nothing remains but a poor paper remembrance of their former condition.

"It would be an unspeakable advantage, both to the public and private, if men would consider that great truth, that no man is wise or safe, but he that is honest. All I have designed is peace to my country; and may England enjoy that blessing when I shall have no more proportion in it than what my ashes make!"

If his philosophy is for the most part poor, yet the conception and expression are rich and generous.

His maxims are not true or impartial, but are conceived with a certain magnanimity which was natural to him, as if a selfish policy could easily afford to give place in him to a more universal and true.

As a fact evincing Raleigh's poetic culture and taste, it is said

that, in a visit to the poet Spenser on the banks of the Mulla, which is described in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, he anticipated the judgment of posterity with respect to the *Faerie Queene*, and by his sympathy and advice encouraged the poet to go on with his work, which by the advice of other friends, among whom was Sidney, he had laid aside. His own poems, though insignificant in respect to number and length, and not yet collected into a separate volume, or rarely accredited to Raleigh, deserve the distinct attention of the lover of English poetry, and leave such an impression on the mind that this leaf of his laurels, for the time, well nigh overshadows all the rest. In these few rhymes, as in that country he describes, his life naturally culminates and his secret aspirations appear. They are in some respects more trustworthy testimonials to his character than state papers or tradition; for poetry is a piece of very private history, which unostentatiously lets us into the secret of a man's life, and is to the reader what the eye is to the beholder, the characteristic feature which cannot be distorted or made to deceive. Poetry is always impartial and unbiased evidence. The whole life of a man may safely be referred to a few deep experiences. When he only sings a more musical line than usual, all his actions have to be retried by a newer and higher standard than before.

The pleasing poem entitled *A Description of the Country's Recreations*, also printed among the poems of Sir Henry Wotton, is well known. The following, which bears evident marks of his pen, we will quote, from its secure and continent rhythm:

FALSE LOVE AND TRUE LOVE

As you came from the holy land
  Of Walsingham,
Met you not with my true love
  By the way as you came?

How shall I know your true love,
  That have met many one,
As I went to the holy land,
  That have come, that have gone.

She is neither white nor brown,
  But as the heavens fair;
There is none hath a form so divine,
  In the earth or the air.

Such a one did I meet, good Sir,
  Such an angelic face;
Who like a queen, like a nymph did appear,
  By her gait, by her grace:

She hath left me here all alone,
  All alone as unknown,
Who sometimes did me lead with herself,
  And me loved as her own:

What's the cause that she leaves you alone,
  And a new way doth take:
Who loved you once as her own
  And her joy did you make?

I have loved her all my youth,
  But now, old as you see,
Love likes not the falling fruit
  From the withered tree:

Know that Love is a careless child
  And forgets promise past,
He is blind, he is deaf, when he list,
  And in faith never fast:

His desire is a dureless content,
  And a trustless joy;
He is won with a world of despair,
  And is lost with a toy.

Of women-kind such indeed is the love,
  Or the word love abused;
Under which, many childish desires

And conceits are excused:

But true love is a durable fire
In the mind ever burning;
Never sick, never old, never dead,
From itself never turning.

The following will be new to many of our readers:

THE SHEPHERD'S PRAISE OF HIS SACRED DIANA

Prais'd be Diana's fair and harmless light;
Prais'd be the dews, wherewith she moists the ground;
Prais'd be her beams, the glory of the night;
Prais'd be her power, by which all powers abound!

Prais'd be her nymphs, with whom she decks the woods;
Prais'd be her knights, in whom true honor lives;
Prais'd be that force by which she moves the floods!
Let that Diana shine, which all these gives!

In heaven, queen she is among the spheres;
She mistress-like, makes all things to be pure;
Eternity in her oft-change she bears;
She, Beauty is ; by her, the fair endure.

Time wears her not; she doth his chariot guide;
Mortality below her orb is plac'd;
By her the virtues of the stars down slide;
In her is Virtue's perfect image cast!

A knowledge pure it is her worth to know:
With *Circes* let them dwell that think not so!

Though we discover in his verses the vices of the courtier, and they are not equally sustained, as if his genius were warped by the frivolous society of the Court, he was capable of rising to unusual heights. His genius seems to have been fitted for short flights of

unmatched sweetness and vigor, but by no means for the sustained loftiness of the epic poet. One who read his verses would say that he had not grown to be the man he promised. They have occasionally a strength of character and heroic tone rarely expressed or appreciated; and powers and excellences so peculiar, as to be almost unique specimens of their kind in the language. Those which have reference to his death have been oftenest quoted, and are the best. *The Soul's Errand* deserves to be remembered till her mission is accomplished in the world.

We quote the following, not so well known, with some omissions, from the commencement of —

HIS PILGRIMAGE

Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon;
My scrip of joy, immortal diet;
My bottle of salvation;
My gown of glory, (hope's true gage)
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.

Blood must be my body's balmer,
No other balm will here be given,
Whilst my soul, like quiet palmer,
Travels to the land of heaven,
Over all the silver mountains,
Where do spring those nectar fountains:

And I there will sweetly kiss
The happy bowl of peaceful bliss.
Drinking mine eternal fill
Flowing on each milky hill.
My soul will be adry before,
But after, it will thirst no more.

In that happy, blissful day,
More peaceful pilgrims I shall see,

That have cast off their rags of clay,
And walk apparell'd fresh like me.

But he wrote his poems, after all, rather with ships and fleets, and regiments of men and horse. At his bidding, navies took their place in the channel, and even from prison he fitted out fleets with which to realize his golden dreams, and invited his companions to fresh adventures.

Raleigh might well be studied if only for the excellence of his style, for he is remarkable even in the midst of so many masters. All the distinguished writers of that period possess a greater vigor and naturalness than the more modern, and when we read a quotation from one of them in the midst of a modern authority, we seem to have come suddenly upon a greener ground and greater depth and strength of soil. It is as if a green bough were laid across the page, and we are refreshed as if by the sight of fresh grass in midwinter or early spring. You have constantly the warrant of life and experience in all you read. The little that is said is supplied by implication of the much that was done. The sentences are verdurous and blooming as evergreen and flowers, because they are rooted in fact and experience; but our false and florid sentences have only the tints of flowers without their sap or roots. Where shall we look for standard English but to the words of a standard man? The word which is best said came very near not being spoken at all; for it is cousin to a deed which would have been better done. It must have taken the place of a deed by some urgent necessity, even by some misfortune, so that the truest writer will be some captive knight after all. And perhaps the fates had such a design, when, having stored Raleigh so richly with the substance of life and experience, they made him a fast prisoner, and compelled him to make his words his deeds, and transfer to his expression the emphasis and sincerity of his action.

The necessity of labor, and conversation with many men and things, to the scholar, is rarely well remembered. Steady labor with the hands, which engrosses the attention also, is the best method of removing palaver out of one's style both of talking and writing. If he has worked hard from morning till night, though he may have grieved that he could not be watching the train of his thoughts during

that time, yet the few hasty lines which at evening record his day's experience will be more musical and true, than his freest but idle fancy could have furnished. He will not lightly dance at his work who has wood to cut and cord before nightfall in the short days of winter, but every stroke will be husbanded and ring soberly through the wood; and so will the stroke of that scholar's pen, when at evening this records the story of the day, ring soberly on the ear of the reader long after the echoes of his axe have died away. The scholar may be sure he writes the tougher truths for the calluses on his palms. They give firmness to the sentence. We are often astonished at the force and precision of style to which hard-working men unpracticed in writing easily attain, when required to make the effort; as if sincerity and plainness, those ornaments of style, were better taught on the farm or in the workshop than in the schools. The sentences written by such rude hands are nervous and tough, like hardened thongs, the sinews of the deer, or the roots of the pine. The scholar might frequently emulate the propriety and emphasis of the farmer's call to his team, and confess, if that were written, it would surpass his *labored* sentences.

From the weak and flimsy periods of the politician and literary man we are glad to turn even to the description of work, the simple record of the month's labor in the farmer's almanac, to restore our tone and spirits. We like that a sentence should read as if its author, had he held a plough instead of a pen, could have drawn a furrow deep and straight to the end. The scholar requires hard labor to give an impetus to his thought; he will learn to grasp the pen firmly so, and wield it gracefully and effectually as an axe or sword. When we consider the weak and nerveless periods of some literary men, who perchance in feet and inches come up to the standard of their race, and are not deficient in girth also, we are amazed at the immense sacrifice of thews and sinews. What! these proportions, these bones, and this their work! Hands which could have felled an ox have hewed this fragile matter which would not have tasked a lady's fingers. Can this be a stalwart man's work, who has a marrow in his back and a tendon Achilles in his heel? They who set up Stonehenge did somewhat, if they only laid out their strength for once, and stretched themselves.

Yet after all the truly efficient laborer will be found not to crowd his day with work, but will saunter to his task, surrounded by a wide halo of ease and leisure, and then do but what he likes best. He is anxious only about the kernels of time. Though the hen should set all day she could lay only one egg, and besides, she would not have picked up the materials for another.

A perfectly healthy sentence is extremely rare. But for the most part we miss the hue and fragrance of the thought. As if we could be satisfied with the dews of the morning or evening without their colors, or the heavens without their azure. The most attractive sentences are perhaps not the wisest, but the surest and soundest. They are spoken firmly and conclusively, as if the author had a right to know what he says; and if not wise, they have at least been well learned. At least he does not stand on a rolling stone, but is well assured of his footing; and if you dispute their doctrine, you will yet allow that there is truth in their assurance. Raleigh's are of this sort, spoken with entire satisfaction and heartiness. They are not so much philosophy as poetry. With him it was always well done and nobly said. His learning was in his hand, and he carried it by him and used it as adroitly as his sword. Aubrey says, "He was no slug; without doubt had a wonderful waking spirit, and great judgment to guide it." He wields his pen as one who sits at ease in his chair, and has a healthy and able body to back his wits, and not a torpid and diseased one to fetter them. In whichever hand is the pen we are sure there is a sword in the other. He sits with his armor on, and with one ear open to hear if the trumpet sound, as one who has stolen a little leisure from the duties of a camp; and we are confident that the whole man, as real and palpable as an Englishman can be, sat down to the writing of his books, and not some curious brain only. Such a man's mere daily exercise in literature might well attract us, and Cecil has said, "He can toil terribly."

Raleigh seems to have been too genial and loyal a soul to resist the temptations of a court; but if to his genius and culture could have been added the temperament of George Fox or Oliver Cromwell, perhaps the world would have had reason longer to remember him. He was, however, the most generous nature that could be drawn into the precincts of a court, and carried the courtier's life almost to the

highest pitch of magnanimity and grace of which it was capable. He was liberal and generous as a prince, that is, within bounds; brave, chivalrous, heroic, as a knight in armor but not as a defenceless man. His was not the heroism of a Luther, but of a Bayard, and had more of grace than of honest truth in it. He had more taste than appetite. There may be something petty in a refined taste, it easily degenerates into effeminacy. It does not consider the broadest use, and is not content with simple good and bad, but is often fastidious, and curious, or nice only.

His faults, as we have hinted before, were those of a courtier and a soldier. In his counsels and aphorisms we see not unfrequently the haste and rashness of the soldier, strangely mingled with the wisdom of the philosopher. Though his philosophy was not wide nor profound, it was continually giving way to the generosity of his nature, and he was not hard to be won to the right.

What he touches he adorns by a greater humanity and native nobleness, but he touches not the truest nor deepest. He does not in any sense unfold the new, but embellishes the old, and with all his promise of originality he never was quite original, or steered his own course. He was of so fair and susceptible a nature, rather than broad or deep, that he delayed to slake his thirst at the nearest and most turbid wells of truth and beauty; and his homage to the least fair and noble left no room for homage to the All-fair. The misfortune and incongruity of the man appear in the fact that he was at once the author of the *Maxims of State* and *The Soul's Errand*.

When we reconsider what we have said in the foregoing pages, we hesitate to apply any of their eulogy to the actual and historical Raleigh, or any of their condemnation to that ideal Raleigh which he suggests. For we must know the man of history as we know our contemporaries, not so much by his deeds, which often belie his real character, as by the expectation he begets in us and there is a bloom and halo about the character of Raleigh which defies a close and literal scrutiny, and robs us of our critical acumen. With all his heroism, he was not heroic enough; with all his manliness, he was servile and dependent; with all his aspirations, he was ambitious. He was not upright nor constant, yet we would have trusted him; he could flatter and cringe, yet we should have respected him; and he

could accept a bribe, yet we should confidently have appealed to his generosity.

Such a life is useful for us to contemplate as suggesting that a man is not to be measured by the virtue of his described actions, or the wisdom of his expressed thoughts merely, but by that free character he is, and is felt to be, under all circumstances. Even talent is respectable only when it indicates a depth of character unfathomed. Surely it is better that our wisdom appear in the constant success of our spirits than in our business, or the maxims which fall from our lips merely. We want not only a revelation, but a nature behind to sustain it. Many silent, as well as famous, lives have been the result of no mean thought, though it was never adequately expressed nor conceived; and perhaps the most illiterate and unphilosophical mind may yet be accustomed to think to the extent of the noblest action. We all know those in our own circle who do injustice to their entire character in their conversation and in writing, but who, if actually set over against us, would not fail to make a wiser impression than many a wise thinker and speaker.

We are not a little profited by any life which teaches us not to despair of the race; and such effect has the steady and cheerful bravery of Raleigh. To march sturdily through life, patiently and resolutely looking grim defiance at one's foes, that is one way; but we cannot help being more attracted by that kind of heroism which relaxes its brows in the presence of danger, and does not need to maintain itself strictly, but, by a kind of sympathy with the universe, generously adorns the scene and the occasion, and loves valor so well that itself would be the defeated party only to behold it; which is as serene and as well pleased with the issue as the heavens which look down upon the field of battle. It is but a lower height of heroism when the hero wears a sour face. We fear that much of the heroism which we praise nowadays is dyspeptic. When we consider the vast Xerxean army of reformers in these days, we cannot doubt that many a grim soul goes silent, the hero of some small intestine war; and it is somewhat to begin to live on cornbread solely, for one who has before lived on bolted wheat; — but of this sort surely are not the deeds to be sung. These are not the Arthurs that inflame the imaginations of men. All fair action is the product of enthusiasm, and

nature herself does nothing in the prose mood, though sometimes grimly with poetic fury, and at others humorously. There is enthusiasm in the sunrise and the summer, and we imagine that the shells on the shore take new layers from year to year with such rapture as the bard writes his poems.

We would fain witness a heroism which is literally illustrious, whose daily life is the stuff of which our dreams are made; so that the world shall regard less what it does than how it does it; and its actions unsettle the common standards, and have a right to be done, however wrong they may be to the moralist.

Mere gross health and cheerfulness are no slight attraction, and some biographies have this charm mainly. For the most part the best man's spirit makes a fearful sprite to haunt his grave, and it adds not a little there fore to the credit of Little John, the celebrated follower of Robin Hood, reflecting favorably on the character of his life, that his grave was "long celebrous for the yielding of excellent whetstones."

A great cheerfulness indeed have all great wits and heroes possessed, almost a profane levity to such as understood them not, but their religion had the broader basis of health and permanence. For the hero, too, has his religion, though it is the very opposite to that of the ascetic. It demands not a narrower cell but a wider world. He is perhaps the very best man of the world; the poet active, the saint wilful; not the most godlike, but the most manlike. There have been souls of a heroic stamp for whom this world seemed expressly made; as if this fair creation had at last succeeded, for it seems to be thrown away on the saint. Such seem to be an essential part of their age if we consider them in time, and of the scenery if we consider them in Nature. They lie out before us ill-defined and uncertain, like some scraggy hillside or pasture, which varies from day to day and from hour to hour, with the revolutions of Nature, so that the eye of the forester never rests twice upon the same scene; one knows not what may occur — he may hear a fox bark or a partridge drum. They are planted deep in Nature and have more root than others. They are earth-born (γηγενεις), as was said of the Titans. They are brothers of the sun and moon, they belong, so to speak, to the natural family of man. Their breath is a kind of wind, their step like that of a

quadruped, their moods the seasons, and they are as serene as Nature. Their eyes are deep-set like moles or glow worms, they move free and unconstrained through Nature as her guests, their motions easy and natural as if their course were already determined for them; as of rivers flowing through valleys, not as somewhat finding a place in Nature, but for whom a place is already found. We love to hear them speak though we do not hear what they say. The very air seems forward to modulate itself into speech for them, and their words are of its own substance, and fall naturally on the ear, like the rustling of leaves and the crackling of the fire. They have the heavens for their abettors, for they never stood from under them, and they look at the stars with an answering ray. The distinctions of better and best, sense and nonsense, seem trivial and petty, when such great healthy indifferences come along. We lay aside the trick of thinking well to attend to their thoughtless and happy natures, and are inclined to show a divine politeness and heavenly good-breeding, for they compel it. They are great natures. It takes a good deal to support them. Theirs is no thin diet. The very air they breathe seems rich, and, as it were, perfumed.

They are so remarkable as to be least remarked at first, since they are most in harmony with the time and place, and if we wonder at all it will be at ourselves and not at them. Mountains do not rise perpendicularly, but the lower eminences hide the higher, and we at last reach their top by a gentle acclivity. We must abide a long time in their midst and at their base, as we spend many days at the Notch of the White Mountains in order to be impressed by the scenery. Let us not think that Alexander will conquer Asia the first time we are introduced to him, though smaller men may be in haste to re-enact their exploits then.

"Would you have
Such an Herculean actor in the scene,
And not his hydra?"
"They must sweat no less
To fit their properties than to express their parts."

The presence of heroic souls enhances the beauty and ampleness

of Nature herself. Where they walk, as Virgil says of the abodes of the blessed —

Largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
Purpureo: solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.

Here a more copious air invests the fields, and clothes with purple light; and they know their own sun and their own stars.

But, alas! What is Truth? That which we know not. What is Beauty? That which we see not. What is Heroism? That which we are not. It is in vain to hang out flags on a day of rejoicing — fresh bunting, bright and whole; better the soiled and torn remnant which has been borne in the wars.

We have considered a fair specimen of an Englishman in the sixteenth century; but it behoves us to be fairer specimens of American men in the nineteenth. The gods have given man no constant gift, but the power and liberty to act greatly. How many wait for health and warm weather to be heroic and noble! We are apt to think there is a kind of virtue which need not be heroic and brave — but in fact virtue is the deed of the bravest; and only the hardy souls venture upon it, for it deals in what we have no experience, and alone does the rude pioneer work of the world. In winter is its campaign, and it never goes into quarters. "Sit not down," said Sir Thomas Browne, "in the popular seats and common level of virtues, but endeavor to make them heroical. Offer not only peace-offerings, but holocausts, unto God."

In our lonely chambers at night we are thrilled by some far-off serenade within the mind, and seem to hear the clarion sound and clang of corselet and buckler from many a silent hamlet of the soul, though actually it may be but the rattling of some farmer's wagon rolling to market against the morrow.

DARK AGES

WE should read history as little critically as we consider the landscape, and be more interested by the atmospheric tints, and various lights and shades which the intervening spaces create, than by its groundwork and composition. It is the morning now turned evening and seen in,the west,- the same sun, but a new light and atmosphere. Its beauty is like the sunset ; not a fresco painting on a wall, flat and bounded, but atmospheric and roving or free.

In reality history fluctuates as the face of the landscape from morning to evening. What is of moment is its hue and color. Time hides no treasures; we want not its then but its now. We do not complain that the mountains in the horizon are blue and indistinct; they are the more like the heavens. Of what moment are facts that can be lost,-which need to be commemorated? The monument of death will outlast the memory of the dead. The pyramids do not tell the tale that was confided to them; the living fact commemorates itself. Why look in the dark for light? Strictly speaking, the historical societies have not recovered one fact from oblivion, but are themselves instead of the fact that is lost. The researcher is more memorable than the researched. The crowd stood admiring the mist, and the dim outlines of the trees seen through it, when one of their number advanced to explore the phenomenon, and with fresh admiration, all eyes were turned on his dimly retreating figure. It is astonishing with how little cooperation of the societies, the past is remembered. Its story has indeed had a different muse than has been assigned it . There is a good instance of the manner in which all history began, in Alwakidi's Arabian Chronicle. "I was informed by Ahmed Almatin Aljorhami, who had it from Rephaa Ebn Kais Alamiri, who had it from Saiph Ebn Fabalah Alchatquarmi, who had it from Thabet Ebn Alkamah, who said he was present at the action." These fathers of history were not anxious to preserve, but to learn the fact; and hence it was not for gotten.

Critical acumen is exerted in vain to uncover the past; the past

cannot be presented; we cannot know what we are not. But one veil hangs over past, present, and future, and it is the province of the historian to find out not what was, but what is. Where a battle has been fought, you will find nothing but the bones of men and beasts; where a battle is being fought there are hearts beating. We will sit on a mound and muse, and not try to make these skeletons stand on their legs attain. Does nature remember, think you, that they were men, or not rather that they are bones? Ancient history has an air of antiquity; it should be more modern.

It is written as if the spectator should be think ing of the backside of the picture on the wall, or as if the author expected the dead would be his readers, and wished to detail to them their own experience . Men seem anxious to accomplish an orderly retreat through the centuries, earnestly rebuilding the works behind, as they are battered down by the encroachments of time; but while they loiter, they and their works both fall a prey to the arch enemy. It has neither the venerableness of antiquity, nor the freshness of the modern.

It does as if it would go to the beginning of things, which natural history might with reason assume to do; but consider the Universal History, and then tell us -when did burdock and plantain sprout first? It has been so written for the most part, that the times it describes are with remarkable propriety called dark arcs. They are dark, as one has observed, because we are so in the dark about them. The sun rarely shines in history, what with the dust and confusion ; and when we rneet with any cheering fact which implies the presence of this luminary, we excerpt and modernize it. As when we read in the history of the Saxons, that Edwin of Northumbria “caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where lie had seen a clear spring,” and “brazen dishes were chained to them, to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced.” This is worth all Arthur’s twelve battles.

But it is fit the past should be dark; though the darkness is not so much a quality of the past, as of tradition. It is not a distance of time but a distance of relation, which makes thus dusky its memorials. What is near to the heart of this generation is fair and bright still. Greece lies outspread fair and sunshiny in floods of light, for there is the sun and day-light in her literature and art, Homer does not allow

us to forget that the sun shone - nor Phidias, nor the Parthenon. Yet no era has been wholly dark, nor will we too hastily submit to the historian, and congratulate ourselves on a blaze of light. If we could pierce the obscurity of those remote years we should find it light enough; only there is not our day. - Some creatures are made to see in the dark. - There has always been the same amount of light in the world.

The new and missing stars, the comets and eclipses do not affect the general illumination, for only our glasses appreciate them. The eyes of the oldest fossil remains, they tell us, indicate that the same laws of light prevailed then as now. Always the laws of light are the same, but the modes and degrees of seeing vary. The gods are partial to no era, but steadily shines their light in the heavens, while the eye of the beholder is turned to stone. There was but the eye and the sun from the first. The ages have not added a new ray to the one, nor altered a fibre of the other.

A WINTER WALK

The wind has gently murmured through the blinds, or puffed with feathery softness against the windows, and occasionally sighed like a summer zephyr lifting the leaves along, the livelong night. The meadow-mouse has slept in his snug gallery in the sod, the owl has sat in a hollow tree in the depth of the swamp, the rabbit, the squirrel, and the fox have all been housed. The watch-dog has lain quiet on the hearth, and the cattle have stood silent in their stalls. The earth itself has slept, as it were its first, not its last sleep, save when some street-sign or wood-house door has faintly creaked upon its hinge, cheering forlorn nature at her midnight work, — the only sound awake twixt Venus and Mars, — advertising us of a remote inward warmth, a divine cheer and fellowship, where gods are met together, but where it is very bleak for men to stand. But while the earth has slumbered, all the air has been alive with feathery flakes descending, as if some northern Ceres reigned, showering her silvery grain over all the fields.

We sleep, and at length awake to the still reality of a winter morning. The snow lies warm as cotton or down upon the window-sill; the broadened sash and frosted panes admit a dim and private light, which enhances the snug cheer within. The stillness of the morning is impressive. The floor creaks under our feet as we move toward the window to look abroad through some clear space over the fields. We see the roofs stand under their snow burden. From the eaves and fences hang stalactites of snow, and in the yard stand stalagmites covering some concealed core. The trees and shrubs rear white arms to the sky on every side; and where were walls and fences, we see fantastic forms stretching in frolic gambols across the dusky landscape, as if nature had strewn her fresh designs over the fields by night as models for man's art.

Silently we unlatch the door, letting the drift fall in, and step abroad to face the cutting air. Already the stars have lost some of their sparkle, and a dull, leaden mist skirts the horizon. A lurid

brazen light in the east proclaims the approach of day, while the western landscape is dim and spectral still, and clothed in a sombre Tartarian light, like the shadowy realms. They are Infernal sounds only that you hear, — the crowing of cocks, the barking of dogs, the chopping of wood, the lowing of kine, all seem to come from Pluto's barn-yard and beyond the Styx; — not for any melancholy they suggest, but their twilight bustle is too solemn and mysterious for earth. The recent tracks of the fox or otter, in the yard, remind us that each hour of the night is crowded with events, and the primeval nature is still working and making tracks in the snow. Opening the gate, we tread briskly along the lone country road, crunching the dry and crisped snow under our feet, or aroused by the sharp clear creak of the wood-sled, just starting for the distant market, from the early farmer's door, where it has lain the summer long, dreaming amid the chips and stubble; while far through the drifts and powdered windows we see the farmer's early candle, like a paled star, emitting a lonely beam, as if some severe virtue were at its matins there. And one by one the smokes begin to ascend from the chimneys amidst the trees and snows.

The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell,
The stiffened air exploring in the dawn,
And making slow acquaintance with the day;
Delaying now upon its heavenward course,
In wreathed loiterings dallying with itself,
With as uncertain purpose and slow deed,
As its half-wakened master by the hearth,
Whose mind still slumbering and sluggish thoughts
Have not yet swept into the onward current
Of the new day; — and now it streams afar,
The while the chopper goes with step direct,
And mind intent to swing the early axe.

First in the dusky dawn he sends abroad
His early scout, his emissary, smoke,
The earliest, latest pilgrim from the roof,
To feel the frosty air, inform the day;

And while he crouches still beside the hearth,
Nor musters courage to unbar the door,
It has gone down the glen with the light wind,
And o'er the plain unfurled its venturous wreath,
Draped the tree-tops, loitered upon the hill,
And warmed the pinions of the early bird;
And now, perchance, high in the crispy air,
Has caught sight of the day o'er the earth's edge,
And greets its master's eye at his low door,
As some refulgent cloud in the upper sky.

We hear the sound of wood-chopping at the farmers' doors, far over the frozen earth, the baying of the house-dog, and the distant clarion of the cock. Though the thin and frosty air conveys only the finer particles of sound to our ears, with short and sweet vibrations, as the waves subside soonest on the purest and lightest liquids, in which gross substances sink to the bottom. They come clear and bell-like, and from a greater distance in the horizon, as if there were fewer impediments than in summer to make them faint and ragged. The ground is sonorous, like seasoned wood, and even the ordinary rural sounds are melodious, and the jingling of the ice on the trees is sweet and liquid. There is the least possible moisture in the atmosphere, all being dried up, or congealed, and it is of such extreme tenuity and elasticity, that it becomes a source of delight. The withdrawn and tense sky seems groined like the aisles of a cathedral, and the polished air sparkles as if there were crystals of ice floating in it. As they who have resided in Greenland tell us, that, when it freezes, "the sea smokes like burning turf-land, and a fog or mist arises, called frost-smoke," which "cutting smoke frequently raises blisters on the face and hands, and is very pernicious to the health." But this pure stinging cold is an elixir to the lungs, and not so much a frozen mist, as a crystallized midsummer haze, refined and purified by cold.

The sun at length rises through the distant woods, as if with the faint clashing swinging sound of cymbals, melting the air with his beams, and with such rapid steps the morning travels, that already his rays are gilding the distant western mountains. Meanwhile we step hastily along through the powdery snow, warmed by an inward heat,

enjoying an Indian summer still, in the increased glow of thought and feeling. Probably if our lives were more conformed to nature, we should not need to defend ourselves against her heats and colds, but find her our constant nurse and friend, as do plants and quadrupeds. If our bodies were fed with pure and simple elements, and not with a stimulating and heating diet, they would afford no more pasture for cold than a leafless twig, but thrive like the trees, which find even winter genial to their expansion.

The wonderful purity of nature at this season is a most pleasing fact. Every decayed stump and moss-grown stone and rail, and the dead leaves of autumn, are concealed by a clean napkin of snow. In the bare fields and tinkling woods, see what virtue survives. In the coldest and bleakest places, the warmest charities still maintain a foothold. A cold and searching wind drives away all contagion, and nothing can withstand it but what has a virtue in it; and accordingly, whatever we meet with in cold and bleak places, as the tops of mountains, we respect for a sort of sturdy innocence, a Puritan toughness. All things beside seem to be called in for shelter, and what stays out must be part of the original frame of the universe, and of such valor as God himself. It is invigorating to breathe the cleansed air. Its greater fineness and purity are visible to the eye, and we would fain stay out long and late, that the-gales may sigh through us, too, as through the leafless trees, and fit us for the winter: — as if we hoped so to borrow some pure and steadfast virtue, which will stead us in all seasons.

There is a slumbering subterranean fire in nature which never goes out, and which no cold can chill. It finally melts the great snow, and in January or July is only buried under a thicker or thinner covering. In the coldest day it flows somewhere, and the snow melts around every tree. This field of winter rye, which sprouted late in the fall, and now speedily dissolves the snow, is where the fire is very thinly covered. We feel warmed by it. In the winter, warmth stands for all virtue, and we resort in thought to a trickling rill, with its bare stones shining in the sun, and to warm springs in the woods, with as much eagerness as rabbits and robins. The steam which rises from swamps and pools, is as dear and domestic as that of our own kettle. What fire could ever equal the sunshine of a winter's day, when the

meadow mice come out by the wallsides, and the chicadee lisps in the defiles of the wood? The warmth comes directly from the sun, and is not radiated from the earth, as in summer; and when we feel his beams on our backs as we are treading some snowy dell, we are grateful as for a special kindness, and bless the sun which has followed us into that by-place.

This subterranean fire has its altar in each man's breast, for in the coldest day, and on the bleakest hill, the traveller cherishes a warmer fire within the folds of his cloak than is kindled on any hearth. A healthy man, indeed, is the complement of the seasons, and in winter, summer is in his heart. There is the south. Thither have all birds and insects migrated, and around the warm springs in his breast are gathered the robin and the lark.

At length, having reached the edge of the woods, and shut out the gadding town, we enter within their covert as we go under the roof of a cottage, and cross its threshold, all ceiled and banked up with snow. They are glad and warm still, and as genial and cheery in winter as in summer. As we stand in the midst of the pines, in the nickering and checkered light which straggles but little way into their maze, we wonder if the towns have ever heard their simple story. It seems to us that no traveller has ever explored them, and notwithstanding the wonders which science is elsewhere revealing every day, who would not like to hear their annals? Our humble villages in the plain are their contribution. We borrow from the forest the boards which shelter, and the sticks which warm us. How important is their evergreen to the winter, that portion of the summer which does not fade, the permanent year, the unwithered grass. Thus simply, and with little expense of altitude, is the surface of the earth diversified. What would human life be without forests, those natural cities? From the tops of mountains they appear like smooth shaven lawns, yet whither shall we walk but in this taller grass?

In this glade covered with bushes of a year's growth, see how the silvery dust lies on every seared leaf and twig, deposited in such infinite and luxurious forms as by their very variety atone for the absence of color. Observe the tiny tracks of mice around every stem, and the triangular tracks of the rabbit. A pure elastic heaven hangs over all, as if the impurities of the summer sky, refined and shrunk

by the chaste winter's cold, had been winnowed from the heavens upon the earth.

Nature confounds her summer distinctions at this season. The heavens seem to be nearer the earth. The elements are less reserved and distinct. Water turns to ice, rain to snow. The day is but a Scandinavian night. The winter is an arctic summer.

How much more living is the life that is in nature, the furred life which still survives the stinging nights, and, from amidst fields and woods covered with frost and snow, sees the sun rise.

"The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants.".

The gray squirrel and rabbit are brisk and playful in the remote glens, even on the morning of the cold Friday. Here is our Lapland and Labrador, and for our Esquimaux and Knistenaux, Dog-ribbed Indians, Novazemblaites, and Spitzbergeners, are there not the ice-cutter and wood-chopper, the fox, musk-rat, and mink?

Still, in the midst of the arctic day, we may trace the summer to its retreats, and sympathize with some contemporary life. Stretched over the brooks, in the midst of the frost-bound meadows, we may observe the submarine cottages of the caddice-worms, the larvae of the Plicipennes. Their small cylindrical cases built around themselves, composed of flags, sticks, grass, and withered leaves, shells, and pebbles, in form and color like the wrecks which strew the bottom, — now drifting along over the pebbly bottom, now whirling in tiny eddies and dashing down steep falls, or sweeping rapidly along with the current, or else swaying to and fro at the end of some grass-blade or root. Anon they will leave their sunken habitations, and, crawling up the stems of plants, or to the surface, like gnats, as perfect insects henceforth, flutter over the surface of the water, or sacrifice their short lives in the flame of our candles at evening. Down yonder little glen the shrubs are drooping under their burden, and the red alder-berries contrast with the white ground. Here are the marks of a myriad feet which have already been abroad. The sun rises as proudly over such a glen, as over the valley of the Seine or the Tiber, and it seems the residence of a pure and self-

subsistent valor, such as they never witnessed; which never knew defeat nor fear. Here reign the simplicity and purity of a primitive age, and a health and hope far remote from towns and cities. Standing quite alone, far in the forest, while the wind is shaking down snow from the trees, and leaving the only human tracks behind us, we find our reflections of a richer variety than the life of cities. The chicadee and nuthatch are more inspiring society than statesmen and philosophers, and we shall return to these last, as to more vulgar companions. In this lonely glen, with its brook draining the slopes, its creased ice and crystals of all hues, where the spruces and hemlocks stand up on either side, and the rush and sere wild oats in the rivulet itself, our lives are more serene and worthy to contemplate.

As the day advances, the heat of the sun is reflected by the hill-sides, and we hear a faint but sweet music, where flows the rill released from its fetters, and the icicles are melting on the trees; and the nuthatch and partridge are heard and seen. The south wind melts the snow at noon, and the bare ground appears with its withered grass and leaves, and we are invigorated by the perfume which exhales from it, as by the scent of strong meats.

Let us go into this deserted woodman's hut, and see how he has passed the long winter nights and the short and stormy days. For here man has lived under this south hill-side, and it seems a civilized and public spot. We have such associations as when the traveller stands by the ruins of Palmyra or Hecatompolis. Singing birds and flowers perchance have begun to appear here, for flowers as well as weeds follow in the footsteps of man. These hemlocks whispered over his head, these hickory logs were his fuel, and these pitch-pine roots kindled his fire; yonder fuming rill in the hollow, whose thin and airy vapor still ascends as busily as ever, though he is far off now, was his well. These hemlock boughs, and the straw upon this raised platform, were his bed, and this broken dish held his drink. But he has not been here this season, for the phoebes built their nest upon this shelf last summer. I find some embers left, as if he had but just gone out, where he baked his pot of beans; and while at evening he smoked his pipe, whose stemless bowl lies in the ashes, chatted with his only companion, if perchance he had any, about the depth of the snow on

the morrow, already falling fast and thick without, or disputed whether the last sound was the screech of an owl, or the creak of a bough, or imagination only; and through this broad chimney throat, in the late winter evening, ere he stretched himself upon the straw, he looked up to learn the progress of the storm, and, seeing the bright stars of Cassiopeia's chair shining brightly down upon him, fell contentedly asleep. See how many traces from which we may learn the chopper's history. From this stump we may guess the sharpness of his axe, and, from the slope of the stroke, on which side he stood, and whether he cut down the tree without going round it or changing hands; and, from the flexure of the splinters, we may know which way it fell. This one chip contains inscribed on it the whole history of the wood-chopper and of the world. On this scrap of paper, which held his sugar or salt, perchance, or was the wadding of his gun, sitting on a log in the forest, with what interest we read the tattle of cities, of those larger huts, empty and to let, like this, in High Streets and Broadways. The eaves are dripping on the south side of this simple roof, while the titmouse lisps in the pine, and the genial warmth of the sun around the door is somewhat kind and human.

After two seasons, this rude dwelling does not deform the scene. Already the birds resort to it, to build their nests, and you may track to its door the feet of many quadrupeds. Thus, for a long time, nature overlooks the encroachment and profanity of-man. The wood still cheerfully and unsuspiciously echoes the strokes of the axe that fells it, and while they are few and seldom, they enhance its wildness, and all the elements strive to naturalize the sound.

Now our path begins to ascend gradually to the top of this high hill, from whose precipitous south side we can look over the broad country, of forest and field and river, to the distant snowy mountains. See yonder thin column of smoke curling up through the woods from some invisible farm-house; the standard raised over some rural homestead. There must be a warmer and more genial spot there below, as where we detect the vapor from a spring forming a cloud above the trees. What fine relations are established between the traveller who discovers this airy column from some eminence in the forest, and him who sits below. Up goes the smoke as silently and naturally as the vapor exhales from the leaves, and as busy disposing

itself in wreathes as the housewife on the hearth below. It is a hieroglyphic of man's life, and suggests more intimate and important things than the boiling of a pot. Where its fine column rises above the forest, like an ensign, some human life has planted itself, — and such is the beginning of Rome, the establishment of the arts, and the foundation of empires, whether on the prairies of America, or the steppes of Asia.

And now we descend again to the brink of this woodland lake, which lies in a hollow of the hills, as if it were their expressed juice, and that of the leaves, which are annually steeped in it. Without outlet or inlet to the eye, it has still its history, in the lapse of its waves, in the rounded pebbles on its shore, and in the pines which grow down to its brink. It has not been idle, though sedentary, but, like Abu Musa, teaches that "sitting still at home is the heavenly way; the going out is the way of the world." Yet in its evaporation it travels as far as any. In summer it is the earth's liquid eye; a mirror in the breast of nature. The sins of the wood are washed out in it. See how the woods form an amphitheatre about it, and it is an arena for all the genialness of nature. All trees direct the traveller to its brink, all paths seek it out, birds fly to it, quadrupeds flee to it, and the very ground inclines toward it. It is nature's saloon, where she has sat down to her toilet. Consider her silent economy and tidiness; how the sun comes with his evaporation to sweep the dust from its surface each morning, and a fresh surface is constantly welling up; and annually, after whatever impurities have accumulated herein, its liquid transparency appears again in the spring. In summer a hushed music seems to sweep across its surface. But now a plain sheet of snow conceals it from our eyes, except where the wind has swept the ice bare, and the sere leaves are gliding from side to side, tacking and veering on their tiny voyages. Here is one just keeled up against a pebble on shove, a dry beech-leaf, rocking still, as if it would start again. A skilful engineer, methinks, might project its course since it fell from the parent stem. Here are all the elements for such a calculation. Its present position, the direction of the wind, the level of the pond, and how much more is given. In its scarred edges and veins is its log rolled up.

We fancy ourselves in the interior of a larger house. The surface

of the pond is our deal table or sanded floor, and the woods rise abruptly from its edge, like the walls of a cottage. The lines set to catch pickerel through the ice look like a larger culinary preparation, and the men stand about on the white ground like pieces of forest furniture. The actions of these men, at the distance of half a mile over the ice and snow, impress us as when we read the exploits of Alexander in history. They seem not unworthy of the scenery, and as momentous as the conquest of kingdoms.

Again we have wandered through the arches of the wood, until from its skirts we hear the distant booming of ice from yonder bay of the river, as if it were moved by some other and subtler tide than oceans know. To me it has a strange sound of home, thrilling as the voice of one's distant and noble kindred. A mild summer sun shines over forest and lake, and though there is but one green leaf for many rods, yet nature enjoys a serene health. Every sound is fraught with the same mysterious assurance of health, as well now the creaking of the boughs in January, as the soft sough of the wind in July.

When Winter fringes every bough
  With his fantastic wreath,
And puts the seal of silence now
  Upon the leaves beneath;

When every stream in its pent-house
  Goes gurgling on its way,
And in his gallery the mouse
  Nibbleth the meadow hay;

Methinks the summer still is nigh,
  And lurketh underneath,
As that same meadow-mouse doth lie
  Snug in that last year's heath.

And if perchance the chicadee
  Lisp a faint note anon,
The snow is summer's canopy,
  Which she herself put on.

Fair blossoms deck the cheerful trees,
  And dazzling fruits depend,
The north wind sighs a summer breeze,
  The nipping frosts to fend,

Bringing glad tidings unto me,
  The while I stand all ear,
Of a serene eternity,
  Which need not winter fear.

Out on the silent pond straightway
  The restless ice doth crack,
And pond sprites merry gambols play
  Amid the deafening rack.

Eager I hasten to the vale,
  As if I heard brave news,
How nature held high festival,
  Which it were hard to lose.

I gambol with my neighbor ice,
  And sympathizing quake,
As each new crack darts in a trice
  Across the gladsome lake.

One with the cricket in the ground,
  And fagot on the hearth,
Resounds the rare domestic sound
  Along the forest path.

Before night we will take a journey on skates along the course of this meandering river, as full of novelty to one who sits by the cottage fire all the winter's day, as if it were over the polar ice, with Captain Parry or Franklin; following the winding of the stream, now flowing amid hills, now spreading out into fair meadows, and forming a myriad coves and bays where the pine and hemlock overarch. The river flows in the rear of the towns, and we see all things from a new and wilder side. The fields and gardens come

down to it with a frankness, and freedom from pretension, which they do not wear on the highway. It is the outside and edge of the earth. Our eyes are not offended by violent contrasts. The last rail of the farmer's fence is some swaying willow bough, which still preserves its freshness, and here at length all fences stop, and we no longer cross any road. We may go far up within the country now by the most retired and level road, never climbing a hill, but by broad levels ascending to the upland meadows. It is a beautiful illustration of the law of obedience, the flow of a river; the path for a sick man, a highway down which an acorn cup may float secure with its freight. Its slight occasional falls, whose precipices would not diversify the landscape, are celebrated by mist and spray, and attract the traveller from far and near. From the remote interior, its current conducts him by broad and easy steps, or by one gentle inclined plane, to the sea. Thus by an early and constant yielding to the inequalities of the ground, it secures itself the easiest passage.

No domain of nature is quite closed to man at all times, and now we draw near to the empire of the fishes. Our feet glide swiftly over unfathomed depths, where in summer our line tempted the pout and perch, and where the stately pickerel lurked in the long corridors formed by the bulrushes. The deep, impenetrable marsh, where the heron waded, and bittern squatted, is made pervious to our swift shoes, as if a thousand railroads had been made into it. With one impulse we are carried to the cabin of the musk-rat, that earliest settler, and see him dart away under the transparent ice, like a furred fish, to his hole in the bank; and we glide rapidly over meadows where lately "the mower whet his scythe," through beds of frozen cranberries mixed with meadow grass. We skate near to where the blackbird, the pewee, and the kingbird hung their nests over the water, and the hornets builded from the maple in the swamp. How many gay warblers following the sun, have radiated from this nest of silver-birch and thistledown. On the swamp's outer edge was hung the supermarine village, where no foot penetrated. In this hollow tree the wood-duck reared her brood, and slid away each day to forage in yonder fen.

In winter, nature is a cabinet of curiosities, full of dried specimens, in their natural order and position. The meadows and

forests are a *hortus siccus*. The leaves and grasses stand perfectly pressed by the air without screw or gum, and the birds' nests are not hung on an artificial twig, but where they builded them. We go about dryshod to inspect the summer's work in the rank swamp, and see what a growth have got the alders, the willows, and the maples; testifying to how many warm suns, and fertilizing dews and showers. See what strides their boughs took in the luxuriant summer, — and anon these dormant buds will carry them onward and upward another span into the heavens.

Occasionally we wade through fields of snow, under whose depths the river is lost for many rods, to appear again to the right or left, where we least expected; still holding on its way underneath, with a faint, stertorous, rumbling sound, as if, like the bear and marmot, it too had hibernated, and we had followed its faint summer-trail to where it earthed itself in snow and ice. At first we should have thought that rivers would be empty and dry in midwinter, or else frozen solid till the spring thawed them; but their volume is not diminished even, for only a superficial cold bridges their surface. The thousand springs which feed the lakes and streams are flowing still. The issues of a few surface springs only are closed, and they go to swell the deep reservoirs. Nature's wells are below the frost. The summer brooks are not filled with snow-water, nor does the mower quench his thirst with that alone. The streams are swollen when the snow melts in the spring, because nature's work has been delayed, the water being turned into ice and snow, whose particles are less smooth and round, and do not find their level so soon.

Far over the ice, between the hemlock woods and snow-clad hills, stands the pickerel fisher, his lines set in some retired cove, like a Finlander, with his arms thrust into the pouches of his dreadnought; with dull, snowy, fishy thoughts, himself a finless fish, separated a few inches from his race; dumb, erect, and made to be enveloped in clouds and snows, like the pines on shore. In these wild scenes, men stand about in the scenery, or move deliberately and heavily, having sacrificed the sprightliness and vivacity of towns to the dumb sobriety of nature. He does not make the scenery less wild, more than the jays and musk-rats, but stands there as a part of it, as the natives are represented in the voyages of early navigators, at Nootka Sound,

and on the Northwest coast, with their furs about them, before they were tempted to loquacity by a scrap of iron. He belongs to the natural family of man, and is planted deeper in nature and has more root than the inhabitants of towns. Go to him, ask what luck, and you will learn that he too is a worshipper of the unseen. Hear with what sincere deference and waving gesture in his tone, he speaks of the lake pickerel, which he has never seen, his primitive and ideal race of pickerel. He is connected with the shore still, as by a fish-line, and yet remembers the season when he took fish through the ice on the pond, while the peas were up in his garden at home.

But now, while we have loitered, the clouds have gathered again, and a few straggling snow-flakes are beginning to descend. Faster and faster they fall, shutting out the distant objects from sight. The snow falls on every wood and field, and no crevice is forgotten; by the river and the pond, on the hill and in the valley. Quadrupeds are confined to their coverts, and the birds sit upon their perches this peaceful hour. There is not so much sound as in fair weather, but silently and gradually every slope, and the gray walls and fences, and the polished ice, and the sere leaves, which were not buried before, are concealed, and the tracks of men and beasts are lost. With so little effort does nature reassert her rule and blot out the traces of men. Hear how Homer has described the same. "The snow-flakes fall thick and fast on a winter's day. The winds are lulled, and the snow falls incessant, covering the tops of the mountains, and the hills, and the plains where the lotus-tree grows, and the cultivated fields, and they are falling by the inlets and shores of the foaming sea, but are silently dissolved by the waves." The snow levels all things, and infolds them deeper in the bosom of nature, as, in the slow summer, vegetation creeps up to the entablature of the temple, and the turrets of the castle, and helps her to prevail over art.

The surly night-wind rustles through the wood, and warns us to retrace our steps, while the sun goes down behind the thickening storm, and birds seek their roosts, and cattle their stalls.

"Drooping the lab'rer ox
Stands covered o'er with snow, and *now* demands
The fruit of all his toil."

Though winter is represented in the almanac as an old man, facing the wind and sleet, and drawing his cloak about him, we rather think of him as a merry wood-chopper, and warm-blooded youth, as blithe as summer. The unexplored grandeur of the storm keeps up the spirits of the traveller. It does not trifle with us, but has a sweet earnestness. In winter we lead a more inward life. Our hearts are warm and cheery, like cottages under drifts, whose windows and doors are half concealed, but from whose chimneys the smoke cheerfully ascends. The imprisoning drifts increase the sense of comfort which the house affords, and in the coldest days we are content to sit over the hearth and see the sky through the chimney top, enjoying the quiet and serene life that may be had in a warm corner by the chimney side, or feeling our pulse by listening to the low of cattle in the street, or the sound of the flail in distant barns all the long afternoon. No doubt a skilful physician could determine our health by observing how these simple and natural sounds affected us. We enjoy now, not an oriental, but a boreal leisure, around warm stoves and fireplaces, and watch the shadow of motes in the sunbeams.

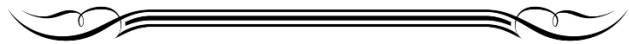
Sometimes our fate grows too homely and familiarly serious ever to be cruel. Consider how for three months the human destiny is wrapped in furs. The good Hebrew Revelation takes no cognizance of all this cheerful snow. Is there no religion for the temperate and frigid zones? We know of no scripture which records the pure benignity of the gods on a New England winter night. Their praises have never been sung, only their wrath deprecated. The best scripture, after all, records but a meagre faith. Its saints live reserved and austere. Let a brave devout man spend the year in the woods of Maine or Labrador, and see if the Hebrew Scriptures speak adequately to his condition and experience, from the setting in of winter to the breaking up of the ice.

Now commences the long winter evening around the farmer's hearth, when the thoughts of the indwellers travel far abroad, and men are by nature and necessity charitable and liberal to all creatures. Now is the happy resistance to cold, when the farmer reaps his reward, and thinks of his preparedness for winter, and, through the glittering panes, sees with equanimity "the mansion of the

northern bear," for now the storm is over,

"The full ethereal round,
Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
Shines out intensely keen; and all one cope
Of starry glitter glows from pole to pole."

THE LANDLORD



Under the one word, house, are included the school-house, the alms-house, the jail, the tavern, the dwelling-house; and the meanest shed or cave in which men live contains the elements of all these. But nowhere on the earth stands the entire and perfect house. The Parthenon, St. Peter's, the Gothic minster, the palace, the hovel, are but imperfect executions of an imperfect idea. Who would dwell in them? Perhaps to the eye of the gods, the cottage is more holy than the Parthenon, for they look down with no especial favor upon the shrines formally dedicated to them, and that should be the most sacred roof which shelters most of humanity. Surely, then, the gods who are most interested in the human race preside over the Tavern, where especially men congregate. Methinks I see the thousand shrines erected to Hospitality shining afar in all countries, as well Mahometan and Jewish, as Christian, khans, and caravansaries, and inns, whither all pilgrims without distinction resort.

Likewise we look in vain, east or west over the earth, to find the perfect man; but each represents only some particular excellence. The Landlord is a man of more open and general sympathies, who possesses a spirit of hospitality which is its own reward, and feeds and shelters men from pure love of the creatures. To be sure, this profession is as often filled by imperfect characters, and such as have sought it from unworthy motives, as any other, but so much the more should we prize the true and honest Landlord when we meet with him.

Who has not imagined to himself a country inn, where the traveller shall really feel *in*, and at home, and at his public-house, who was before at his private house; whose host is indeed a *host*, and a *lord* of the *land*, a self-appointed brother of his race; called to his place, beside, by all the winds of heaven and his good genius, as truly as the preacher is called to preach; a man of such universal sympathies, and so broad and genial a human nature, that he would fain sacrifice the tender but narrow ties of private friendship, to a

broad, sunshiny, fair-weather-and-foul friendship for his race; who loves men, not as a philosopher, with philanthropy, nor as an overseer of the poor, with charity, but by a necessity of his nature, as he loves dogs and horses; and standing at his open door from morning till night, would fain see more and more of them come along the highway, and is never satiated. To him the sun and moon are but travellers, the one by day and the other by night; and they too patronize his house. To his imagination all things travel save his sign-post and himself; and though you may be his neighbor for years, he will show you only the civilities of the road. But on the other hand, while nations and individuals are alike selfish and exclusive, he loves all men equally; and if he treats his nearest neighbor as a stranger, since he has invited all nations to share his hospitality, the farthest travelled is in some measure kindred to him who takes him into the bosom of his family.

He keeps a house of entertainment at the sign of the Black Horse or the Spread Eagle, and is known far and wide, and his fame travels with increasing radius every year. All the neighborhood is in his interest, and if the traveller ask how far to a tavern, he receives some such answer as this: "Well, sir, there's a house about three miles from here, where they haven't taken down their sign yet; but it's only ten miles to Slocum's, and that's a capital house, both for man and beast." At three miles he passes a cheerless barrack, standing desolate behind its sign-post, neither public nor private, and has glimpses of a discontented couple who have mistaken their calling. At ten miles see where the Tavern stands, — really an *entertaining* prospect, — so public and inviting that only the rain and snow do not enter. It is no gay pavilion, made of bright stuffs, and furnished with nuts and gingerbread, but as plain and sincere as a caravansary; located in no Tarrytown, where you receive only the civilities of commerce, but far in the fields it exercises a primitive hospitality, amid the fresh scent of new hay and raspberries, if it be summer time, and the tinkling of cow-bells from invisible pastures; for it is a land flowing with milk and honey, and the newest milk courses in a broad, deep stream across the premises.

In these retired places the tavern is first of all a house — elsewhere, last of all, or never, — and warms and shelters its

inhabitants. It is as simple and sincere in its essentials as the caves in which the first men dwelt, but it is also as open and public. The traveller steps across the threshold, and lo! he too is master, for he only can be called proprietor of the house here who behaves with most propriety in it. The Landlord stands clear back in nature, to my imagination, with his axe and spade felling trees and raising potatoes with the vigor of a pioneer; with Promethean energy making nature yield her increase to supply the wants of so many; and he is not so exhausted, nor of so short a stride, but that he comes forward even to the highway to this wide hospitality and publicity. Surely, he has solved some of the problems of life. He comes in at his backdoor, holding a log fresh cut for the hearth upon his shoulder with one hand, while he greets the newly arrived traveller with the other.

Here at length we have free range, as not in palaces, nor cottages, nor temples, and intrude nowhere. All the secrets of housekeeping are exhibited to the eyes of men, above and below, before and behind. This is the necessary way to live, men have confessed, in these days, and shall he skulk and hide? And why should we have any serious disgust at kitchens? Perhaps they are the holiest recess of the house. There is the hearth, after all, — and the settle, and the fagots, and the kettle, and the crickets. We have pleasant reminiscences of these. They are the heart, the left ventricle, the very vital part of the house. Here the real and sincere life which we meet in the streets was actually fed and sheltered. Here burns the taper that cheers the lonely traveller by night, and from this hearth ascend the smokes that populate the valley to his eyes by day. On the whole, a man may not be so little ashamed of any other part of his house, for here is his sincerity and earnest, at least. It may not be here that the besoms are plied most, — it is not here that they need to be, for dust will not settle on the kitchen floor more than in nature.

Hence it will not do for the Landlord to possess too fine a nature. He must have health above the common accidents of life, subject to no modern fashionable diseases; but no taste, rather a vast relish or appetite. His sentiments on all subjects will be delivered as freely as the wind blows; there is nothing private or individual in them, though still original, but they are public, and of the hue of the heavens over his house, — a certain out-of-door obviousness and transparency not

to be disputed. What he does, his manners are not to be complained of, though abstractly offensive, for it is what man does, and in him the race is exhibited. When he eats, he is liver and bowels, and the whole digestive apparatus to the company, and so all admit the thing is done. He must have no idiosyncrasies, no particular bents or tendencies to this or that, but a general, uniform, and healthy development, such as his portly person indicates, offering himself equally on all sides to men. He is not one of your peaked and inhospitable men of genius, with particular tastes, but, as we said before, has one uniform relish, and taste which never aspires higher than a tavern-sign, or the cut of a weather-cock. The man of genius, like a dog with a bone, or the slave who has swallowed a diamond, or a patient with the gravel, sits afar and retired, off the road, hangs out no sign of refreshment for man and beast, but says, by all possible hints and signs, I wish to be alone — good-by — farewell. But the landlord can afford to live without privacy. He entertains no private thought, he cherishes no solitary hour, no Sabbath day, but thinks, — enough to assert the dignity of reason, — and talks, and reads the newspaper. What he does not tell to one traveller, he tells to another. He never wants to be alone, but sleeps, wakes, eats, drinks, sociably, still remembering his race. He walks abroad through the thoughts of men, and the Iliad and Shakspeare are tame to him, who hears the rude but homely incidents of the road from every traveller. The mail might drive through his brain in the midst of his most lonely soliloquy, without disturbing his equanimity, provided it brought plenty of news and passengers. There can be no *pro*-fanity where there is no fane behind, and the whole world may see quite round him. Perchance his lines have fallen to him in dustier places, and he has heroically sat down where two roads meet, or at the Four Corners, or the Five Points, and his life is sublimely trivial for the good of men. The dust of travel blows ever in his eyes, and they preserve their clear, complacent look. The hourlies and half-hourlies, the dailies and weeklies, whirl on well-worn tracks, round and round his house, as if it were the goal in the stadium, and still he sits within in unruffled serenity, with no show of retreat. His neighbor dwells timidly behind a screen of poplars and willows, and a fence with sheaves of spears at regular intervals, or defended against the tender

palms of visitors by sharp spikes, — but the traveller's wheels rattle over the door-step of the tavern, and he cracks his whip in the entry. He is truly glad to see you, and sincere as the bull's-eye over his door. The traveller seeks to find, wherever he goes, some one who will stand in this broad and catholic relation to him, who will be an inhabitant of the land to him a stranger, and represent its human nature, as the rock stands for its inanimate nature; and this is he. As his crib furnishes provender for the traveller's horse, and his larder provisions for his appetite, so his conversation furnishes the necessary aliment to his spirits. He knows very well what a man wants, for he is a man himself, and as it were the farthest travelled, though he has never stirred from his door. He understands his needs and destiny. He would be well fed and lodged, there can be no doubt, and have the transient sympathy of a cheerful companion, and of a heart which always prophesies fair weather. And after all the greatest men, even, want much more the sympathy which every honest fellow can give, than that which the great only can impart. If he is not the most upright, let us allow him this praise, that he is the most downright of men. He has a hand to shake and to be shaken, and takes a sturdy and unquestionable interest in you, as if he had assumed the care of you, but if you will break your neck, he will even give you the best advice as to the method.

The great poets have not been ungrateful to their landlords. Mine host of the Tabard Inn, in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, was an honor to his profession: —

"A semely man our Hoste was, with alle,
For to han been an marshal in an halle.
A large man he was, with eyen stepe;
A fairer burgeis is ther nou in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wise, and well ytaught,
And of manhood him lacked righte naught.
Eke thereto, was he right a mery man,
And after souper plaien he began,
And spake of mirthe amonges other thinges,
Whan that we hadden made our reckoninges."

He is the true house-band, and centre of the company — of greater fellowship and practical social talent than any. He it is that proposes that each shall tell a tale to while away the time to Canterbury, and leads them himself, and concludes with his own tale: —

"Now, by my fader's soule that is ded,
But ye be mery, smiteth of my hed:
Hold up your hondes withouten more speche."

If we do not look up to the Landlord, we look round for him on all emergencies, for he is a man of infinite experience, who unites hands with wit. He is a more public character than a statesman, — a publican, and not consequently a sinner; and surely, he, if any, should be exempted from taxation and military duty.

Talking with our host is next best and instructive to talking with one's self. It is a more conscious soliloquy; as it were, to speak generally, and try what we would say provided we had an audience. He has indulgent and open ears, and does not require petty and particular statements. "Heigho!" exclaims the traveller. Them's my sentiments, thinks mine host, and stands ready for what may come next, expressing the purest sympathy by his demeanor. "Hot as blazes!" says the other,— "Hard weather, sir, — not much stirring nowadays," says he. He is wiser than to contradict his guest in any case; he lets him go on, he lets him travel.

The latest sitter leaves him standing far in the night, prepared to live right on, while suns rise and set, and his "good night" has as brisk a sound as his "good morning;" and the earliest riser finds him tasting his liquors in the bar ere flies begin to buzz, with a countenance fresh as the morning star over the sanded floor, — and not as one who had watched all night for travellers. And yet, if beds be the subject of conversation, it will appear that no man has been a sounder sleeper in his time.

Finally, as for his moral character, we do not hesitate to say, that he has no grain of vice or meanness in him, but represents just that degree of virtue which all men relish without being obliged to respect. He is a good man, as his bitters are good, — an

unquestionable goodness. Not what is called a good man, — good to be considered, as a work of art in galleries and museums, — but a good fellow, that is, good to be associated with. Who ever thought of the religion of an innkeeper — whether he was joined to the Church, partook of the sacrament, said his prayers, feared God, or the like? No doubt he has had his experiences, has felt a change, and is a firm believer in the perseverance of the saints. In this last, we suspect, does the peculiarity of his religion consist. But he keeps an inn, and not a conscience. How many fragrant charities and sincere social virtues are implied in this, daily offering of himself to the public. He cherishes good will to all, and gives the wayfarer as good and honest advice to direct him on his road as the priest.

To conclude, the tavern will compare favorably with the church. The church is the place where prayers and sermons are delivered, but the tavern is where they are to take effect, and if the former are good, the latter cannot be bad.

PARADISE (TO BE) REGAINED

We learn that Mr. Etzler is a native of Germany, and originally published his book in Pennsylvania, ten or twelve years ago; and now a second English edition, from the original American one, is demanded by his readers across the water, owing, we suppose, to the recent spread of Fourier's doctrines. It is one of the signs of the times. We confess that we have risen from reading this book with enlarged ideas, and grander conceptions of our duties in this world. It did expand us a little. It is worth attending to, if only that it entertains large questions. Consider what Mr. Etzler proposes:

"Fellow-men! I promise to show the means of creating a paradise within ten years, where everything desirable for human life may be had by every man in superabundance, without labor, and without pay; where the whole face of nature shall be changed into the most beautiful forms, and man may live in the most magnificent palaces, in all imaginable refinements of luxury, and in the most delightful gardens; where he may accomplish, without labor, in one year, more than hitherto could be done in thousands of years; may level mountains, sink valleys, create lakes, drain lakes and swamps, and intersect the land everywhere with beautiful canals, and roads for transporting heavy loads of many thousand tons, and for traveling one thousand miles in twenty-four hours; may cover the ocean with floating islands movable in any desired direction with immense power and celerity, in perfect security, and with all comforts and luxuries, bearing gardens and palaces, with thousands of families, and provided with rivulets of sweet water; may explore the interior of the globe, and travel from pole to pole in a fortnight; provide himself with means, unheard of yet, for increasing his knowledge of the world, and so his intelligence; lead a life of continual happiness, of enjoyments yet unknown; free himself from almost all the evils that afflict mankind, except death, and even put death far beyond the common period of human life, and finally render it less afflicting. Mankind may thus live in and enjoy a new world, far superior to the

present, and raise themselves far higher in the scale of being."

It would seem from this and various indications beside, that there is a transcendentalism in mechanics as well as in ethics. While the whole field of the one reformer lies beyond the boundaries of space, the other is pushing his schemes for the elevation of the race to its utmost limits. While one scours the heavens, the other sweeps the earth. One says he will reform himself, and then nature and circumstances will be right. Let us not obstruct ourselves, for that is the greatest friction. It is of little importance though a cloud obstruct the view of the astronomer compared with his own blindness. The other will reform nature and circumstances, and then man will be right. Talk no more vaguely, says he, of reforming the world — I will reform the globe itself. What matters it whether I remove this humor out of my flesh, or this pestilent humor from the fleshy part of the globe? Nay, is not the latter the more generous course? At present the globe goes with a shattered constitution in its orbit. Has it not asthma, and ague, and fever, and dropsy, and flatulence, and pleurisy, and is it not afflicted with vermin? Has it not its healthful laws counteracted, and its vital energy which will yet redeem it? No doubt the simple powers of nature, properly directed by man, would make it healthy and a paradise; as the laws of man's own constitution but wait to be obeyed, to restore him to health and happiness. Our panaceas cure but few ails, our general hospitals are private and exclusive. We must set up another Hygeian than is now worshipped. Do not the quacks even direct small doses for children, larger for adults, and larger still for oxen and horses? Let us remember that we are to prescribe for the globe itself.

This fair homestead has fallen to us, and how little have we done to improve it, how little have we cleared and hedged and ditched! We are too inclined to go hence to a "better land," without lifting a finger, as our farmers are moving to the Ohio soil; but would it not be more heroic and faithful to till and redeem this New England soil of the world? The still youthful energies of the globe have only to be directed in their proper channel. Every gazette brings accounts of the untutored freaks of the wind, — shipwrecks and hurricanes which the mariner and planter accept as special or general providences; but they touch our consciences, they remind us of our sins. Another

deluge would disgrace mankind. We confess we never had much respect for that antediluvian race. A thoroughbred business man cannot enter heartily upon the business of life without first looking into his accounts. How many things are now at loose ends! Who knows which way the wind will blow to-morrow? Let us not succumb to nature. We will marshal the clouds and restrain tempests; we will bottle up pestilent exhalations; we will probe for earthquakes, grub them up, and give vent to the dangerous gas; we will disembowel the volcano, and extract its poison, take its seed out. We will wash water, and warm fire, and cool ice, and underprop the earth. We will teach birds to fly, and fishes to swim, and ruminants to chew the cud. It is time we had looked into these things.

And it becomes the moralist, too, to inquire what man might do to improve and beautify the system; what to make the stars shine more brightly, the sun more cheery and joyous, the moon more placid and content. Could he not heighten the tints of flowers and the melody of birds? Does he perform his duty to the inferior races? Should he not be a god to them? What is the part of magnanimity to the whale and the beaver? Should we not fear to exchange places with them for a day, lest by their behavior they should shame us? Might we not treat with magnanimity the shark and the tiger, not descend to meet there on their own level, with spears of shark's teeth and bucklers of tiger's skin? We slander the hyena; man is the fiercest and cruelest animal. Ah! he is of little faith; even the erring comets and meteors would thank him, and return his kindness in their kind.

How meanly and grossly do we deal with nature! Could we not have a less gross labor? What else do these fine inventions suggest, — magnetism, the daguerreotype, electricity? Can we not do more than cut and trim the forest — can we not assist in its interior economy, in the circulation of the sap? Now we work superficially and violently. We do not suspect how much might be done to improve our relation to animated nature even; what kindness and refined courtesy there might be.

There are certain pursuits which, if not wholly poetic and true, do at least suggest a nobler and finer relation to nature than we know. The keeping of bees, for instance, is a very slight interference. It is like directing the sunbeams. All nations, from the remotest antiquity,

have thus fingered nature. There are Hymettus and Hybla, and how many bee-renowned spots beside? There is nothing gross in the idea of these little herds, — their hum like the faintest low of kine in the meads. A pleasant reviewer has lately reminded us that in some places they are led out to pasture where the flowers are most abundant. "Columella tells us," says he, "that the inhabitants of Arabia sent their hives into Attica to benefit by the later-blowing flowers." Annually are the hives, in immense pyramids, carried up the Nile in boats, and suffered to float slowly down the stream by night, resting by day, as the flowers put forth along the banks; and they determine the richness of any locality, and so the profitableness of delay, by the sinking of the boat in the water. We are told, by the same reviewer, of a man in Germany, whose bees yielded more honey than those of his neighbors, with no apparent advantage ; but at length he informed them, that he had turned his hives one degree more to the east, and so his bees, having two hours the start in the morning, got the first sip of honey. True, there is treachery and selfishness behind all this, but these things suggest to the poetic mind what might be done.

Many examples there are of a grosser interference, yet not without their apology. We saw last summer, on the side of a mountain, a dog employed to churn for a farmer's family, traveling upon a horizontal wheel, and though he had sore eyes, an alarming cough, and withal a demure aspect, yet their bread did get buttered for all that. Undoubtedly, in the most brilliant successes, the first rank is always sacrificed. Much useless traveling of horses, *in extenso*, has of late years been improved for man's behoof, only two forces being taken advantage of, — the gravity of the horse, which is the centripetal, and his centrifugal inclination to go ahead. Only these two elements in the calculation. And is not the creature's whole economy better economized thus? Are not all finite beings better pleased with motions relative than absolute? And what is the great globe itself but such a wheel, — a larger tread-mill, — so that our horse's freest steps over prairies are oftentimes balked and rendered of no avail by the earth's motion on its axis? But here he is the central agent and motive-power; and, for variety of scenery, being provided with a window in front, do not the ever-varying activity and fluctuating

energy of the creature himself work the effect of the most varied scenery on a country road? It must be confessed that horses at present work too exclusively for men, rarely men for horses; and the brute degenerates in man's society.

It will be seen that we contemplate a time when man's will shall be law to the physical world, and he shall no longer be deterred by such abstractions as time and space, height and depth, weight and hardness, but shall indeed be the lord of creation. "Well," says the faithless reader, "'life is short, but art is long;' where is the power that will effect all these changes?" This it is the very object of Mr. Etzler's volume to show. At present, he would merely remind us that there are innumerable and immeasurable powers already existing in nature, unimproved on a large scale, or for generous and universal ends, amply sufficient for these purposes. He would only indicate their existence, as a surveyor makes known the existence of a water-power on any stream; but for their application he refers us to a sequel to this book, called the "Mechanical System." A few of the most obvious and familiar of these powers are the Wind, the Tide, the Waves, the Sunshine. Let us consider their value.

First, there is the power of the Wind, constantly exerted over tire globe. It appears from observation of a sailing-vessel, and from scientific tables, that the average power of the wind is equal to that of one horse for every one hundred square feet. "We know," says our author —

"that ships of the first class carry sails two hundred feet high; we may, therefore, equally, on land, oppose to the wind surfaces of the same height. Imagine a line of such surfaces one mile, or about 5,000 feet, long; they would then contain 1,000,000 square feet. Let these surfaces intersect the direction of the wind at right angles, by some contrivance, and receive, consequently, its full power at al times. Its average power being equal to one horse for every 100 square feet, the total power would be equal to 1,000,000 divided by 100, or 10,000 horses' power. Allowing the power of one horse to equal that of ten men, the power of 10,000 horses is equal to 100,000 men. But as men cannot work uninterruptedly, but want about half the time for sleep and repose, the same power would be equal to 200,000 men. … We are not limited to the height of 200 feet; we might extend, if

required, the application of this power to the height of the clouds, by means of kites."

But we will have one such fence for every square mile of the globe's surface, for, as the wind usually strikes the earth at an angle of more than two degrees, which is evident from observing its effect on the high sea, it admits of even a closer approach. As the surface of the globe contains about 200,000,000 square miles, the whole power of the wind on these surfaces would equal 40,000,000,000,000 men's power, and "would perform 80,000 times as much work as all the men on earth could effect with their nerves."

If it should be objected that this computation includes the surface of the ocean and uninhabitable regions of the earth, where this power could not be applied for our purposes, Mr. Etzler is quick with his reply — "But, you will recollect," says he, "that I have promised to show the means for rendering the ocean as inhabitable as the most fruitful dry land; and I do not exclude even the polar regions."

The reader will observe that our author uses the fence only as a convenient formula for expressing the power of the wind, and does not consider it a necessary method of its application. We do not attach much value to this statement of the comparative power of the wind and horse, for no common ground is mentioned on which they can be compared. Undoubtedly, each is incomparably excellent in its way, and every general comparison made for such practical purposes as are contemplated, which gives a preference to the one, must be made with some unfairness to the other. The scientific tables are, for the most part, true only in a tabular sense. We suspect that a loaded wagon, with a light sail, ten feet square, would not have been blown so far by the end of the year, under equal circumstances, as a common racer or dray horse would have drawn it. And how many crazy structures on our globe's surface, of the same dimensions, would wait for dry-rot if the traces of one horse were hitched to them, even to their windward side? Plainly this is not the principle of comparison. But even the steady and constant force of the horse may be rated as equal to his weight at least. Yet we should prefer to let the zephyrs and gales bear, with all their weight, upon our fences, than that Dobbin, with feet braced, should lean ominously against them for a season.

Nevertheless, here is an almost incalculable power at our disposal, yet how trifling the use we make of it! It only serves to turn a few mills, blow a few vessels across the ocean, and a few trivial ends besides. What a poor compliment do we pay to our indefatigable and energetic servant!

"If you ask, perhaps, why this power is not used, if the statement be true, I have to ask in return, why is the power of steam so lately come to application? so many millions of men boiled water every day for many thousand years; they must have frequently seen that boiling water, in tightly closed pots or kettles, would lift the cover or burst the vessel with great violence. The power of steam was, therefore, as commonly known down to the least kitchen or wash-woman, as the power of wind; but close observation and reflection were bestowed neither on the one nor the other."

Men having discovered the power of falling water, which, after all, is comparatively slight, how eagerly do they seek out and improve these privileges! Let a difference of but a few feet in level be discovered on some stream near a populous town, some slight occasion for gravity to act, and the whole economy of the neighborhood is changed at once. Men do indeed speculate about and with this power as if it were the only privilege. But meanwhile this aerial stream is falling from far greater heights with more constant flow, never shrunk by drought, offering mill-sites wherever the wind blows; a Niagara in the air, with no Canada side; — only the application is hard.

There are the powers, too, of the Tide and Waves, constantly ebbing and flowing, lapsing and relapsing, but they serve man in but few ways. They turn a few tide mills, and perform a few other insignificant and accidental services only. We all perceive the effect of the tide, how imperceptibly it creeps up into our harbors and rivers, and raises the heaviest navies as easily as the lightest chip. Everything that floats must yield to it. But man, slow to take nature's constant hint of assistance, makes slight and irregular use of this power, in careening ships and getting them afloat when aground.

The following is Mr. Etzler' calculation on this head: To form a conception of the power which the tide affords, let us imagine a surface of 100 miles square, or 10,000 square miles, where the tide

rises and sinks, on an average, 10 feet; how many men would it require to empty a basin of 10,000 square miles area, and 10 feet deep, filled with sea-water, in 6¼ hours and fill it again in the same time? As one man can raise 8 cubic feet of sea-water per minute, and in 6¼ hours 3,000, it would take 1,200,000,000 men, or as they could work only half the time, 2,400,000,000, to raise 3,000,000,000,000 cubic feet, or the whole quantity required in the given time.

This power may be applied in various ways. A large body, of the heaviest materials that will float, may first be raised by it, and being attached to the end of a balance reaching from the land, or from a stationary support fastened to the bottom, when the tide falls the whole weight will be brought to bear upon the end of the balance. Also, when the tide rises, it may be made to exert a nearly equal force in the opposite direction. It can be employed wherever a *point d'appui* can be obtained.

"However, the application of the tide being by establishments fixed on the ground, it is natural to begin with them near the shores in shallow water, and upon sands, which may be extended gradually further into the sea. The shores of the continent, islands, and sands, being generally surrounded by shallow water, not exceeding from 50 to 100 fathoms in depth, for 20, 50, or 100 miles and upward. The coasts of North America, with their extensive sand-banks, islands, and rocks, may easily afford, for this purpose, a ground about 3,000 miles long, and, on average, 100 miles broad, or 300,000 square miles, which, with a power of 240,000 men per square mile, as stated, at 10 feet tide, will be equal to 72,000 millions of men, or for every mile of coast, a power of 24,000,000 men."

"Rafts, of any extent, fastened on the ground of the sea, along the shore, and stretching far into the sea, may be covered with fertile soil, bearing vegetables and trees, of every description, the finest gardens, equal to those the firm land may admit of, and buildings and machineries, which may operate, not only on the sea, where they are, but which also, by means of mechanical connections, may extend their operations for many miles into the continent. (Etzler's *Mechanical System*, page 24.) Thus this power may cultivate the artificial soil for many miles upon the surface of the sea, near the shores, and, for several miles, the dry land, along the shore, in the

most superior manner imaginable; it may build cities along the shore, consisting of the most magnificent palaces, every one surrounded by gardens and the most delightful sceneries; it may level the hills and unevennesses, or raise eminences for enjoying open prospect into the country and upon the sea; it may cover the barren shore with fertile soil, and beautify the same in various ways; it may clear the sea of shallows, and make easy the approach to the land, not merely of vessels, but of large floating islands, which may come from, and go to distant parts of the world, islands that have every commodity and security for their inhabitants which the firm land affords."

"Thus may a power, derived from the gravity of the moon and the ocean, hitherto but the objects of idle curiosity to the studious man, be made eminently subservient for creating the most delightful abodes along the coasts, where men may enjoy at the same time all the advantages of sea and dry land; the coasts may hereafter be continuous paradisiacal skirts between land and sea, everywhere crowded with the densest population. The shores and the sea along them will be no more as raw nature presents them now, but everywhere of easy and charming access, not even molested by the roar of waves, shaped as it may suit the purposes of their inhabitants; the sea will be cleared of every obstruction to free passage everywhere, and its productions in fishes, etc., will be gathered in large, appropriate receptacles, to present them to the inhabitants of the shores and of the sea."

Verily, the land would wear a busy aspect at the spring and neap tide, and these island ships, these *terræ infirmæ*, which realize the fables of antiquity, affect our imagination. We have often thought that the fittest locality for a human dwelling was on the edge of the land, that there the constant lesson and impression of the sea might sink deep into the life and character of the landsman, and perhaps impart a marine tint to his imagination. It is a noble word, that mariner — one who is conversant with the sea. There should be more of what it signifies in each of us. It is a worthy country to belong to — we look to see him not disgrace it. Perhaps we should be equally mariners and terreners, and even our Green Mountains need some of that sea-green to be mixed with them.

The computation of the power of the waves is less satisfactory.

While only the average power of the wind and the average height of the tide were taken before, now the extreme height of the waves is used, for they are made to rise ten feet above the level of the sea, to which, adding ten more for depression, we have twenty feet, or the extreme height of a wave. Indeed, the power of the waves, which is produced by the wind blowing obliquely and at disadvantage upon the water, is made to be, not only three thousand times greater than that of the tide, but one hundred times greater than that of the wind itself, meeting its object at right angles. Moreover, this power is measured by the area of the vessel, and not by its length mainly, and it seems to be forgotten that the motion of the waves is chiefly undulatory, and exerts a power only within the limits of a vibration, else the very continents, with their extensive coasts, would soon be set adrift.

Finally, there is the power to be derived from sunshine, by the principle on which Archimedes contrived his burning-mirrors, a multiplication of mirrors reflecting the rays of the sun upon the same spot, till the requisite degree of heat is obtained. The principal application of this power will be to the boiling of water and production of steam.

"How to create rivulets of sweet and wholesome water, on floating islands, in the midst of the ocean, will be no riddle now. Sea-water changed into steam, will distil into sweet water, leaving the salt on the bottom. Thus the steam engines on floating islands, for their propulsion and other mechanical purposes, will serve, at the same time, for the distillery of sweet water, which, collected in basins, may be led through channels over the island, while, where required, it may be refrigerated by artificial means, and changed into cool water, surpassing, in salubrity, the best spring water, because nature hardly ever distils water so purely, and without admixture of less wholesome matter."

So much for these few and more obvious powers, already used to a trifling extent. But there are innumerable others in nature, not described nor discovered. These, however, will do for the present. This would be to make the sun and the moon equally our satellites. For, as the moon is the cause of the tides, and the sun the cause of the wind, which, in turn, is the cause of the waves, all the work of this

planet would be performed by these far influences.

"But as these powers are very irregular and subject to interruptions; the next object is to show how they may be converted into powers that operate continually and uniformly for ever, until the machinery be worn out, or, in other words, into perpetual motions" … "Hitherto the power of the wind has been applied immediately upon the machinery for use, and we have had to wait the chances of the wind's blowing; while the operation was stopped as soon as the wind ceased to blow. But the manner, which I shall state hereafter, of applying this power, is to make it operate only for collecting or storing up power, and then to take out of this store, at any time, as much as may be wanted for final operation upon the machines. The power stored up is to react as required, and may do so long after the original power of the wind has ceased. And though the wind should cease for intervals of many months, we may have by the same power a uniform perpetual motion in a very simple way."

"The weight of a clock being wound up gives us an image of reaction. The sinking of this weight is the reaction of winding it up. It is not necessary to wait till it has run down before we wind up the weight, but it may be wound up at any time, partly or totally; and if done always before the weight reaches the bottom, the clock will be going perpetually. In a similar, though not in the same way, we may cause a reaction on a larger scale. We may raise, for instance, water by the immediate application of wind or steam to a pond upon some eminence, out of which, through an outlet, it may fall upon some wheel or other contrivance for setting machinery a going. Thus we may store up water in some eminent pond, and take out of this store, at any time, as much water through the outlet as we want to employ, by which means the original power may react for many days after it has ceased." … "Such reservoirs of moderate elevation or size need not be made artificially, but will be found made by nature very frequently, requiring but little aid for their completion. They require no regularity of form. Any valley, with lower grounds in its vicinity, would answer the purpose. Small crevices may be filled up. Such places may be eligible for the beginning of enterprises of this kind."

The greater the height, of course, the less water required. But suppose a level and dry country; then hill and valley, and "eminent

pond," are to be constructed by main force; or, if the springs are unusually low, then dirt and stones may be used, and the disadvantage arising from friction will be counterbalanced by their greater gravity. Nor shall a single rood of dry land be sunk in such artificial ponds as may be wanted, but their surfaces "may be covered with rafts decked with fertile earth, and all kinds of vegetables which may grow there as well as anywhere else."

And, finally, by the use of thick envelopes retaining the heat, and other contrivances, "the power of steam caused by sunshine may react at will, and thus be rendered perpetual, no matter how often or how long the sunshine may be interrupted. (Etzler's *Mechanical System*)."

Here is power enough, one would think, to accomplish somewhat. These are the powers below. Oh ye millwrights, ye engineers, ye operatives and speculators of every class, never again complain of a want of power; it is the grossest form of infidelity. The question is, not how we shall execute, but what. Let us not use in a niggardly manner what is thus generously offered.

Consider what revolutions are to be effected in agriculture. First, in the new country a machine is to move along, taking out trees and stones to any required depth, and piling them up in convenient heaps; then the same machine, "with a little alteration," is to plane the ground perfectly, till there shall be no hills nor valleys, making the requisite canals, ditches, and roads as it goes along. The same machine, "with some other little alterations," is then to sift the ground thoroughly, supply fertile soil from other places if wanted, and plant it; and finally the same machine, "with a little addition," is to reap and gather in the crop, thresh and grind it, or press it to oil, or prepare it any way for final use. For the description of these machines we are referred to "Etzler's *Mechanical System*, pages 11 to 27." We should be pleased to see that "*Mechanical System,*" though we have not been able to ascertain whether it has been published, or only exists as yet in the design of the author. We have great faith in it. But we cannot stop for applications now.

"Any wilderness, even the most hideous and sterile, may be converted into the most fertile and delightful gardens. The most dismal swamps may be cleared of all their spontaneous growth, filled

up and levelled, and intersected by canals, ditches and aqueducts, for draining them entirely. The soil, if required, may be meliorated, by covering or mixing it with rich soil taken from distant places, and the same be mouldered to fine dust, levelled, sifted from all roots, weeds and stones, and sowed and planted in the most beautiful order and symmetry, with fruit trees and vegetables of every kind that may stand the climate."

New facilities for transportation and locomotion are to be adopted:

"Large and commodious vehicles, for carrying many thousand tons, running over peculiarly adapted level roads, at the rate of forty miles per hour, or one thousand miles per day, may transport men and things, small houses, and whatever may serve for comfort and ease, by land. Floating islands, constructed of logs, or of wooden-stuff prepared in a similar manner, as is to be done with stone, and of live trees, which may be reared so as to interlace one another, and strengthen the whole, may be covered with gardens and palaces, and propelled by powerful engines, so as to run at an equal rate though seas and oceans. Thus, man may move, with the celerity of a bird's flight, in terrestrial paradises, from one climate to another, and see the world in all its variety, exchanging, with distant nations, the surplus of productions. The journey from one pole to another may be performed in a fortnight; the visit to a transmarine country in a week or two; or a journey round the world in one or two months by land and water. And why pass a dreary winter every year while there is yet room enough on the globe where nature is blessed with a perpetual summer, and with a far greater variety and luxuriance of vegetation? More than one-half the surface of the globe has no winter. Men will have it in their power to remove and prevent all bad influences of climate, and to enjoy, perpetually, only that temperature which suits their constitution and feeling best."

Who knows but by accumulating the power until the end of the present century, using meanwhile only the smallest allowance, reserving all that blows, all that shines, all that ebbs and flows, all that dashes, we may have got such a reserved accumulated power as to run the earth off its track into a new orbit, some summer, and so change the tedious vicissitude of the seasons? Or, perchance, coming

generations will not abide the dissolution of the globe, but, availing themselves of future inventions in aerial locomotion, and the navigation of space, the entire race may migrate from the earth, to settle some vacant and more western planet, it may be still healthy, perchance unearthy, not composed of dirt and stones, whose primary strata only are strewn, and where no weeds are sown. It took but little art, a simple application of natural laws, a canoe, a paddle, and a sail of matting, to people the isles of the Pacific, and a little more will people the shining isles of space. Do we not see in the firmament the lights carried along the shore by night, as Columbus did? Let us not despair nor mutiny.

"The dwellings also ought to be very different from what is known, if the full benefit of our means is to be enjoyed. They are to be of a structure for which we have no name yet. They are to be neither palaces, nor temples, nor cities, but a combination of all, superior to whatever is known. Earth may be baked into bricks, or even vitrified stone by heat, — we may bake large masses of any size and form, into stone and vitrified substance of the greatest durability, lasting even thousands of years, out of clayey earth, or of stones ground to dust, by the application of burning mirrors. This is to be done in the open air without other preparation than gathering the substance, grinding and mixing it with water and cement, moulding or casting it, and bringing the focus of the burning mirrors of proper size upon the same. The character of the architecture is to be quite different from what it ever has been hitherto; large solid masses are to be baked or cast in one piece, ready shaped in any form that may be desired. The building may, therefore, consist of columns two hundred feet high and upwards, of proportionate thickness, and of one entire piece of vitrified substance; huge pieces are to be moulded so as to join and hook on to each other firmly, by proper joints and folds, and not to yield in any way without breaking."

"Foundries, of any description, are to be heated by burning mirrors, and will require no labor, except the making of the first moulds and the superintendence for gathering the metal and taking the finished articles away."

Alas! in the present state of science, we must take the finished articles away; but think not that man will always be the victim of

circumstances.

The countryman who visited the city, and found the streets cluttered with bricks and lumber, reported that it was not yet finished, and one who considers the endless repairs and reforming of our houses might well wonder when they will be done. But why may not the dwellings of men on this earth be built, once for all, of some durable material, some Roman or Etruscan masonry, which will stand, so that time shall only adorn and beautify them? Why may we not finish the outward world for posterity, and leave them leisure to attend to the inner? Surely, all the gross necessities and economics might be cared for in a few years. All might be built and baked and stored up, during this, the term-time of the world, against the vacant eternity, and the globe go provisioned and furnished like our public vessels, for its voyage through space, as through some Pacific ocean, while we would "tie up the rudder and sleep before the wind," as those who sail from Lima to Manilla.

But, to go back a few years in imagination, think not that life in these crystal palaces is to bear any analogy to life in our present humble cottages. Far from it. Clothed, once for all, in some "flexible stuff," more durable than George Fox's suit of leather, composed of "fibres of vegetables," "glutinated" together by some "cohesive substances," and made into sheets, like paper, of any size or form, man will put far from him corroding care and the whole host of ills.

"The twenty-five halls in the inside of the square are to be each two hundred feet square and high; the forty corridors, each one hundred feet long and twenty wide; the eighty galleries, each from 1,000 to 1,250 feet long; about 7,000 private rooms, the whole surrounded and intersected by the grandest and most splendid colonnades imaginable; floors, ceilings, columns, with their various beautiful and fanciful intervals, all shining, and reflecting to infinity all objects and persons, with splendid lustre of all beautiful colors, and fanciful shapes and pictures. All galleries, outside and within the halls, are to be provided with many thousand commodious and most elegant vehicles, in which persons may move up and down like birds, in perfect security, and without exertion. Any member may procure himself all the common articles of his daily wants, by a short turn of some crank, without leaving his apartment; he may, at any time,

bathe himself in cold or warm water, or in steam, or in some artificially prepared liquor for invigorating health. He may, at any time, give to the air in his apartment that temperature that suits his feeling best. He may cause, at any time, an agreeable scent of various kinds. He may, at any time, meliorate his breathing air, — that main vehicle of vital power. Thus, by a proper application of the physical knowledge of our days, man may be kept in a perpetual serenity of mind, and if there is no incurable disease or defect in his organism, in constant vigor of health, and his life be prolonged beyond any parallel which present times afford."

"One or two persons are sufficient to direct the kitchen business. They have nothing else to do but to superintend the cookery, and to watch the time of the victuals being done, and then to remove them, with the table and vessels, into the dining-hall, or to the respective private apartments, by a slight motion of the hand at some crank. Any very extraordinary desire of any person may be satisfied by going to the place where the thing is to be had; and anything that requires a particular preparation in cooking or baking may be done by the person who desires it."

This is one of those instances in which the individual genius is found to consent, as indeed it always does, at last, with the universal. This last sentence has a certain sad and sober truth, which reminds us of the scripture of all nations. All expression of truth does at length take this deep ethical form. Here is hint of a place the most eligible of any in space, and of a servitor, in comparison with whom all other helps dwindle into insignificance. We hope to hear more of him anon, for even a Crystal Palace would be deficient without his invaluable services.

And as for the environs of the establishment,

"There will be afforded the most enrapturing views to be fancied, out of the private apartments, from the galleries, from the roof, from its turrets and cupolas, — gardens, as far as the eye can see, full of fruits and flowers, arranged in the most beautiful order, with walks, colonnades, aqueducts, canals, ponds, plains, amphitheatres, terraces, fountains, sculptural works, pavilions, gondolas, places for public amusement, etc., to delight the eye and fancy, the taste and smell." … "The walks and roads are to be paved with hard vitrified large

plates, so as to be always clean from all dirt in any weather or season. … The channels being of vitrified substance, and the water perfectly clear, and filtrated or distilled if required, may afford the most beautiful scenes imaginable, wile a variety of fishes is seen clear down to the bottom playing about, and the canals may afford at the same time, the means of gliding smoothly along between various sceneries of art and nature, in beautiful gondolas, while their surface and borders may be covered with fine land and aquatic birds. The walks may be covered with porticoes adorned with magnificent columns, statues, and sculptural works; all of vitrified substance, and lasting forever, while the beauties of nature around heighten the magnificence and deliciousness.

"The night affords no less delight to fancy and feelings. An infinite variety of grand, beautiful and fanciful objects and sceneries, radiating with crystalline brilliancy, by the illumination of gas-light; the human figures themselves, arrayed in the most beautiful pomp fancy may suggest, or the eye desire, shining even with brilliancy of stuffs and diamonds, like stones of various colors, elegantly shaped and arranged around the body; all reflected a thousand-fold in huge mirrors and reflectors of various forms; theatrical scenes of a grandeur and magnificence, and enrapturing illusions, unknown yet, in which any person may be either a spectator or an actor; the speech and the songs reverberating with increased sound, rendered more sonorous and harmonious than by nature, by vaultings that are moveable into any shape at any time; the sweetest and most impressive harmony of music, produced by song and instruments partly not known yet, may thrill through the nerves and vary with other amusements and delights."

"At night the roof and the inside and outside of the whole square are illuminated by gas-light, which in the mazes of many-colored crystal-like colonnades and vaultings, is reflected with a brilliancy that gives to the whole a lustre of precious stones, as far as the eye can see. Such are the future abodes of men." … "Such is the life reserved to true intelligence, but withheld from ignorance, prejudice, and stupid adherence to custom." … "Such is the domestic life to be enjoyed by every human individual that will partake of it. Love and affection may there be fostered and enjoyed without any of the

obstructions that oppose, diminish, and destroy them in the present state of men." … "It would be as ridiculous, then, to dispute and quarrel about the means of life, as it would be now about water to drink along mighty rivers, or about the permission to breathe air in the atmosphere, or about sticks in our extensive woods."

Thus is Paradise to be Regained, and that old and stern decree at length reversed. Man shall no more earn his living by the sweat of his brow. All labor shall be reduced to "a short turn of some crank," and "taking the finished article away." But there is a crank, — oh, how hard to be turned! Could there not be a crank upon a crank, — an infinitely small crank? — we would fain inquire. No, — alas! not. But there is a certain divine energy in every man, but sparingly employed as yet, which may be called the crank within, — the crank after all, — the prime mover in all machinery, — quite indispensable to all work. Would that we might get our hands on its handle! In fact, no work can be shirked. It may be postponed indefinitely, but not infinitely. Nor can any really important work be made easier by cooperation or machinery. Not one particle of labor now threatening any man can be routed without being performed. It cannot be hunted out of the vicinity like jackals and hyenas. It will not run. You may begin by sawing the little sticks, or you may saw the great sticks first, but sooner or later you must saw them both.

We will not be imposed upon by this vast application of forces. We believe that most things will have to be accomplished still by the application called Industry. We are rather pleased, after all, to consider the small private, but both constant and accumulated, force which stands behind every spade in the field. This it is that makes the valleys shine, and the deserts really bloom. Sometimes, we confess, we are so degenerate as to reflect with pleasure on the days when men were yoked like cattle, and drew a crooked stick for a plow. After all, the great interests and methods were the same.

It is a rather serious objection to Mr. Etzler's schemes, that they require time, men, and money, three very superfluous and inconvenient things for an honest and well-disposed man to deal with. "The whole world,"; he tells us, "might therefore be really changed into a paradise, within less than ten years, commencing from the first year of an association for the purpose of constructing

and applying the machinery." We are sensible of a startling incongruity when time and money are mentioned in this connection. The ten years which are proposed would be a tedious while to wait, if every man were at his post and did his duty, but quite too short a period, if we are to take time for it. But this fault is by no means peculiar to Mr. Etzler's schemes. There is far too much hurry and bustle, and too little patience and privacy, in all our methods, as if something were to be accomplished in centuries. The true reformer does not want time, nor money, nor cooperation, nor advice. What is time but the stuff delay is made of? And depend upon it, our virtue will not live on the interest of our money. He expects no income, but outgoes; so soon as we begin to count the cost, the, cost begins. And as for advice, the information floating in the atmosphere of society is as evanescent and unserviceable to him as gossamer for clubs of Hercules. There is absolutely no common sense; it is common nonsense. If we are to risk a cent or a drop of our blood, who then shall advise us? For ourselves, we are too young for experience. Who is old enough? We are older by faith than by experience. In the unbending of the arm to do the deed there is experience worth all the maxims in the world.

"It will now be plainly seen that the execution of the proposals is not proper for individuals. Whether it be proper for government at this time, before the subject has become popular, is a question to be decided; all that is to be done is to step forth, after mature reflection, to confess loudly one's conviction, and to constitute societies. Man is powerful but in union with many. Nothing great, for the improvement of his own condition, or that of his fellow-men, can ever be effected by individual enterprise."

Alas! this is the crying sin of the age, this want of faith in the prevalence of a man. Nothing can be effected but by one man. He who wants help wants everything. True, this is the condition of our weakness, but it can never be the means of our recovery. We must first succeed alone, that we may enjoy our success together. We trust that the social movements which we witness indicate an aspiration not to be thus cheaply satisfied. In this matter of reforming the world, we have little faith in corporations; not thus was it first formed.

But our author is wise enough to say that the materials for the

accomplishment of his purposes are "iron, copper, wood, earth chiefly, and a union of men whose eyes and understanding are not shut up by preconceptions." Ay, this last may be what we want mainly, — a company of "odd fellows" indeed.

"Small shares of twenty dollars will be sufficient," — in all, from "200,000 to 300,000," — "to create the first establishment for a whole community of from 3,000 to 4,000 individuals" at the end of five years we shall have a principal of 200 millions of dollars, and so paradise will be wholly regained at the end of the tenth year. But, alas! the ten years have already elapsed, and there are no signs of Eden yet, for want of the requisite funds to begin the enterprise in a hopeful manner. Yet it seems a safe investment. Perchance they could be hired at a low rate, the property being mortgaged for security, and, if necessary, it could be given up in any stage of the enterprise, without loss, with the fixtures.

Mr. Etzler considers this "Address as a touchstone, to try whether our nation is in any way accessible to these great truths, for raising the human creature to a superior state of existence, in accordance with the knowledge and the spirit of the most cultivated minds of the present time." He has prepared a constitution, short and concise, consisting of twenty-one articles, so that wherever an association may spring up, it may go into operation without delay; and the editor informs us that "Communications on the subject of this book may be addressed to C.F. Stollmeyer, No. 6, Upper Charles street, Northampton square, London."

But we see two main difficulties in the way: first, the successful application of the powers by machinery (we have not yet seen the "*Mechanical System*,") and, secondly, which is infinitely harder, the application of man to the work by faith. This it is, we fear, which will prolong the ten years to ten thousand at least. It will take a power more than "80,000 times greater than all the men on earth could effect with their nerves," to persuade men to use that which is already offered them. Even a greater than this physical power must be brought to bear upon that moral power. Faith, indeed, is all the reform that is needed; it is itself a reform. Doubtless, we are as slow to conceive of Paradise as of Heaven, of a perfect natural as of a perfect spiritual world. We see how past ages have loitered and erred.

“Is perhaps our generation free from irrationality and error? Have we perhaps reached now the summit of human wisdom, and need no more to look out for mental or physical improvement?” Undoubtedly, we are never so visionary as to be prepared for what the next hour may bring forth.

Μέλλει τὸ Θεῖον δ’ ἔστι τοιοῦτον φύσει

The Divine is about to be, and such is its nature. In our wisest moments we are secreting a matter, which, like the lime of the shell-fish, incrusts us quite over, and well for us if, like it, we cast our shells from time to time, though they be pearl and of fairest tint. Let us consider under what disadvantages science has hitherto labored before we pronounce thus confidently on her progress.

“There was never any system in the productions of human labor; but they came into existence and fashion as chance directed men.” “Only a few professional men of learning occupy themselves with teaching natural philosophy, chemistry, and the other branches of the sciences of nature, to a very limited extent, for very limited purposes, with very limited means.” “The science of mechanics is but in a state of infancy. It is true, improvements are made upon improvements, instigated by patents of government; but they are made accidentally or at hap-hazard. There is no general system of this science, mathematical as it is, which develops its principles in their full extent, and the outlines of the application to which they lead. There is no idea of comparison between what is explored and what is yet to be explored in this science. The ancient Greeks placed mathematics at the head of their education. But we are glad to have filled our memory with notions, without troubling ourselves much with reasoning about them.”

Mr. Etzler is not one of the enlightened practical men, the pioneers of the actual, who move with the slow, deliberate tread of science, conserving the world; who execute the dreams of the last century, though they have no dreams of their own; yet he deals in the very raw but still solid material of all inventions. He has more of the practical than usually belongs to so bold a schemer, so resolute a dreamer. Yet his success is in theory, and not in practice, and he feeds our faith rather than contents our understanding. His book wants order, serenity, dignity, everything, — but it does not fail to

impart what only man can impart to man of much importance, his own faith. It is true his dreams are not thrilling nor bright enough, and he leaves off to dream where he who dreams just before the dawn begins. His castles in the air fall to the ground, because they are not built lofty enough; they should be secured to heaven's roof. After all, the theories and speculations of men concern us more than their puny accomplishment. It is with a certain coldness and languor that we loiter about the actual and so-called practical. How little do the most wonderful inventions of modern times detain us. They insult nature. Every machine, or particular application, seems a slight outrage against universal laws. How many fine inventions are there which do not clutter the ground? We think that those only succeed which minister to our sensible and animal wants, which bake or brew, wash or warm, or the like. But are those of no account which are patented by fancy and imagination, and succeed so admirably in our dreams that they give the tone still to our waking thoughts? Already nature is serving all those uses which science slowly derives on a much higher and grander scale to him that will be served by her. When the sunshine falls on the path of the poet, he enjoys all those pure benefits and pleasures which the arts slowly and partially realize from age to age. The winds which fan his cheek waft him the sum of that profit and happiness which their lagging inventions supply.

The chief fault of this book is, that it aims to secure the greatest degree of gross comfort and pleasure merely. It paints a Mahometan's heaven, and stops short with singular abruptness when we think it is drawing near to the precincts of the Christian's, — and we trust we have not made here a distinction without a difference. Undoubtedly if we were to reform this outward life truly and thoroughly, we should find no duty of the inner omitted. It would be employment for our whole nature; and what we should do thereafter would be as vain a question as to ask the bird what it will do when its nest is built and its brood reared. But a moral reform must take place first, and then the necessity of the other will be superseded, and we shall sail and plow by its force alone. There is a speedier way than the "*Mechanical System*" can show to fill up marshes, to drown the roar of the waves, to tame hyenas, secure agreeable environs, diversify the land, and refresh it with "rivulets of sweet water," and

that is by the power of rectitude and true behavior. It is only for a little while, only occasionally, methinks, that we want a garden. Surely a good man need not be at the labor to level a hill for the sake of a prospect, or raise fruits and flowers, and construct floating islands, for the sake of a paradise. He enjoys better prospects than lie behind any hill. Where an angel travels it will be paradise all the way, but where Satan travels it will be burning marl and cinders. What says Veeshnoo Sarma? "He whose mind is at ease is possessed of all riches. Is it not the same to one whose foot is enclosed in a shoe, as if the whole surface of the earth were covered with leather?"

He who is conversant with the supernal powers will not worship these inferior deities of the wind, waves, tide, and sunshine. But we would not disparage the importance of such calculations as we have described. They are truths in physics, because they are true in ethics. The moral powers no one would presume to calculate. Suppose we could compare the moral with the physical, and say how many horse-power the force of love, for instance, blowing on every square foot of a man's soul, would equal. No doubt we are well aware of this force; figures would not increase our respect for it; the sunshine is equal to but one ray of its heat. The light of the sun is but the shadow of love. "The souls of men loving and fearing God," says Raleigh, "receive influence from that divine light itself, whereof the sun's clarity, and that of the stars, is by Plato called but a shadow. *Lumen est umbra Dei, Deus est Lumen Luminis.* Light is the shadow of God's brightness, who is the light of light," and, we may add, the heat of heat. Love is the wind, the tide, the waves, the sunshine. Its power is incalculable; it is many horse-power. It never ceases, it never slacks; it can move the globe without a resting-place; it can warm without fire; it can feed without meat; it can clothe without garments; it can shelter without roof; it can make a paradise within which will dispense with a paradise without. But though the wisest men in all ages have labored to publish this force, and every human heart is, sooner or later, more or less, made to feel it, yet how little is actually applied to social ends! True, it is the motive-power of all successful social machinery; but, as in physics we have made the elements do only a little drudgery for us — steam to take the place of a few horses, wind of a few oars, water of a few cranks and hand-mills —

as the mechanical forces have not yet been generously and largely applied to make the physical world answer to the ideal, so the power of love has been but meanly and sparingly applied, as yet. It has patented only such machines as the almshouse, the hospital, and the Bible Society, while its infinite wind is still blowing, and blowing down these very structures too, from time to time. Still less are we accumulating its power, and preparing to act with greater energy at a future time. Shall we not contribute our shares to this enterprise, then?

HOMER. OSSIAN. CHAUCER.

EXTRACTS FROM A LECTURE ON POETRY, READ BEFORE THE CONCORD LYCEUM, NOVEMBER 29, 1843, BY HENRY D. THOREAU.

HOMER.

THE wisest definition of poetry the poet will instantly prove false by setting aside its requisitions. We can therefore publish only our advertisement of it.

There is no doubt that the loftiest written wisdom is rhymed or measured, is in form as well as substance poetry; and a volume, which should contain the condensed wisdom of mankind, need not have one rhythmless line. Yet poetry, though the last and finest result, is a natural fruit. As naturally as the oak bears an acorn, and the vine a gourd, man bears a poem, either spoken or done. It is the chief and most memorable success, for history is but a prose narrative of poetic deeds. What else have the Hindoos, the Persians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, done, that can be told? It is the simplest relation of phenomena, and describes the commonest sensations with more truth than science does, and the latter at a distance slowly mimics its style and methods. The poet sings how the blood flows in his veins. He performs his functions, and is so well that he needs such stimulus to sing only as plants to put forth leaves and blossoms. He would strive in vain to modulate the remote and transient music which he sometimes hears, since his song is a vital function like breathing, and an integral result like weight. It is not the overflowing of life but its subsidence rather, and is drawn from under the feet of the poet. It is enough if Homer but say the sun sets. He is as serene as nature, and we can hardly detect the enthusiasm of the bard. It is as if nature spoke. He presents to us the simplest pictures of human life, so that childhood itself can understand them, and the man must not think twice to appreciate his naturalness. Each reader

discovers for himself, that succeeding poets have done little else than copy his similes. His more memorable passages are as naturally bright, as gleams of sunlight in misty weather. Nature furnishes him not only with words, but with stereotyped lines and sentences from her mint.

"As from the clouds appears the full moon,
All shining, and then again it goes behind the shadowy clouds,
So Hector, at one time appeared among the foremost,
And at another in the rear, commanding; and all with brass
He shone, like to the lightning of ægis-bearing Zeus."

He conveys the least information, even the hour of the day, with such magnificence, and vast expense of natural imagery, as if it were a message from the gods.

"While it was dawn, and sacred day was advancing,
For that space the weapons of both flew fast, and the people fell;
But when now the woodcutter was preparing his morning meal
In the recesses of the mountain, and had wearied his hands
With cutting lofty trees, and satiety came to his mind,
And the desire of sweet food took possession of his thoughts;
Then the Danaans by their valor broke the phalanxes,
Shouting to their companions from rank to rank."

When the army of the Trojans passed the night under arms, keeping watch lest the enemy should re-embark under cover of the dark,

"They, thinking great things, upon the neutral ground of war, Sat all the night; and many fires burned for them.

As when in the heavens the stars round the bright moon Appear beautiful, and the air is without wind; And all the heights, and the extreme summits, And the shady valleys appear; and the shepherd rejoices in his heart; So between the ships and the streams of Xanthus Appeared the fires of the Trojans before Ilium."

The "white-armed goddess Juno," sent by the Father of gods and

men for Iris and Apollo,

"Went down the Idæan mountains to far Olympus,

As when the mind of a man, who has come over much earth, Sallies forth, and he reflects with rapid thoughts, There was I, and there, and remembers many things; So swiftly the august Juno hastening flew through the air, And came to high Olympus."

There are few books which are fit to be remembered in our wisest hours, but the Iliad is brightest in the serenest days, and imbodies still all the sunlight that fell on Asia Minor. No modern joy or ecstasy of ours can lower its height or dim its lustre; but there it lies in the east of literature, as it were the earliest, latest production of the mind. The ruins of Egypt oppress and stifle us with their dust, foulness preserved in cassia and pitch, and swathed in linen; the death of that which never lived. But the rays of Greek poetry struggle down to us, and mingle with the sunbeams of the recent day. The statue of Memnon is cast down, but the shaft of the Iliad still meets the sun in his rising.

So too, no doubt, Homer had his Homer, and Orpheus his Orpheus, in the dim antiquity which preceded them. The mythological system of the ancients, and it is still the only mythology of the moderns, the poem of mankind, interwoven so wonderfully with their astronomy, and matching in grandeur and harmony with the architecture of the Heavens themselves, seems to point to a time when a mightier genius inhabited the earth. But man is the great poet, and not Homer nor Shakspeare; and our language itself, and the common arts of life are his work. Poetry is so universally true and independent of experience, that it does not need any particular biography to illustrate it, but we refer it sooner or later to some Orpheus or Linus, and after ages to the genius of humanity, and the gods themselves.

OSSIAN.

The genuine remains of Ossian, though of less fame and extent, are in many respects of the same stamp with the Iliad itself. He asserts the dignity of the bard no less than Homer, and in his era we hear of no other priest than he. It will not avail to call him a heathen because he personifies the sun and addresses it; and what if his

heroes did "worship the ghosts of their fathers," their thin, airy, and unsubstantial forms? we but worship the ghosts of our fathers in more substantial forms. We cannot but respect the vigorous faith of those heathen, who sternly believed somewhat, and are inclined to say to the critics, who are offended by their superstitious rites, don't interrupt these men's prayers. As if we knew more about human life and a God, than the heathen and ancients. Does English theology contain the recent discoveries?

Ossian reminds us of the most refined and rudest eras, of Homer, Pindar, Isaiah, and the American Indian. In his poetry, as in Homer's, only the simplest and most enduring features of humanity are seen, such essential parts of a man as Stonehenge exhibits of a temple; we see the circles of stone, and the upright shaft alone. The phenomena of life acquire almost an unreal and gigantic size seen through his mists. Like all older and grander poetry, it is distinguished by the few elements in the lives of its heroes. They stand on the heath, between the stars and the earth, shrunk to the bones and sinews. The earth is a boundless plain for their deeds. They lead such a simple, dry, and everlasting life, as hardly needs depart with the flesh, but is transmitted entire from age to age. There are but few objects to distract their sight, and their life is as unencumbered as the course of the stars they gaze at.

"The wrathful kings, on cairns apart,
Look forward from behind their shields,
And mark the wandering stars,
That brilliant westward move."

It does not cost much for these heroes to live. They want not much furniture. They are such forms of men only as can be seen afar through the mist, and have no costume nor dialect, but for language there is the tongue itself, and for costume there are always the skins of beasts and the bark of trees to be had. They live out their years by the vigor of their constitutions. They survive storms and the spears of their foes, and perform a few heroic deeds, and then,

"Mounds will answer questions of them,

For many future years."

Blind and infirm, they spend the remnant of their days listening to the lays of the bards, and feeling the weapons which laid their enemies low, and when at length they die, by a convulsion of nature, the bard allows us a short misty glance into futurity, yet as clear, perchance, as their lives had been. When Mac-Roine was slain,

"His soul departed to his warlike sires,
To follow misty forms of boars,
In tempestuous islands bleak."

The hero's cairn is erected, and the bard sings a brief significant strain, which will suffice for epitaph and biography.

"The weak will find his bow in the dwelling,
The feeble will attempt to bend it."

Compared with this simple, fibrous life, our civilized history appears the chronicle of debility, of fashion, and the arts of luxury. But the civilized man misses no real refinement in the poetry of the rudest era. It reminds him that civilization does but dress men. It makes shoes, but it does not toughen the soles of the feet. It makes cloth of finer texture, but it does not touch the skin. Inside the civilized man stands the savage still in the place of honor. We are those blue-eyed, yellow-haired Saxons, those slender, dark-haired Normans.

The profession of the bard attracted more respect in those days from the importance attached to fame. It was his province to record the deeds of heroes. When Ossian hears the traditions of inferior bards, he exclaims,

"I straightway seize the unfutile tales,
And send them down in faithful verse."

His philosophy of life is expressed in the opening of the third Duan of Ca-Lodin.

"Whence have sprung the things that are?
And whither roll the passing years?
Where does time conceal its two heads,
In dense impenetrable gloom,
Its surface marked with heroes' deeds alone?
I view the generations gone;
The past appears but dim;
As objects by the moon's faint beams,
Reflected from a distant lake.
I see, indeed, the thunder-bolts of war,
But there the unmighty joyless dwell,
All those who send not down their deeds
To far, succeeding times."

The ignoble warriors die and are forgotten;

"Strangers come to build a tower,
And throw their ashes overhand;
Some rusted swords appear in dust;
One, bending forward, says,
'The arms belonged to heroes gone;
We never heard their praise in song.'"

The grandeur of the similes is another feature which characterizes great poetry. Ossian seems to speak a gigantic and universal language. The images and pictures occupy even much space in the landscape, as if they could be seen only from the sides of mountains, and plains with a wide horizon, or across arms of the sea. The machinery is so massive that it cannot be less than natural. Oivana says to the spirit of her father, "Grey-haired Torkil of Tome," seen in the skies, "Thou glidest away like receding ships."

So when the hosts of Fingal and Starne approach to battle,

"With murmurs loud, like rivers far,
The race of Torne hither moved."

And when compelled to retire,

"dragging his spear behind,
Cudulin sank in the distant wood,
Like a fire unblazing ere it dies."

Nor did Fingal want a proper audience when he spoke;

"A thousand orators inclined
To hear the lay of Fingal."

The threats too would have deterred a man. Vengeance and terror were real. Trenmore threatens the young warrior, whom he meets on a foreign strand,

"Thy mother shall find thee pale on the shore,
While lessening on the waves she spies
The sails of him who slew her son."

If Ossian's heroes weep, it is from excess of strength, and not from weakness, a sacrifice or libation of fertile natures, like the perspiration of stone in summer's heat. We hardly know that tears have been shed, and it seems as if weeping were proper only for babes and heroes. Their joy and their sorrow are made of one stuff, like rain and snow, the rainbow and the mist. When Fillan was worsted in fight, and ashamed in the presence of Fingal,

"He strode away forthwith,
And bent in grief above a stream,
His cheeks bedewed with tears.
From time to time the thistles gray
He lopped with his inverted lance."

Crodar, blind and old, receives Ossian, son of Fingal, who comes to aid him in war,

"'My eyes have failed,' says he, 'Crodar is blind,

Is thy strength like that of thy fathers?
Stretch, Ossian, thine arm to the hoary-haired.'
I gave my arm to the king.
The aged hero seized my hand;
He heaved a heavy sigh;
Tears flowed incessant down his cheek.
'Strong art thou, son of the mighty,
Though not so dreadful as Morven's prince. * * *
Let my feast be spread in the hall,
Let every sweet-voiced minstrel sing;
Great is he who is within my wall,
Sons of wave-echoing Croma.'"

Even Ossian himself, the hero-bard, pays tribute to the superior strength of his father Fingal.

"How beauteous, mighty man, was thy mind,
Why succeeded Ossian without its strength?"

CHAUCER.

What a contrast between the stern and desolate poetry of Ossian, and that of Chaucer, and even of Shakspeare and Milton, much more of Dryden, and Pope, and Gray. Our summer of English poetry, like the Greek and Latin before it, seems well advanced toward its fall, and laden with the fruit and foliage of the season, with bright autumnal tints, but soon the winter will scatter its myriad clustering and shading leaves, and leave only a few desolate and fibrous boughs to sustain the snow and rime, and creak in the blasts of ages. We cannot escape the impression, that the Muse has stooped a little in her flight, when we come to the literature of civilized eras. Now first we hear of various ages and styles of poetry, but the poetry of runic monuments is for every age. The bard has lost the dignity and sacredness of his office. He has no more the bardic rage, and only conceives the deed, which he formerly stood ready to perform. Hosts of warriors, earnest for battle, could not mistake nor dispense with the ancient bard. His

lays were heard in the pauses of the fight. There was no danger of his being overlooked by his contemporaries. But now the hero and the bard are of different professions. When we come to the pleasant English verse, it seems as if the storms had all cleared away, and it would never thunder and lighten more. The poet has come within doors, and exchanged the forest and crag for the fireside, the hut of the Gael, and Stonehenge with its circles of stones, for the house of the Englishman. No hero stands at the door prepared to break forth into song or heroic action, but we have instead a homely Englishman, who cultivates the art of poetry. We see the pleasant fireside, and hear the crackling fagots in all the verse. The towering and misty imagination of the bard has descended into the plain, and become a lowlander, and keeps flocks and herds. Poetry is one man's trade, and not all men's religion, and is split into many styles. It is pastoral, and lyric, and narrative, and didactic.

Notwithstanding the broad humanity of Chaucer, and the many social and domestic comforts which we meet with in his verse, we have to narrow our vision somewhat to consider him, as if he occupied less space in the landscape, and did not stretch over hill and valley as Ossian does. Yet, seen from the side of posterity, as the father of English poetry, preceded by a long silence or confusion in history, unenlivened by any strain of pure melody, we easily come to reverence him. Passing over the earlier continental poets, since we are bound to the pleasant archipelago of English poetry, Chaucer's is the first name after that misty weather in which Ossian lived, which can detain us long. Indeed, though he represents so different a culture and society, he may be regarded as in many respects the Homer of the English poets. Perhaps he is the youthfullest of them all. We return to him as to the purest well, the fountain furthest removed from the highway of desultory life. He is so natural and cheerful, compared with later poets, that we might almost regard him as a personification of spring. To the faithful reader his muse has even given an aspect to his times, and when he is fresh from perusing him, they seem related to the golden age. It is still the poetry of youth and life, rather than of thought; and though the moral vein is obvious and constant, it has not yet banished the sun and daylight from his verse. The loftiest strains of the muse are, for the most part, sublimely

plaintive, and not a carol as free as nature's. The content which the sun shines to celebrate from morning to evening is unsung. The muse solaces herself, and is not ravished but consoled. There is a catastrophe implied, and a tragic element in all our verse, and less of the lark and morning dews, than of the nightingale and evening shades. But in Homer and Chaucer there is more of the innocence and serenity of youth, than in the more modern and moral poets. The Iliad is not sabbath but morning reading, and men cling to this old song, because they have still moments of unbaptized and uncommitted life, which give them an appetite for more. It represents no creed nor opinion, and we read it with a rare sense of freedom and irresponsibility, as if we trod on native ground, and were autochthones of the soil.

Chaucer had eminently the habits of a literary man and a scholar. We do not enough allow for the prevalence of this class. There were never any times so stirring, that there were not to be found some sedentary still. Through all those outwardly active ages, there were still monks in cloisters writing or copying folios. He was surrounded by the din of arms. The battles of Hallidon Hill and Neville's Cross, and the still more memorable battles of Crecy and Poictiers, were fought in his youth, but these did not concern our poet much, Wicliffe much more. He seems to have regarded himself always as one privileged to sit and converse with books. He helped to establish the literary class. His character, as one of the fathers of the English language, would alone make his works important, even those which have little poetical merit. A great philosophical and moral poet gives permanence to the language he uses, by making the best sound convey the best sense. He was as simple as Wordsworth in preferring his homely but vigorous Saxon tongue, when it was neglected by the court, and had not yet attained to the dignity of a literature, and rendered a similar service to his country to that which Dante rendered to Italy. If Greek sufficeth for Greek, and Arabic for Arabian, and Hebrew for Jew, and Latin for Latin, then English shall suffice for him, for any of these will serve to teach truth "right as divers pathes leaden divers folke the right waye to Rome." In the Testament of Love he writes, "Let then clerkes enditen in Latin, for they have the propertie of science, and the knowinge in that facultie,

and lette Frenchmen in their Frenche also enditen their queinte termes, for it is kyndely to their mouthes, and let us shewe our fantasies in soche wordes as we lerneden of our dames tonge."

He will know how to appreciate Chaucer best, who has come down to him the natural way, through the meagre pastures of Saxon and ante-Chaucerian poetry; and yet so human and wise he seems after such diet, that he is liable to misjudge him still. In the Saxon poetry extant, in the earliest English, and the contemporary Scottish poetry, there is less to remind the reader of the rudeness and vigor of youth, than of the feebleness of a declining age. It is for the most part translation or imitation merely, with only an occasional and slight tinge of poetry, and oftentimes the falsehood and exaggeration of fable, without its imagination to redeem it. It is astonishing to how few thoughts so many sincere efforts give utterance. But as they never sprang out of nature, so they will never root themselves in nature. There are few traces of original genius, and we look in vain to find antiquity restored, humanized, and made blithe again, by the discovery of some natural sympathy between it and the present. But when we come to Chaucer we are relieved of many a load. He is fresh and modern still, and no dust settles on his true passages. It lightens along the line, and we are reminded that flowers have bloomed, and birds sung, and hearts beaten, in England. Before the earnest gaze of the reader the rust and moss of time gradually drop off, and the original green life is revealed. He was a homely and domestic man, and did breathe quite as modern men do. Only one trait, one little incident of human biography needs to be truly recorded, that all the world may think the author fit to wear the laurel crown. In the dearth we have described, and at this distance of time, the bare processes of living read like poetry, for all of human good or ill, heroic or vulgar, lies very near to them. All that is truly great and interesting to men, runs thus as level a course, and is as unaspiring, as the plough in the furrow.

There is no wisdom which can take place of humanity, and we find *that* in Chaucer. We can expand in his breadth and think we could be that man's acquaintance. He was worthy to be a citizen of England, while Petrarch and Boccaccio lived in Italy, and Tell and Tamerlane in Switzerland and in Asia, and Bruce in Scotland, and

Wickliffe, and Gower, and Edward the Third, and John of Gaunt, and the Black Prince, were his own countrymen; all stout and stirring names. The fame of Roger Bacon came down from the preceding century, and the name of Dante still exerted the influence of a living presence. On the whole, Chaucer impresses us, as greater than his reputation, and not a little like Homer and Shakspeare, for he would have held up his head in their company. Among early English poets he is the landlord and host, and has the authority of such. The affectionate mention, which succeeding early poets make of him, coupling him with Homer and Virgil, is to be taken into the account in estimating his character and influence. King James and Dunbar of Scotland speak with more love and reverence of him, than any modern author of his predecessors of the last century. The same childlike relation is without parallel now. We read him without criticism for the most part, for he pleads not his own cause, but speaks for his readers, and has that greatness of trust and reliance which compels popularity. He confides in the reader, and speaks privily with him, keeping nothing back. And in return his reader has great confidence in him, that he tells no lies, and reads his story with indulgence, as if it were the circumlocution of a child, but discovers afterwards that he has spoken with more directness and economy of words than a sage. He is never heartless,

> "For first the thing is thought within the hart,
> Er any word out from the mouth astart."

And so new as all his theme in those days, that he had not to invent, but only to tell.

We admire Chaucer for his sturdy English wit. The easy height he speaks from in his Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, as if he were equal to any of the company there assembled, is as good as any particular excellence in it. But though it is full of good sense and humanity, it is not transcendent poetry. For picturesque description of persons it is, perhaps, without a parallel in English poetry; yet it is essentially humorous, as the loftiest genius never is. Humor, however broad and genial, takes a narrower view than enthusiasm. The whole story of Chanticlere and Dame Partlett, in the Nonne's Preeste's tale,

is genuine humanity. I know of nothing better in its kind, no more successful fabling of birds and beasts. If it is said of Shakspeare, that he is now Hamlet, and then Falstaff, it may be said of Chaucer that he sympathizes with brutes as well as men, and assumes their nature that he may speak from it. In this tale he puts on the very feathers and stature of the cock. To his own finer vein he added all the common wit and wisdom of his time, and every where in his works his remarkable knowledge of the world, and nice perception of character, his rare common sense and proverbial wisdom, are apparent. His genius does not soar like Milton's, but is genial and familiar. It shows great tenderness and delicacy, but not the heroic sentiment. It is only a greater portion of humanity with all its weakness. It is not heroic, as Raleigh's, nor pious, as Herbert's, nor philosophical, as Shakspeare's, but it is the child of the English muse, that child which is the father of the man. It is for the most part only an exceeding naturalness, perfect sincerity, with the behavior of a child rather than of a man.

Gentleness and delicacy of character are every where apparent in his verse. The simplest and humblest words come readily to his lips. No one can read the Prioress' tale, understanding the spirit in which it was written, and in which the child sings, *O alma redemptoris mater*, or the account of the departure of Custance with her child upon the sea, in the Man of Lawe's tale, without feeling the native innocence and refinement of the author. Nor can we be mistaken respecting the essential purity of his character, disregarding the apology of the manners of the age. His sincere sorrow in his later days for the grossness of his earlier works, and that he "cannot recall and annull" much that he had written, "but, alas, they are now continued from man to man, and I cannot do what I desire," is not to be forgotten. A simple pathos and feminine gentleness, which Wordsworth occasionally approaches, but does not equal, are peculiar to him. We are tempted to say, that his genius was feminine, not masculine. It was such a femininess, however, as is rarest to find in woman, though not the appreciation of it. Perhaps it is not to be found at all in woman, but is only the feminine in man.

Such pure, childlike love of nature is not easily to be matched. Nor is it strange, that the poetry of so rude an age should contain

such sweet and polished praise of nature, for her charms are not enhanced by civilization, as society's are, but by her own original and permanent refinement she at last subdues and educates man.

Chaucer's remarkably trustful and affectionate character appears in his familiar, yet innocent and reverent, manner of speaking of his God. He comes into his thought without any false reverence, and with no more parade than the zephyr to his ear. If nature is our mother, then God is our father. There is less love and simple practical trust in Shakspeare and Milton. How rarely in our English tongue do we find expressed any affection for God. There is no sentiment so rare as the love of God. Herbert almost alone expresses it, "Ah, my dear God!" Our poet uses similar words, and whenever he sees a beautiful person, or other object, prides himself on the "maistry" of his God. He reverently recommends Dido to be his bride,

> "if that God that heaven and yearth made,
> Would have a love for beauty and goodnesse,
> And womanhede, trouth, and semeliness."

He supplies the place to his imagination of the saints of the Catholic calendar, and has none of the attributes of a Scandinavian deity.

But, in justification of our praise, we must refer the hearer to his works themselves; to the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, the account of Gentilesse, the Flower and the Leaf, the stories of Griselda, Virginia, Ariadne, and Blanche the Dutchesse, and much more of less distinguished merit. There are many poets of more taste and better manners, who knew how to leave out their dulness, but such negative genius cannot detain us long; we shall return to Chaucer still with love. Even the clown has taste, whose dictates, though he disregards them, are higher and purer than those which the artist obeys; and some natures, which are rude and ill developed, have yet a higher standard of perfection, than others which are refined and well balanced. Though the peasant's cot is dark, it has the evening star for taper, while the nobleman's saloon is meanly lighted. If we have to wander through many dull and prosaic

passages in Chaucer, we have at least the satisfaction of knowing that it is not an artificial dulness, but too easily matched by many passages in life, and it is, perhaps, more pleasing, after all, to meet with a fine thought in its natural setting. We confess we feel a disposition commonly to concentrate sweets, and accumulate pleasures, but the poet may be presumed always to speak as a traveller, who leads us through a varied scenery, from one eminence to another, and, from time to time, a single casual thought rises naturally and inevitably, with such majesty and escort only as the first stars at evening. And surely fate has enshrined it in these circumstances for some end. Nature strews her nuts and flowers broadcast, and never collects them into heaps. This was the soil it grew in, and this the hour it bloomed in; if sun, wind, and rain, came here to cherish and expand the flower, shall not we come here to pluck it?

A true poem is distinguished, not so much by a felicitous expression, or any thought it suggests, as by the atmosphere which surrounds it. Most have beauty of outline merely, and are striking as the form and bearing of a stranger, but true verses come toward us indistinctly, as the very kernel of all friendliness, and envelope us in their spirit and fragrance. Much of our poetry has the very best manners, but no character. It is only an unusual precision and elasticity of speech, as if its author had taken, not an intoxicating draught, but an electuary. It has the distinct outline of sculpture, and chronicles an early hour. Under the influence of passion all men speak thus distinctly, but wrath is not always divine.

There are two classes of men called poets. The one cultivates life, the other art; one seeks food for nutriment, the other for flavor; one satisfies hunger, the other gratifies the palate. There are two kinds of writing, both great and rare; one that of genius, or the inspired, the other of intellect and taste, in the intervals of inspiration. The former is above criticism, always correct, giving the law to criticism. It vibrates and pulsates with life forever. It is sacred, and to be read with reverence, as the works of nature are studied. There are few instances of a sustained style of this kind; perhaps every man has spoken words, but the speaker is then careless of the record. Such a

style removes us out of personal relations with its author, we do not take his words on our lips, but his sense into our hearts. It is the stream of inspiration, which bubbles out, now here, now there, now in this man, now in that. It matters not through what ice-crystals it is seen, now a fountain, now the ocean stream running under ground. It is in Shakspeare, Alpheus, in Burns, Arethuse; but ever the same. The other is self-possessed and wise. It is reverent of genius, and greedy of inspiration. It is conscious in the highest and the least degree. It consists with the most perfect command of the faculties. It dwells in a repose as of the desert, and objects are as distinct in it as oases or palms in the horizon of sand. The train of thought moves with subdued and measured step, like a caravan. But the pen is only an instrument in its hand, and not instinct with life, like a longer arm. It leaves a thin varnish or glaze over all its work. The works of Goethe furnish remarkable instances of the latter.

There is no just and serene criticism as yet. Our taste is too delicate and particular. It says nay to the poet's work, but never yea to his hope. It invites him to adorn his deformities, and not to cast them off by expansion, as the tree its bark. We are a people who live in a bright light, in houses of pearl and porcelain, and drink only light wines, whose teeth are easily set on edge by the least natural sour. If we had been consulted, the back bone of the earth would have been made, not of granite, but of Bristol spar. A modern author would have died in infancy in a ruder age. But the poet is something more than a scald, "a smoother and polisher of language"; he is a Cincinnatus in literature, and occupies no west end of the world, but, like the sun, indifferently selects his rhymes, and with a liberal taste weaves into his verse the planet and the stubble.

In these old books the stucco has long since crumbled away, and we read what was sculptured in the granite. They are rude and massive in their proportions, rather than smooth and delicate in their finish. The workers in stone polish only their chimney ornaments, but their pyramids are roughly done. There is a soberness in a rough aspect, as of unhewn granite, which addresses a depth in us, but a polished surface hits only the ball of the eye. The true finish is the work of time and the use to which a thing is put. The elements are still polishing the pyramids. Art may varnish and gild, but it can do

no more. A work of genius is rough-hewn from the first, because it anticipates the lapse of time, and has an ingrained polish, which still appears when fragments are broken off, an essential quality of its substance. Its beauty is at the same time its strength, and it breaks with a lustre. The great poem must have the stamp of greatness as well as its essence. The reader easily goes within the shallowest contemporary poetry, and informs it with all the life and promise of the day, as the pilgrim goes within the temple, and hears the faintest strains of the worshippers; but it will have to speak to posterity, traversing these deserts, through the ruins of its outmost walls, by the grandeur and beauty of its proportions.

HERALD OF FREEDOM

We have occasionally, for several years, met with a number of this spirited journal, edited, as abolitionists need not to be informed, by Nathaniel P. Rogers, once a counselor at law in Plymouth, still further up the Merrimack, but now, in his riper years, come down the hills thus far, to be the Herald of Freedom to those parts. We have been refreshed not a little by the cheap cordial of his editorials, flowing like his own mountain-torrents, now clear and sparkling, now foaming and gritty, and always spiced with the essence of the fir and the Norway pine; but never dark nor muddy, nor threatening with smothered murmurs, like the rivers of the plain. The effect of one of his effusions reminds us of what the hydropathists say about the electricity in fresh spring-water, compared with that which has stood over night, to suit weak nerves. We do not know of another notable and public instance of such pure, youthful, and hearty indignation at all wrong. The Church itself must love it, if it have any heart, though he is said to have dealt rudely with its sanctity. His clean attachment to the right, however, sanctions the severest rebuke we have read.

We have neither room, nor inclination, to criticise this paper, or its cause, at length, but would speak of it in the free and uncalculating spirit of its author. Mr. Rogers seems to us to occupy an honorable and manly position in these days, and in this country, making the press a living and breathing organ to reach the hearts of men, and not merely "fine paper, and good type," with its civil pilot sitting aft, and magnanimously waiting for the news to arrive — the vehicle of the earliest news, but the latest intelligence — recording the indubitable and last results, the marriages and deaths, alone. The present editor is wide awake, and standing on the beak of his ship; not as a scientific explorer under government, but a Yankee sealer rather, who makes those unexplored continents his harbors in which to refit for more adventurous cruises. He is a fund of news and freshness in himself — has the gift of speech, and the knack of

writing, and if anything important takes place in the Granite State, we may be sure that we shall hear of it in good season. No other paper that we know keeps pace so well with one forward wave of the restless public thought and sentiment of New England, and asserts so faithfully and ingenuously the largest liberty in all things. There is, beside, more unpledged poetry in his prose than in the verses of many an accepted rhymer; and we are occasionally advertised by a mellow hunter's note from his trumpet, that, unlike most reformers, his feet are still where they should be, on the turf, and that he looks out from a serener natural life into the turbid arena of politics. Nor is slavery always a sombre theme with him, but invested with the colors of his wit and fancy, and an evil to be abolished by other means than sorrow and bitterness of complaint. He will fight this fight with what cheer may be. But to speak of his composition. It is a genuine Yankee style, without fiction — real guessing and calculating to some purpose, and reminds us occasionally, as does all free, brave, and original writing, of its great master in these days, Thomas Carlyle. It has a life above grammar, and a meaning which need not be parsed to be understood.

But like those same mountain-torrents, there is rather too much slope to his channel, and the rainbow sprays and evaporations go double-quick-time to heaven, while the body of his water falls headlong to the plain. We would have more pause and deliberation, occasionally, if only to bring his tide to a head — more frequent expansions of the stream, still, bottomless, mountain tarns, perchance inland seas, and at length the deep ocean itself.

We cannot do better than enrich our pages with a few extracts from such articles as we have at hand. Who can help sympathizing with his righteous impatience, when invited to hold his peace or endeavor to convince the understandings of the people by well ordered arguments?

"Bandy compliments and arguments with the somnambulist, on 'table rock,' when all the waters of Lake Superior are thundering in the great horse-shoe, and deafening the very war of the elements! Would you not shout to him with a clap of thunder through a speaking-trumpet, if you could command it — if possible to reach his senses in his appaling extremity! Did Jonah argufy with the city of

Nineveh— ‘yet forty days,’ cried the vagabond prophet, ‘and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’ That was his salutation. And did the ‘Property and Standing’ turn up their noses at him, and set the mob on to him? Did the clergy discountenance him, and call him extravagant, misguided, a divider of churches, a disturber of parishes? What would have become of that city, if they had done this? Did they ‘approve his principles’ but dislike his ‘measures’ and his ‘spirit’!!

“Slavery must be cried down, denounced down, ridiculed down, and pro-slavery with it, or rather before it. Slavery will go when pro-slavery starts. The sheep will follow when the bell-wether leads. Down, then, with the bloody system, out of the land with it, and out of the world with it — into the Red Sea with it. Men shan’t be enslaved in this country any longer. Women and children shan’t be flogged here any longer. If you undertake to hinder us, the worst is your own.”— “But this is all fanaticism. Wait and see.”

He thus raises the anti-slavery ‘war-whoop’ in New Hampshire, when an important convention is to be held, sending the summons

“To none but the whole-hearted, fully-committed, cross-the-Rubicon spirits.”— “From rich ‘old Cheshire,’ from Rockingham, with her horizon setting down away to the salt sea.”— “From where the sun sets behind Kearsarge, even to where he rises gloriously over Moses Norris’s own town of Pittsfield; and from Amoskeag to Ragged Mountains — Coos — Upper Coos, home of the everlasting hills, send out your bold advocates of human rights — wherever they lay, scattered by lonely lake, or Indian stream, or ‘Grant,’ or ‘Location’ — from the trout-haunted brooks of the Amoriscoggin, and where the adventurous streamlet takes up its mountain march for the St. Lawrence.

“Scattered and insulated men, wherever the light of philanthropy and liberty has beamed in upon your solitary spirits, come down to us like your streams and clouds — and our own Grafton, all about among your dear hills, and your mountain-flanked valleys — whether you home along the swift Ammonoosuck, the cold Pemigewassett, or the ox-bowed Connecticut.” —

“We are slow, brethren, dishonorably slow, in a cause like ours. Our feet should be ‘as hinds’ feet.’ ‘Liberty lies bleeding.’ The

leaden-colored wing of slavery obscures the land with its baleful shadow. Let us come together, and inquire at the hand of the Lord what is to be done."

And again; on occasion of the New England Convention in the Second-Advent Tabernacle, in Boston, he desires to try one more blast, as it were, 'on Fabyan's White Mountain horn.'

"Ho, then, people of the Bay State — men, women, and children; children, women, and men, scattered friends of the friendless, wheresoever ye inhabit — if habitations ye have, as such friends have not always — along the sea-beat border of Old Essex and the Puritan Landing, and up beyond sight of the sea-cloud, among the inland hills, where the sun rises and sets upon the dry land, in that vale of the Connecticut, too fair for human content, and too fertile for virtuous industry — where deepens the haughtiest of earth's streams, on its seaward way, proud with the pride of old Massachusetts. Are there any friends of the friendless negro haunting such a valley as this? In God's name, I fear there are none, or few, for the very scene looks apathy and oblivion to the genius of humanity. I blow you the summons though. Come, if any of you are there.

"And gallant little Rhode Island; transcendent abolitionists of the tiny Commonwealth. I need not call you. You are called the year round, and, instead of sleeping in your tents, stand harnessed, and with trumpets in your hands — every one!

"Connecticut! yonder, the home of the Burleighs, the Monroes, and the Hudsons, and the native land of old George Benson! are you ready? 'All ready!'

"Maine here, off east, looking from my mountain post, like an everglade. Where is your Sam. Fessenden, who stood storm-proof 'gainst New Organization in '38? Has he too much name as a jurist and orator, to be found at a New England Convention in '43? God forbid! Come one and all of you from 'Down East' to Boston, on the 30th, and let the sails of your coasters whiten all the sea-road. Alas! there are scarce enough of you to man a fishing boat. Come up, mighty in your fewness.

"And green Vermont, what has become of your anti-slavery host — thick as your mountain maples — mastering your very politics — not by balance of power, but by sturdy majority. Where are you

now? Will you be at the Advent Meeting on the 30th of May? Has anti-slavery waxed too trying for your off-hand, how-are-ye, humanity? Have you heard the voice of Freedom of late? Next week will answer.

"Poor, cold, winter-ridden New-Hampshire — winter-killed, I like to have said — she will be there, bare-foot, and bare-legged, making tracks like her old bloody-footed volunteers at Trenton. She will be there, if she can work her passage. I guess her minstrelsy* will — for birds can go independently of car, or tardy stage-coach." —

— "Let them come as Macaulay says they did to the siege of Rome, when they did not leave old men and women enough to begin the harvests. Oh how few we should be, if every soul of us were there. How few, and yet it is the entire muster-roll of Freedom for all the land. We should have to beat up for recruits to complete the army of Gideon, or the platoon at the Spartan straits. The foe are like the grasshoppers for multitude, as for moral power. Thick grass mows the easier, as the Goth said of the enervated millions of falling Rome. They can't stand too thick, nor too tall for the anti-slavery scythe. Only be there at the mowing."

In noticing the doings of another Convention, he thus congratulates himself on the liberty of speech which anti-slavery concedes to all — even to the Folsoms and Lamsons:

"Denied a chance to speak elsewhere, because they are not mad after the fashion, they all flock to the anti-slavery boards as a kind of Asylum. And so the poor old enterprise has to father all the oddity of the times. It is a glory to anti-slavery, that she can allow the poor friends the right of speech. I hope she will always keep herself able to afford it. Let the constables wait on the State House, and Jail, and the Meeting Houses. Let the door-keeper at the Anti-Slavery Hall be that tall, celestial-faced Woman, that carries the flag on the National Standard, and says, 'without concealment,' as well as 'without compromise.' Let every body in, who has sanity enough to see the beauty of brotherly kindness, and let them say their fantasies, and magnanimously bear with them, seeing unkind pro-slavery drives them in upon us. We shall have saner and sensibler meetings then, than all others in the land put together."

More recently, speaking of the use which some of the clergy have

made of Webster's plea in the Girard case, as a seasonable aid to the church, he proceeds:

"Webster is a great man, and the clergy run under his wing. They had better employ him as counsel against the Comeouters. He wouldn't trust the defence on the Girard will plea though, if they did. He would not risk his fame on it, as a religious argument. He would go and consult William Bassett, of Lynn, on the principles of the 'Comeouters,' to learn their strength; and he would get him a testament, and go into it as he does into the Constitution, and after a year's study of it he would hardly come off in the argument as he did from the conflict with Carolina Hayne. On looking into the case, he would advise the clergy not to go to trial — to settle — or, if they couldn't to 'leave it out' to a reference of 'orthodox deacons.

We will quote from the same sheet his indignant and touching satire on the funeral of those public officers who were killed by the explosion on board the Princeton, together with the President's slave; an accident which reminds us how closely slavery is linked with the government of this nation. The President coming to preside over a nation of free men, and the man who stands next to him a slave!

"I saw account," says he, "of the burial of those slaughtered politicians. The hearses passed along, of Upshur, Gilmer, Kennon, Maxcy, and Gardner — but the dead slave, who fell in company with them on the deck of the Princeton, was not there. He was held their equal by the impartial gun-burst, but not allowed by the bereaved nation a share in the funeral." … "Out upon their funeral, and upon the paltry procession that went in its train. Why didn't they enquire for the body of the other man who fell on that deck! And why hasn't the nation inquired, and its press? I saw account of the scene in a barbarian print, called the Boston Atlas, and it was dumb on the absence of that body, as if no such man had fallen. Why, I demand in the name of human nature, what was that sixth man of the game brought down by that great shot, left unburied and above ground — for there is no account yet that his body has been allowed the right of sepulture." … "They didn't bury him even as a slave. They didn't assign him a jim-crow place in that solemn procession, that he might follow to wait upon his enslavers in the land of spirits. They have gone there without slaves or waiters." … "The poor black man —

they enslaved and imbruted him all his life, and now he is dead, they have, for aught appears, left him to decay and waste above ground. Let the civilized world take note of the circumstance."

We deem such timely, pure, and unpremeditated expressions of a public sentiment, such publicity of genuine indignation and humanity, as abound everywhere in this journal, the most generous gifts a man can make, and should be glad to see the scraps from which we have quoted, and the others which we have not seen, collected into a volume. It might, perchance, penetrate into some quarters which the unpopular cause of freedom has not reached.

Long may we hear the voice of this Herald.

But since our voyage Rogers has died, and now there is no one in New England to express the indignation or contempt which may still be felt at any cant or inhumanity.

When, on a certain occasion, one said to him, "Why do you go about as you do, agitating the community on the subject of abolition? Jesus Christ never preached abolitionism:" he replied, "Sir, I have two answers to your appeal to Jesus Christ. First, I deny your proposition, that he never preached abolition. That single precept of his— 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them' — reduced to practice, would abolish slavery over the whole earth in twenty-four hours. That is my first answer. I deny your proposition.

Secondly, granting your proposition to be true — and admitting what I deny — that Jesus Christ did not preach the abolition of slavery, then I say, "he didn't do his duty."

His was not the wisdom of the head, but of the heart. If perhaps he had all the faults, he had more than the usual virtues of the radical. He loved his native soil, her hills and streams, like a Burns or Scott. As he rode to an antislavery convention, he viewed the country with a poet's eye, and some of his letters written back to his editorial substitute contain as true and pleasing pictures of New England life and scenery as are anywhere to be found.

Whoever heard of Swamscot before? "Swamscot is all fishermen. Their business is all on the deep. Their village is ranged along the ocean margin, where their brave little fleets lay drawn up, and which are out at day-break on the mighty blue — where you may see them

brooding at anchor — still and intent at their profound trade, as so many flies on the back of a wincing horse, and for whose wincings they care as little as the Swamscot Fishers heed the restless heavings of the sea around their barks. Every thing about savors of fish. Nets hang out on every enclosure. Flakes, for curing the fish are attached to almost every dwelling. Every body has a boat — and you'll see a huge pair of sea boots lying before almost every door. The air too savors strongly of the common finny vocation. Beautiful little beaches slope out from the dwellings into the Bay, all along the village — where the fishing boats lie keeled up, at low water, with their useless anchors hooked deep into the sand. A stranded bark is a sad sight — especially if it is above high water mark, where the next tide can't relieve it and set it afloat again. The Swamscot boats though, all look cheery, and as if sure of the next sea-flow. The people are said to be the freest in the region — owing perhaps to their bold and adventurous life. The Priests can't ride them out into the deep, as they can the shore folks. "

His style and vein though often exaggerated and affected were more native to New England than those of any of her sons, and unfinished as his pieces were, yet their literary merit has been overlooked.

WENDELL PHILLIPS BEFORE THE CONCORD LYCEUM

Concord, Mass. March 12th, 1845.

Mr. Editor: —

We have now, for the third winter, had our spirits refreshed, and our faith in the destiny of the commonwealth strengthened, by the presence and the eloquence of Wendell Phillips; and we wish to tender to him our thanks and our sympathy. The admission of this gentleman into the Lyceum has been strenuously opposed by a respectable portion of our fellow citizens, who themselves, we trust, whose descendants, at least, we know, will be as faithful conservers of the true order, whenever that shall be the order of the day — and in each instance, the people have voted that they would hear him, by coming themselves and bringing their friends to the lecture room, and being very silent that they might hear. We saw some men and women, who had long ago come out, going in once more through the free and hospitable portals of the Lyceum; and many of our neighbors confessed, that they had had a "sound season" this once.

It was the speaker's aim to show what the State, and above all the Church, had to do, and now, alas! have done, with Texas and slavery, and how much, on the other hand, the individual should have to do with church and state. These were fair themes, and not mistimed; and his words were addressed to "fit audience, and not few."

We must give Mr. Phillips the credit of being a clean, erect, and what was once called a consistent man. He at least is not responsible for slavery, nor for American Independence; for the hypocrisy and superstition of the Church, nor the timidity and selfishness of the State; nor for the indifference and willing ignorance of any. He stands so distinctly, so firmly, and so effectively, alone, and one honest man is so much more than a host, that we cannot but feel that he does himself injustice when he reminds us of "the American Society, which he represents." It is rare that we have the pleasure of listening to so clear and orthodox a speaker, who obviously has so

few cracks or flaws in his moral nature — who, having words at his command in a remarkable degree, has much more than words, if these should fail, in his unquestionable earnestness and integrity — and, aside from their admiration at his rhetoric, secures the genuine respect of his audience. He unconsciously tells his biography as he proceeds, and we see him early and earnestly deliberating on these subjects, and wisely and bravely, without counsel or consent of any, occupying a ground at first, from which the varying tides of public opinion cannot drive him.

No one could mistake the genuine modesty and truth with which he affirmed, when speaking of the framers of the Constitution— "I am wiser than they," which with him has improved these sixty years' experience of its working; or the uncompromising consistency and frankness of the prayer which concluded, not like the Thanksgiving proclamations, with— "God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," but God dash it into a thousand pieces, till there shall not remain a fragment on which a man can stand, and dare not tell his name — referring to the case of Frederick —— .

To our disgrace we know not what to call him, unless Scotland will lend us the spoils of one of her Douglasses, out of history or fiction, for a season, till we be hospitable and brave enough to hear his proper name — a fugitive slave in one more sense than we; who has proved himself the possessor of a fair intellect, and has won a colorless reputation in these parts; and who, we trust, will be as superior to degradation from the sympathies of Freedom, as from the antipathies of slavery. When, said Mr. Phillips, he communicated to a New Bedford audience, the other day, his purpose of writing his life, and telling his name, and the name of his master, and the place he ran from, the murmur ran round the room, and was anxiously whispered by the sons of the Pilgrims, "He had better not!" and it was echoed under the shadow of Concord monument, "He had better not!"

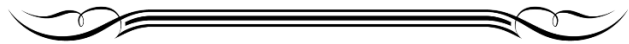
We would fain express our appreciation of the freedom and steady wisdom, so rare in the reformer, with which he declared that he was not born to abolish slavery, but to do right. We have heard a few, a very few, good political speakers, who afforded us the pleasure of great intellectual power and acuteness, of soldier-like steadiness, and

of a graceful and natural oratory; but in this man the audience might detect a sort of moral principle and integrity, which was more stable than their firmness, more discriminating than his own intellect, and more graceful than his rhetoric, which was not working for temporary or trivial ends. It is so rare and encouraging to listen to an orator, who is content with another alliance than with the popular party, or even with the sympathizing school of the martyrs, who can afford sometimes to be his own auditor if the mob stay away, and hears himself without reproof, that we feel ourselves in danger of slandering all mankind by affirming, that here is one, who is at the same time an eloquent speaker and a righteous man.

Perhaps, on the whole, the most interesting fact elicited by these addresses, is the readiness of the people at large, of whatever sect or party, to entertain, with good will and hospitality, the most revolutionary and heretical opinions, when frankly and adequately, and in some sort cheerfully, expressed. Such clear and candid declaration of opinion served like an electuary to whet and clarify the intellect of all parties, and furnished each one with an additional argument for that right he asserted.

We consider Mr. Phillips one of the most conspicuous and efficient champions of a true Church and State now in the field, and would say to him, and such as are like him, “God speed you.” If you know of any champion in the ranks of his opponents, who has the valor and courtesy even of Paynim chivalry, if not the Christian graces and refinement of this knight, you will do us a service by directing him to these fields forthwith, where the lists are now open, and he shall be hospitably entertained. For as yet the red-cross knight has shown us only the gallant device upon his shield, and his admirable command of his steed, prancing and curveting in the empty lists; but we wait to see who, in the actual breaking of lances, will come tumbling upon the plain.

THOMAS CARLYLE AND HIS WORKS



Thomas Carlyle is a Scotchman, born about fifty years ago, "at Ecclefechan, Annandale," according to one authority. "His parents 'good farmer people,' his father an elder in the Secession church there, and a man of strong native sense, whose words were said to 'nail a subject to the wall.'" We also hear of his "excellent mother," still alive, and of "her fine old covenanting accents, converting with his transcendental tones." He seems to have gone to school at Annan, on the shore of the Solway Firth, and there, as he himself writes, "heard of famed professors, of high matters classical, mathematical, a whole Wonderland of Knowledge," from Edward Irving, then a young man "fresh from Edinburgh, with college prizes, … come to see our schoolmaster, who had also been his." From this place, they say, you can look over into Wordsworth's country. Here first he may have become acquainted with Nature, with woods, such as are there, and rivers and brooks, some of whose names we have heard, and the last lapses of Atlantic billows. He got some of his education, too, more or less liberal, out of the University of Edinburgh, where, according to the same authority, he had to "support himself," partly by "private tuition, translations for the booksellers, etc.," and afterward, as we are glad to hear, "taught an academy in Dysart, at the same time that Irving was teaching in Kirkaldy," the usual middle passage of a literary life. He was destined for the Church, but not by the powers that rule man's life; made his literary début in Fraser's Magazine, long ago; read here and there in English and French, with more or less profit, we may suppose, such of us at least as are not particularly informed, and at length found some words which spoke to his condition in the German language, and set himself earnestly to unravel that mystery — with what success many readers know.

After his marriage he "resided partly at Comely Bank, Edinburgh; and for a year or two at Craigenputtock, a wild and solitary farmhouse in the upper part of Dumfriesshire," at which last place, amid barren heather hills, he was visited by our countryman,

Emerson. With Emerson he still corresponds. He was early intimate with Edward Irving, and continued to be his friend until the latter's death. Concerning this "freest, brotherliest, bravest human soul," and Carlyle's relation to him, those whom it concerns will do well to consult a notice of his death in Fraser's Magazine for 1835, reprinted in the Miscellanies. He also corresponded with Goethe. Latterly, we hear, the poet Sterling was his only intimate acquaintance in England.

He has spent the last quarter of his life in London, writing books; has the fame, as all readers know, of having made England acquainted with Germany, in late years, and done much else that is novel and remarkable in literature. He especially is the literary man of those parts. You may imagine him living in altogether a retired and simple way, with small family, in a quiet part of London, called Chelsea, a little out of the din of commerce, in "Cheyne Row," there, not far from the "Chelsea Hospital.

" "A little past this, and an old ivy-clad church, with its buried generations lying around it," writes one traveler, "you come to an antique street running at right angles with the Thames, and, a few steps from the river, you find Carlyle's name on the door." "A Scotch lass ushers you into the second story front chamber, which is the spacious workshop of the world maker." Here he sits a long time together, with many books and papers about him; many new books, we have been told, on the upper shelves, uncut, with the "author's respects" in them; in late months, with many manuscripts in an old English hand, and innumerable pamphlets, from the public libraries, relating to the Cromwellian period; now, perhaps, looking out into the street on brick and pavement, for a change, and now upon some rod of grass ground in the rear; or, perchance, he steps over to the British Museum, and makes that his studio for the time. This is the fore part of the day; that is the way with literary men commonly; and then in the afternoon, we presume, he takes a short run of a mile or so through the suburbs out into the country; we think he would run that way, though so short a trip might not take him to very sylvan or rustic places. In the meanwhile, people are calling to see him, from various quarters, few very worthy of being seen by him; "distinguished travelers from America," not a few; to all and sundry

of whom he gives freely of his yet unwritten rich and flashing soliloquy, in exchange for whatever they may have to offer; speaking his English, as they say, with a "broad Scotch accent," talking, to their astonishment and to ours, very much as he writes, a sort of Carlylese, his discourse "coming to its climaxes, ever and anon, in long, deep, chest-shaking bursts of laughter."

He goes to Scotland sometimes, to visit his native heath-clad hills, having some interest still in the earth there; such names as Craigenputtock and Ecclefechan, which we have already quoted, stand for habitable places there to him; or he rides to the seacoast of England in his vacations, upon his horse Yankee, bought by the sale of his books here, as we have been told.

How, after all, he gets his living; what proportion of his daily bread he earns by day-labor or job-work with his pen, what he inherits, what steals — questions whose answers are so significant, and not to be omitted in his biography — we, alas! are unable to answer here. It may be worth the while to state that he is not a Reformer in our sense of the term — eats, drinks, and sleeps, thinks and believes, professes and practices, not according to the New England standard, nor to the Old English wholly. Nevertheless, we are told that he is a sort of lion in certain quarters there, "an amicable centre for men of the most opposite opinions," and "listened to as an oracle," "smoking his perpetual pipe."

A rather tall, gaunt figure, with intent face, dark hair and complexion, and the air of a student; not altogether well in body, from sitting too long in his workhouse — he, born in the Border Country and descended from moss-troopers, it may be.

We have seen several pictures of him here; one, a full-length portrait, with hat and overall, if it did not tell us much, told the fewest lies; another, we remember, was well said to have "too combed a look;" one other also we have seen in which we discern some features of the man we are thinking of; but the only ones worth remembering, after all, are those which he has unconsciously drawn of himself.

When we remember how these volumes came over to us, with their encouragement and provocation from month to month, and what commotion they created in many private breasts, we wonder

that the country did not ring, from shore to shore, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with its greeting; and the Boones and Crocketts of the West make haste to hail him, whose wide humanity embraces them too. Of all that the packets have brought over to us, has there been any richer cargo than this? What else has been English news for so long a season? What else, of late years, has been England to us — to us who read books, we mean? Unless we remembered it as the scene where the age of Wordsworth was spending itself, and a few younger muses were trying their wings, and from time to time as the residence of Landor, Carlyle alone, since the death of Coleridge, has kept the promise of England. It is the best apology for all the bustle and the sin of commerce, that it has made us acquainted with the thoughts of this man. Commerce would not concern us much if it were not for such results as this. New England owes him a debt which she will be slow to recognize. His earlier essays reached us at a time when Coleridge's were the only recent words which had made any notable impression so far, and they found a field unoccupied by him, before yet any words of moment had been uttered in our midst. He had this advantage, too, in a teacher, that he stood near to his pupils; and he has no doubt afforded reasonable encouragement and sympathy to many an independent but solitary thinker.

It is remarkable, but on the whole, perhaps, not to be lamented, that the world is so unkind to a new book. Any distinguished traveler who comes to our shores is likely to get more dinners and speeches of welcome than he can well dispose of, but the best books, if noticed at all, meet with coldness and suspicion, or, what is worse, gratuitous, off-hand criticism. It is plain that the reviewers, both here and abroad, do not know how to dispose of this man. They approach him too easily, as if he were one of the men of letters about town, who grace Mr. Somebody's administration, merely; but he already belongs to literature, and depends neither on the favor of reviewers, nor the honesty of booksellers, nor the pleasure of readers for his success. He has more to impart than to receive from his generation. He is another such a strong and finished workman in his craft as Samuel Johnson was, and, like him, makes the literary class respectable; since few are yet out of their apprenticeship, or, even if they learn to be able writers, are at the same time able and valuable

thinkers. The aged and critical eye, especially, is incapacitated to appreciate the works of this author. To such their meaning is impalpable and evanescent, and they seem to abound only in obstinate mannerisms, Germanisms, and whimsical ravings of all kinds, with now and then an unaccountably true and sensible remark. On the strength of this last, Carlyle is admitted to have what is called genius. We hardly know an old man to whom these volumes are not hopelessly sealed.

The language, they say, is foolishness and a stumbling-block to them; but to many a clear-headed boy they are plainest English, and dispatched with such hasty relish as his bread and milk. The fathers wonder how it is that the children take to this diet so readily, and digest it with so little difficulty. They shake their heads with mistrust at their free and easy delight, and remark that "Mr. Carlyle is a very learned Man;" for they, too, not to be out of fashion, have got grammar and dictionary, if the truth were known, and with the best faith cudgeled their brains to get a little way into the jungle, and they could not but confess, as often as they found the clue, that it was as intricate as Blackstone to follow, if you read it honestly. But merely reading, even with the best intentions, is not enough: you must almost have written these books yourself. Only he who has had the good fortune to read them in the nick of time, in the most perceptive and recipient season of life, can give any adequate account of them.

Many have tasted of this well with an odd suspicion, as if it were some fountain Arethuse which had flowed under the sea from Germany, as if the materials of his books had lain in some garret there, in danger of being appropriated for waste-paper. Over what German ocean, from what Hercynian forest, he has been imported, piecemeal, into England, or whether he has now all arrived, we are not informed. This article is not invoiced in Hamburg nor in London. Perhaps it was contraband. However, we suspect that this sort of goods cannot be imported in this way. No matter how skillful the stevedore, all things being got into sailing trim, wait for a Sunday, and aft wind, and then weigh anchor, and run up the main-sheet — straightway what of transcendent and permanent value is there resists the aft wind, and will doggedly stay behind that Sunday — it does not travel Sundays; while biscuit and pork make headway, and

sailors cry heave-yo! It must part company, if it open a seam. It is not quite safe to send out a venture in this kind, unless yourself go supercargo. Where a man goes, there he is; but the slightest virtue is immovable — it is real estate, not personal; who would keep it, must consent to be bought and sold with it.

However, we need not dwell on this charge of a German extraction, it being generally admitted, by this time, that Carlyle is English, and an inhabitant of London. He has the English for his mother-tongue, though with a Scotch accent, or never so many accents, and thoughts also, which are the legitimate growth of native soil, to utter therewith. His style is eminently colloquial, and no wonder it is strange to meet with in a book. It is not literary or classical; it has not the music of poetry, nor the pomp of philosophy, but the rhythms and cadences of conversation endlessly repeated. It resounds with emphatic, natural, lively, stirring tones, muttering, rattling, exploding, like shells and shot, and with like execution. So far as it is a merit in composition that the written answer to the spoken word, and the spoken word to a fresh and pertinent thought in the mind, as well as to the half thoughts, the tumultuary misgivings and expectancies, this author is, perhaps, not to be matched in literature.

He is no mystic, either, more than Newton or Arkwright or Davy, and tolerates none. Not one obscure line, or half line, did he ever write.

His meaning lies plain as the daylight, and he who runs may read; indeed, only he who runs can read, and keep up with the meaning. It has the distinctness of picture to his mind, and he tells us only what he sees printed in largest English type upon the face of things. He utters substantial English thoughts in plainest English dialects; for it must be confessed, he speaks more than one of these. All the shires of England, and all the shires of Europe, are laid under contribution to his genius; for to be English does not mean to be exclusive and narrow, and adapt one's self to the apprehension of his nearest neighbor only. And yet no writer is more thoroughly Saxon. In the translation of those fragments of Saxon poetry, we have met with the same rhythm that occurs so often in his poem on the French Revolution. And if you would know where many of those obnoxious

Carlyleisms and Germanisms came from, read the best of Milton's prose, read those speeches of Cromwell which he has brought to light, or go and listen once more to your mother's tongue. So much for his German extraction.

Indeed, for fluency and skill in the use of the English tongue, he is a master unrivaled. His felicity and power of expression surpass even his special merits as historian and critic. Therein his experience has not failed him, but furnished him with such a store of winged, ay and legged words, as only a London life, perchance, could give account of. We had not understood the wealth of the language before. Nature is ransacked, and all the resorts and purlieus of humanity are taxed, to furnish the fittest symbol for his thought. He does not go to the dictionary, the word-book, but to the word-manufactory itself, and has made endless work for the lexicographers. Yes, he has that same English for his mother-tongue that you have, but with him it is no dumb, muttering, mumbling faculty, concealing the thoughts, but a keen, unwearied, resistless weapon. He has such command of it as neither you nor I have; and it would be well for any who have a lost horse to advertise, or a town-meeting warrant, or a sermon, or a letter to write, to study this universal letter-writer, for he knows more than the grammar or the dictionary.

The style is worth attending to, as one of the most important features of the man which we at this distance can discern. It is for once quite equal to the matter. It can carry all its load, and never breaks down nor staggers. His books are solid and workmanlike, as all that England does; and they are graceful and readable also. They tell of huge labor done, well done, and all the rubbish swept away, like the bright cutlery which glitters in shop windows, while the coke and ashes, the turnings, filings, dust, and borings lie far away at Birmingham, unheard of. He is a masterly clerk, scribe, reporter, writer. He can reduce to writing most things — gestures, winks, nods, significant looks, patois, brogue, accent, pantomime, and how much that had passed for silence before does he represent by written words. The countryman who puzzled the city lawyer, requiring him to write, among other things, his call to his horses, would hardly have puzzled him; he would have found a word for it, all right and classical, that would have started his team for him.

Consider the ceaseless tide of speech forever flowing in countless cellars, garrets, parlors; that of the French, says Carlyle, "only ebbs toward the short hours of night," and what a drop in the bucket is the printed word. Feeling, thought, speech, writing, and, we might add, poetry, inspiration — for so the circle is completed; how they gradually dwindle; at length, passing through successive colanders, into your history and classics, from the roar of the ocean, the murmur of the forest, to the squeak of a mouse; so much only parsed and spelt out, and punctuated, at last. The few who can talk like a book, they only get reported commonly. But this writer ports a new lieferung.

One wonders how so much, after all, was expressed in the old way, so much here depends upon the emphasis, tone, pronunciation, style, and spirit of the reading. No writer uses so profusely all the aids to intelligibility which the printer's art affords. You wonder how others had contrived to write so many pages without emphatic or italicized words, they are so expressive, so natural, so indispensable here, as if none had ever used the demonstrative pronouns demonstratively before. In another's sentences the thought, though it may be immortal, is as it were embalmed, and does not strike you, but here it is so freshly living, even the body of it not having passed through the ordeal of death, that it stirs in the very extremities, and the smallest particles and pronouns are all alive within it. It is not simple dictionary it, yours or mine, but it. The words did not come at the command of grammar, but of a tyrannous, inexorable meaning; not like standing soldiers, by vote of Parliament, but any able-bodied countryman pressed into the service, for "Sire, it is not a revolt, it is a revolution."

We have never heard him speak, but we should say that Carlyle was a rare talker. He has broken the ice, and streams freely forth like a spring torrent. He does not trace back the stream of his thought, silently adventurous, up to its fountain-head, but is borne away with it, as it rushes through his brain like a torrent to overwhelm and fertilize. He holds a talk with you. His audience is such a tumultuous mob of thirty thousand as assembled at the University of Paris, before printing was invented. Philosophy, on the other hand, does not talk, but write, or, when it comes personally before an audience,

lecture or read; and therefore it must be read tomorrow, or a thousand years hence. But the talker must naturally be attended to at once; he does not talk on without an audience; the winds do not long bear the sound of his voice. Think of Carlyle reading his "French Revolution" to any audience. One might say it was never written, but spoken; and thereafter reported and printed, that those not within sound of his voice might know something about it. Some men read to you something which they have written in a dead language, of course, but it may be in a living letter, in Syriac, or Roman, or Runic character. Men must speak English who can write Sanskrit; they must speak a modern language who write, perchance, an ancient and universal one. We do not live in those days when the learned used a learned language.

There is no writing of Latin with Carlyle; but as Chaucer, with all reverence to Homer, and Virgil, and Messieurs the Normans, sung his poetry in the homely Saxon tongue, and Locke has at least the merit of having done philosophy into English, so Carlyle has done a different philosophy still further into English, and thrown open the doors of literature and criticism to the populace.

Such a style — so diversified and variegated! It is like the face of a country; it is like a New England landscape, with farmhouses and villages, and cultivated spots, and belts of forests and blueberry swamps round about, with the fragrance of shad-blossoms and violets on certain winds. And as for the reading of it, it is novel enough to the reader who has used only the diligence, and old line mail-coach. It is like traveling, sometimes on foot, sometimes in a gig tandem; sometimes in a full coach, over highways, mended and unmended, for which you will prosecute the town; on level roads, through French departments, by Simplon roads over the Alps; and now and then he hauls up for a relay, and yokes in an unbroken colt of a Pegasus for a leader, driving off by cart-paths, and across lots, by corduroy roads and gridiron bridges; and where the bridges are gone, not even a string-piece left, and the reader has to set his breast and swim. You have got an expert driver this time, who has driven ten thousand miles, and was never known to upset; can drive six in hand on the edge of a precipice, and touch the leaders anywhere with his snapper.

With wonderful art he grinds into paint for his picture all his moods and experiences, so that all his forces may be brought to the encounter. Apparently writing without a particular design or responsibility, setting down his soliloquies from time to time, taking advantage of all his humors, when at length the hour comes to declare himself, he puts down in plain English, without quotation marks, what he, Thomas Carlyle, is ready to defend in the face of the world, and fathers the rest, often quite as defensible, only more modest, or plain-spoken, or insinuating, upon "Sauerteig," or some other gentleman long employed on the subject. Rolling his subject how many ways in his mind, he meets it now face to face, wrestling with it at arm's length, and striving to get it down, or throw it over his head; and if that will not do, or whether it will do or not, tries the back stitch and side hug with it, and downs it again, scalps it, draws and quarters it, hangs it in chains, and leaves it to the winds and dogs. With his brows knit, his mind made up, his will resolved and resistless, he advances, crashing his way through the host of weak, half-formed, dilettante opinions, honest and dishonest ways of thinking, with their standards raised, sentimentalities and conjectures, and tramples them all into dust. See how he prevails; you don't even hear the groans of the wounded and dying. Certainly it is not so well worth the while to look through any man's eyes at history, for the time, as through his; and his way of looking at things is fastest getting adopted by his generation.

It is not in man to determine what his style shall be. He might as well determine what his thoughts shall be. We would not have had him write always as in the chapter on Burns, and the Life of Schiller, and elsewhere. No; his thoughts were ever irregular and impetuous. Perhaps as he grows older and writes more he acquires a truer expression; it is in some respects manlier, freer, struggling up to a level with its fountain-head.

We think it is the richest prose style we know of.

Who cares what a man's style is, so it is intelligible — as intelligible as his thought. Literally and really, the style is no more than the stylus, the pen he writes with; and it is not worth scraping and polishing, and gilding, unless it will write his thoughts the better for it. It is something for use, and not to look at. The question for us

is, not whether Pope had a fine style, wrote with a peacock's feather, but whether he uttered useful thoughts. Translate a book a dozen times from one language to another, and what becomes of its style? Most books would be worn out and disappear in this ordeal. The pen which wrote it is soon destroyed, but the poem survives. We believe that Carlyle has, after all, more readers, and is better known today for this very originality of style, and that posterity will have reason to thank him for emancipating the language, in some measure, from the fetters which a merely conservative, aimless, and pedantic literary class had imposed upon it, and setting an example of greater freedom and naturalness. No man's thoughts are new, but the style of their expression is the never-failing novelty which cheers and refreshes men. If we were to answer the question, whether the mass of men, as we know them, talk as the standard authors and reviewers write, or rather as this man writes, we should say that he alone begins to write their language at all, and that the former is, for the most part, the mere effigies of a language, not the best method of concealing one's thoughts even, but frequently a method of doing without thoughts at all.

In his graphic description of Richter's style, Carlyle describes his own pretty nearly; and no doubt he first got his own tongue loosened at that fountain, and was inspired by it to equal freedom and originality. "The language," as he says of Richter, "groans with indescribable metaphors and allusions to all things, human and divine, flowing onward, not like a river, but like an inundation; circling in complex eddies, chafing and gurgling, now this way, now that;" but in Carlyle, "the proper current" never "sinks out of sight amid the boundless uproar." Again: "His very language is Titanian — deep, strong, tumultuous, shining with a thousand hues, fused from a thousand elements, and winding in labyrinthic mazes."

In short, if it is desirable that a man be eloquent, that he talk much, and address himself to his own age mainly, then this is not a bad style of doing it. But if it is desired rather that he pioneer into unexplored regions of thought, and speak to silent centuries to come, then, indeed, we could wish that he had cultivated the style of Goethe more, that of Richter less; not that Goethe's is the kind of utterance most to be prized by mankind, but it will serve for a model of the

best that can be successfully cultivated.

But for style, and fine writing, and Augustan ages, that is but a poor style, and vulgar writing, and a degenerate age, which allows us to remember these things. This man has something to communicate. Carlyle's are not, in the common sense, works of art in their origin and aim; and yet, perhaps, no living English writer evinces an equal literary talent.

They are such works of art only as the plow and corn-mill and steam-engine — not as pictures and statues. Others speak with greater emphasis to scholars, as such, but none so earnestly and effectually to all who can read. Others give their advice, he gives his sympathy also. It is no small praise that he does not take upon himself the airs, has none of the whims, none of the pride, the nice vulgarities, the starched, impoverished isolation, and cold glitter of the spoiled children of genius. He does not need to husband his pearl, but excels by a greater humanity and sincerity.

He is singularly serious and untrivial. We are everywhere impressed by the rugged, unwearied, and rich sincerity of the man. We are sure that he never sacrificed one jot of his honest thought to art or whim, but to utter himself in the most direct and effectual way — that is the endeavor. These are merits which will wear well. When time has worn deeper into the substance of these books, this grain will appear. No such sermons have come to us here out of England, in late years, as those of this preacher — sermons to kings, and sermons to peasants, and sermons to all intermediate classes. It is in vain that John Bull, or any of his cousins, turns a deaf ear, and pretends not to hear them: nature will not soon be weary of repeating them. There are words less obviously true, more for the ages to hear, perhaps, but none so impossible for this age not to hear. What a cutting cimeter was that "Past and Present," going through heaps of silken stuffs, and glibly through the necks of men, too, without their knowing it, leaving no trace! He has the earnestness of a prophet. In an age of pedantry and dilettantism, he has no grain of these in his composition. There is nowhere else, surely, in recent readable English, or other books, such direct and effectual teaching, reproving, encouraging, stimulating, earnestly, vehemently, almost like Mahomet, like Luther; not looking behind him to see how his Opera

Omnia will look, but forward to other work to be done. His writings are a gospel to the young of this generation; they will hear his manly, brotherly speech with responsive joy, and press forward to older or newer gospels.

We should omit a main attraction in these books, if we said nothing of their humor. Of this indispensable pledge of sanity, without some leaven of which the abstruse thinker may justly be suspected of mysticism, fanaticism, or insanity, there is a superabundance in Carlyle. Especially the transcendental philosophy needs the leaven of humor to render it light and digestible. In his later and longer works it is an unfailing accompaniment, reverberating through pages and chapters, long sustained without effort. The very punctuation, the italics, the quotation marks, the blank spaces and dashes, and the capitals, each and all are pressed into its service.

Carlyle's humor is vigorous and titanic, and has more sense in it than the sober philosophy of many another. It is not to be disposed of by laughter and smiles merely; it gets to be too serious for that: only they may laugh who are not hit by it. For those who love a merry jest, this is a strange kind of fun — rather too practical joking, if they understand it. The pleasant humor which the public loves is but the innocent pranks of the ballroom, harmless flow of animal spirits, the light plushy pressure of dandy pumps, in comparison.

But when an elephant takes to treading on your corns, why then you are lucky if you sit high, or wear cowhide. His humor is always subordinate to a serious purpose, though often the real charm for the reader is not so much in the essential progress and final upshot of the chapter as in this indirect side-light illustration of every hue. He sketches first, with strong, practical English pencil, the essential features in outline, black on white, more faithfully than Dryasdust would have done, telling us wisely whom and what to mark, to save time, and then with brush of camel's-hair, or sometimes with more expeditious swab, he lays on the bright and fast colors of his humor everywhere. One piece of solid work, be it known, we have determined to do, about which let there be no jesting, but all things else under the heavens, to the right and left of that, are for the time fair game. To us this humor is not wearisome, as almost every other

is. Rabelais, for instance, is intolerable; one chapter is better than a volume — it may be sport to him, but it is death to us. A mere humorist, indeed, is a most unhappy man; and his readers are most unhappy also.

Humor is not so distinct a quality as, for the purposes of criticism, it is commonly regarded, but allied to every, even the divinest faculty. The familiar and cheerful conversation about every hearthside, if it be analyzed, will be found to be sweetened by this principle. There is not only a never-failing, pleasant, and earnest humor kept up there, embracing the domestic affairs, the dinner, and the scolding, but there is also a constant run upon the neighbors, and upon Church and State, and to cherish and maintain this, in a great measure, the fire is kept burning, and the dinner provided. There will be neighbors, parties to a very genuine, even romantic friendship, whose whole audible salutation and intercourse, abstaining from the usual cordial expressions, grasping of hands, or affectionate farewells, consists in the mutual play and interchange of a genial and healthy humor, which excepts nothing, not even themselves, in its lawless range. The child plays continually, if you will let it, and all its life is a sort of practical humor of a very pure kind, often of so fine and ethereal a nature, that its parents, its uncles and cousins, can in no wise participate in it, but must stand aloof in silent admiration, and reverence even. The more quiet the more profound it is. Even Nature is observed to have her playful moods or aspects, of which man seems sometimes to be the sport.

But, after all, we could sometimes dispense with the humor, though unquestionably incorporated in the blood, if it were replaced by this author's gravity. We should not apply to himself, without qualification, his remarks on the humor of Richter. With more repose in his inmost being, his humor would become more thoroughly genial and placid. Humor is apt to imply but a half satisfaction at best. In his pleasantest and most genial hour, man smiles but as the globe smiles, and the works of nature. The fruits dry ripe, and much as we relish some of them in their green and pulpy state, we lay up for our winter store, not out of these, but the rustling autumnal harvests.

Though we never weary of this vivacious wit, while we are

perusing its work, yet when we remember it from afar, we sometimes feel balked and disappointed, missing the security, the simplicity, and frankness, even the occasional magnanimity of acknowledged dullness and bungling. This never-failing success and brilliant talent become a reproach.

Besides, humor does not wear well. It is commonly enough said, that a joke will not bear repeating. The deepest humor will not keep. Rumors do not circulate but stagnate, or circulate partially. In the oldest literature, in the Hebrew, the Hindoo, the Persian, the Chinese, it is rarely humor, even the most divine, which still survives, but the most sober and private, painful or joyous thoughts, maxims of duty, to which the life of all men may be referred. After time has sifted the literature of a people, there is left only their scripture, for that is writing, par excellence. This is as true of the poets, as of the philosophers and moralists by profession; for what subsides in any of these is the moral only, to reappear as dry land at some remote epoch.

We confess that Carlyle's humor is rich, deep, and variegated, in direct communication with the backbone and risible muscles of the globe — and there is nothing like it; but much as we relish this jovial, this rapid and delugeous way of conveying one's views and impressions, when we would not converse but meditate, we pray for a man's diamond edition of his thought, without the colored illuminations in the margin — the fishes and dragons and unicorns, the red or the blue ink, but its initial letter in distinct skeleton type, and the whole so clipped and condensed down to the very essence of it, that time will have little to do. We know not but we shall immigrate soon, and would fain take with us all the treasures of the East; and all kinds of dry, portable soups, in small tin canisters, which contain whole herds of English beeves boiled down, will be acceptable.

The difference between this flashing, fitful writing and pure philosophy is the difference between flame and light. The flame, indeed, yields light; but when we are so near as to observe the flame, we are apt to be incommoded by the heat and smoke. But the sun, that old Platonist, is set so far off in the heavens, that only a genial summer heat and ineffable daylight can reach us. But many a time,

we confess, in wintry weather, we have been glad to forsake the sunlight, and warm us by these Promethean flames. Carlyle must undoubtedly plead guilty to the charge of mannerism. He not only has his vein, but his peculiar manner of working it. He has a style which can be imitated, and sometimes is an imitator of himself.

Certainly, no critic has anywhere said what is more to the purpose than this which Carlyle's own writings furnish, which we quote, as well for its intrinsic merit as for its pertinence here. "It is true," says he, thinking of Richter, "the beaten paths of literature lead the safeliest to the goal; and the talent pleases us most which submits to shine with new gracefulness through old forms. Nor is the noblest and most peculiar mind too noble or peculiar for working by prescribed laws; Sophocles, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and, in Richter's own age, Goethe, how little did they innovate on the given forms of composition, how much in the spirit they breathed into them! All this is true; and Richter must lose of our esteem in proportion.

And again, in the chapter on Goethe, "We read Goethe for years before we come to see wherein the distinguishing peculiarity of his understanding, of his disposition, even of his way of writing, consists! It seems quite a simple style — that of his; remarkable chiefly for its calmness, its perspicuity, in short, its commonness; and yet it is the most uncommon of all styles." And this, too, translated for us by the same pen from Schiller, which we will apply not merely to the outward form of his works, but to their inner form and substance. He is speaking of the artist. "Let some beneficent divinity snatch him, when a suckling, from the breast of his mother, and nurse him with the milk of a better time, that he may ripen to his full stature beneath a distant Grecian sky. And having grown to manhood, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century; not, however, to delight it by his presence, but, dreadful, like the son of Agamemnon, to purify it. The matter of his works he will take from the present, but their form he will derive from a nobler time; nay, from beyond all time, from the absolute unchanging unity of his own nature."

But enough of this. Our complaint is already out of all proportion to our discontent.

Carlyle's works, it is true, have not the stereotyped success which we call classic. They are a rich but inexpensive entertainment, at which we are not concerned lest the host has strained or impoverished himself to feed his guests. It is not the most lasting word, nor the loftiest wisdom, but rather the word which comes last. For his genius it was reserved to give expression to the thoughts which were throbbing in a million breasts. He has plucked the ripest fruit in the public garden; but this fruit already least concerned the tree that bore it, which was rather perfecting the bud at the foot of the leaf-stalk. His works are not to be studied, but read with a swift satisfaction. Their flavor and gust is like what poets tell of the froth of wine, which can only be tasted once and hastily. On a review we can never find the pages we had read. Yet they are in some degree true natural products in this respect. All things are but once, and never repeated. These works were designed for such complete success that they serve but for a single occasion.

But he is willfully and pertinaciously unjust, even scurrilous, impolite, ungentlemanly; calls us "Imbeciles," "Dilettantes," "Philistines," implying sometimes what would not sound well expressed. If he would adopt the newspaper style, and take back these hard names — But where is the reader who does not derive some benefit from these epithets, applying them to himself?

He is, in fact, the best tempered, and not the least impartial of reviewers. He goes out of his way to do justice to profligates and quacks. There is somewhat even Christian, in the rarest and most peculiar sense, in his universal brotherliness, his simple, childlike endurance, and earnest, honest endeavor, with sympathy for the like. Carlyle, to adopt his own classification, is himself the hero as literary man. There is no more notable workingman in England, in Manchester or Birmingham, or the mines round about. We know not how many hours a day he toils, nor for what wages, exactly: we only know the results for us.

Notwithstanding the very genuine, admirable, and loyal tributes to Burns, Schiller, Goethe, and others, Carlyle is not a critic of poetry. In the book of heroes, Shakespeare, the hero as poet, comes off rather slimly. His sympathy, as we said, is with the men of endeavor; not using the life got, but still bravely getting their life. "In fact," as he

says of Cromwell, “everywhere we have to notice the decisive practical eye of this man, how he drives toward the practical and practicable; has a genuine insight into what is fact.” You must have very stout legs to get noticed at all by him. He is thoroughly English in his love of practical men, and dislike for cant, and ardent, enthusiastic heads that are not supported by any legs. He would kindly knock them down that they may regain some vigor by touching their mother earth. We have often wondered how he ever found out Burns, and must still refer a good share of his delight in him to neighborhood and early association. The Lycidas and Comus, appearing in Blackwood’s Magazine, would probably go unread by him, nor lead him to expect a Paradise Lost. The condition-of-England question is a practical one. The condition of England demands a hero, not a poet. Other things demand a poet; the poet answers other demands. Carlyle in London, with this question pressing on him so urgently, sees no occasion for minstrels and rhapsodists there. Kings may have their bards when there are any kings. Homer would certainly go a-begging there. He lives in Chelsea, not on the plains of Hindostan, nor on the prairies of the West, where settlers are scarce, and a man must at least go whistling to himself.

What he says of poetry is rapidly uttered, and suggestive of a thought, rather than the deliberate development of any. He answers your question, What is poetry? by writing a special poem, as that Norse one, for instance, in the Book of Heroes, altogether wild and original; — answers your question, What is light? by kindling a blaze which dazzles you, and pales sun and moon, and not as a peasant might, by opening a shutter.

Carlyle is not a seer, but a brave looker-on and reviewer; not the most free and catholic observer of men and events, for they are likely to find him preoccupied, but unexpectedly free and catholic when they fall within the focus of his lens. He does not live in the present hour, and read men and books as they occur for his theme, but having chosen this, he directs his studies to this end. If we look again at his page, we are apt to retract somewhat that we have said. Often a genuine poetic feeling dawns through it, like the texture of the earth seen through the dead grass and leaves in the spring. The “History of

the French Revolution" is a poem, at length translated into prose — an Iliad, indeed, as he himself has it— "The destructive wrath of Sansculottism, this is what we speak, having unhappily no voice for singing."

One improvement we could suggest in this last, as indeed in most epics — that he should let in the sun oftener upon his picture. It does not often enough appear, but it is all revolution, the old way of human life turned simply bottom upward, so that when at length we are inadvertently reminded of the "Brest Shipping," a St.

Domingo colony, and that anybody thinks of owning plantations, and simply turning up the soil there, and that now at length, after some years of this revolution, there is a falling off in the importation of sugar, we feel a queer surprise. Had they not sweetened their water with revolution then? It would be well if there were several chapters headed "Work for the Month," — Revolution-work inclusive, of course— "Altitude of the Sun," "State of the Crops and Markets," "Meteorological Observations," "Attractive Industry," "Day Labor," etc., just to remind the reader that the French peasantry did something beside go without breeches, burn châteaus, get ready knotted cords, and embrace and throttle one another by turns. These things are sometimes hinted at, but they deserve a notice more in proportion to their importance. We want not only a background to the picture, but a ground under the feet also. We remark, too, occasionally, an unphilosophical habit, common enough elsewhere, in Alison's History of Modern Europe, for instance, of saying, undoubtedly with effect, that if a straw had not fallen this way or that, why then — but, of course, it is as easy in philosophy to make kingdoms rise and fall as straws.

The poet is blithe and cheery ever, and as well as nature. Carlyle has not the simple Homeric health of Wordsworth, nor the deliberate philosophic turn of Coleridge, nor the scholastic taste of Landor, but, though sick and under restraint, the constitutional vigor of one of his old Norse heroes, struggling in a lurid light, with Jötuns still, striving to throw the old woman, and "she was Time" — striving to lift the big cat, and that was "the Great World-Serpent, which, tail in mouth, girds and keeps up the whole created world." The smith, though so brawny and tough, I should not call the healthiest man. There is too

much shopwork, too great extremes of heat and cold, and incessant ten-pound-ten and thrashing of the anvil, in his life. But the haymaker's is a true sunny perspiration, produced by the extreme of summer heat only, and conversant with the blast of the zephyr, not of the forge-bellows. We know very well the nature of this man's sadness, but we do not know the nature of his gladness.

The poet will maintain serenity in spite of all disappointments. He is expected to preserve an unconcerned and healthy outlook over the world, while he lives. Philosophia practica est eruditionis meta — Philosophy practiced is the goal of learning; and for that other, Oratoris est celare artem, we might read, Herois est celare pugnam — the hero will conceal his struggles. Poetry is the only life got, the only work done, the only pure product and free labor of man, performed only when be has put all the world under his feet, and conquered the last of his foes.

Carlyle speaks of Nature with a certain unconscious pathos for the most part. She is to him a receded but ever memorable splendor, casting still a reflected light over all his scenery. As we read his books here in New England, where there are potatoes enough, and every man can get his living peacefully and sportively as the birds and bees, and need think no more of that, it seems to us as if by the world he often meant London, at the head of the tide upon the Thames, the sorest place on the face of the earth, the very citadel of conservatism.

In his writings, we should say that he, as conspicuously as any, though with little enough expressed or even conscious sympathy, represents the Reformer class, and all the better for not being the acknowledged leader of any. In him the universal plaint is most settled, unappeasable, and serious. Until a thousand named and nameless grievances are righted, there will be no repose for him in the lap of nature, or the seclusion of science and literature. By foreseeing it, he hastens the crisis in the affairs of England, and is as good as many years added to her history.

To do himself justice, and set some of his readers right, he should give us some transcendent hero at length, to rule his demigods and Titans; develop, perhaps, his reserved and dumb reverence for Christ, not speaking to a London or Church of England audience merely. Let

not “sacred silence meditate that sacred matter” forever, but let us have sacred speech and sacred scripture thereon.

Every man will include in his list of worthies those whom he himself best represents. Carlyle, and our countryman Emerson, whose place and influence must ere long obtain a more distinct recognition, are, to a certain extent, the complement of each other. The age could not do with one of them, it cannot do with both. To make a broad and rude distinction, to suit our present purpose, the former, as critic, deals with the men of action — Mahomet, Luther, Cromwell; the latter with the thinkers — Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe; for, though both have written upon Goethe, they do not meet in him. The one has more sympathy with the heroes, or practical reformers, the other with the observers, or philosophers. Put their worthies together, and you will have a pretty fair representation of mankind; yet with one or more memorable exceptions. To say nothing of Christ, who yet awaits a just appreciation from literature, the peacefully practical hero, whom Columbus may represent, is obviously slighted; but above and after all, the Man of the Age, come to be called workingman, it is obvious that none yet speaks to his condition, for the speaker is not yet in his condition.

Like speaks to like only; labor to labor, philosophy to philosophy, criticism to criticism, poetry to poetry. Literature speaks how much still to the past, how little to the future, how much to the East, how little to the West —

In the East fames are won,

In the West deeds are done.

One merit in Carlyle, let the subject be what it may, is the freedom of prospect he allows, the entire absence of cant and dogma. He removes many cartloads of rubbish, and leaves open a broad highway. His writings are all unfenced on the side of the future and the possible. Though he does but inadvertently direct our eyes to the open heavens, nevertheless he lets us wander broadly underneath, and shows them to us reflected in innumerable pools and lakes.

These volumes contain not the highest, but a very practicable wisdom, which startles and provokes, rather than informs us. Carlyle does not oblige us to think; we have thought enough for him already, but he compels us to act. We accompany him rapidly through an

endless gallery of pictures, and glorious reminiscences of experiences unimproved.

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." There is no calm philosophy of life here, such as you might put at the end of the Almanac, to hang over the farmer's hearth — how men shall live in these winter, in these summer days. No philosophy, properly speaking, of love, or friendship, or religion, or politics, or education, or nature, or spirit; perhaps a nearer approach to a philosophy of kingship, and of the place of the literary man, than of anything else. A rare preacher, with prayer, and psalm, and sermon, and benediction, but no contemplation of man's life from the serene Oriental ground, nor yet from the stirring Occidental. No thanksgiving sermon for the holydays, or the Easter vacations, when all men submit to float on the full currents of life. When we see with what spirits, though with little heroism enough, woodchoppers, drovers, and apprentices take and spend life, playing all day long, sunning themselves, shading themselves, eating, drinking, sleeping, we think that the philosophy of their life written would be such a level natural history as the Gardener's Calendar and the works of the early botanists, inconceivably slow to come to practical conclusions.

There is no philosophy here for philosophers, only as every man is said to have his philosophy; no system but such as is the man himself — and, indeed, he stands compactly enough; — no progress beyond the first assertion and challenge, as it were, with trumpet blast. One thing is certain — that we had best be doing something in good earnest henceforth forever; that's an indispensable philosophy. The before impossible precept, "Know thyself," he translates into the partially possible one, "Know what thou canst work at." "Sartor Resartus" is, perhaps, the sunniest and most philosophical, as it is the most autobiographical of his works, in which he drew most largely on the experience of his youth. But we miss everywhere a calm depth, like a lake, even stagnant, and must submit to rapidity and whirl, as on skates, with all kinds of skillful and antic motions, sculling, sliding, cutting punch-bowls and rings, forward and backward. The talent is very nearly equal to the genius. Sometimes it would be preferable to wade slowly through a Serbonian bog, and

feel the juices of the meadow.

Beside some philosophers of larger vision, Carlyle stands like an honest, half-despairing boy, grasping at some details only of their world systems. Philosophy, certainly, is some account of truths the fragments and very insignificant parts of which man will practice in this workshop; truths infinite and in harmony with infinity, in respect to which the very objects and ends of the so-called practical philosopher will be mere propositions, like the rest. It would be no reproach to a philosopher, that he knew the future better than the past, or even than the present. It is better worth knowing. He will prophesy, tell what is to be, or, in other words, what alone is, under appearances, laying little stress on the boiling of the pot, or, the condition-of-England question. He has no more to do with the condition of England than with her national debt, which a vigorous generation would not inherit. The philosopher's conception of things will, above all, be truer than other men's, and his philosophy will subordinate all the circumstances of life.

To live like a philosopher is to live, not foolishly, like other men, but wisely and according to universal laws. If Carlyle does not take two steps in philosophy, are there any who take three? Philosophy, having crept clinging to the rocks so far, puts out its feelers many ways in vain. It would be hard to surprise him by the relation of any important human experience, but in some nook or corner of his works you will find that this, too, was sometimes dreamed of in his philosophy.

To sum up our most serious objections in a few words, we should say that Carlyle indicates a depth — and we mean not impliedly, but distinctly — which he neglects to fathom. We want to know more about that which he wants to know as well. If any luminous star or undissolvable nebula is visible from his station which is not visible from ours, the interests of science require that the fact be communicated to us. The universe expects every man to do his duty in his parallel of latitude. We want to hear more of his inmost life; his hymn and prayer more; his elegy and eulogy less; that he should speak more from his character, and less from his talent; communicate centrally with his readers, and not by a side; that he should say what he believes, without suspecting that men disbelieve it, out of his

never-misunderstood nature. His genius can cover all the land with gorgeous palaces, but the reader does not abide in them, but pitches his tent rather in the desert and on the mountain-peak.

When we look about for something to quote, as the fairest specimen of the man, we confess that we labor under an unusual difficulty; for his philosophy is so little of the proverbial or sentential kind, and opens so gradually, rising insensibly from the reviewer's level, and developing its thought completely and in detail, that we look in vain for the brilliant passages, for point and antithesis, and must end by quoting his works entire. What in a writer of less breadth would have been the proposition which would have bounded his discourse, his column of victory, his Pillar of Hercules, and ne plus ultra, is in Carlyle frequently the same thought unfolded; no Pillar of Hercules, but a considerable prospect, north and south, along the Atlantic coast. There are other pillars of Hercules, like beacons and lighthouses, still further in the horizon, toward Atlantis, set up by a few ancient and modern travelers; but, so far as this traveler goes, he clears and colonizes, and all the surplus population of London is bound thither at once. What we would quote is, in fact, his vivacity, and not any particular wisdom or sense, which last is ever synonymous with sentence (sententia), as in his contemporaries Coleridge, Landor, and Wordsworth. We have not attempted to discriminate between his works, but have rather regarded them all as one work, as is the man himself. We have not examined so much as remembered them. To do otherwise would have required a more indifferent, and perhaps even less just review than the present.

All his works might well enough be embraced under the title of one of them, a good specimen brick, "On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History." Of this department he is the Chief Professor in the World's University, and even leaves Plutarch behind.

Such intimate and living, such loyal and generous sympathy with the heroes of history, not one in one age only, but forty in forty ages, such an unparalleled reviewing and greeting of all past worth, with exceptions, to be sure — but exceptions were the rule before — it was, indeed, to make this the age of review writing, as if now one period of the human story were completing itself, and getting its

accounts settled. This soldier has told the stories with new emphasis, and will be a memorable hander-down of fame to posterity. And with what wise discrimination he has selected his men, with reference both to his own genius and to theirs! — Mahomet, Dante, Cromwell, Voltaire, Johnson, Burns, Goethe, Richter, Schiller, Mirabeau — could any of these have been spared? These we wanted to hear about. We have not, as commonly, the cold and refined judgment of the scholar and critic merely, but something more human and affecting. These eulogies have the glow and warmth of friendship. There is sympathy, not with mere fames, and formless, incredible things, but with kindred men — not transiently, but lifelong he has walked with them.

No doubt, some of Carlyle's worthies, should they ever return to earth, would find themselves unpleasantly put upon their good behavior, to sustain their characters; but if he can return a man's life more perfect to our hands than it was left at his death, following out the design of its author, we shall have no great cause to complain. We do not want a daguerreotype likeness. All biography is the life of Adam — a much-experienced man — and time withdraws something partial from the story of every individual, that the historian may supply something general. If these virtues were not in this man, perhaps they are in his biographer — no fatal mistake. Really, in any other sense, we never do, nor desire to, come at the historical man — unless we rob his grave, that is the nearest approach. Why did he die, then? He is with his bones, surely.

No doubt Carlyle has a propensity to exaggerate the heroic in history, that is, he creates you an ideal hero rather than another thing: he has most of that material. This we allow in all its senses, and in one narrower sense it is not so convenient. Yet what were history if he did not exaggerate it? How comes it that history never has to wait for facts, but for a man to write it? The ages may go on forgetting the facts never so long, he can remember two for every one forgotten. The musty records of history, like the catacombs, contain the perishable remains, but only in the breast of genius are embalmed the souls of heroes. There is very little of what is called criticism here; it is love and reverence, rather, which deal with qualities not relatively, but absolutely great; for whatever is admirable in a man is something

infinite, to which we cannot set bounds. These sentiments allow the mortal to die, the immortal and divine to survive. There is something antique, even, in his style of treating his subject, reminding us that heroes and Demi-gods, Fates and Furies, still exist; the common man is nothing to him, but after death the hero is apotheosized and has a place in heaven, as in the religion of the Greeks.

Exaggeration! was ever any virtue attributed to a man without exaggeration? was ever any vice, without infinite exaggeration? Do we not exaggerate ourselves to ourselves, or do we recognize ourselves for the actual men we are? Are we not all great men? Yet what are we actually, to speak of? We live by exaggeration. What else is it to anticipate more than we enjoy? The lightning is an exaggeration of the light. Exaggerated history is poetry, and truth referred to a new standard. To a small man every greater is an exaggeration. He who cannot exaggerate is not qualified to utter truth. No truth, we think, was ever expressed but with this sort of emphasis, so that for the time there seemed to be no other. Moreover, you must speak loud to those who are hard of hearing, and so you acquire a habit of shouting to those who are not. By an immense exaggeration we appreciate our Greek poetry and philosophy, and Egyptian ruins; our Shakespeares and Miltons; our Liberty and Christianity. We give importance to this hour over all other hours. We do not live by justice, but by grace. As the sort of justice which concerns us in our daily intercourse is not that administered by the judge, so the historical justice which we prize is not arrived at by nicely balancing the evidence. In order to appreciate any, even the humblest man, you must first, by some good fortune, have acquired a sentiment of admiration, even of reverence, for him, and there never were such exaggerators as these.

To try him by the German rule of referring an author to his own standard, we will quote the following from Carlyle's remarks on history, and leave the reader to consider how far his practice has been consistent with his theory. "Truly, if History is Philosophy teaching by Experience, the writer fitted to compose history is hitherto an unknown man. The Experience itself would require All-knowledge to record it, were the All-wisdom, needful for such Philosophy as would interpret it, to be had for asking. Better were it that mere

earthly Historians should lower such pretensions, more suitable for Omniscience than for human science; and aiming only at some picture of the things acted, which picture itself will at best be a poor approximation, leave the inscrutable purport of them an acknowledged secret; or, at most, in reverent faith, far different from that teaching of Philosophy, pause over the mysterious vestiges of Him whose path is in the great deep of Time, whom History indeed reveals, but only all History, and in Eternity, will clearly reveal."

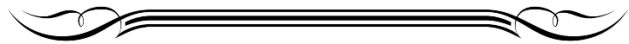
Carlyle is a critic who lives in London to tell this generation who have been the great men of our race. We have read that on some exposed place in the city of Geneva, they have fixed a brazen indicator for the use of travelers, with the names of the mountain summits in the horizon marked upon it, "so that by taking sight across the index you can distinguish them at once. You will not mistake Mont Blanc, if you see him, but until you get accustomed to the panorama, you may easily mistake one of his court for the king." It stands there a piece of mute brass, that seems nevertheless to know in what vicinity it is: and there perchance it will stand, when the nation that placed it there has passed away, still in sympathy with the mountains, forever discriminating in the desert.

So, we may say, stands this man, pointing as long as he lives, in obedience to some spiritual magnetism, to the summits in the historical horizon, for the guidance of his fellows.

Truly, our greatest blessings are very cheap.

To have our sunlight without paying for it, without any duty levied — to have our poet there in England, to furnish us entertainment, and, what is better, provocation, from year to year, all our lives long, to make the world seem richer for us, the age more respectable, and life better worth the living — all without expense of acknowledgment even, but silently accepted out of the east, like morning light, as a matter of course.

ON THE DUTY OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE



I heartily accept the motto, "That government is best which governs least"; and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe— "That government is best which governs not at all"; and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

This American government — what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed upon, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. *It* does not keep the country free. *It* does not settle the West. *It* does not educate. The character inherent in the American people has done all that has been accomplished; and it would have done somewhat more, if the

government had not sometimes got in its way. For government is an expedient, by which men would fain succeed in letting one another alone; and, as has been said, when it is most expedient, the governed are most let alone by it. Trade and commerce, if they were not made of india-rubber, would never manage to bounce over obstacles which legislators are continually putting in their way; and if one were to judge these men wholly by the effects of their actions and not partly by their intentions, they would deserve to be classed and punished with those mischievious persons who put obstructions on the railroads.

But, to speak practically and as a citizen, unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not *at once* no government, but at once a better government. Let every man make known what kind of government would command his respect, and that will be one step toward obtaining it.

After all, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long period continue, to rule is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But a government in which the majority rule in all cases can not be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. Can there not be a government in which the majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience? — in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable? Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator? Why has every man a conscience then? I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. It is truly enough said that a corporation has no conscience; but a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation *with* a conscience. Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents on injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for the law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and

dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against their common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart. They have no doubt that it is a damnable business in which they are concerned; they are all peaceably inclined. Now, what are they? Men at all? or small movable forts and magazines, at the service of some unscrupulous man in power? Visit the Navy Yard, and behold a marine, such a man as an American government can make, or such as it can make a man with its black arts — a mere shadow and reminiscence of humanity, a man laid out alive and standing, and already, as one may say, buried under arms with funeral accompaniment, though it may be,

"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero was buried."

The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, posse comitatus, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgement or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt. They have the same sort of worth only as horses and dogs. Yet such as these even are commonly esteemed good citizens. Others — as most legislators, politicians, lawyers, ministers, and office-holders — serve the state chiefly with their heads; and, as they rarely make any moral distinctions, they are as likely to serve the devil, without *intending* it, as God. A very few — as heroes, patriots, martyrs, reformers in the great sense, and *men* — serve the state with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated as enemies by it. A wise man will only be useful as a man, and will not submit to be "clay," and "stop a hole to keep the wind away," but leave that office to his dust at least:

“I am too high born to be propertied,
To be a second at control,
Or useful serving-man and instrument
To any sovereign state throughout the world.”

He who gives himself entirely to his fellow men appears to them useless and selfish; but he who gives himself partially to them is pronounced a benefactor and philanthropist.

How does it become a man to behave toward the American government today? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as *my* government which is the *slave's* government also.

All men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable. But almost all say that such is not the case now. But such was the case, they think, in the Revolution of ‘75. If one were to tell me that this was a bad government because it taxed certain foreign commodities brought to its ports, it is most probable that I should not make an ado about it, for I can do without them. All machines have their friction; and possibly this does enough good to counter-balance the evil. At any rate, it is a great evil to make a stir about it. But when the friction comes to have its machine, and oppression and robbery are organized, I say, let us not have such a machine any longer. In other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is that fact that the country so overrun is not our own, but ours is the invading army.

Paley, a common authority with many on moral questions, in his chapter on the “Duty of Submission to Civil Government,” resolves all civil obligation into expediency; and he proceeds to say that “so long as the interest of the whole society requires it, that is, so long as the established government cannot be resisted or changed without public inconvenience, it is the will of God . . . that the established

government be obeyed — and no longer. This principle being admitted, the justice of every particular case of resistance is reduced to a computation of the quantity of the danger and grievance on the one side, and of the probability and expense of redressing it on the other." Of this, he says, every man shall judge for himself. But Paley appears never to have contemplated those cases to which the rule of expediency does not apply, in which a people, as well as an individual, must do justice, cost what it may. If I have unjustly wrested a plank from a drowning man, I must restore it to him though I drown myself. This, according to Paley, would be inconvenient. But he that would save his life, in such a case, shall lose it. This people must cease to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people.

In their practice, nations agree with Paley; but does anyone think that Massachusetts does exactly what is right at the present crisis?

"A drab of stat,
a cloth-o'-silver slut,
To have her train borne up,
and her soul trail in the dirt."

Practically speaking, the opponents to a reform in Massachusetts are not a hundred thousand politicians at the South, but a hundred thousand merchants and farmers here, who are more interested in commerce and agriculture than they are in humanity, and are not prepared to do justice to the slave and to Mexico, *cost what it may*. I quarrel not with far-off foes, but with those who, near at home, co-operate with, and do the bidding of, those far away, and without whom the latter would be harmless. We are accustomed to say, that the mass of men are unprepared; but improvement is slow, because the few are not as materially wiser or better than the many. It is not so important that many should be good as you, as that there be some absolute goodness somewhere; for that will leaven the whole lump. There are thousands who are *in opinion* opposed to slavery and to the war, who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them; who, esteeming themselves children of Washington and Franklin, sit down with their hands in their pockets, and say that they know not what to

do, and do nothing; who even postpone the question of freedom to the question of free trade, and quietly read the prices-current along with the latest advices from Mexico, after dinner, and, it may be, fall asleep over them both. What is the price-current of an honest man and patriot today? They hesitate, and they regret, and sometimes they petition; but they do nothing in earnest and with effect. They will wait, well disposed, for other to remedy the evil, that they may no longer have it to regret. At most, they give up only a cheap vote, and a feeble countenance and Godspeed, to the right, as it goes by them. There are nine hundred and ninety-nine patrons of virtue to one virtuous man. But it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than with the temporary guardian of it.

All voting is a sort of gaming, like checkers or backgammon, with a slight moral tinge to it, a playing with right and wrong, with moral questions; and betting naturally accompanies it. The character of the voters is not staked. I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right; but I am not vitally concerned that that right should prevail. I am willing to leave it to the majority. Its obligation, therefore, never exceeds that of expediency. Even *voting for the right* is *doing* nothing for it. It is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority. There is but little virtue in the action of masses of men. When the majority shall at length vote for the abolition of slavery, it will be because they are indifferent to slavery, or because there is but little slavery left to be abolished by their vote. *They* will then be the only slaves. Only *his* vote can hasten the abolition of slavery who asserts his own freedom by his vote.

I hear of a convention to be held at Baltimore, or elsewhere, for the selection of a candidate for the Presidency, made up chiefly of editors, and men who are politicians by profession; but I think, what is it to any independent, intelligent, and respectable man what decision they may come to? Shall we not have the advantage of this wisdom and honesty, nevertheless? Can we not count upon some independent votes? Are there not many individuals in the country who do not attend conventions? But no: I find that the respectable man, so called, has immediately drifted from his position, and

despairs of his country, when his country has more reasons to despair of him. He forthwith adopts one of the candidates thus selected as the only *available* one, thus proving that he is himself *available* for any purposes of the demagogue. His vote is of no more worth than that of any unprincipled foreigner or hireling native, who may have been bought. O for a man who is a man, and, as my neighbor says, has a bone in his back which you cannot pass your hand through! Our statistics are at fault: the population has been returned too large. How many *men* are there to a square thousand miles in the country? Hardly one. Does not America offer any inducement for men to settle here? The American has dwindled into an Odd Fellow — one who may be known by the development of his organ of gregariousness, and a manifest lack of intellect and cheerful self-reliance; whose first and chief concern, on coming into the world, is to see that the almshouses are in good repair; and, before yet he has lawfully donned the virile garb, to collect a fund to the support of the widows and orphans that may be; who, in short, ventures to live only by the aid of the Mutual Insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently.

It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even to most enormous wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to engage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give it practically his support. If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations too. See what gross inconsistency is tolerated. I have heard some of my townsmen say, "I should like to have them order me out to help put down an insurrection of the slaves, or to march to Mexico — see if I would go"; and yet these very men have each, directly by their allegiance, and so indirectly, at least, by their money, furnished a substitute. The soldier is applauded who refuses to serve in an unjust war by those who do not refuse to sustain the unjust government which makes the war; is applauded by those whose own act and authority he disregards and sets at naught; as if the state were penitent to that degree that it hired one to scourge it while it sinned, but not to that

degree that it left off sinning for a moment. Thus, under the name of Order and Civil Government, we are all made at last to pay homage to and support our own meanness. After the first blush of sin comes its indifference; and from immoral it becomes, as it were, unmoral, and not quite unnecessary to that life which we have made.

The broadest and most prevalent error requires the most disinterested virtue to sustain it. The slight reproach to which the virtue of patriotism is commonly liable, the noble are most likely to incur. Those who, while they disapprove of the character and measures of a government, yield to it their allegiance and support are undoubtedly its most conscientious supporters, and so frequently the most serious obstacles to reform. Some are petitioning the State to dissolve the Union, to disregard the requisitions of the President. Why do they not dissolve it themselves — the union between themselves and the State — and refuse to pay their quota into its treasury? Do not they stand in same relation to the State that the State does to the Union? And have not the same reasons prevented the State from resisting the Union which have prevented them from resisting the State?

How can a man be satisfied to entertain an opinion merely, and enjoy *it*? Is there any enjoyment in it, if his opinion is that he is aggrieved? If you are cheated out of a single dollar by your neighbor, you do not rest satisfied with knowing you are cheated, or with saying that you are cheated, or even with petitioning him to pay you your due; but you take effectual steps at once to obtain the full amount, and see to it that you are never cheated again. Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything which was. It not only divided States and churches, it divides families; ay, it divides the *individual*, separating the diabolical in him from the divine.

Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men, generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of

the government itself that the remedy is worse than the evil. *It* makes it worse. Why is it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not cherish its wise minority? Why does it cry and resist before it is hurt? Why does it not encourage its citizens to put out its faults, and *do* better than it would have them? Why does it always crucify Christ and excommunicate Copernicus and Luther, and pronounce Washington and Franklin rebels?

One would think, that a deliberate and practical denial of its authority was the only offense never contemplated by its government; else, why has it not assigned its definite, its suitable and proportionate, penalty? If a man who has no property refuses but once to earn nine shillings for the State, he is put in prison for a period unlimited by any law that I know, and determined only by the discretion of those who put him there; but if he should steal ninety times nine shillings from the State, he is soon permitted to go at large again.

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth — certainly the machine will wear out. If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter-friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn.

As for adopting the ways of the State has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone. I have other affairs to attend to. I came into this world, not chiefly to make this a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. A man has not everything to do, but something; and because he cannot do *everything*, it is not necessary that he should be doing *something* wrong. It is not my business to be petitioning the Governor or the Legislature any more than it is theirs to petition me; and if they should not hear my petition, what should I do then? But in this case the State has provided no way: its very Constitution is the evil. This may seem to be harsh and stubborn and unconcilliatory; but it is to treat with the utmost kindness and

consideration the only spirit that can appreciate or deserves it. So is all change for the better, like birth and death, which convulse the body.

I do not hesitate to say, that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts, and not wait till they constitute a majority of one, before they suffer the right to prevail through them. I think that it is enough if they have God on their side, without waiting for that other one. Moreover, any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already.

I meet this American government, or its representative, the State government, directly, and face to face, once a year — no more — in the person of its tax-gatherer; this is the only mode in which a man situated as I am necessarily meets it; and it then says distinctly, Recognize me; and the simplest, the most effectual, and, in the present posture of affairs, the indispensablest mode of treating with it on this head, of expressing your little satisfaction with and love for it, is to deny it then. My civil neighbor, the tax-gatherer, is the very man I have to deal with — for it is, after all, with men and not with parchment that I quarrel — and he has voluntarily chosen to be an agent of the government. How shall he ever know well that he is and does as an officer of the government, or as a man, until he is obliged to consider whether he will treat me, his neighbor, for whom he has respect, as a neighbor and well-disposed man, or as a maniac and disturber of the peace, and see if he can get over this obstruction to his neighborlines without a ruder and more impetuous thought or speech corresponding with his action. I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name — if ten *honest* men only — ay, if *one* HONEST man, in this State of Massachusetts, *ceasing to hold slaves*, were actually to withdraw from this co-partnership, and be locked up in the county jail therefor, it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done forever. But we love better to talk about it: that we say is our mission. Reform keeps many scores of newspapers in its service, but not one man. If my esteemed neighbor, the State's ambassador, who

will devote his days to the settlement of the question of human rights in the Council Chamber, instead of being threatened with the prisons of Carolina, were to sit down the prisoner of Massachusetts, that State which is so anxious to foist the sin of slavery upon her sister — though at present she can discover only an act of inhospitality to be the ground of a quarrel with her — the Legislature would not wholly waive the subject of the following winter.

Under a government which imprisons unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. The proper place today, the only place which Massachusetts has provided for her freer and less despondent spirits, is in her prisons, to be put out and locked out of the State by her own act, as they have already put themselves out by their principles. It is there that the fugitive slave, and the Mexican prisoner on parole, and the Indian come to plead the wrongs of his race should find them; on that separate but more free and honorable ground, where the State places those who are not *with* her, but *against* her — the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honor. If any think that their influence would be lost there, and their voices no longer afflict the ear of the State, that they would not be as an enemy within its walls, they do not know by how much truth is stronger than error, nor how much more eloquently and effectively he can combat injustice who has experienced a little in his own person. Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible. If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, “But what shall I do?” my answer is, “If you really wish to do anything, resign your office.” When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned from office, then the revolution is accomplished. But even suppose blood should flow. Is there not a sort of blood shed when the conscience is wounded?

Through this wound a man's real manhood and immortality flow out, and he bleeds to an everlasting death. I see this blood flowing now.

I have contemplated the imprisonment of the offender, rather than the seizure of his goods — though both will serve the same purpose — because they who assert the purest right, and consequently are most dangerous to a corrupt State, commonly have not spent much time in accumulating property. To such the State renders comparatively small service, and a slight tax is wont to appear exorbitant, particularly if they are obliged to earn it by special labor with their hands. If there were one who lived wholly without the use of money, the State itself would hesitate to demand it of him. But the rich man — not to make any invidious comparison — is always sold to the institution which makes him rich. Absolutely speaking, the more money, the less virtue; for money comes between a man and his objects, and obtains them for him; it was certainly no great virtue to obtain it. It puts to rest many questions which he would otherwise be taxed to answer; while the only new question which it puts is the hard but superfluous one, how to spend it. Thus his moral ground is taken from under his feet. The opportunities of living are diminished in proportion as that are called the "means" are increased. The best thing a man can do for his culture when he is rich is to endeavor to carry out those schemes which he entertained when he was poor. Christ answered the Herodians according to their condition. "Show me the tribute-money," said he — and one took a penny out of his pocket — if you use money which has the image of Caesar on it, and which he has made current and valuable, that is, *if you are men of the State*, and gladly enjoy the advantages of Caesar's government, then pay him back some of his own when he demands it. "Render therefore to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God those things which are God's" — leaving them no wiser than before as to which was which; for they did not wish to know.

When I converse with the freest of my neighbors, I perceive that, whatever they may say about the magnitude and seriousness of the question, and their regard for the public tranquillity, the long and the short of the matter is, that they cannot spare the protection of the existing government, and they dread the consequences to their property and families of disobedience to it. For my own part, I

should not like to think that I ever rely on the protection of the State. But, if I deny the authority of the State when it presents its tax bill, it will soon take and waste all my property, and so harass me and my children without end. This is hard. This makes it impossible for a man to live honestly, and at the same time comfortably, in outward respects. It will not be worth the while to accumulate property; that would be sure to go again. You must hire or squat somewhere, and raise but a small crop, and eat that soon. You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself always tucked up and ready for a start, and not have many affairs. A man may grow rich in Turkey even, if he will be in all respects a good subject of the Turkish government. Confucius said: "If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are subjects of shame." No: until I want the protection of Massachusetts to be extended to me in some distant Southern port, where my liberty is endangered, or until I am bent solely on building up an estate at home by peaceful enterprise, I can afford to refuse allegiance to Massachusetts, and her right to my property and life. It costs me less in every sense to incur the penalty of disobedience to the State than it would to obey. I should feel as if I were worth less in that case.

Some years ago, the State met me in behalf of the Church, and commanded me to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergyman whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself. "Pay," it said, "or be locked up in the jail." I declined to pay. But, unfortunately, another man saw fit to pay it. I did not see why the schoolmaster should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the schoolmaster; for I was not the State's schoolmaster, but I supported myself by voluntary subscription. I did not see why the lyceum should not present its tax bill, and have the State to back its demand, as well as the Church. However, at the request of the selectmen, I condescended to make some such statement as this in writing: "Know all men by these presents, that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined." This I gave to the town clerk; and he has it. The State, having thus learned that I did not wish to be regarded as a member of that church, has never made a like demand on me since;

though it said that it must adhere to its original presumption that time. If I had known how to name them, I should then have signed off in detail from all the societies which I never signed on to; but I did not know where to find such a complete list.

I have paid no poll tax for six years. I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did nor for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of that stone wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations, which followed them out again without let or hindrance, and *they* were really all that was dangerous. As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body; just as boys, if they cannot come at some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it.

Thus the state never intentionally confronts a man's sense, intellectual or moral, but only his body, his senses. It is not armed with superior wit or honesty, but with superior physical strength. I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion. Let us see who is the strongest. What force has a multitude? They only can force me who obey a higher law than I. They force me to become like themselves. I do not hear of *men* being *forced* to live this way or that by masses of men. What sort of life were that to live? When I

meet a government which says to me, “Your money or your life,” why should I be in haste to give it my money? It may be in a great strait, and not know what to do: I cannot help that. It must help itself; do as I do. It is not worth the while to snivel about it. I am not responsible for the successful working of the machinery of society. I am not the son of the engineer. I perceive that, when an acorn and a chestnut fall side by side, the one does not remain inert to make way for the other, but both obey their own laws, and spring and grow and flourish as best they can, till one, perchance, overshadows and destroys the other. If a plant cannot live according to nature, it dies; and so a man.

The night in prison was novel and interesting enough. The prisoners in their shirtsleeves were enjoying a chat and the evening air in the doorway, when I entered. But the jailer said, “Come, boys, it is time to lock up”; and so they dispersed, and I heard the sound of their steps returning into the hollow apartments. My room-mate was introduced to me by the jailer as “a first-rate fellow and clever man.” When the door was locked, he showed me where to hang my hat, and how he managed matters there. The rooms were whitewashed once a month; and this one, at least, was the whitest, most simply furnished, and probably neatest apartment in town. He naturally wanted to know where I came from, and what brought me there; and, when I had told him, I asked him in my turn how he came there, presuming him to be an honest man, of course; and as the world goes, I believe he was. “Why,” said he, “they accuse me of burning a barn; but I never did it.” As near as I could discover, he had probably gone to bed in a barn when drunk, and smoked his pipe there; and so a barn was burnt. He had the reputation of being a clever man, had been there some three months waiting for his trial to come on, and would have to wait as much longer; but he was quite domesticated and contented, since he got his board for nothing, and thought that he was well treated.

He occupied one window, and I the other; and I saw that if one stayed there long, his principal business would be to look out the window. I had soon read all the tracts that were left there, and examined where former prisoners had broken out, and where a grate had been sawed off, and heard the history of the various occupants of

that room; for I found that even there there was a history and a gossip which never circulated beyond the walls of the jail. Probably this is the only house in the town where verses are composed, which are afterward printed in a circular form, but not published. I was shown quite a long list of young men who had been detected in an attempt to escape, who avenged themselves by singing them.

I pumped my fellow-prisoner as dry as I could, for fear I should never see him again; but at length he showed me which was my bed, and left me to blow out the lamp.

It was like travelling into a far country, such as I had never expected to behold, to lie there for one night. It seemed to me that I never had heard the town clock strike before, not the evening sounds of the village; for we slept with the windows open, which were inside the grating. It was to see my native village in the light of the Middle Ages, and our Concord was turned into a Rhine stream, and visions of knights and castles passed before me. They were the voices of old burghers that I heard in the streets. I was an involuntary spectator and auditor of whatever was done and said in the kitchen of the adjacent village inn — a wholly new and rare experience to me. It was a closer view of my native town. I was fairly inside of it. I never had seen its institutions before. This is one of its peculiar institutions; for it is a shire town. I began to comprehend what its inhabitants were about.

In the morning, our breakfasts were put through the hole in the door, in small oblong-square tin pans, made to fit, and holding a pint of chocolate, with brown bread, and an iron spoon. When they called for the vessels again, I was green enough to return what bread I had left, but my comrade seized it, and said that I should lay that up for lunch or dinner. Soon after he was let out to work at haying in a neighboring field, whither he went every day, and would not be back till noon; so he bade me good day, saying that he doubted if he should see me again.

When I came out of prison — for some one interfered, and paid that tax — I did not perceive that great changes had taken place on the common, such as he observed who went in a youth and emerged a gray-headed man; and yet a change had come to my eyes come over the scene — the town, and State, and country, greater than any

that mere time could effect. I saw yet more distinctly the State in which I lived. I saw to what extent the people among whom I lived could be trusted as good neighbors and friends; that their friendship was for summer weather only; that they did not greatly propose to do right; that they were a distinct race from me by their prejudices and superstitions, as the Chinamen and Malays are; that in their sacrifices to humanity they ran no risks, not even to their property; that after all they were not so noble but they treated the thief as he had treated them, and hoped, by a certain outward observance and a few prayers, and by walking in a particular straight though useless path from time to time, to save their souls. This may be to judge my neighbors harshly; for I believe that many of them are not aware that they have such an institution as the jail in their village.

It was formerly the custom in our village, when a poor debtor came out of jail, for his acquaintances to salute him, looking through their fingers, which were crossed to represent the jail window, "How do ye do?" My neighbors did not thus salute me, but first looked at me, and then at one another, as if I had returned from a long journey. I was put into jail as I was going to the shoemaker's to get a shoe which was mended. When I was let out the next morning, I proceeded to finish my errand, and, having put on my mended shoe, joined a huckleberry party, who were impatient to put themselves under my conduct; and in half an hour — for the horse was soon tackled — was in the midst of a huckleberry field, on one of our highest hills, two miles off, and then the State was nowhere to be seen.

This is the whole history of "My Prisons."

I have never declined paying the highway tax, because I am as desirous of being a good neighbor as I am of being a bad subject; and as for supporting schools, I am doing my part to educate my fellow countrymen now. It is for no particular item in the tax bill that I refuse to pay it. I simply wish to refuse allegiance to the State, to withdraw and stand aloof from it effectually. I do not care to trace the course of my dollar, if I could, till it buys a man or a musket to shoot one with — the dollar is innocent — but I am concerned to trace the effects of my allegiance. In fact, I quietly declare war with the State, after my fashion, though I will still make use and get what

advantages of her I can, as is usual in such cases.

If others pay the tax which is demanded of me, from a sympathy with the State, they do but what they have already done in their own case, or rather they abet injustice to a greater extent than the State requires. If they pay the tax from a mistaken interest in the individual taxed, to save his property, or prevent his going to jail, it is because they have not considered wisely how far they let their private feelings interfere with the public good.

This, then, is my position at present. But one cannot be too much on his guard in such a case, lest his actions be biased by obstinacy or an undue regard for the opinions of men. Let him see that he does only what belongs to himself and to the hour.

I think sometimes, Why, this people mean well, they are only ignorant; they would do better if they knew how: why give your neighbors this pain to treat you as they are not inclined to? But I think again, This is no reason why I should do as they do, or permit others to suffer much greater pain of a different kind. Again, I sometimes say to myself, When many millions of men, without heat, without ill will, without personal feelings of any kind, demand of you a few shillings only, without the possibility, such is their constitution, of retracting or altering their present demand, and without the possibility, on your side, of appeal to any other millions, why expose yourself to this overwhelming brute force? You do not resist cold and hunger, the winds and the waves, thus obstinately; you quietly submit to a thousand similar necessities. You do not put your head into the fire. But just in proportion as I regard this as not wholly a brute force, but partly a human force, and consider that I have relations to those millions as to so many millions of men, and not of mere brute or inanimate things, I see that appeal is possible, first and instantaneously, from them to the Maker of them, and, secondly, from them to themselves. But if I put my head deliberately into the fire, there is no appeal to fire or to the Maker of fire, and I have only myself to blame. If I could convince myself that I have any right to be satisfied with men as they are, and to treat them accordingly, and not according, in some respects, to my requisitions and expectations of what they and I ought to be, then, like a good Mussulman and fatalist, I should endeavor to be satisfied with things

as they are, and say it is the will of God. And, above all, there is this difference between resisting this and a purely brute or natural force, that I can resist this with some effect; but I cannot expect, like Orpheus, to change the nature of the rocks and trees and beasts.

I do not wish to quarrel with any man or nation. I do not wish to split hairs, to make fine distinctions, or set myself up as better than my neighbors. I seek rather, I may say, even an excuse for conforming to the laws of the land. I am but too ready to conform to them. Indeed, I have reason to suspect myself on this head; and each year, as the tax-gatherer comes round, I find myself disposed to review the acts and position of the general and State governments, and the spirit of the people to discover a pretext for conformity.

"We must affect our country as our parents,
And if at any time we alienate
Out love or industry from doing it honor,
We must respect effects and teach the soul
Matter of conscience and religion,
And not desire of rule or benefit."

I believe that the State will soon be able to take all my work of this sort out of my hands, and then I shall be no better patriot than my fellow-countrymen. Seen from a lower point of view, the Constitution, with all its faults, is very good; the law and the courts are very respectable; even this State and this American government are, in many respects, very admirable, and rare things, to be thankful for, such as a great many have described them; seen from a higher still, and the highest, who shall say what they are, or that they are worth looking at or thinking of at all?

However, the government does not concern me much, and I shall bestow the fewest possible thoughts on it. It is not many moments that I live under a government, even in this world. If a man is thought-free, fancy-free, imagination-free, that which *is not* never for a long time appearing *to be* to him, unwise rulers or reformers cannot fatally interrupt him.

I know that most men think differently from myself; but those whose lives are by profession devoted to the study of these or

kindred subjects content me as little as any. Statesmen and legislators, standing so completely within the institution, never distinctly and nakedly behold it. They speak of moving society, but have no resting-place without it. They may be men of a certain experience and discrimination, and have no doubt invented ingenious and even useful systems, for which we sincerely thank them; but all their wit and usefulness lie within certain not very wide limits. They are wont to forget that the world is not governed by policy and expediency. Webster never goes behind government, and so cannot speak with authority about it. His words are wisdom to those legislators who contemplate no essential reform in the existing government; but for thinkers, and those who legislate for all time, he never once glances at the subject. I know of those whose serene and wise speculations on this theme would soon reveal the limits of his mind's range and hospitality. Yet, compared with the cheap professions of most reformers, and the still cheaper wisdom an eloquence of politicians in general, his are almost the only sensible and valuable words, and we thank Heaven for him. Comparatively, he is always strong, original, and, above all, practical. Still, his quality is not wisdom, but prudence. The lawyer's truth is not Truth, but consistency or a consistent expediency. Truth is always in harmony with herself, and is not concerned chiefly to reveal the justice that may consist with wrong-doing. He well deserves to be called, as he has been called, the Defender of the Constitution. There are really no blows to be given him but defensive ones. He is not a leader, but a follower. His leaders are the men of '87. "I have never made an effort," he says, "and never propose to make an effort; I have never countenanced an effort, and never mean to countenance an effort, to disturb the arrangement as originally made, by which various States came into the Union." Still thinking of the sanction which the Constitution gives to slavery, he says, "Because it was part of the original compact — let it stand." Notwithstanding his special acuteness and ability, he is unable to take a fact out of its merely political relations, and behold it as it lies absolutely to be disposed of by the intellect — what, for instance, it behooves a man to do here in American today with regard to slavery — but ventures, or is driven, to make some such desperate answer to the following, while

professing to speak absolutely, and as a private man — from which what new and singular of social duties might be inferred? "The manner," says he, "in which the governments of the States where slavery exists are to regulate it is for their own consideration, under the responsibility to their constituents, to the general laws of propriety, humanity, and justice, and to God. Associations formed elsewhere, springing from a feeling of humanity, or any other cause, have nothing whatever to do with it. They have never received any encouragement from me and they never will." [These extracts have been inserted since the lecture was read -HDT]

They who know of no purer sources of truth, who have traced up its stream no higher, stand, and wisely stand, by the Bible and the Constitution, and drink at it there with reverence and humanity; but they who behold where it comes trickling into this lake or that pool, gird up their loins once more, and continue their pilgrimage toward its fountainhead.

No man with a genius for legislation has appeared in America. They are rare in the history of the world. There are orators, politicians, and eloquent men, by the thousand; but the speaker has not yet opened his mouth to speak who is capable of settling the much-vexed questions of the day. We love eloquence for its own sake, and not for any truth which it may utter, or any heroism it may inspire. Our legislators have not yet learned the comparative value of free trade and of freedom, of union, and of rectitude, to a nation. They have no genius or talent for comparatively humble questions of taxation and finance, commerce and manufactures and agriculture. If we were left solely to the wordy wit of legislators in Congress for our guidance, uncorrected by the seasonable experience and the effectual complaints of the people, America would not long retain her rank among the nations. For eighteen hundred years, though perchance I have no right to say it, the New Testament has been written; yet where is the legislator who has wisdom and practical talent enough to avail himself of the light which it sheds on the science of legislation.

The authority of government, even such as I am willing to submit to — for I will cheerfully obey those who know and can do better than I, and in many things even those who neither know nor can do

so well — is still an impure one: to be strictly just, it must have the sanction and consent of the governed. It can have no pure right over my person and property but what I concede to it. The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual. Even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement possible in government? Is it not possible to take a step further towards recognizing and organizing the rights of man? There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor; which even would not think it inconsistent with its own repose if a few were to live aloof from it, not meddling with it, nor embraced by it, who fulfilled all the duties of neighbors and fellow men. A State which bore this kind of fruit, and suffered it to drop off as fast as it ripened, would prepare the way for a still more perfect and glorious State, which I have also imagined, but not yet anywhere seen.

WALKING

I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness, as contrasted with a freedom and culture merely civil, — to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society. I wish to make an extreme statement, if so I may make an emphatic one, for there are enough champions of civilization: the minister and the school-committee, and every one of you will take care of that.

* * * * *

I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks, — who had a genius, so to speak, for *sauntering*: which word is beautifully derived "from idle people who roved about the country, in the Middle Ages, and asked charity, under pretence of going *à la Sainte Terre*" to the Holy Land, till the children exclaimed, "There goes a *Sainte-Terrer*," a Saunterer, — a Holy-Lander. They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds; but they who do go there are saunterers in the good sense, such as I mean. Some, however, would derive the word from *sans terre*, without land or a home, which, therefore, in the good sense, will mean, having no particular home, but equally at home everywhere. For this is the secret of successful sauntering. He who sits still in a house all the time may be the greatest vagrant of all; but the saunterer, in the good sense, is no more vagrant than the meandering river, which is all the while sedulously seeking the shortest course to the sea. But I prefer the first, which, indeed, is the most probable derivation. For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us, to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels.

It is true, we are but faint-hearted crusaders, even the walkers, nowadays, who undertake no persevering, never-ending enterprises. Our expeditions are but tours, and come round again at evening to

the old hearth-side from which we set out. Half the walk is but retracing our steps. We should go forth on the shortest walk, perchance, in the spirit of undying adventure, never to return, — prepared to send back our embalmed hearts only as relics to our desolate kingdoms. If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again, — if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man, then you are ready for a walk.

To come down to my own experience, my companion and I, for I sometimes have a companion, take pleasure in fancying ourselves knights of a new, or rather an old, order, — not Equestrians or Chevaliers, not Ritters or riders, but Walkers, a still more ancient and honorable class, I trust. The chivalric and heroic spirit which once belonged to the Rider seems now to reside in, or perchance to have subsided into, the Walker, — not the Knight, but Walker Errant. He is a sort of fourth estate, outside of Church and State and People.

We have felt that we almost alone hereabouts practised this noble art; though, to tell the truth, at least, if their own assertions are to be received, moat of my townsmen would fain walk sometimes, as I do, but they cannot. No wealth can buy the requisite leisure, freedom, and independence, which are the capital in this profession. It comes only by the grace of God. It requires a direct dispensation from Heaven to become a walker. You must be born into the family of the Walkers. *Ambulator nascitur, non fit.* Some of my townsmen, it is true, can remember and have described to me some walks which they took ten years ago, in which they were so blessed as to lose themselves for half an hour in the woods; but I know very well that they have confined themselves to the highway ever since, whatever pretensions they may make to belong to this select class. No doubt they were elevated for a moment as by the reminiscence of a previous state of existence, when even they were foresters and outlaws.

“When he came to grene wode,
In a mery mornynge,
There he herde the notes small

Of byrdes mery syngynge.

“It is ferre gone, sayd Robyn,
That I was last here;
Me lyste a lytell for to shote
At the donne dere.”

I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least, — and it is commonly more than that, — sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements. You may safely say, A penny for your thoughts, or a thousand pounds. When sometimes I am reminded that the mechanics and shopkeepers stay in their shops not only all the forenoon, but all the afternoon too, sitting with crossed legs, so many of them, — as if the legs were made to sit upon, and not to stand or walk upon, — I think that they deserve some credit for not having all committed suicide long ago.

I, who cannot stay in my chamber for a single day without acquiring some rust, and when sometimes I have stolen forth for a walk at the eleventh hour of four o’clock in the afternoon, too late to redeem the day, when the shades of night were already beginning to be mingled with the daylight, have felt as if I had committed some sin to be atoned for, — I confess that I am astonished at the power of endurance, to say nothing of the moral insensibility, of my neighbors who confine themselves to shops and offices the whole day for weeks and months, ay, and years almost together. I know not what manner of stuff they are of, — sitting there now at three o’clock in the afternoon, as if it were three o’clock in the morning. Bonaparte may talk of the three-o’clock-in-the-morning courage, but it is nothing to the courage which can sit down cheerfully at this hour in the afternoon over against one’s self whom you have known all the morning, to starve out a garrison to whom you are bound by such strong ties of sympathy. I wonder that about this time, or say between four and five o’clock in the afternoon, too late for the morning papers and too early for the evening ones, there is not a general explosion heard up and down the street, scattering a legion of antiquated and house-bred notions and whims to the four winds for

an airing, — and so the evil cure itself.

How womankind, who are confined to the house still more than men, stand it I do not know; but I have ground to suspect that most of them do not *stand* it at all. When, early in a summer afternoon, we have been shaking the dust of the village from the skirts of our garments, making haste past those houses with purely Doric or Gothic fronts, which have such an air of repose about them, my companion whispers that probably about these times their occupants are all gone to bed. Then it is that I appreciate the beauty and the glory of architecture, which itself never turns in, but forever stands out and erect, keeping watch over the slumberers.

No doubt temperament, and, above all, age, have a good deal to do with it. As a man grows older, his ability to sit still and follow indoor occupations increases. He grows vespertinal in his habits as the evening of life approaches, till at last he comes forth only just before sundown, and gets all the walk that he requires in half an hour.

But the walking of which I speak has nothing in it akin to taking exercise, as it is called, as the sick take medicine at stated hours, — as the swinging of dumb-bells or chairs; but is itself the enterprise and adventure of the day. If you would get exercise, go in search of the springs of life. Think of a man's swinging dumb-bells for his health, when those springs are bubbling up in far-off pastures unsought by him!

Moreover, you must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when walking. When a traveller asked Wordsworth's servant to show him her master's study, she answered, "Here is his library, but his study is out of doors."

Living much out of doors, in the sun and wind, will no doubt produce a certain roughness of character, — will cause a thicker cuticle to grow over some of the finer qualities of our nature, as on the face and hands, or as severe manual labor robs the hands of some of their delicacy of touch. So staying in the house, on the other hand, may produce a softness and smoothness, not to say thinness of skin, accompanied by an increased sensibility to certain impressions. Perhaps we should be more susceptible to some influences important to our intellectual and moral growth, if the sun had shone and the

wind blown on us a little less; and no doubt it is a nice matter to proportion rightly the thick and thin skin. But methinks that is a scurf that will fall off fast enough, — that the natural remedy is to be found in the proportion which the night bears to the day, the winter to the summer, thought to experience. There will be so much the more air and sunshine in our thoughts. The callous palms of the laborer are conversant with finer tissues of self-respect and heroism, whose touch thrills the heart, than the languid fingers of idleness. That is mere sentimentality that lies abed by day and thinks itself white, far from the tan and callus of experience.

When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us, if we walked only in a garden or a mall? Even some sects of philosophers have felt the necessity of importing the woods to themselves, since they did not go to the woods. "They planted groves and walks of Platanes," where they took *subdiales ambulationes* in porticos open to the air. Of course it is of no use to direct our steps to the woods, if they do not carry us thither. I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would fain forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head, and I am not where my body is, — I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods? I suspect myself, and cannot help a shudder, when I find myself so implicated even in what are called good works, — for this may sometimes happen.

My vicinity affords many good walks; and though for so many years I have walked almost every day, and sometimes for several days together, I have not yet exhausted them. An absolutely new prospect is a great happiness, and I can still get this any afternoon. Two or three hours' walking will carry me to as strange a country as I expect ever to see. A single farmhouse which I had not seen before is sometimes as good as the dominions of the King of Dahomey. There is in fact a sort of harmony discoverable between the capabilities of the landscape within a circle of ten miles' radius, or the limits of an afternoon walk, and the threescore years and ten of

human life. It will never become quite familiar to you.

Nowadays almost all man's improvements, so called, as the building of houses, and the cutting down of the forest and of all large trees, simply deform the landscape, and make it more and more tame and cheap. A people who would begin by burning the fences and let the forest stand! I saw the fences half consumed, their ends lost in the middle of the prairie, and some worldly miser with a surveyor looking after his bounds, while heaven had taken place around him, and he did not see the angels going to and fro, but was looking for an old post-hole in the midst of paradise. I looked again, and saw him standing in the middle of a boggy, stygian fen, surrounded by devils, and he had found his bounds without a doubt, three little stones, where a stake had been driven, and looking nearer, I saw that the Prince of Darkness was his surveyor.

I can easily walk ten, fifteen, twenty, any number of miles, commencing at my own door, without going by any house, without crossing a road except where the fox and the mink do: first along by the river, and then the brook, and then the meadow and the wood-side. There are square miles in my vicinity which have no inhabitant. From many a hill I can see civilization and the abodes of man afar. The farmers and their works are scarcely more obvious than woodchucks and their burrows. Man and his affairs, church and state and school, trade and commerce, and manufactures and agriculture, even politics, the most alarming of them all, — I am pleased to see how little space they occupy in the landscape. Politics is but a narrow field, and that still narrower highway yonder leads to it. I sometimes direct the traveller thither. If you would go to the political world, follow the great road, — follow that market-man, keep his dust in your eyes, and it will lead you straight to it; for it, too, has its place merely, and does not occupy all space. I pass from it as from a bean-field into the forest, and it is forgotten. In one half-hour I can walk off to some portion of the earth's surface where a man does not stand from one year's end to another, and there, consequently, politics are not, for they are but as the cigar-smoke of a man.

The village is the place to which the roads tend, a sort of expansion of the highway, as a lake of a river. It is the body of which roads are the arms and legs, — a trivial or quadrivial place, the

thoroughfare and ordinary of travellers. The word is from the Latin *villa*, which, together with *via*, a way, or more anciently *ved* and *vella*, Varro derives from *veho*, to carry, because the villa is the place to and from which things are carried. They who got their living by teaming were said *vellaturam facere*. Hence, too, apparently, the Latin word *vilis* and our vile; also *villain*. This suggests what kind of degeneracy villagers are liable to. They are wayworn by the travel that goes by and over them, without travelling themselves.

Some do not walk at all; others walk in the highways; a few walk across lots. Roads are made for horses and men of business. I do not travel in them much, comparatively, because I am not in a hurry to get to any tavern or grocery or livery-stable or depot to which they lead. I am a good horse to travel, but not from choice a roadster. The landscape-painter uses the figures of men to mark a road. He would not make that use of my figure. I walk out into a Nature such as the old prophets and poets, Menu, Moses, Homer, Chaucer, walked in. You may name it America, but it is not America: neither Atnericus Vespucius, nor Columbus, nor the rest were the discoverers of it. There is a truer account of it in mythology than in any history of America, so called, that I have seen.

However, there are a few old roads that may be trodden with profit, as if they led somewhere now that they are nearly discontinued. There is the Old Marlborough Road, which does not go to Marlborough now, methinks, unless that is Marlborough where it carries me. I am the bolder to speak of it here, because I presume that there are one or two such roads in every town.

THE OLD MARLBOROUGH ROAD.

Where they once dug for money,
But never found any;
Where sometimes Martial Miles
Singly files,
And Elijah Wood,
I fear for no good:
No other man,
Save Elisha Dugan, —

O man of wild habits,
Partridges and rabbits,
Who hast no cares
Only to set snares,
Who liv'st all alone,
Close to the bone,
And where life is sweetest
Constantly eatest.
When the spring stirs my blood
With the instinct to travel,
I can get enough gravel
On the Old Marlborough Road.
Nobody repairs it,
For nobody wears it;
It is a living way,
As the Christians say.
Not many there be
Who enter therein,
Only the guests of the
Irishman Quin.
What is it, what is it,
But a direction out there,
And the bare possibility
Of going somewhere?
Great guide-boards of stone,
But travellers none;
Cenotaphs of the towns
Named on their crowns.
It is worth going to see
Where you *might* be.
What king
Did the thing,
I am still wondering;
Set up how or when,
By what selectmen,
Gourgas or Lee,
Clark or Darby?

They're a great endeavor
To be something forever;
Blank tablets of stone,
Where a traveller might groan,
And in one sentence
Grave all that is known;
Which another might read,
In his extreme need.
I know one or two
Lines that would do,
Literature that might stand
All over the land,
Which a man could remember
Till next December,
And read again in the spring,
After the thawing.
If with fancy unfurled
You leave your abode,
You may go round the world
By the Old Marlborough Road.

At present, in this vicinity, the best part of the land is not private property; the landscape is not owned, and the walker enjoys comparative freedom. But possibly the day will come when it will be partitioned off into so-called pleasure-grounds, in which a few will take a narrow and exclusive pleasure only, — when fences shall be multiplied, and man-traps and other engines invented to confine men to the *public* road, and walking over the surface of God's earth shall be construed to mean trespassing on some gentleman's grounds. To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it. Let us improve our opportunities, then, before the evil days come.

* * * * *

What is it that makes it so hard sometimes to determine whither we will walk? I believe that there is a subtile magnetism in Nature,

which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright. It is not indifferent to us which way we walk. There is a right way; but we are very liable from heedlessness and stupidity to take the wrong one. We would fain take that walk, never yet taken by us through this actual world, which is perfectly symbolical of the path which we love to travel in the interior and ideal world; and sometimes, no doubt, we find it difficult to choose our direction, because it does not yet exist distinctly in our idea.

When I go out of the house for a walk, uncertain as yet whither I will bend my steps, and submit myself to my instinct to decide for me, I find, strange and whimsical as it may seem, that I finally and inevitably settle southwest, toward some particular wood or meadow or deserted pasture or hill in that direction. My needle is slow to settle, — varies a few degrees, and does not always point due southwest, it is true, and it has good authority for this ‘variation, but it always settles between west and south-southwest. The future lies that way to me, and the earth seems more unexhausted and richer on that side. The outline which would bound my walks would be, not a circle, but a parabola, or rather like one of those cometary orbits which have been thought to be non-returning curves, in this case opening westward, in which my house occupies the place of the sun. I turn round and round irresolute sometimes for a quarter of an hour, until I decide, for a thousandth time, that I will walk into the southwest or west. Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free. Thither no business leads me. It is hard for me to believe that I shall find fair landscapes or sufficient wildness and freedom behind the eastern horizon. I am not excited by the prospect of a walk thither; but I believe that the forest which I see in the western horizon stretches uninterruptedly toward the setting sun, and there are no towns nor cities in it of enough consequence to disturb me. Let me live where I will, on this side is the city, on that the wilderness, and ever I am leaving the city more and more, and withdrawing into the wilderness. I should not lay so much stress on this fact, if I did not believe that something like this is the prevailing tendency of my countrymen. I must walk toward Oregon, and not toward Europe. And that way the nation is moving, and I may say that mankind progress from east to west. Within a few years we have witnessed the

phenomenon of a southeastward migration, in the settlement of Australia; but this affects us as a retrograde movement, and, judging from the moral and physical character of the first generation of Australians, has not yet proved a successful experiment. The eastern Tartars think that there is nothing west beyond Thibet. "The world ends there," say they, "beyond there is nothing but a shoreless sea." It is unmitigated East where they live.

We go eastward to realize history and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race; we go westward as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure. The Atlantic is a Lethean stream, in our passage over which we have had an opportunity to forget the Old World and its institutions. If we do not succeed this time, there is perhaps one more chance for the race left before it arrives on the banks of the Styx; and that is in the Lethe of the Pacific, which is three times as wide.

I know not how significant it is, or how far it is an evidence of singularity, that an individual should thus consent in his pettiest walk with the general movement of the race; but I know that something akin to the migratory instinct in birds and quadrupeds, — which, in some instances, is known to have affected the squirrel tribe, impelling them to a general and mysterious movement, in which they were seen, say some, crossing the broadest rivers, each on its particular chip, with its tail raised for a sail, and bridging narrower streams with their dead, — that something like the *furor* which affects the domestic cattle in the spring, and which is referred to a worm in their tails, — affects both nations and individuals, either perennially or from time to time. Not a flock of wild geese cackles over our town, but it to some extent unsettles the value of real estate here, and, if I were a broker, I should probably take that disturbance into account.

"Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken strange strondes."

Every sunset which I witness inspires me with the desire to go to a West as distant and as fair as that into which the sun goes down. He appears to migrate westward daily, and tempt us to follow him. He is

the Great Western Pioneer whom the nations follow. We dream all night of those mountain-ridges in the horizon, though they may be of vapor only, which were last gilded by his rays. The island of Atlantis, and the islands and gardens of the Hesperides, a sort of terrestrial paradise, appear to have been the Great West of the ancients, enveloped in mystery and poetry. Who has not seen in imagination, when looking into the sunset sky, the gardens of the Hesperides, and the foundation of all those fables?

Columbus felt the westward tendency more strongly than any before. He obeyed it, and found a New World for Castile and Leon. The herd of men in those days scented fresh pastures from afar.

"And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay;
At last *he* rose, and twitched his mantle blue;
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new."

Where on the globe can there be found an area of equal extent with that occupied by the bulk of our States, so fertile and so rich and varied in its productions, and at the same time so habitable by the European, as this is? Michaux, who knew but part of them, says that "the species of large trees are much more numerous in North America than in Europe; in the United States there are more than one hundred and forty species that exceed thirty feet in height; in France there are but thirty that attain this size." Later botanists more than confirm his observations. Humboldt came to America to realize his youthful dreams of a tropical vegetation, and he beheld it in its greatest perfection in the primitive forests of the Amazon, the most gigantic wilderness on the earth, which he has so eloquently described. The geographer Guyot, himself a European, goes farther, — farther than I am ready to follow him; yet not when he says,— "As the plant is made for the animal, as the vegetable world is made for the animal world, America is made for the man of the Old World…. The man of the Old World sets out upon his way. Leaving the highlands of Asia, he descends from station to station towards Europe. Each of his steps is marked by a new civilization superior to the preceding, by a greater power of development. Arrived at the

Atlantic, he pauses on the shore of this unknown ocean, the bounds of which he knows not, and turns upon his footprints for an instant." When he has exhausted the rich soil of Europe, and reinvigorated himself, "then recommences his adventurous career westward as in the earliest ages." So far Guyot.

From this western impulse coming in contact with the barrier of the Atlantic sprang the commerce and enterprise of modern times. The younger Michaux, in his "Travels West of the Alleghanies in 1802," says that the common inquiry in the newly settled West was, "'From what part of the world have you come?' As if these vast and fertile regions would naturally be the place of meeting and common country of all the inhabitants of the globe."

To use an obsolete Latin word, I might say, *Ex Oriente lux; ex Occidente*
FRUX. From the East light; from the West fruit.

Sir Francis, Head, an English traveller and a Governor-General of Canada, tells us that "in both the northern and southern hemispheres of the New World, Nature has not only outlined her works on a larger scale, but has painted the whole picture with brighter and more costly colors than she used in delineating and in beautifying the Old World…. The heavens of America appear infinitely higher, the sky is bluer, the air is fresher, the cold is intenser, the moon looks larger, the stars are brighter, the thunder is louder, the lightning is vivider, the wind is stronger, the rain is heavier, the mountains are higher, the rivers longer, the forests bigger, the plains broader." This statement will do at least to set against Buffon's account of this part of the world and its productions.

Linnaeus said long ago, "Nescio quae facies *laeta, glabra* plantis Americanis: I know not what there is of joyous and smooth in the aspect of American plants;" and I think that in this country there are no, or at most very few, *Africanae bestiae*, African beasts, as the Romans called them, and that in this respect also it is peculiarly fitted for the habitation of man. We are told that within three miles of the centre of the East-Indian city of Singapore, some of the inhabitants are annually carried off by tigers; but the traveller can lie down in the

woods at night almost anywhere in North America without fear of wild beasts.

These are encouraging testimonies. If the moon looks larger here than in Europe, probably the sun looks larger also. If the heavens of America appear infinitely higher, and the stars brighter, I trust that these facts are symbolical of the height to which the philosophy and poetry and religion of her inhabitants may one day soar. At length, perchance, the immaterial heaven will appear as much higher to the American mind, and the intimations that star it as much brighter. For I believe that climate does thus react on man, — as there is something in the mountain-air that feeds the spirit and inspires. Will not man grow to greater perfection intellectually as well as physically under these influences? Or is it unimportant how many foggy days there are in his life? I trust that we shall be more imaginative, that our thoughts will be clearer, fresher, and more ethereal, as our sky, — our understanding more comprehensive and broader, like our plains, — our intellect generally on a grander scale, like our thunder and lightning, our rivers and mountains and forests, — and our hearts shall even correspond in breadth and depth and grandeur to our inland seas. Perchance there will appear to the traveller something, he knows not what, of *laeta* and *glabra*, of joyous and serene, in our very faces. Else to what end does the world go on, and why was America discovered?

To Americans I hardly need to say, —

"Westward the star of empire takes its way."

As a true patriot, I should be ashamed to think that Adam in paradise was more favorably situated on the whole than the backwoodsman in this country.

Our sympathies in Massachusetts are not confined to New England; though we may be estranged from the South, we sympathize with the West. There is the home of the younger sons, as among the Scandinavians they took to the sea for their inheritance. It is too late to be studying Hebrew; it is more important to understand even the slang of to-day.

Some months ago I went to see a panorama of the Rhine. It was like a dream of the Middle Ages. I floated down its historic stream in something more than imagination, under bridges built by the

Romans, and repaired by later heroes, past cities and castles whose very names were music to my ears, and each of which was the subject of a legend. There were Ehrenbreitstein and Rolandseck and Coblentz, which I knew only in history. They were ruins that interested me chiefly. There seemed to come up from its waters and its vine-clad hills and valleys a hushed music as of Crusaders departing for the Holy Land. I floated along under the spell of enchantment, as if I had been transported to an heroic age, and breathed an atmosphere of chivalry.

Soon after, I went to see a panorama of the Mississippi, and as I worked my way up the river in the light of to-day, and saw the steamboats wooding up, counted the rising cities, gazed on the fresh ruins of Nauvoo, beheld the Indians moving west across the stream, and, as before I had looked up the Moselle now looked up the Ohio and the Missouri, and heard the legends of Dubuque and of Wenona's Cliff, — still thinking more of the future than of the past or present, — I saw that this was a Rhine stream of a different kind; that the foundations of castles were yet to be laid, and the famous bridges were yet to be thrown over the river; and I felt that *this was the heroic age itself*, though we know it not, for the hero is commonly the simplest and obscurest of men.

* * * * *

The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild; and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the World. Every tree sends its fibres forth in search of the Wild. The cities import it at any price. Men plough and sail for it. From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind. Our ancestors were savages. The story of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf is not a meaningless fable. The founders of every State which has risen to eminence have drawn their nourishment and vigor from a similar wild source. It was because the children of the Empire were not suckled by the wolf that they were conquered and displaced by the children of the Northern forests who were.

I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in

which the corn grows. We require an infusion of hemlock-spruce or arbor-vitae in our tea. There is a difference between eating and drinking for strength and from mere gluttony. The Hottentots eagerly devour the marrow of the koodoo and other antelopes raw, as a matter of course. Some of our Northern Indians eat raw the marrow of the Arctic reindeer, as well as various other parts, including the summits of the antlers, as long as they are soft. And herein, perchance, they have stolen a march on the cooks of Paris. They get what usually goes to feed the fire. This is probably better than stall-fed beef and slaughter-house pork to make a man of. Give me a wildness whose glance no civilization can endure, — as if we lived on the marrow of koodoos devoured raw.

There are some intervals which border the strain of the wood-thrush, to which I would migrate, — wild lands where no settler has squatted; to which, methinks, I am already acclimated.

The African hunter Cummings tells us that the skin of the eland, as well as that of most other antelopes just killed, emits the most delicious perfume of trees and grass. I would have every man so much like a wild antelope, so much a part and parcel of Nature, that his very person should thus sweetly advertise our senses of his presence, and remind us of those parts of Nature which he most haunts. I feel no disposition to be satirical, when the trapper's coat emits the odor of musquash even; it is a sweeter scent to me than that which commonly exhales from the merchant's or the scholar's garments. When I go into their wardrobes and handle their vestments, I am reminded of no grassy plains and flowery meads which they have frequented, but of dusty merchants' exchanges and libraries rather.

A tanned skin is something more than respectable, and perhaps olive is a fitter color than white for a man, — a denizen of the woods. "The pale white man!" I do not wonder that the African pitied him. Darwin the naturalist says, "A white man bathing by the side of a Tahitian was like a plant bleached by the gardener's art, compared with a fine, dark green one, growing vigorously in the open fields."

Ben Jonson exclaims, —

"How near to good is what is fair!"

So I would say, —

How near to good is what is *wild*!

Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest. Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him. One who pressed forward incessantly and never rested from his labors, who grew fast and made infinite demands on life, would always find himself in a new country or wilderness, and surrounded by the raw material of life. He would be climbing over the prostrate stems of primitive forest-trees.

Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, not in towns and cities, but in the impervious and quaking swamps. When, formerly, I have analyzed my partiality for some farm which I had contemplated purchasing, I have frequently found that I was attracted solely by a few square rods of impermeable and unfathomable bog, — a natural sink in one corner of it. That was the jewel which dazzled me. I derive more of my subsistence from the swamps which surround my native town than from the cultivated gardens in the village. There are no richer parterres to my eyes than the dense beds of dwarf andromeda *(Cassandra calyculata)* which cover these tender places on the earth's surface. Botany cannot go farther than tell me the names of the shrubs which grow there, — the high-blueberry, panicled andromeda, lamb-kill, azalea, and rhodora, — all standing in the quaking sphagnum. I often think that I should like to have my house front on this mass of dull red bushes, omitting other flower plots and borders, transplanted spruce and trim box, even gravelled walks, — to have this fertile spot under my windows, not a few imported barrow-fulls of soil only to cover the sand which was thrown out in digging the cellar. Why not put my house, my parlor, behind this plot, instead of behind that meagre assemblage of curiosities, that poor apology for a Nature and Art, which I call my front-yard? It is an effort to clear up and make a decent appearance when the carpenter and mason have departed, though done as much for the passer-by as the dweller within. The most tasteful front-yard fence was never an agreeable object of study to me; the most elaborate ornaments, acorn-tops, or what not, soon wearied and disgusted me. Bring your sills up to the very edge of the swamp, then, (though it may not be the best place for a dry cellar,) so that there be no access on that side to citizens. Front-yards are not made

to walk in, but, at most, through, and you could go in the back way.

Yes, though you may think me perverse, if it were proposed to me to dwell in the neighborhood of the most beautiful garden that ever human art contrived, or else of a Dismal swamp, I should certainly decide for the swamp. How vain, then, have been all your labors, citizens, for me!

My spirits infallibly rise in proportion to the outward dreariness. Give me the ocean, the desert or the wilderness! In the desert, pure air and solitude compensate for want of moisture and fertility. The traveller Burton says of it,— "Your *morale* improves; you become frank and cordial, hospitable and single-minded….. In the desert, spirituous liquors excite only disgust. There is a keen enjoyment in a mere animal existence." They who have been travelling long on the steppes of Tartary say,— "On reëntering cultivated lands, the agitation, perplexity, and turmoil of civilization oppressed and suffocated us; the air seemed to fail us, and we felt every moment as if about to die of asphyxia." When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable, and, to the citizen, most dismal swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place, — a *sanctum sanctorum*. There is the strength, the marrow of Nature. The wild-wood covers the virgin mould, — and the same soil is good for men and for trees. A man's health requires as many acres of meadow to his prospect as his farm does loads of muck. There are the strong meats on which he feeds. A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it. A township where one primitive forest waves above, while another primitive forest rots below, — such a town is fitted to raise not only corn and potatoes, but poets and philosophers for the coming ages. In such a soil grew Homer and Confucius and the rest, and out of such a wilderness comes the Reformer eating locusts and wild honey.

To preserve wild animals implies generally the creation of a forest for them to dwell in or resort to. So it is with man. A hundred years ago they sold bark in our streets peeled from our own woods. In the very aspect of those primitive and rugged trees, there was, methinks, a tanning principle which hardened and consolidated the fibres of men's thoughts. Ah! already I shudder for these comparatively degenerate days of my native village, when you cannot collect a load

of bark of good thickness, — and we no longer produce tar and turpentine.

The civilized nations — Greece, Rome, England — have been sustained by the primitive forests which anciently rotted where they stand. They survive as long as the soil is not exhausted. Alas for human culture! little is to be expected of a nation, when the vegetable mould is exhausted, and it is compelled to make manure of the bones of its fathers. There the poet sustains himself merely by his own superfluous fat, and the philosopher comes down on his marrow-bones.

It is said to be the task of the American "to work the virgin soil," and that "agriculture here already assumes proportions unknown everywhere else." I think that the farmer displaces the Indian even because he redeems the meadow, and so makes himself stronger and in some respects more natural. I was surveying for a man the other day a single straight line one hundred and thirty-two rods long, through a swamp, at whose entrance might have been written the words which Dante read over the entrance to the infernal regions,— "Leave all hope, ye that enter," — that is, of ever getting out again; where at one time I saw my employer actually up to his neck and swimming for his life in his property, though it was still winter. He had another similar swamp which I could not survey at all, because it was completely under water, and nevertheless, with regard to a third swamp, which I did *survey* from a distance, he remarked to me, true to his instincts, that he would not part with it for any consideration, on account of the mud which it contained. And that man intends to put a girdling ditch round the whole in the course of forty months, and so redeem it by the magic of his spade. I refer to him only as the type of a class.

The weapons with which we have gained our most important victories, which should be handed down as heirlooms from father to son, are not the sword and the lance, but the bushwhack, the turf-cutter, the spade, and the bog-hoe, rusted with the blood of many a meadow, and begrimed with the dust of many a hard-fought field. The very winds blew the Indian's cornfield into the meadow, and pointed out the way which he had not the skill to follow. He had no better implement with which to intrench himself in the land than a

clam-shell. But the farmer is armed with plough and spade.

In Literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dullness is but another name for tameness. It is the uncivilized free and wild thinking in "Hamlet" and the "Iliad," in all the Scriptures and Mythologies, not learned in the schools, that delights us. As the wild duck is more swift and beautiful than the tame, so is the wild — the mallard — thought, which 'mid falling dews wings its way above the fens. A truly good book is something as natural, and as unexpectedly and unaccountably fair and perfect, as a wild flower discovered on the prairies of the West or in the jungles of the East. Genius is a light which makes the darkness visible, like the lightning's flash, which perchance shatters the temple of knowledge itself, — and not a taper lighted at the hearth-stone of the race, which pales before the light of common day.

English literature, from the days of the minstrels to the Lake Poets, — Chaucer and Spenser and Milton, and even Shakspeare, included, — breathes no quite fresh and in this sense wild strain. It is an essentially tame and civilized literature, reflecting Greece and Rome. Her wilderness is a green wood, — her wild man a Robin Hood. There is plenty of genial love of Nature, but not so much of Nature herself. Her chronicles inform us when her wild animals, but not when the wild man in her, became extinct.

The science of Humboldt is one thing, poetry is another thing. The poet to-day, notwithstanding all the discoveries of science, and the accumulated learning of mankind, enjoys no advantage over Homer.

Where is the literature which gives expression to Nature? He would be a poet who could impress the winds and streams into his service, to speak for him; who nailed words to their primitive senses, as farmers drive down stakes in the spring, which the frost has heaved; who derived his words as often as he used them, — transplanted them to his page with earth adhering to their roots; whose words were so true and fresh and natural that they would appear to expand like the buds at the approach of spring, though they lay half-smothered between two musty leaves in a library, — ay, to bloom and bear fruit there, after their kind, annually, for the faithful reader, in sympathy with surrounding Nature.

I do not know of any poetry to quote which adequately expresses

this yearning for the Wild. Approached from this side, the best poetry is tame. I do not know where to find in any literature, ancient or modern, any account which contents me of that Nature with which even I am acquainted. You will perceive that I demand something which no Augustan nor Elizabethan age, which no *culture*, in short, can give. Mythology comes nearer to it than anything. How much more fertile a Nature, at least, has Grecian mythology its root in than English literature! Mythology is the crop which the Old World bore before its soil was exhausted, before the fancy and imagination were affected with blight; and which it still bears, wherever its pristine vigor is unabated. All other literatures endure only as the elms which overshadow our houses; but this is like the great dragon-tree of the Western Isles, as old as mankind, and, whether that does or not, will endure as long; for the decay of other literatures makes the soil in which it thrives.

The West is preparing to add its fables to those of the East. The valleys of the Ganges, the Nile, and the Rhine, having yielded their crop, it remains to be seen what the valleys of the Amazon, the Plate, the Orinoco, the St. Lawrence, and the Mississippi will produce. Perchance, when, in the course of ages, American liberty has become a fiction of the past, — as it is to some extent a fiction of the present, — the poets of the world will be inspired by American mythology.

The wildest dreams of wild men, even, are not the less true, though they may not recommend themselves to the sense which is most common among Englishmen and Americans today. It is not every truth that recommends itself to the common sense. Nature has a place for the wild clematis as well as for the cabbage. Some expressions of truth are reminiscent, — others merely *sensible*, as the phrase is, — others prophetic. Some forms of disease, even, may prophesy forms of health. The geologist has discovered that the figures of serpents, griffins, flying dragons, and other fanciful embellishments of heraldry, have their prototypes in the forms of fossil species which were extinct before man was created, and hence "indicate a faint and shadowy knowledge of a previous state of organic existence." The Hindoos dreamed that the earth rested on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on a serpent; and though it may be an unimportant coincidence, it will not be out

of place here to state, that a fossil tortoise has lately been discovered in Asia large enough to support an elephant. I confess that I am partial to these wild fancies, which transcend the order of time and development. They are the sublimest recreation of the intellect. The partridge loves peas, but not those that go with her into the pot.

In short, all good things are wild and free. There is something in a strain of music, whether produced by an instrument or by the human voice, — take the sound of a bugle in a summer night, for instance, — which by its wildness, to speak without satire, reminds me of the cries emitted by wild beasts in their native forests. It is so much of their wildness as I can understand. Give me for my friends and neighbors wild men, not tame ones. The wildness of the savage is but a faint symbol of the awful ferity with which good men and lovers meet.

I love even to see the domestic animals reassert their native rights, — any evidence that they have not wholly lost their original wild habits and vigor; as when my neighbor's cow breaks out of her pasture early in the spring and boldly swims the river, a cold, gray tide, twenty-five or thirty rods wide, swollen by the melted snow. It is the buffalo crossing the Mississippi. This exploit confers some dignity on the herd in my eyes, — already dignified. The seeds of instinct are preserved under the thick hides of cattle and horses, like seeds in the bowels of the earth, an indefinite period.

Any sportiveness in cattle is unexpected. I saw one day a herd of a dozen bullocks and cows running about and frisking in unwieldly sport, like huge rats, even like kittens. They shook their heads, raised their tails, and rushed up and down a hill, and I perceived by their horns, as well as by their activity, their relation to the deer tribe. But, alas! a sudden loud *Whoa*! would have damped their ardor at once, reduced them from venison to beef, and stiffened their sides and sinews like the locomotive. Who but the Evil One has cried, "Whoa!" to mankind? Indeed, the life of cattle, like that of many men, is but a sort of locomotiveness; they move a side at a time, and man, by his machinery, is meeting the horse and the ox half-way. Whatever part the whip has touched is thenceforth palsied. Who would ever think of a *side* of any of the supple cat tribe, as we speak of a *side* of beef?

I rejoice that horses and steers have to be broken before they can be made the slaves of men, and that men themselves have some, wild oats still left to sow before they become submissive members of society. Undoubtedly, all men are not equally fit subjects for civilization; and because the majority, like dogs and sheep, are tame by inherited disposition, this is no reason why the others should have their natures broken that they may be reduced to the same level. Men are in the main alike, but they were made several in order that they might be various. If a low use is to be served, one man will do nearly or quite as well as another; if a high one, individual excellence is to be regarded. Any man can stop a hole to keep the wind away, but no other man could serve so rare a use as the author of this illustration did. Confucius says,— "The skins of the tiger and the leopard, when they are tanned, are as the skins of the dog and the sheep tanned." But it is not the part of a true culture to tame tigers, any more than it is to make sheep ferocious; and tanning their skins for shoes is not the best use to which they can be put.

When looking over a list of men's names in a foreign language, as of military officers, or of authors who have written on a particular subject, I am reminded once more that there is nothing in a name. The name Menschikoff, for instance, has nothing in it to my ears more human than a whisker, and it may belong to a rat. As the names of the Poles and Russians are to us, so are ours to them. It is as if they had been named by the child's rigmarole, — *Iery wiery ichery van, tittle-tol-tan.* I see in my mind a herd of wild creatures swarming over the earth, and to each the herdsman has affixed some barbarous sound in his own dialect. The names of men are of course as cheap and meaningless as *Bose* and *Tray*, the names of dogs.

Methinks it would be some advantage to philosophy, if men were named merely in the gross, as they are known. It would be necessary only to know the genus and perhaps the race or variety, to know the individual. We are not prepared to believe that every private soldier in a Roman army had a name of his own, — because we have not supposed that he had a character of his own. At present our only true names are nicknames. I knew a boy who, from his peculiar energy, was called "Buster" by his playmates, and this rightly supplanted his Christian name. Some travellers tell us that an Indian had no name

given him at first, but earned it, and his name was his fame; and among some tribes he acquired a new name with every new exploit. It is pitiful when a man bears a name for convenience merely, who has earned neither name nor fame.

I will not allow mere names to make distinctions for me, but still see men in herds for all them. A familiar name cannot make a man less strange to me. It may be given to a savage who retains in secret his own wild title earned in the woods. We have a wild savage in us, and a savage name is perchance somewhere recorded as ours. I see that my neighbor, who bears the familiar epithet William, or Edwin, takes it off with his jacket. It does not adhere to him when asleep or in anger, or aroused by any passion or inspiration. I seem to hear pronounced by some of his kin at such a time his original wild name in some jaw-breaking or else melodious tongue.

Here is this vast, savage, howling mother of ours, Nature, lying all around, with such beauty, and such affection for her children, as the leopard; and yet we are so early weaned from her breast to society, to that culture which is exclusively an interaction of man on man, — a sort of breeding in and in, which produces at most a merely English nobility, a civilization destined to have a speedy limit.

In society, in the best institutions of men, it is easy to detect a certain precocity. When we should still be growing children, we are already little men. Give me a culture which imports much muck from the meadows, and deepens the soil, — not that which trusts to heating manures, and improved implements and modes of culture only!

Many a poor sore-eyed student that I have heard of would grow faster, both intellectually and physically, if, instead of sitting up so very late, he honestly slumbered a fool's allowance.

There may be an excess even of informing light. Niépce, a Frenchman, discovered "actinism," that power in the sun's rays which produces a chemical effect, — that granite rocks, and stone structures, and statues of metal, "are all alike destructively acted upon during the hours of sunshine, and, but for provisions of Nature no less wonderful, would soon perish under the delicate touch of the most subtile of the agencies of the universe." But he observed that "those bodies which underwent this change during the daylight

possessed the power of restoring themselves to their original conditions during the hours of night, when this excitement was no-longer influencing them." Hence it has been inferred that "the hours of darkness are as necessary to the inorganic creation as we know night and sleep are to the organic kingdom." Not even does the moon shine every night, but gives place to darkness.

I would not have every man nor every part of a man cultivated, any more than I would have every acre of earth cultivated: part will be tillage, but the greater part will be meadow and forest, not only serving an immediate use, but preparing a mould against a distant future, by the annual decay of the vegetation which it supports.

There are other letters for the child to learn than those which Cadmus invented. The Spaniards have a good term to express this wild and dusky knowledge, — *Gramática parda*, tawny grammar, — a kind of mother-wit derived from that same leopard to which I have referred.

We have heard of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. It is said that knowledge is power; and the like. Methinks there is equal need of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Ignorance, what we will call Beautiful Knowledge, a knowledge useful in a higher sense: for what is most of our boasted so-called knowledge but a conceit that we know something, which robs us of the advantage of our actual ignorance? What we call knowledge is often our positive ignorance; ignorance our negative knowledge. By long years of patient industry and reading of the newspapers, — for what are the libraries of science but files of newspapers? — a man accumulates a myriad facts, lays them up in his memory, and then when in some spring of his life he saunters abroad into the Great Fields of thought, he, as it were, goes to grass like a horse, and leaves all his harness behind in the stable. I would say to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, sometimes, — Go to grass. You have eaten hay long enough. The spring has come with its green crop. The very cows are driven to their country pastures before the end of May; though I have heard of one unnatural farmer who kept his cow in the barn and fed her on hay all the year round. So, frequently, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge treats its cattle.

A man's ignorance sometimes is not only useful, but beautiful, — while his knowledge, so called, is oftentimes worse than useless, besides being ugly. Which is the best man to deal with, — he who knows nothing about a subject, and, what is extremely rare, knows that he knows nothing, or he who really knows something about it, but thinks that he knows all?

My desire for knowledge is intermittent; but my desire to bathe my head in atmospheres unknown to my feet is perennial and constant. The highest that we can attain to is not Knowledge, but Sympathy with Intelligence. I do not know that this higher knowledge amounts to anything more definite than a novel and grand surprise on a sudden revelation of the insufficiency of all that we called Knowledge before, — a discovery that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. It is the lighting up of the mist by the sun. Man cannot *know* in any higher sense than this, any more than he can look serenely and with impunity in the face of sun: [Greek: 'Os thi noon, ou keiuou uoaeseis],— "You will not perceive that, as perceiving a particular thing," say the Chaldean Oracles.

There is something servile in the habit of seeking after a law which we may obey. We may study the laws of matter at and for our convenience, but a successful life knows no law. It is an unfortunate discovery certainly, that of a law which binds us where we did not know before that we were bound. Live free, child of the mist, — and with respect to knowledge we are all children of the mist. The man who takes the liberty to live is superior to all the laws, by virtue of his relation to the law-maker. "That is active duty," says the Vishnu Parana, "which is not for our bondage; that is knowledge which is for our liberation: all other duty is good only unto weariness; all other knowledge is only the cleverness of an artist."

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It is remarkable how few events or crises there are in our histories; how little exercised we have been in our minds; how few experiences we have had. I would fain be assured that I am growing apace and rankly, though my very growth disturb this dull equanimity, —

though it be with struggle through long, dark, muggy nights or seasons of gloom. It would be well, if all our lives were a divine tragedy even, instead of this trivial comedy or farce. Dante, Bunyan, and others, appear to have been exercised in their minds more than we: they were subjected to a kind of culture such as our district schools and colleges do not contemplate. Even Mahomet, though many may scream at his name, had a good deal more to live for, ay, and to die for, than they have commonly.

When, at rare intervals, some thought visits one, as perchance he is walking on a railroad, then indeed the cars go by without his hearing them. But soon, by some inexorable law, our life goes by and the cars return.

"Gentle breeze, that wanderest unseen,
  And bendest the thistles round Loira of storms,
  Traveller of the windy glens,
  Why hast thou left my ear so soon?"

While almost all men feel an attraction drawing them to society, few are attracted strongly to Nature. In their relation to Nature men appear to me for the most part, notwithstanding their arts, lower than the animals. It is not often a beautiful relation, as in the case of the animals. How little appreciation of the beauty of the landscape there is among us! We have to be told that the Greeks called the world [Greek: Kosmos], Beauty, or Order, but we do not see clearly why they did so, and we esteem it at best only a curious philological fact.

For my part, I feel that with regard to Nature I live a sort of border life, on the confines of a world into which I make occasional and transional and transient forays only, and my patriotism and allegiance to the State into whose territories I seem to retreat are those of a moss-trooper. Unto a life which I call natural I would gladly follow even a will-o'-the-wisp through bogs and sloughs unimaginable, but no moon nor fire-fly has shown me the causeway to it. Nature is a personality so vast and universal that we have never seen one of her features. The walker in the familiar fields which stretch around my native town sometimes finds himself in another land than is described in their owners' deeds, as it were in some far-

away field on the confines of the actual Concord, where her jurisdiction ceases, and the idea which the word Concord suggests ceases to be suggested. These farms which I have myself surveyed, these bounds which I have set up, appear dimly still as through a mist; but they have no chemistry to fix them; they fade from the surface of the glass; and the picture which the painter painted stands out dimly from beneath. The world with which we are commonly acquainted leaves no trace, and it will have no anniversary.

I took a walk on Spaulding's Farm the other afternoon. I saw the setting sun lighting up the opposite side of a stately pine wood. Its golden rays straggled into the aisles of the wood as into some noble hall. I was impressed as if some ancient and altogether admirable and shining family had settled there in that part of the land called Concord, unknown to me, — to whom the sun was servant, — who had not gone into society in the village, — who had not been called on. I saw their park, their pleasure-ground, beyond through the wood, in Spaulding's cranberry-meadow. The pines furnished them with gables as they grew. Their house was not obvious, to vision; the trees grew through it. I do not know whether I heard the sounds of a suppressed hilarity or not. They seemed to recline on the sunbeams. They have sons and daughters. They are quite well. The farmer's cart-path, which leads directly through their hall, does not in the least put them out, — as the muddy bottom of a pool is sometimes seen through the reflected skies. They never heard of Spaulding, and do not know that he is their neighbor, — notwithstanding I heard him whistle as he drove his team through the house. Nothing can equal the serenity of their lives. Their coat of arms is simply a lichen. I saw it painted on the pines and oaks. Their attics were in the tops of the trees. They are of no politics. There was no noise of labor. I did not perceive that they were weaving or spinning. Yet I did detect, when the wind lulled and hearing was done away, the finest imaginable sweet musical hum, — as of a distant hive in May, which perchance was the sound of their thinking. They had no idle thoughts, and no one without could see their work, for their industry was not as in knots and excrescences embayed.

But I find it difficult to remember them. They fade irrevocably out of my mind even now while I speak and endeavor to recall them, and

recollect myself. It is only after a long and serious effort to recollect my best thoughts that I become again aware of their cohabitancy. If it were not for such families as this, I think I should move out of Concord.

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We are accustomed to say in New England that few and fewer pigeons visit us every year. Our forests furnish no mast for them. So, it would seem, few and fewer thoughts visit each growing man from year to year, for the grove in our minds is laid waste, — sold to feed unnecessary fires of ambition, or sent to mill, and there is scarcely a twig left for them to perch on. They no longer build nor breed with us. In some more genial season, perchance, a faint shadow flits across the landscape of the mind, cast by the *wings* of some thought in its vernal or autumnal migration, but, looking up, we are unable to detect the substance of the thought itself. Our winged thoughts are turned to poultry. They no longer soar, and they attain only to a Shanghai and Cochin-China grandeur. Those *gra-a-ate thoughts*, those *gra-a-ate men* you hear of!

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We hug the earth, — how rarely we mount! Methinks we might elevate ourselves a little more. We might climb a tree, at least. I found my account in climbing a tree once. It was a tall white pine, on the top of a hill; and though I got well pitched, I was well paid for it, for I discovered new mountains in the horizon which I had never seen before, — so much more of the earth and the heavens. I might have walked about the foot of the tree for threescore years and ten, and yet I certainly should never have seen them. But, above all, I discovered around me, — it was near the end of June, — on the ends of the topmost branches only, a few minute and delicate red cone-like blossoms, the fertile flower of the white pine looking heavenward. I carried straightway to the village the topmost spire, and showed it to stranger jurymen who walked the streets, — for it was court-week, — and to farmers and lumber-dealers and wood-

choppers and hunters, and not one had ever seen the like before, but they wondered as at a star dropped down. Tell of ancient architects finishing their works on the tops of columns as perfectly as on the lower and more visible parts! Nature has from the first expanded the minute blossoms of the forest only toward the heavens, above men's heads and unobserved by them. We see only the flowers that are under our feet in the meadows. The pines have developed their delicate blossoms on the highest twigs of the wood every summer for ages, as well over the heads of Nature's red children as of her white ones; yet scarcely a farmer or hunter in the land has ever seen them.

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Above all, we cannot afford not to live in the present. He is blessed over all mortals who loses no moment of the passing life in remembering the past. Unless our philosophy hears the cock crow in every barn-yard within our horizon, it is belated. That sound commonly reminds us that we are growing rusty and antique in our employments and habits of thought. His philosophy comes down to a more recent time than ours. There is something suggested by it that is a newer testament, — the gospel according to this moment. He has not fallen astern; he has got up early, and kept up early, and to be where he is to be in season, in the foremost rank of time. It is an expression of the health and soundness of Nature, a brag for all the world, — healthiness as of a spring burst forth, a new fountain of the Muses, to celebrate this last instant of time. Where he lives no fugitive slave laws are passed. Who has not betrayed his master many times since last he heard that note?

The merit of this bird's strain is in its freedom from all plaintiveness. The singer can easily move us to tears or to laughter, but where is he who can excite in us a pure morning joy? When, in doleful dumps, breaking the awful stillness of our wooden sidewalk on a Sunday, or, perchance, a watcher in the house of mourning, I hear a cockerel crow far or near, I think to myself, "There is one of us well, at any rate," — and with a sudden gush return to my senses.

We had a remarkable sunset one day last November. I was walking in a meadow, the source of a small brook, when the sun at

last, just before setting, after a cold gray day, reached a clear stratum in the horizon, and the softest, brightest morning sunlight fell on the dry grass and on the stems of the trees in the opposite horizon, and on the leaves of the shrub-oaks on the hill-side, while our shadows stretched long over the meadow eastward, as if we were the only motes in its beams. It was such a light as we could not have imagined a moment before, and the air also was so warm and serene that nothing was wanting to make a paradise of that meadow. When we reflected that this was not a solitary phenomenon, never to happen again, but that it would happen forever and ever an infinite number of evenings, and cheer and reassure the latest child that walked there, it was more glorious still.

The sun sets on some retired meadow, where no house is visible, with all the glory and splendor that it lavishes on cities, and perchance, as it has never set before, — where there is but a solitary marsh-hawk to have his wings gilded by it, or only a musquash looks out from his cabin, and there is some little black-veined brook in the midst of the marsh, just beginning to meander, winding slowly round a decaying stump. We walked in so pure and bright a light, gilding the withered grass and leaves, so softly and serenely bright, I thought I had never bathed in such a golden flood, without a ripple or a murmur to it. The west side of every wood and rising ground gleamed like the boundary of Elysium, and the sun on our backs seemed like a gentle herdsman driving us home at evening.

So we saunter toward the Holy Land, till one day the sun shall shine more brightly than ever he has done, shall perchance shine into our minds and hearts, and light up our whole lives with a great awakening light, as warm and serene and golden as on a bank-side in autumn.

LOVE

WHAT the essential difference between man and woman is that they should be thus attracted to one another, no one has satisfactorily answered. Perhaps we must acknowledge the justness of the distinction which assigns to man the sphere of wisdom, and to woman that of love, though neither belongs exclusively to either. Man is continually saying to woman, Why will you not be more wise? Woman is continually saying to man, Why will you not be more loving? It is not in their wills to be wise or to be loving; but, unless each is both wise and loving, there can be neither wisdom nor love.

All transcendent goodness is one, though appreciated in different ways, or by different senses. In beauty we see it, in music we hear it, in fragrance we scent it, in the palatable the pure palate tastes it, and in rare health the whole body feels it. The variety is in the surface or manifestation; but the radical identity we fail to express. The lover sees in the glance of his beloved the same beauty that in the sunset paints the western skies. It is the same daimon, here lurking under a human eyelid, and there under the closing eyelids of the day. Here, in small compass, is the ancient and natural beauty of evening and morning. What loving astronomer has ever fathomed the ethereal depths of the eye?

The maiden conceals a fairer flower and sweeter fruit than any calyx in the field; and, if she goes with averted face, confiding in her purity and high resolves, she will make the heavens retrospective, and all nature humbly confess its queen.

Under the influence of this sentiment, man is a string of an Æolian harp, which vibrates with the zephyrs of the eternal morning.

There is at first thought something trivial in the commonness of love. So many Indian youths and maidens along these banks have in ages past yielded to the influence of this great civilizer. Nevertheless, this generation is not disgusted nor discouraged, for love is no individual's experience; and though we are imperfect mediums, it

does not partake of our imperfection; though we are finite, it is infinite and eternal; and the same divine influence broods over these banks, whatever race may inhabit them, and perchance still would, even if the human race did not dwell here.

Perhaps an instinct survives through the intensest actual love, which prevents entire abandonment and devotion, and makes the most ardent lover a little reserved. It is the anticipation of change. For the most ardent lover is not the less practically wise, and seeks a love which will last forever.

Considering how few poetical friendships there are, it is remarkable that so many are married. It would seem as if men yielded too easy an obedience to nature without consulting their genius. One may be drunk with love without being any nearer to finding his mate. There is more of good nature than of good sense at the bottom of most marriages. But the good nature must have the counsel of the good spirit or Intelligence. If common sense had been consulted, how many marriages would never have taken place; if uncommon or divine sense, how few marriages such as we witness would ever have taken place!

Our love may be ascending or descending. What is its character, if it may be said of it, —

"We must *respect* the souls above,
But only *those below* we *love.*""

Love is a severe critic. Hate can pardon more than love. They who aspire to love worthily, subject themselves to an ordeal more rigid than any other.

Is your friend such a one that an increase of worth on your part will surely make her more your friend? Is she retained, — is she attracted, — by more nobleness in you, — by more of that virtue which is peculiarly yours; or is she indifferent and blind to that? Is she to be flattered and won by your meeting her on any other than the ascending path? Then duty requires that you separate from her.

Love must be as much a light as a flame.

Where there is not discernment, the behavior even of the purest soul may in effect amount to coarseness.

A man of fine perceptions is more truly feminine than a merely sentimental woman. The heart is blind, but Love is not blind. None of the gods is so discriminating.

In Love & Friendship the imagination is as much exercised as the heart, and if either is outraged, the other will be estranged. It is commonly the imagination which is wounded first, rather than the heart, it is so much the more sensitive.

Comparatively, we can excuse any offence against the heart, but not against the imagination. The imagination knows — nothing escapes its glance from out its eyry — and it controls the breast. My heart may still yearn toward the valley, but my imagination will not permit me to jump off the precipice that debars me from it, for it is wounded, its wings are dipt, and it cannot fly, even descendingly. Our "blundering hearts"! some poet says. The imagination never forgets, it is a remembering. It is not foundationless, but most reasonable, and it alone uses all the knowledge of the intellect.

Love is the profoundest of secrets. Divulged, even to the beloved, it is no longer Love. As if it were merely I that loved you. When love ceases, then it is divulged.

In our intercourse with one we love, we wish to have answered those questions at the end of which we do not raise our voice; against which we put no interrogation-mark, — answered with the same unfailing, universal aim toward every point of the compass.

I require that thou knowest everything without being told anything. I parted from my beloved because there was one thing which I had to tell her. She *questioned* me. She should have known all by sympathy. That I had to tell it her was the difference between us, — the misunderstanding.

A lover never hears anything that is *told*, for that is commonly either false or stale; but he hears things taking place, as the sentinels heard Trenck mining in the ground, and thought it was moles.

The relation may be profaned in many ways. The parties may not regard it with equal sacredness. What if the lover should learn that his beloved dealt in incantations and philters! What if he should hear that she consulted a clairvoyant! The spell would be instantly broken.

If to chaffer and higgle are bad in trade, they are much worse in Love. It demands directness as of an arrow.

There is danger that we lose sight of what our friend is absolutely, while considering what she is to us alone.

The lover wants no partiality. He says, Be so kind as to be just.

Canst thou love with thy mind,
And reason with thy heart?
Canst thou be kind,
And from thy darling part?

Canst thou range earth, sea, and air,
And so meet me everywhere?
Through all events I will pursue thee,
Through all persons I will woo thee.

I need thy hate as much as thy love. Thou wilt not repel me entirely when thou repellest what is evil in me.

Indeed, indeed, I cannot tell,
Though I ponder on it well.
Which were easier to state,
All my love or all my hate.
Surely, surely, thou wilt trust me
When I say thou dost disgust me.
O I hate thee with a hate
That would fain annihilate;
Yet, sometimes, against my will,
My dear Friend, I love thee still.
It were treason to our love,
And a sin to God above,
One iota to abate
Of a pure, impartial hate.

It is not enough that we are truthful; we must cherish and carry out high purposes to be truthful about.

It must be rare, indeed, that we meet with one to whom we are prepared to be quite ideally related, as she to us. We should have no reserve; we should give the whole of ourselves to that society; we

should have no duty aside from that. One who could bear to be so wonderfully and beautifully exaggerated every day. I would take my friend out of her low self and set her higher, infinitely higher, and *there* know her. But, commonly, men are as much afraid of love as of hate. They have lower engagements. They have near ends to serve. They have not imagination enough to be thus employed about a human being, but must be coopering a barrel, forsooth.

What a difference, whether, in all your walks, you meet only strangers, or in one house is one who knows you, and whom you know. To have a brother or a sister! To have a gold mine on your farm! To find diamonds in the gravel heaps before your door! How rare these things are! To share the day with you, — to people the earth. Whether to have a god or a goddess for companion in your walks, or to walk alone with hinds and villains and carles. Would not a friend enhance the beauty of the landscape as much as a deer or hare? Everything would acknowledge and serve such a relation; the corn in the field, and the cranberries in the meadow. The flowers would bloom, and the birds sing, with a new impulse. There would be more fair days in the year.

The object of love expands and grows before us to eternity, until it includes all that is lovely, and we become all that can love.

CHASTITY AND SENSUALITY

The subject of Sex is a remarkable one, since, though its phenomena concern us so much both directly and indirectly, and, sooner or later it occupies the thoughts of all, yet, all mankind, as it were, agree to be silent about it, at least the sexes commonly one to another. One of the most interesting of all human facts is veiled more completely than any mystery. It is treated with such secrecy and awe, as surely do not go to any religion. I believe that it is unusual even for the most intimate friends to communicate the pleasures and anxieties connected with this fact, — much as the external affairs of love, its comings & goings, are bruited. The Shakers do not exaggerate it so much by their manner of speaking of it, as all mankind by their manner of keeping silence about it. Not that men should speak on this or any subject without having any thing worthy to say; but it is plain that the education of man has hardly commenced, there is so little genuine intercommunication.

In a pure society, the subject of copulation would not be so often avoided from shame and not from reverence, winked out of sight, and hinted at only, but treated naturally and simply, — perhaps simply avoided, like the kindred mysteries. If it cannot be spoken of for shame, how can it be acted of? But doubtless there is far more purity as well as more impurity, than is apparent.

Men commonly couple with their idea of marriage a slight degree at least of sensuality, but every lover, the world over, believes in its inconceivable purity.

If it is the result of a pure love, there can be nothing sensual in marriage. Chastity is something positive, not negative. It is the virtue of the married especially. All lusts or base pleasures must give place to loftier delights. They who meet as superior beings cannot perform the deeds of inferior ones. The deeds of love are less questionable than any action of an individual can be, for, it being founded on the rarest mutual respect, the parties incessantly stimulate each other to a loftier and purer life, and the act in which they are associated must be

pure and noble indeed, for innocence and purity can have no equal. In this relation we deal with one whom we respect more religiously even than we respect our better selves, and we shall necessarily conduct as in the presence of God. What presence can be more awful to the lover than that of his beloved?

If you seek the warmth even of affection from a similar motive to that from which cats and dogs and slothful persons hug the fire, because your temperature is low through sloth, you are on the downward road, and it is but to plunge yet deeper into sloth. Better the cold affection of the sun reflected from fields of ice and snow, or his warmth in some still wintry dell. The warmth of celestial love does not relax, but nerves and braces its enjoyer. Warm your body by healthful exercise, not by cowering over a stove. Warm your spirit by performing independently noble deeds, not by ignobly seeking the sympathy of your fellows who are no better than yourself. A man's social and spiritual discipline must answer to his corporeal. He must lean on a friend who has a hard breast, as he would lie on a hard bed. He must drink cold water for his only beverage. So he must not hear sweetened and colored words, but pure and refreshing truths. He must daily bathe in truth cold as spring water, not warmed by the sympathy of friends.

Can love be in aught allied to dissipation? Let us love by refusing not accepting one another. Love and lust are far asunder. The one is good, the other bad. When the affectionate sympathize by their higher natures, there is love; but there is danger that they will sympathize by their lower natures, and then there is lust. It is not necessary that this be deliberate, hardly even conscious, but in the close contact of affection there is danger that we may stain and pollute one another, for we cannot embrace but with an entire embrace.

We must love our friend so much that she shall be associated with our purest and holiest thoughts alone. When there is impurity, we have "descended to meet," though we knew it not.

The *luxury* of affection, — there's the danger. There must be some nerve and heroism in our love, as of a winter morning. In the religion of all nations a purity is hinted at, which, I fear, men never attain to. We may love and not elevate one another. The love that

takes us as it finds us, degrades us. What watch we must keep over the fairest and purest of our affections, lest there be some taint about them. May we so love as never to have occasion to repent of our love.

There is to be attributed to sensuality the loss to language of how many pregnant symbols.

Flowers, which, by their infinite hues and fragrance celebrate the marriage of the plants are intended for a symbol of the open and unsuspected beauty of all true marriage, when man's flowering season arrives.

Virginity too is a budding flower, and by an impure marriage the virgin is deflowered. Whoever loves flowers, loves virgins and chastity. Love and lust are as far asunder as a flower garden is from a brothel.

J. Biberg, in the "Amoenitates Botanicae", edited by Linnaeus, observes, (I translate from the Latin) "the organs of generation which in the animal kingdom are for the most part concealed by nature as if they were to be ashamed of, in the vegetable kingdom are exposed to the eyes of all; and when the nuptials of plants are celebrated, it is wonderful what delight they afford to the beholder, refreshing the senses with the most agreeable color and the sweetest odor, and at the same time bees and other insects, not to mention the humming bird, extract honey from their nectaries, and gather wax from their effete pollen." Linnaeus himself calls the calyx the *thalamus*, or bridal chamber, and the corolla the *aulaeum* or tapestry of it, and proceeds to explain thus every part of the flower.

Who knows but evil spirits might corrupt the flowers themselves, rob them of their fragrance and their fair hues, and turn their marriage into a secret shame & defilement? Already they are of various qualities, and there is one whose nuptials fill the lowlands in June with the odor of carrion.

The intercourse of the sexes, I have dreamed, is incredibly beautiful, too fair to be remembered. I have had thoughts about it, but they are among the most fleeting and irrecoverable in my experience. It is strange that men will talk of miracles, revelation, inspiration, and the like, as things past, while love remains.

A true marriage will differ in no wise from illumination. In all

perception of the truth there is a divine ecstasy, an inexpressible delirium of joy, as when a youth embraces his betrothed virgin. The ultimate delights of a true marriage are one with this.

No wonder that out of such a union, not as end, but as accompaniment, comes the undying race of man. The womb is a most fertile soil.

Some have asked if the stock of men could not be improved, — if they could not be bred as cattle. Let Love be purified and all the rest will follow. A pure love is thus indeed the panacea for all the ills of the world.

The only excuse for reproduction is improvement. Nature abhors repetition. Beasts merely propagate their kind, but the offspring of noble men & women will be superior to themselves, as their aspirations are. By their fruits ye shall know them.

SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS

I lately attended a meeting of the citizens of Concord, expecting, as one among many, to speak on the subject of slavery in Massachusetts; but I was surprised and disappointed to find that what had called my townsmen together was the destiny of Nebraska, and not of Massachusetts, and that what I had to say would be entirely out of order. I had thought that the house was on fire, and not the prairie; but though several of the citizens of Massachusetts are now in prison for attempting to rescue a slave from her own clutches, not one of the speakers at that meeting expressed regret for it, not one even referred to it. It was only the disposition of some wild lands a thousand miles off, which appeared to concern them. The inhabitants of Concord are not prepared to stand by one of their own bridges, but talk only of taking up a position on the highlands beyond the Yellowstone river. Our Buttricks, and Davises, and Hosmers are retreating thither, and I fear that they will have no Lexington Common between them and the enemy. There is not one slave in Nebraska; there are perhaps a million slaves in Massachusetts.

They who have been bred in the school of politics fail now and always to face the facts. Their measures are half measures and make-shifts, merely. They put off the day of settlement indefinitely, and meanwhile, the debt accumulates. Though the Fugitive Slave Law had not been the subject of discussion on that occasion, it was at length faintly resolved by my townsmen, at an adjourned meeting, as I learn, that the compromise compact of 1820 having been repudiated by one of the parties, 'Therefore, . . . the Fugitive Slave Law must be repealed.' But this is not the reason why an iniquitous law should be repealed. The fact which the politician faces is merely, that there is less honor among thieves than was supposed, and not the fact that they are thieves.

As I had no opportunity to express my thoughts at that meeting, will you allow me to do so here?

Again it happens that the Boston Court House is full of armed

men, holding prisoner and trying a MAN, to find out if he is not really a SLAVE. Does any one think that Justice or God awaits Mr. Loring's decision? For him to sit there deciding still, when this question is already decided from eternity to eternity, and the unlettered slave himself, and the multitude around, have long since heard and assented to the decision, is simply to make himself ridiculous. We may be tempted to ask from whom he received his commission, and who he is that received it; what novel statutes he obeys, and what precedents are to him of authority. Such an arbiter's very existence is an impertinence. We do not ask him to make up his mind, but to make up his pack.

I listen to hear the voice of a Governor, Commander-in-Chief of the forces of Massachusetts. I hear only the creaking of crickets and the hum of insects which now fill the summer air. The Governor's exploit is to review the troops on muster days. I have seen him on horseback, with his hat off, listening to a chaplain's prayer. It chances that is all I have ever seen of a Governor. I think that I could manage to get along without one. If *he* is not of the least use to prevent my being kidnapped, pray of what important use is he likely to be to me? When freedom is most endangered, he dwells in the deepest obscurity. A distinguished clergyman told me that he chose the profession of a clergyman, because it afforded the most leisure for literary pursuits. I would recommend to him the profession of a Governor.

Three years ago, also, when the Simms tragedy was acted, I said to myself, there is such an officer, if not such a man, as the Governor of Massachusetts, — what has he been about the last fortnight? Has he had as much as he could do to keep on the fence during this moral earthquake? It seemed to me that no keener satire could have been aimed at, no more cutting insult have been offered to that man, than just what happened — the absence of all inquiry after him in that crisis. The worst and the most I chance to know of him is, that he did not improve that opportunity to make himself known, and worthily known. He could at least have *resigned* himself into fame. It appeared to be forgotten that there was such a man, or such an office. Yet no doubt he was endeavoring to fill the gubernatorial chair all the while. He was no Governor of mine. He did not govern me.

But at last, in the present case, the Governor was heard from. After he and the United States Government had perfectly succeeded in robbing a poor innocent black man of his liberty for life, and, as far as they could, of his Creator's likeness in his breast, he made a speech to his accomplices, at a congratulatory supper!

I have read a recent law of this State, making it penal for 'any officer of the Commonwealth' to 'detain, or aid in the . . . detention,' any where within its limits, 'of any person, for the reason that he is claimed as a fugitive slave.' Also, it was a matter of notoriety that a writ of replevin to take the fugitive out of the custody of the United States Marshal could not be served, for want of sufficient force to aid the officer.

I had thought that the Governor was in some sense the executive officer of the State; that it was his business, as a Governor, to see that the laws of the State were executed; while, as a man, he took care that he did not, by so doing, break the laws of humanity; but when there is any special important use for him, he is useless, or worse than useless, and permits the laws of the State to go unexecuted. Perhaps I do not know what are the duties of a Governor; but if to be a Governor requires to subject one's self to so much ignominy without remedy, if it is to put a restraint upon my manhood, I shall take care never to be Governor of Massachusetts. I have not read far in the statutes of this Commonwealth. It is not profitable reading. They do not always say what is true; and they do not always mean what they say. What I am concerned to know is, that that man's influence and authority were on the side of the slaveholder, and not of the slave — of the guilty, and not of the innocent — of injustice, and not of justice. I never saw him of whom I speak; indeed, I did not know that he was Governor until this event occurred. I heard of him and Anthony Burns at the same time, and thus, undoubtedly, most will hear of him. So far am I from being governed by him. I do not mean that it thing to his discredit that 1 had not heard of him, only that I heard what I did. The worst I shall say of him is, that he proved no better than the majority of his constituents would be likely to prove. In my opinion, he was not equal to the occasion.

The whole military force of the State is at the service of a Mr. Suttle, a slaveholder from Virginia, to enable him to catch a man

whom he calls his property; but not a soldier is offered to save a citizen of Massachusetts from being kidnapped! Is this what all these soldiers, all this *training* has been for these seventy-nine years past? Have they been trained merely to rob Mexico, and carry back fugitive slaves to their masters?

These very nights, I heard the sound of a drum in our streets. There were men *training* still; and for what? I could with an effort pardon the cockerels of Concord for crowing still, for they, perchance, had not been beaten that morning; but I could not excuse this rub-a-dub of the 'trainers.' The slave was carried back by exactly such as these, i.e., by the soldier, of whom the best you can say in this connection is that he is a fool made conspicuous by a painted coat.

Three years ago, also, just a week after the authorities of Boston assembled to carry back a perfectly innocent man, and one whom they knew to be innocent, into slavery, the inhabitants of Concord caused the bells to be rung and the cannons to be fired, to celebrate their liberty — and the courage and love of liberty of their ancestors who fought at the bridge. As if *those* three millions had fought for the right to be free themselves, but to hold in slavery three million others. Now-a-days men wear a fool's cap, and call it a liberty cap. I do not know but there are some, who, if they were tied to a whipping-post, and could but get one hand free, would use it to ring the bells and fire the cannons, to celebrate *their* liberty. So some of my townsmen took the liberty to ring and fire; that was the extent of their freedom; and when the sound of the bells died away, their liberty died away also; when the powder was all expended, their liberty went off with the smoke.

The joke could be no broader, if the inmates of the prisons were to subscribe for all the powder to be used in such salutes, and hire the jailers to do the firing and ringing for them, while they enjoyed it through the grating.

This is what I thought about my neighbors.

Every humane and intelligent inhabitant of Concord, when he or she heard those bells and those cannons, thought not with pride of the events of the 19th of April, 1775, but with shame of the events of the 12th of April, 1851. But now we have half buried that old shame

under a new one.

Massachusetts sat waiting Mr. Loring's decision, as if it could in any way affect her own criminality. Her crime, the most conspicuous and fatal crime of all, was permitting him to be the umpire in such a case. It was really the trial of Massachusetts. Every moment that she hesitated to set this man free — every moment that she now hesitates to atone for her crime, she is convicted. The Commissioner on her case is God; not Edward G. God, but simple God.

I wish my countrymen to consider, that whatever the human law may be, neither an individual nor a nation can ever commit the least act of injustice against the obscurest individual, without having to pay the penalty for it. A government which deliberately enacts injustice, and persists in it, will at length ever become the laughing-stock of the world.

Much has been said about American slavery, but I think that we do not even yet realize what slavery is. If I were seriously to propose to Congress to make mankind into sausages, I have no doubt that most of the members would smile at my proposition, and if any believed me to be in earnest, they would think that I proposed something much worse than Congress had ever done. But if any of them will tell me that to make a man into a sausage would be much worse, — would be any worse, than to make him into a slave, — than it was to enact the Fugitive Slave Law, I will accuse him of foolishness, of intellectual incapacity, of making a distinction without a difference. The one is just as sensible a proposition as the other.

I hear a good deal said about trampling this law under foot. Why, one need not go out of his way to do that. This law rises not to the level of the head or the reason; its natural habitat is in the dirt. It was born and bred, and has its life only in the dust and mire, on a level with the feet, and he who walks with freedom, and does not with Hindoo mercy avoid treading on every venomous reptile, will inevitably tread on it, and so trample it under foot, — and Webster, its maker, with it, like the dirt-bug and its ball.

Recent events will be valuable as a criticism on the administration of justice in our midst, or, rather, as showing what are the true resources of justice in any community. It has come to this, that the

friends of liberty, the friends of the slave, have shuddered when they have understood that his fate was left to the legal tribunals of the country to be decided. Free men have no faith that justice will be awarded in such a case; the judge may decide this way or that; it is a kind of accident, at best. It is evident that he is not a competent authority in so important a case. It is no time, then, to be judging according to his precedents, but to establish a precedent for the future. I would much rather trust to the sentiment of the people. In their vote, you would get something of some value, at least, however small; but, in the other case, only the trammelled judgment of an individual, of no significance, be it which way it might.

It is to some extent fatal to the courts, when the people are compelled to go behind them. I do not wish to believe that the courts were made for fair weather, and for very civil cases merely, — but think of leaving it to any court in the land to decide whether more than three millions of people. in this case, a sixth part of a nation, have a right to be freemen or not! But it has been left to the courts of *justice*, so-called — to the Supreme Court of the land — and, as you all know, recognizing no authority but the Constitution, it has decided that the three millions are, and shall continue to be, slaves. Such judges as these are merely the inspectors of a pick-lock and murderer's tools, to tell him whether they are in working order or not, and there they think that their responsibility ends. There was a prior case on the docket, which they, as judges appointed by God, had no right to skip; which having been justly settled, they would have been saved from this humiliation. It was the case of the murderer himself.

The law will never make men free; it is men who have got to make the law free. They are the lovers of law and order, who observe the law when the government breaks it.

Among human beings, the judge whose words seal the fate of a man furthest into eternity, is not he who merely pronounces the verdict of the law, but he, whoever he may be, who, from a love of truth, and unprejudiced by any custom or enactment of men, utters a true opinion or *sentence* concerning him. He it is that *sentences* him. Whoever has discerned truth has received his commission from a higher source than the chiefest justice in the world, who can discern

only law. He finds himself constituted judge of the judge. — Strange that it should be necessary to state such simple truths.

I am more and more convinced that, with reference to any public question, it is more important to know what the country thinks of it, than what the city thinks. The city does not *think* much. On any moral question, I would rather have the opinion of Boxboro than of Boston and New York put together. When the former speaks, I feel as if somebody had spoken, as if *humanity* was yet, and a reasonable being had asserted its rights, — as if some unprejudiced men among the country's hills had at length turned their attention to the subject, and by a few sensible words redeemed the reputation of the race. When, in some obscure country town, the farmers come together to a special town meeting, to express their opinion on some subject which is vexing the land, that, I think, is the true Congress, and the most respectable one that is ever assembled in the United States.

It is evident that there are, in this Commonwealth, at least, two parties, becoming more and more distinct — the party of the city, and the party of the country. I know that the country is mean enough, but I am glad to believe that there is a slight difference in her favor. But as yet, she has few, if any organs, through which to express herself. The editorials which she reads, like the news, come from the sea-board. Let us, the inhabitants of the country, cultivate self-respect. Let us not send to the city for aught more essential than our broadcloths and groceries, or, if we read the opinions of the city, let us entertain opinions of our own.

Among measures to be adopted, I would suggest to make as earnest and vigorous an assault on the Press as has already been made, and with effect, on the Church. The Church has much improved within a few years; but the Press is almost, without exception, corrupt. I believe that, in this country, the press exerts a greater and a more pernicious influence than the Church did in its worst period. We are not a religious people, but we are a nation of politicians. We do not care for the Bible, but we do care for the newspaper. At any meeting of politicians, — like that at Concord the other evening, for instance, — how impertinent it would be to quote from the Bible! how pertinent to quote from a newspaper or from the Constitution! The newspaper is a Bible which we read every morning

and every afternoon, standing and sitting, riding and walking. It is a Bible which every man carries in his pocket, which lies on every table and counter, and which the mail, and thousands of missionaries, are continually dispensing. It is, in short, the only book which America has printed, and which America reads. So wide is its influence. The editor is a preacher whom you voluntarily support. Your tax is commonly one cent daily, and it costs nothing for pew hire. But how many of these preachers preach the truth? I repeat the testimony of many an intelligent foreigner as well as my own convictions, when I say, that probably no country was ever ruled by so mean a class of tyrants as, with a few noble exceptions, are the editors of the periodical press in *this* country. And as they live and rule only by their servility, and appealing to the worst, and not the better nature of man, the people who read them are in the condition of the dog that returns to his vomit.

The *Liberator* and the *Commonwealth* were the only papers in Boston, as far as I know, which made themselves heard in condemnation of the cowardice and meanness of the authorities of that city, as exhibited in ‘51. The other journals, almost without exception, by their manner of referring to and speaking of the Fugitive Slave Law, and the carrying back of the slave Simms, insulted the common sense of the country, at least. And, for the most part, they did this, one would say, because they thought so to secure the approbation of their patrons, not being aware that a sounder sentiment prevailed to any extent in the heart of the Commonwealth. I am told that some of them have improved of late; but they are still eminently time-serving. Such is the character they have won.

But, thank fortune, this preacher can be even more easily reached by the weapons of the reformer than could the recreant priest. The free men of New England have only to refrain from purchasing and reading these sheets, have only to withhold their cents, to kill a score of them at once. One whom I respect told me that he purchased Mitchell’s *Citizen* in the cars, and then threw it out the window. But would not his contempt have been more fatally expressed, if he had not bought it?

Are they Americans? are they New Englanders? are they inhabitants of Lexington, and Concord, and Framingham, who read

and support the Boston *Post*, *Mail*, *Journal*, *Advertiser*, *Courier*, and *Times*? Are these the Flags of our Union? I am not a newspaper reader, and may omit to name the worst.

Could slavery suggest a more complete servility than some of these journals exhibit? Is there any dust which their conduct does not lick, and make fouler still with its slime? I do not know whether the Boston *Herald* is still in existence, but I remember to have seen it about the streets when Simms was carried off. Did it not act its part well — serve its master faithfully? How could it have gone lower on its belly? How can a man stoop lower than he is low? do more than put his extremities in the place of the head he has? than make his head his lower extremity? When I have taken up this paper with my cuffs turned up, I have heard the gurgling of the sewer through every column. I have felt that I was handling a paper picked out of the public gutters, a leaf from the gospel of the gambling-house, the groggery and the brothel, harmonizing with the gospel of the Merchants' Exchange.

The majority of the men of the North, and of the South, and East, and West, are not men of principle. If they vote, they do not send men to Congress or errands of humanity, but while their brothers and sisters are being scourged and hung for loving liberty, while I might here insert all that slavery implies and is, it is the mismanagement of wood and iron and stone and gold which concerns them. Do what you will, O Government! with my wife and children, my mother and brother, my father and sister, I will obey your commands to the letter. It will indeed grieve me if you hurt them, if you deliver them to overseers to be hunted by hounds or to be whipped to death; but nevertheless, I will peaceably pursue my chosen calling on this fair earth, until perchance, one day, when I have put on mourning for them dead, I shall have persuaded you to relent. Such is the attitude, such are the words of Massachusetts.

Rather than do thus, I need not say what match I would touch, what system endeavor to blow up, — but as I love my life, I would side with the light, and let the dark earth roll from under me, calling my mother and my brother to follow.

I would remind my countrymen, that they are to be men first, and Americans only at a late and convenient hour. No matter how

valuable law may be to protect your property, even to keep soul and body together, if it do not keep you and humanity together.

I am sorry to say, that I doubt if there is a judge in Massachusetts who is prepared to resign his office, and get his living innocently, whenever it is required of him to pass sentence under a law which is merely contrary to the law of God. I am compelled to see that they put themselves, or rather, are by character, in this respect, exactly on a level with the marine who discharges his musket in any direction he is ordered to. They are just as much tools and as little men. Certainly, they are not the more to be respected, because their master enslaves their understandings and consciences, instead of their bodies.

The judges and lawyers, — simply as such, I mean, — and all men of expediency, try this case by a very low and incompetent standard. They consider, not whether the Fugitive Slave Law is right, but whether it is what they call *constitutional*. Is virtue constitutional, or vice? Is equity constitutional, or iniquity? In important moral and vital questions like this, it is just as impertinent to ask whether a law is constitutional or not, as to ask whether it is profitable or not. They persist in being the servants of the worst of men, and not the servants of humanity. The question is not whether you or your grandfather, seventy years ago, did not enter into an agreement to serve the devil, and that service is not accordingly now due; but whether you will not now, for once and at last, serve God, — in spite of your own past recreancy, or that of your ancestor, — by obeying that eternal and only just CONSTITUTION, which He, and not any Jefferson or Adams, has written in your being.

The amount of it is, if the majority vote the devil to be God, the minority will live and behave accordingly, and obey the successful candidate, trusting that some time or other, by some Speaker's casting vote, perhaps, they may reinstate God. This is the highest principle I can get out of or invent for my neighbors. These men act as if they believed that they could safely slide down hill a little way — or a good way — and would surely come to a place, by and by, where they could begin to slide up again. This is expediency, or choosing that course which offers the slightest obstacles to the feet, that is, a down-hill one. But there is no such thing as accomplishing a

righteous reform by the use of 'expediency.' There is no such thing as sliding up hill. In morals, the only sliders are backsliders.

Thus we steadily worship Mammon, both School, and State, and Church, and the Seventh Day curse God with a tintamar from one end of the Union to the other.

Will mankind never learn that policy is not morality — that it never secures any moral right, but considers merely what is expedient? chooses the available candidate, who is invariably the devil, — and what right have his constituents to be surprised, because the devil does not behave like an angel of light? What is wanted is men, not of policy, but of probity — who recognize a higher law than the Constitution, or the decision of the majority. The fate of the country does not depend on how you vote at the polls — the worst man is as strong as the best at that game; it does not depend on what kind of paper you drop into the ballot-box once a year, but on what kind of man you drop from your chamber into the street every morning.

What should concern Massachusetts is not the Nebraska Bill, nor the Fugitive Slave Bill, but her own slaveholding and servility. Let the State dissolve her union with the slaveholder. She may wriggle and hesitate, and ask leave to read the Constitution once more; but she can find no respectable law or precedent which sanctions the continuance of such a Union for an instant.

Let each inhabitant of the State dissolve his union with her, as long as she delays to do her duty.

The events of the past month teach me to distrust Fame. I see that she does not finely discriminate, but coarsely hurrahs. She considers not the simple heroism of an action, but only as it is connected with its apparent consequences. She praises till she is hoarse the easy exploit of the Boston tea party, but will be comparatively silent about the braver and more disinterestedly heroic attack on the Boston Court-House simply because it was unsuccessful!

Covered with disgrace, the State has sat down coolly to try for their lives and liberties the men who attempted to do its duty for it. And this is called *justice*! They who have shown that they can behave particularly well may perchance be put under bonds for *their good behavior*. They whom truth requires at present to plead guilty.

are of all the inhabitants of the State, pre-eminently innocent. While the Governor, and the Mayor, and countless officers of the Commonwealth, are at large, the champions of liberty are imprisoned.

Only they are guiltless, who commit the crime of contempt of such a Court. It behoves every man to see that his influence is on the side of justice, and let the courts make their own characters. My sympathies in this case are wholly with the accused, and wholly against the accusers and their judges. Justice is sweet and musical; but injustice is harsh and discordant. The judge still sits grinding at his organ, but it yields no music, and we hear only the sound of the handle. He believes that all the music resides in the handle, and the crowd toss him their coppers the same as before.

Do you suppose that that Massachusetts which is now doing these things, — which hesitates to crown these men, some of whose lawyers, and even judges, Perchance, may be driven to take refuge in some poor quibble, that they may not wholly outrage their instinctive sense of justice, — do you suppose that she is any thing but base and servile? that she is the champion of liberty?

Show me a free State, and a court truly of justice, and I will fight for them, if need be; but show me Massachusetts, and I refuse her my allegiance, and express contempt for her courts.

The effect of a good government is to make life more valuable, — of a bad one, to make it less valuable. We can afford that railroad, and all merely material stock, should lose some of its value, for that only compels us to live more simply and economically; but suppose that the value of life itself should be diminished! How can we make a less demand on man and nature, how live more economically in respect to virtue and all noble qualities, than we do? I have lived for the last month, — and I think that every man in Massachusetts capable of the sentiment of patriotism must have had a similar experience, — with the sense of having suffered a vast and indefinite loss. I did not know at first what ailed me. At last it occurred to me that what I had lost was a country. I had never respected the Government near to which I had lived, but I had foolishly thought that I might manage to live here, minding my private affairs, and forget it. For my part, my old and worthiest pursuits have lost I

cannot say how much of their attraction, and I feel that my investment in life here is worth many per cent. less since Massachusetts last deliberately sent back an innocent man, Anthony Burns, to slavery. I dwelt before, perhaps, in the illusion that my life passed somewhere only *between* heaven and hell, but now I cannot persuade myself that I do not dwell *wholly within* hell. The site of that political organization called Massachusetts is to me morally covered with volcanic scoriae and cinders, such as Milton describes in the infernal regions. If there is any hell more unprincipled than our rulers, and we, the ruled, I feel curious to see it. Life itself being worth less, all things with it, which minister to it, are worth less. Suppose you have a small library, with pictures to adorn the walls — a garden laid out around — and contemplate scientific and literary pursuits, &c., and discover all at once that your villa, with all its contents, is located in hell, and that the justice of the peace has a cloven foot and a forked tail — do not these things suddenly lose their value in your eyes?

I feel that, to some extent, the State has fatally interfered with my lawful business. It has not only interrupted me in my passage through Court street on errands of trade, but it has interrupted me and every man on his onward and upward path, on which he had trusted soon to leave Court street far behind. What right had it to remind me of Court street? I have found that hollow which even I had relied on for solid.

I am surprised to see men going about their business as if nothing had happened. I say to myself — Unfortunates! they have not heard the news. I am surprised that the man whom I just met on horseback should be so earnest to overtake his newly bought cows running away — since all property is insecure — and if they do not run away again, they may be taken away from him when he gets them. Fool! does he not know that his seed-corn is worth less this year — that all beneficent harvests fail as you approach the empire of hell? No prudent man will build a stone house under these circumstances, or engage in any Peaceful enterprise which it requires a long time to accomplish. Art is as long as ever, but life is more interrupted and less available for a man's proper pursuits. It is not an era of repose. We have used up all our inherited freedom. If we would save our

lives, we must fight for them.

I walk toward one of our ponds, but what signifies the beauty of nature when men are base? We walk to lakes to see our serenity reflected in them; when we are not serene, we go not to them. Who can be serene in a country where both the rulers and the ruled are without principle? The remembrance of my country spoils my walk. My thoughts are murder to the State, and involuntarily go plotting against her.

But it chanced the other day that I scented a white water-lily, and a season I had waited for had arrived. It is the emblem of purity. It bursts up so pure and fair to the eye, and so sweet to the scent, as if to show us what purity and sweetness reside in, and can be extracted from, the slime and muck of earth. I think I have plucked the first one that has opened for a mile. What confirmation of our hopes is in the fragrance of this flower! I shall not so soon despair of the world for it, notwithstanding slavery, and the cowardice and want of principle of Northern men. It suggests what kind of laws have prevailed longest and widest, and still prevail and that the time may come when man's deeds will smell as sweet. Such is the odor which the plant omits. If Nature can compound this fragrance still annually, I shall believe her still young and full of vigor, her integrity and genius unimpaired, and that there is virtue even in man, too who is fitted to perceive and love it. It reminds me that Nature has been partner to no Missouri Compromise. I scent no compromise in the fragrance of the water-lily. It is not a *Nymphoea Douglassii*. In it, the sweet, and pure, and innocent, are wholly sundered from the obscene and baleful. I do not scent in this time the time-serving irresolution of a Massachusetts Governor, nor of a Boston Mayor. So behave that the odor of your actions may enhance the general sweetness of the atmosphere, that when we behold or scent a flower, we may not be reminded how inconsistent your deeds are with it; for all odor is but one form of advertisement of a moral quality, and if fair actions had not been performed, the lily would not smell sweet. The foul slime stands for the sloth and vice of man, the decay of humanity; the fragrant flower that springs from it, for the purity and courage which are immortal.

Slavery and servility have produced no sweet-scented flower

annually, to charm the senses of men, for they have no real life: they are merely a decaying and a death, offensive to all healthy nostrils. We do not complain that they *live*, but that they do not *get buried*. Let the living bury them; even they are good for manure.

LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE

AT A LYCEUM, not long since, I felt that the lecturer had chosen a theme too foreign to himself, and so failed to interest me as much as he might have done. He described things not in or near to his heart, but toward his extremities and superficies. There was, in this sense, no truly central or centralizing thought in the lecture. I would have had him deal with his privatest experience, as the poet does. The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer. I am surprised, as well as delighted, when this happens, it is such a rare use he would make of me, as if he were acquainted with the tool. Commonly, if men want anything of me, it is only to know how many acres I make of their land- since I am a surveyor- or, at most, what trivial news I have burdened myself with. They never will go to law for my meat; they prefer the shell. A man once came a considerable distance to ask me to lecture on Slavery; but on conversing with him, I found that he and his clique expected seven eighths of the lecture to be theirs, and only one eighth mine; so I declined. I take it for granted, when I am invited to lecture anywhere- for I have had a little experience in that business- that there is a desire to hear what I think on some subject, though I may be the greatest fool in the country- and not that I should say pleasant things merely, or such as the audience will assent to; and I resolve, accordingly, that I will give them a strong dose of myself. They have sent for me, and engaged to pay for me, and I am determined that they shall have me, though I bore them beyond all precedent.

So now I would say something similar to you, my readers. Since you are my readers, and I have not been much of a traveller, I will not talk about people a thousand miles off, but come as near home as I can. As the time is short, I will leave out all the flattery, and retain all the criticism.

Let us consider the way in which we spend our lives.

This world is a place of business. What an infinite bustle! I am

awaked almost every night by the panting of the locomotive. It interrupts my dreams. There is no sabbath. It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once. It is nothing but work, work, work. I cannot easily buy a blank-book to write thoughts in; they are commonly ruled for dollars and cents. An Irishman, seeing me making a minute in the fields, took it for granted that I was calculating my wages. If a man was tossed out of a window when an infant, and so made a cripple for life, or seared out of his wits by the Indians, it is regretted chiefly because he was thus incapacitated for business! I think that there is nothing, not even crime, more opposed to poetry, to philosophy, ay, to life itself, than this incessant business.

There is a coarse and boisterous money-making fellow in the outskirts of our town, who is going to build a bank-wall under the hill along the edge of his meadow. The powers have put this into his head to keep him out of mischief, and he wishes me to spend three weeks digging there with him. The result will be that he will perhaps get some more money to board, and leave for his heirs to spend foolishly. If I do this, most will commend me as an industrious and hard-working man; but if I choose to devote myself to certain labors which yield more real profit, though but little money, they may be inclined to look on me as an idler. Nevertheless, as I do not need the police of meaningless labor to regulate me, and do not see anything absolutely praiseworthy in this fellow's undertaking any more than in many an enterprise of our own or foreign governments, however amusing it may be to him or them, I prefer to finish my education at a different school.

If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen. As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down!

Most men would feel insulted if it were proposed to employ them in throwing stones over a wall, and then in throwing them back, merely that they might earn their wages. But many are no more worthily employed now. For instance: just after sunrise, one summer morning, I noticed one of my neighbors walking beside his team,

which was slowly drawing a heavy hewn stone swung under the axle, surrounded by an atmosphere of industry- his day's work begun- his brow commenced to sweat- a reproach to all sluggards and idlers- pausing abreast the shoulders of his oxen, and half turning round with a flourish of his merciful whip, while they gained their length on him. And I thought, Such is the labor which the American Congress exists to protect- honest, manly toil- honest as the day is long- that makes his bread taste sweet, and keeps society sweet- which all men respect and have consecrated; one of the sacred band, doing the needful but irksome drudgery. Indeed, I felt a slight reproach, because I observed this from a window, and was not abroad and stirring about a similar business. The day went by, and at evening I passed the yard of another neighbor, who keeps many servants, and spends much money foolishly, while he adds nothing to the common stock, and there I saw the stone of the morning lying beside a whimsical structure intended to adorn this Lord Timothy Dexter's premises, and the dignity forthwith departed from the teamster's labor, in my eyes. In my opinion, the sun was made to light worthier toil than this. I may add that his employer has since run off, in debt to a good part of the town, and, after passing through Chancery, has settled somewhere else, there to become once more a patron of the arts.

The ways by which you may get money almost without exception lead downward. To have done anything by which you earned money merely is to have been truly idle or worse. If the laborer gets no more than the wages which his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself. If you would get money as a writer or lecturer, you must be popular, which is to go down perpendicularly. Those services which the community will most readily pay for, it is most disagreeable to render. You are paid for being something less than a man. The State does not commonly reward a genius any more wisely. Even the poet laureate would rather not have to celebrate the accidents of royalty. He must be bribed with a pipe of wine; and perhaps another poet is called away from his muse to gauge that very pipe. As for my own business, even that kind of surveying which I could do with most satisfaction my employers do not want. They would prefer that I should do my work coarsely and not too well, ay, not well enough.

When I observe that there are different ways of surveying, my employer commonly asks which will give him the most land, not which is most correct. I once invented a rule for measuring cord-wood, and tried to introduce it in Boston; but the measurer there told me that the sellers did not wish to have their wood measured correctly- that he was already too accurate for them, and therefore they commonly got their wood measured in Charlestown before crossing the bridge.

The aim of the laborer should be, not to get his living, to get "a good job," but to perform well a certain work; and, even in a pecuniary sense, it would be economy for a town to pay its laborers so well that they would not feel that they were working for low ends, as for a livelihood merely, but for scientific, or even moral ends. Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love of it.

It is remarkable that there are few men so well employed, so much to their minds, but that a little money or fame would commonly buy them off from their present pursuit. I see advertisements for active young men, as if activity were the whole of a young man's capital. Yet I have been surprised when one has with confidence proposed to me, a grown man, to embark in some enterprise of his, as if I had absolutely nothing to do, my life having been a complete failure hitherto. What a doubtful compliment this to pay me! As if he had met me half-way across the ocean beating up against the wind, but bound nowhere, and proposed to me to go along with him! If I did, what do you think the underwriters would say? No, no! I am not without employment at this stage of the voyage. To tell the truth, I saw an advertisement for able-bodied seamen, when I was a boy, sauntering in my native port, and as soon as I came of age I embarked.

The community has no bribe that will tempt a wise man. You may raise money enough to tunnel a mountain, but you cannot raise money enough to hire a man who is minding his own business. An efficient and valuable man does what he can, whether the community pay him for it or not. The inefficient offer their inefficiency to the highest bidder, and are forever expecting to be put into office. One would suppose that they were rarely disappointed.

Perhaps I am more than usually jealous with respect to my freedom. I feel that my connection with and obligation to society are still very slight and transient. Those slight labors which afford me a livelihood, and by which it is allowed that I am to some extent serviceable to my contemporaries, are as yet commonly a pleasure to me, and I am not often reminded that they are a necessity. So far I am successful. But I foresee that if my wants should be much increased, the labor required to supply them would become a drudgery. If I should sell both my forenoons and afternoons to society, as most appear to do, I am sure that for me there would be nothing left worth living for. I trust that I shall never thus sell my birthright for a mess of pottage. I wish to suggest that a man may be very industrious, and yet not spend his time well. There is no more fatal blunderer than he who consumes the greater part of his life getting his living. All great enterprises are self-supporting. The poet, for instance, must sustain his body by his poetry, as a steam planing-mill feeds its boilers with the shavings it makes. You must get your living by loving. But as it is said of the merchants that ninety-seven in a hundred fail, so the life of men generally, tried by this standard, is a failure, and bankruptcy may be surely prophesied.

Merely to come into the world the heir of a fortune is not to be born, but to be still-born, rather. To be supported by the charity of friends, or a government pension- provided you continue to breathe- by whatever fine synonyms you describe these relations, is to go into the almshouse. On Sundays the poor debtor goes to church to take an account of stock, and finds, of course, that his outgoes have been greater than his income. In the Catholic Church, especially, they go into chancery, make a clean confession, give up all, and think to start again. Thus men will lie on their backs, talking about the fall of man, and never make an effort to get up.

As for the comparative demand which men make on life, it is an important difference between two, that the one is satisfied with a level success, that his marks can all be hit by point-blank shots, but the other, however low and unsuccessful his life may be, constantly elevates his aim, though at a very slight angle to the horizon. I should much rather be the last man- though, as the Orientals say, “Greatness doth not approach him who is forever looking down; and all those

who are looking high are growing poor."

It is remarkable that there is little or nothing to be remembered written on the subject of getting a living; how to make getting a living not merely holiest and honorable, but altogether inviting and glorious; for if getting a living is not so, then living is not. One would think, from looking at literature, that this question had never disturbed a solitary individual's musings. Is it that men are too much disgusted with their experience to speak of it? The lesson of value which money teaches, which the Author of the Universe has taken so much pains to teach us, we are inclined to skip altogether. As for the means of living, it is wonderful how indifferent men of all classes are about it, even reformers, so called- whether they inherit, or earn, or steal it. I think that Society has done nothing for us in this respect, or at least has undone what she has done. Cold and hunger seem more friendly to my nature than those methods which men have adopted and advise to ward them off.

The title wise is, for the most part, falsely applied. How can one be a wise man, if he does not know any better how to live than other men?- if he is only more cunning and intellectually subtle? Does Wisdom work in a tread-mill? or does she teach how to succeed by her example? Is there any such thing as wisdom not applied to life? Is she merely the miller who grinds the finest logic? It is pertinent to ask if Plato got his living in a better way or more successfully than his contemporaries- or did he succumb to the difficulties of life like other men? Did he seem to prevail over some of them merely by indifference, or by assuming grand airs? or find it easier to live, because his aunt remembered him in her will? The ways in which most men get their living, that is, live, are mere makeshifts, and a shirking of the real business of life- chiefly because they do not know, but partly because they do not mean, any better.

The rush to California, for instance, and the attitude, not merely of merchants, but of philosophers and prophets, so called, in relation to it, reflect the greatest disgrace on mankind. That so many are ready to live by luck, and so get the means of commanding the labor of others less lucky, without contributing any value to society! And that is called enterprise! I know of no more startling development of the immorality of trade, and all the common modes of getting a living.

The philosophy and poetry and religion of such a mankind are not worth the dust of a puffball. The hog that gets his living by rooting, stirring up the soil so, would be ashamed of such company. If I could command the wealth of all the worlds by lifting my finger, I would not pay such a price for it. Even Mahomet knew that God did not make this world in jest. It makes God to be a moneyed gentleman who scatters a handful of pennies in order to see mankind scramble for them. The world's raffle! A subsistence in the domains of Nature a thing to be raffled for! What a comment, what a satire, on our institutions! The conclusion will be, that mankind will hang itself upon a tree. And have all the precepts in all the Bibles taught men only this? and is the last and most admirable invention of the human race only an improved muck-rake? Is this the ground on which Orientals and Occidentals meet? Did God direct us so to get our living, digging where we never planted- and He would, perchance, reward us with lumps of gold?

God gave the righteous man a certificate entitling him to food and raiment, but the unrighteous man found a facsimile of the same in God's coffers, and appropriated it, and obtained food and raiment like the former. It is one of the most extensive systems of counterfeiting that the world has seen. I did not know that mankind was suffering for want of old. I have seen a little of it. I know that it is very malleable, but not so malleable as wit. A grain of gold gild a great surface, but not so much as a grain of wisdom.

The gold-digger in the ravines of the mountains is as much a gambler as his fellow in the saloons of San Francisco. What difference does it make whether you shake dirt or shake dice? If you win, society is the loser. The gold-digger is the enemy of the honest laborer, whatever checks and compensations there may be. It is not enough to tell me that you worked hard to get your gold. So does the Devil work hard. The way of transgressors may be hard in many respects. The humblest observer who goes to the mines sees and says that gold-digging is of the character of a lottery; the gold thus obtained is not the same same thing with the wages of honest toil. But, practically, he forgets what he has seen, for he has seen only the fact, not the principle, and goes into trade there, that is, buys a ticket in what commonly proves another lottery, where the fact is not so

obvious.

After reading Howitt's account of the Australian gold-diggings one evening, I had in my mind's eye, all night, the numerous valleys, with their streams, all cut up with foul pits, from ten to one hundred feet deep, and half a dozen feet across, as close as they can be dug, and partly filled with water- the locality to which men furiously rush to probe for their fortunes- uncertain where they shall break ground- not knowing but the gold is under their camp itself- sometimes digging one hundred and sixty feet before they strike the vein, or then missing it by a foot- turned into demons, and regardless of each others' rights, in their thirst for riches- whole valleys, for thirty miles, suddenly honeycombed by the pits of the miners, so that even hundreds are drowned in them- standing in water, and covered with mud and clay, they work night and day, dying of exposure and disease. Having read this, and partly forgotten it, I was thinking, accidentally, of my own unsatisfactory life, doing as others do; and with that vision of the diggings still before me, I asked myself why I might not be washing some gold daily, though it were only the finest particles- why I might not sink a shaft down to the gold within me, and work that mine. There is a Ballarat, a Bendigo for you- what though it were a sulky-gully? At any rate, I might pursue some path, however solitary and narrow and crooked, in which I could walk with love and reverence. Wherever a man separates from the multitude, and goes his own way in this mood, there indeed is a fork in the road, though ordinary travellers may see only a gap in the paling. His solitary path across lots will turn out the higher way of the two.

Men rush to California and Australia as if the true gold were to be found in that direction; but that is to go to the very opposite extreme to where it lies. They go prospecting farther and farther away from the true lead, and are most unfortunate when they think themselves most successful. Is not our native soil auriferous? Does not a stream from the golden mountains flow through our native valley? and has not this for more than geologic ages been bringing down the shining particles and forming the nuggets for us? Yet, strange to tell, if a digger steal away, prospecting for this true gold, into the unexplored solitudes around us, there is no danger that any will dog his steps,

and endeavor to supplant him. He may claim and undermine the whole valley even, both the cultivated and the uncultivated portions, his whole life long in peace, for no one will ever dispute his claim. They will not mind his cradles or his toms. He is not confined to a claim twelve feet square, as at Ballarat, but may mine anywhere, and wash the whole wide world in his tom.

Howitt says of the man who found the great nugget which weighed twenty-eight pounds, at the Bendigo diggings in Australia: "He soon began to drink; got a horse, and rode all about, generally at full gallop, and, when he met people, called out to inquire if they knew who he was, and then kindly informed them that he was 'the bloody wretch that had found the nugget.' At last he rode full speed against a tree, and nearly knocked his brains out." I think, however, there was no danger of that, for he had already knocked his brains out against the nugget. Howitt adds, "He is a hopelessly ruined man." But he is a type of the class. They are all fast men. Hear some of the names of the places where they dig: "Jackass Flat"- "Sheep's-Head Gully"- "Murderer's Bar," etc. Is there no satire in these names? Let them carry their ill-gotten wealth where they will, I am thinking it will still be "Jackass Flat," if not "Murderer's Bar," where they live.

The last resource of our energy has been the robbing of graveyards on the Isthmus of Darien, an enterprise which appears to be but in its infancy; for, according to late accounts, an act has passed its second reading in the legislature of New Granada, regulating this kind of mining; and a correspondent of the "Tribune" writes: "In the dry season, when the weather will permit of the country being properly prospected, no doubt other rich guacas [that is, graveyards] will be found." To emigrants he says: "do not come before December; take the Isthmus route in preference to the Boca del Toro one; bring no useless baggage, and do not cumber yourself with a tent; but a good pair of blankets will be necessary; a pick, shovel, and axe of good material will be almost all that is required": advice which might have been taken from the "Burker's Guide." And he concludes with this line in Italics and small capitals: "If you are doing well at home, STAY THERE," which may fairly be interpreted to mean, "If you are getting a good living by robbing graveyards at home, stay there."

But why go to California for a text? She is the child of New England, bred at her own school and church.

It is remarkable that among all the preachers there are so few moral teachers. The prophets are employed in excusing the ways of men. Most reverend seniors, the illuminati of the age, tell me, with a gracious, reminiscent smile, betwixt an aspiration and a shudder, not to be too tender about these things- to lump all that, that is, make a lump of gold of it. The highest advice I have heard on these subjects was grovelling. The burden of it was- It is not worth your while to undertake to reform the world in this particular. Do not ask how your bread is buttered; it will make you sick, if you do- and the like. A man had better starve at once than lose his innocence in the process of getting his bread. If within the sophisticated man there is not an unsophisticated one, then he is but one of the devil's angels. As we grow old, we live more coarsely, we relax a little in our disciplines, and, to some extent, cease to obey our finest instincts. But we should be fastidious to the extreme of sanity, disregarding the gibes of those who are more unfortunate than ourselves.

In our science and philosophy, even, there is commonly no true and absolute account of things. The spirit of sect and bigotry has planted its hoof amid the stars. You have only to discuss the problem, whether the stars are inhabited or not, in order to discover it. Why must we daub the heavens as well as the earth? It was an unfortunate discovery that Dr. Kane was a Mason, and that Sir John Franklin was another. But it was a more cruel suggestion that possibly that was the reason why the former went in search of the latter. There is not a popular magazine in this country that would dare to print a child's thought on important subjects without comment. It must be submitted to the D.D.'s. I would it were the chickadee-dees.

You come from attending the funeral of mankind to attend to a natural phenomenon. A little thought is sexton to all the world.

I hardly know an intellectual man, even, who is so broad and truly liberal that you can think aloud in his society. Most with whom you endeavor to talk soon come to a stand against some institution in which they appear to hold stock- that is, some particular, not universal, way of viewing things. They will continually thrust their

own low roof, with its narrow skylight, between you and the sky, when it is the unobstructed heavens you would view. Get out of the way with your cobwebs; wash your windows, I say! In some lyceums they tell me that they have voted to exclude the subject of religion. But how do I know what their religion is, and when I am near to or far from it? I have walked into such an arena and done my best to make a clean breast of what religion I have experienced, and the audience never suspected what I was about. The lecture was as harmless as moonshine to them. Whereas, if I had read to them the biography of the greatest scamps in history, they might have thought that I had written the lives of the deacons of their church. Ordinarily, the inquiry is, Where did you come from? or, Where are you going? That was a more pertinent question which I overheard one of my auditors put to another one- "What does he lecture for?" It made me quake in my shoes.

To speak impartially, the best men that I know are not serene, a world in themselves. For the most part, they dwell in forms, and flatter and study effect only more finely than the rest. We select granite for the underpinning of our houses and barns; we build fences of stone; but we do not ourselves rest on an underpinning of granitic truth, the lowest primitive rock. Our sills are rotten. What stuff is the man made of who is not coexistent in our thought with the purest and subtilest truth? I often accuse my finest acquaintances of an immense frivolity; for, while there are manners and compliments we do not meet, we do not teach one another the lessons of honesty and sincerity that the brutes do, or of steadiness and solidity that the rocks do. The fault is commonly mutual, however; for we do not habitually demand any more of each other.

That excitement about Kossuth, consider how characteristic, but superficial, it was!- only another kind of politics or dancing. Men were making speeches to him all over the country, but each expressed only the thought, or the want of thought, of the multitude. No man stood on truth. They were merely banded together, as usual one leaning on another, and all together on nothing; as the Hindoos made the world rest on an elephant, the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on a serpent, and had nothing to put under the serpent. For all fruit of that stir we have the Kossuth hat.

Just so hollow and ineffectual, for the most part, is our ordinary conversation. Surface meets surface. When our life ceases to be inward and private, conversation degenerates into mere gossip. We rarely meet a man who can tell us any news which he has not read in a newspaper, or been told by his neighbor; and, for the most part, the only difference between us and our fellow is that he has seen the newspaper, or been out to tea, and we have not. In proportion as our inward life fails, we go more constantly and desperately to the post-office. You may depend on it, that the poor fellow who walks away with the greatest number of letters, proud of his extensive correspondence, has not heard from himself this long while.

I do not know but it is too much to read one newspaper a week. I have tried it recently, and for so long it seems to me that I have not dwelt in my native region. The sun, the clouds, the snow, the trees say not so much to me. You cannot serve two masters. It requires more than a day's devotion to know and to possess the wealth of a day.

We may well be ashamed to tell what things we have read or heard in our day. I did not know why my news should be so trivial- considering what one's dreams and expectations are, why the developments should be so paltry. The news we hear, for the most part, is not news to our genius. It is the stalest repetition. You are often tempted to ask why such stress is laid on a particular experience which you have had- that, after twenty-five years, you should meet Hobbins, Registrar of Deeds, again on the sidewalk. Have you not budged an inch, then? Such is the daily news. Its facts appear to float in the atmosphere, insignificant as the sporules of fungi, and impinge on some neglected thallus, or surface of our minds, which affords a basis for them, and hence a parasitic growth. We should wash ourselves clean of such news. Of what consequence, though our planet explode, if there is no character involved in the explosion? In health we have not the least curiosity about such events. We do not live for idle amusement. I would not run round a corner to see the world blow up.

All summer, and far into the autumn, perchance, you unconsciously went by the newspapers and the news, and now you find it was because the morning and the evening were full of news to

you. Your walks were full of incidents. You attended, not to the affairs of Europe, but to your own affairs in Massachusetts fields. If you chance to live and move and have your being in that thin stratum in which the events that make the news transpire- thinner than the paper on which it is printed- then these things will fill the world for you; but if you soar above or dive below that plane, you cannot remember nor be reminded of them. Really to see the sun rise or go down every day, so to relate ourselves to a universal fact, would preserve us sane forever. Nations! What are nations? Tartars, and Huns, and Chinamen! Like insects, they swarm. The historian strives in vain to make them memorable. It is for want of a man that there are so many men. It is individuals that populate the world. Any man thinking may say with the Spirit of Lodin-

"I look down from my height on nations,
And they become ashes before me;-
Calm is my dwelling in the clouds;
Pleasant are the great fields of my rest."

Pray, let us live without being drawn by dogs, Esquimaux-fashion, tearing over hill and dale, and biting each other's ears.

Not without a slight shudder at the danger, I often perceive how near I had come to admitting into my mind the details of some trivial affair- the news of the street; and I am astonished to observe how willing men are to lumber their minds with such rubbish- to permit idle rumors and incidents of the most insignificant kind to intrude on ground which should be sacred to thought. Shall the mind be a public arena, where the affairs of the street and the gossip of the tea-table chiefly are discussed? Or shall it be a quarter of heaven itself- an hypaethral temple, consecrated to the service of the gods? I find it so difficult to dispose of the few facts which to me are significant, that I hesitate to burden my attention with those which are insignificant, which only a divine mind could illustrate. Such is, for the most part, the news in newspapers and conversation. It is important to preserve the mind's chastity in this respect. Think of admitting the details of a single case of the criminal court into our thoughts, to stalk profanely through their very sanctum sanctorum for an hour, ay, for many

hours! to make a very bar-room of the mind's inmost apartment, as if for so long the dust of the street had occupied us- the very street itself, with all its travel, its bustle, and filth, had passed through our thoughts' shrine! Would it not be an intellectual and moral suicide? When I have been compelled to sit spectator and auditor in a court-room for some hours, and have seen my neighbors, who were not compelled, stealing in from time to time, and tiptoeing about with washed hands and faces, it has appeared to my mind's eye, that, when they took off their hats, their ears suddenly expanded into vast hoppers for sound, between which even their narrow heads were crowded. Like the vanes of windmills, they caught the broad but shallow stream of sound, which, after a few titillating gyrations in their coggy brains, passed out the other side. I wondered if, when they got home, they were as careful to wash their ears as before their hands and faces. It has seemed to me, at such a time, that the auditors and the witnesses, the jury and the counsel, the judge and the criminal at the bar- if I may presume him guilty before he is convicted- were all equally criminal, and a thunderbolt might be expected to descend and consume them all together.

By all kinds of traps and signboards, threatening the extreme penalty of the divine law, exclude such trespassers from the only ground which can be sacred to you. It is so hard to forget what it is worse than useless to remember! If I am to be a thoroughfare, I prefer that it be of the mountain brooks, the Parnassian streams, and not the town sewers. There is inspiration, that gossip which comes to the ear of the attentive mind from the courts of heaven. There is the profane and stale revelation of the bar-room and the police court. The same ear is fitted to receive both communications. Only the character of the hearer determines to which it shall be open, and to which closed. I believe that the mind can be permanently profaned by the habit of attending to trivial things, so that all our thoughts shall be tinged with triviality. Our very intellect shall be macadamized, as it were- its foundation broken into fragments for the wheels of travel to roll over; and if you would know what will make the most durable pavement, surpassing rolled stones, spruce blocks, and asphaltum, you have only to look into some of our minds which have been subjected to this treatment so long.

If we have thus desecrated ourselves- as who has not?- the remedy will be by wariness and devotion to reconsecrate ourselves, and make once more a fane of the mind. We should treat our minds, that is, ourselves, as innocent and ingenuous children, whose guardians we are, and be careful what objects and what subjects we thrust on their attention. Read not the Times. Read the Eternities. Conventionalities are at length as had as impurities. Even the facts of science may dust the mind by their dryness, unless they are in a sense effaced each morning, or rather rendered fertile by the dews of fresh and living truth. Knowledge does not come to us by details, but in flashes of light from heaven. Yes, every thought that passes through the mind helps to wear and tear it, and to deepen the ruts, which, as in the streets of Pompeii, evince how much it has been used. How many things there are concerning which we might well deliberate whether we had better know them- had better let their peddling-carts be driven, even at the slowest trot or walk, over that bride of glorious span by which we trust to pass at last from the farthest brink of time to the nearest shore of eternity! Have we no culture, no refinement- but skill only to live coarsely and serve the Devil?- to acquire a little worldly wealth, or fame, or liberty, and make a false show with it, as if we were all husk and shell, with no tender and living kernel to us? Shall our institutions be like those chestnut burs which contain abortive nuts, perfect only to prick the fingers?

America is said to be the arena on which the battle of freedom is to be fought; but surely it cannot be freedom in a merely political sense that is meant. Even if we grant that the American has freed himself from a political tyrant, he is still the slave of an economical and moral tyrant. Now that the republic- the respublica- has been settled, it is time to look after the res-privata- the private state- to see, as the Roman senate charged its consuls, "ne quid res-PRIVATA detrimenti caperet," that the private state receive no detriment.

Do we call this the land of the free? What is it to be free from King George and continue the slaves of King Prejudice? What is it to be born free and not to live free? What is the value of any political freedom, but as a means to moral freedom? Is it a freedom to be slaves, or a freedom to be free, of which we boast? We are a nation of politicians, concerned about the outmost defences only of

freedom. It is our children's children who may perchance be really free. We tax ourselves unjustly. There is a part of us which is not represented. It is taxation without representation. We quarter troops, we quarter fools and cattle of all sorts upon ourselves. We quarter our gross bodies on our poor souls, till the former eat up all the latter's substance.

With respect to a true culture and manhood, we are essentially provincial still, not metropolitan- mere Jonathans. We are provincial, because we do not find at home our standards; because we do not worship truth, but the reflection of truth; because we are warped and narrowed by an exclusive devotion to trade and commerce and manufactures and agriculture and the like, which are but means, and not the end.

So is the English Parliament provincial. Mere country bumpkins, they betray themselves, when any more important question arises for them to settle, the Irish question, for instance- the English question why did I not say? Their natures are subdued to what they work in. Their "good breeding" respects only secondary objects. The finest manners in the world are awkwardness and fatuity when contrasted with a finer intelligence. They appear but as the fashions of past days- mere courtliness, knee-buckles and small-clothes, out of date. It is the vice, but not the excellence of manners, that they are continually being deserted by the character; they are cast-off-clothes or shells, claiming the respect which belonged to the living creature. You are presented with the shells instead of the meat, and it is no excuse generally, that, in the case of some fishes, the shells are of more worth than the meat. The man who thrusts his manners upon me does as if he were to insist on introducing me to his cabinet of curiosities, when I wished to see himself. It was not in this sense that the poet Decker called Christ "the first true gentleman that ever breathed." I repeat that in this sense the most splendid court in Christendom is provincial, having authority to consult about Transalpine interests only, and not the affairs of Rome. A praetor or proconsul would suffice to settle the questions which absorb the attention of the English Parliament and the American Congress.

Government and legislation! these I thought were respectable professions. We have heard of heaven-born Numas, Lycurguses, and

Solons, in the history of the world, whose names at least may stand for ideal legislators; but think of legislating to regulate the breeding of slaves, or the exportation of tobacco! What have divine legislators to do with the exportation or the importation of tobacco? what humane ones with the breeding of slaves? Suppose you were to submit the question to any son of God- and has He no children in the Nineteenth Century? is it a family which is extinct?- in what condition would you get it again? What shall a State like Virginia say for itself at the last day, in which these have been the principal, the staple productions? What ground is there for patriotism in such a State? I derive my facts from statistical tables which the States themselves have published.

A commerce that whitens every sea in quest of nuts and raisins, and makes slaves of its sailors for this purpose! I saw, the other day, a vessel which had been wrecked, and many lives lost, and her cargo of rags, juniper berries, and bitter almonds were strewn along the shore. It seemed hardly worth the while to tempt the dangers of the sea between Leghorn and New York for the sake of a cargo of juniper berries and bitter almonds. America sending to the Old World for her bitters! Is not the sea-brine, is not shipwreck, bitter enough to make the cup of life go down here? Yet such, to a great extent, is our boasted commerce; and there are those who style themselves statesmen and philosophers who are so blind as to think that progress and civilization depend on precisely this kind of interchange and activity- the activity of flies about a molasses-hogshead. Very well, observes one, if men were oysters. And very well, answer I, if men were mosquitoes.

Lieutenant Herndon, whom our government sent to explore the Amazon, and, it is said, to extend the area of slavery, observed that there was wanting there "an industrious and active population, who know what the comforts of life are, and who have artificial wants to draw out the great resources of the country." But what are the "artificial wants" to be encouraged? Not the love of luxuries, like the tobacco and slaves of, I believe, his native Virginia, nor the ice and granite and other material wealth of our native New England; nor are "the great resources of a country" that fertility or barrenness of soil which produces these. The chief want, in every State that I have been

into, was a high and earnest purpose in its inhabitants. This alone draws out "the great resources" of Nature, and at last taxes her beyond her resources; for man naturally dies out of her. When we want culture more than potatoes, and illumination more than sugar-plums, then the great resources of a world are taxed and drawn out, and the result, or staple production, is, not slaves, nor operatives, but men- those rare fruits called heroes, saints, poets, philosophers, and redeemers.

In short, as a snow-drift is formed where there is a lull in the wind, so, one would say, where there is a lull of truth, an institution springs up. But the truth blows right on over it, nevertheless, and at length blows it down.

What is called politics is comparatively something so superficial and inhuman, that practically I have never fairly recognized that it concerns me at all. The newspapers, I perceive, devote some of their columns specially to politics or government without charge; and this, one would say, is all that saves it; but as I love literature and to some extent the truth also, I never read those columns at any rate. I do not wish to blunt my sense of right so much. I have not got to answer for having read a single President's Message. A strange age of the world this, when empires, kingdoms, and republics come a-begging to a private man's door, and utter their complaints at his elbow! I cannot take up a newspaper but I find that some wretched government or other, hard pushed and on its last legs, is interceding with me, the reader, to vote for it- more importunate than an Italian beggar; and if I have a mind to look at its certificate, made, perchance, by some benevolent merchant's clerk, or the skipper that brought it over, for it cannot speak a word of English itself, I shall probably read of the eruption of some Vesuvius, or the overflowing of some Po, true or forged, which brought it into this condition. I do not hesitate, in such a case, to suggest work, or the almshouse; or why not keep its castle in silence, as I do commonly? The poor President, what with preserving his popularity and doing his duty, is completely bewildered. The newspapers are the ruling power. Any other government is reduced to a few marines at Fort Independence. If a man neglects to read the Daily Times, government will go down on its knees to him, for this is the only treason in these days.

Those things which now most engage the attention of men, as politics and the daily routine, are, it is true, vital functions of human society, but should be unconsciously performed, like the corresponding functions of the physical body. They are infrahuman, a kind of vegetation. I sometimes awake to a half-consciousness of them going on about me, as a man may become conscious of some of the processes of digestion in a morbid state, and so have the dyspepsia, as it is called. It is as if a thinker submitted himself to be rasped by the great gizzard of creation. Politics is, as it were, the gizzard of society, full of grit and gravel, and the two political parties are its two opposite halves- sometimes split into quarters, it may be, which grind on each other. Not only individuals, but states, have thus a confirmed dyspepsia, which expresses itself, you can imagine by what sort of eloquence. Thus our life is not altogether a forgetting, but also, alas! to a great extent, a remembering, of that which we should never have been conscious of, certainly not in our waking hours. Why should we not meet, not always as dyspeptics, to tell our had dreams, but sometimes as eupeptics, to congratulate each other on the ever-glorious morning? I do not make an exorbitant demand, surely.

AUTUMNAL TINTS

Europeans coming to America are surprised by the brilliancy of our autumnal foliage. There is no account of such a phenomenon in English poetry, because the trees acquire but few bright colors there. The most that Thomson says on this subject in his "Autumn" is contained in the lines, —

"But see the fading many-colored woods,
Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown; a crowded umbrage, dusk and dun,
Of every hue, from wan declining green to sooty dark": —

and in the line in which he speaks of
"Autumn beaming o'er the yellow woods."

The autumnal change of our woods has not made a deep impression on our own literature yet. October has hardly tinged our poetry.

A great many, who have spent their lives in cities, and have never chanced to come into the country at this season, have never seen this, the flower, or rather the ripe fruit, of the year. I remember riding with one such citizen, who, though a fortnight too, late for the most brilliant tints, was taken by surprise, and would not believe that there had been any brighter. He had never heard of this phenomenon before. Not only many in our towns have never witnessed it, but it is scarcely remembered by the majority from year to year.

Most appear to confound changed leaves with withered ones, as if they were to confound ripe apples with rotten ones. I think that the change to some higher color in a leaf is an evidence that it has arrived at a late and perfect maturity, answering to the maturity of fruits. It is generally the lowest and oldest leaves which change first. But as the perfect winged and usually bright-colored insect is short-lived, so the leaves ripen but to fall.

Generally, every fruit, on ripening, and just before it falls, when it commences a more independent and individual existence, requiring

less nourishment from any source, and that not so much from the earth through its stem as from the sun and air, acquires a bright tint. So do leaves. The physiologist says it is "due to an increased absorption of oxygen." That is the scientific account of the matter, — only a reassertion of the fact. But I am more interested in the rosy cheek than I am to know what particular diet the maiden fed on. The very forest and herbage, the pellicle of the earth, must acquire a bright color, an evidence of its ripeness, — as if the globe itself were a fruit on its stem, with ever a cheek toward the sun.

Flowers are but colored leaves, fruits but ripe ones. The edible part of most fruits is, as the physiologist says, "the parenchyma or fleshy tissue of the leaf," of which they are formed.

Our appetites have commonly confined our views of ripeness and its phenomena, color, mellowness, and perfectness, to the fruits which we eat, and we are wont to forget that an immense harvest which we do not eat, hardly use at all, is annually ripened by Nature. At our annual Cattle Shows and Horticultural Exhibitions, we make, as we think, a great show of fair fruits, destined, however, to a rather ignoble end, fruits not valued for their beauty chiefly. But round about and within our towns there is annually another show of fruits, on an infinitely grander scale, fruits which address our taste for beauty alone.

October is the month for painted leaves. Their rich glow now flashes round the world. As fruits and leaves and the day itself acquire a bright tint just before they fall, so the year near its setting. October is its sunset sky; November the later twilight.

I formerly thought that it would be worth the while to get a specimen leaf from each changing tree, shrub, and herbaceous plant, when it had acquired its brightest characteristic color, in its transition from the green to the brown state, outline it, and copy its color exactly, with paint in a book, which should be entitled, "*October, or Autumnal Tints*"; — beginning with the earliest reddening, — Woodbine and the lake of radical leaves, and coming down through the Maples, Hickories, and Sumachs, and many beautifully freckled leaves less generally known, to the latest Oaks and Aspens. What a memento such a book would be! You would need only to turn over its leaves to take a ramble through the autumn woods whenever you

pleased. Or if I could preserve the leaves themselves, unfaded, it would be better still. I have made but little progress toward such a book, but I have endeavored, instead, to describe all these bright tints in the order in which they present themselves. The following are some extracts from my notes.

THE PURPLE GRASSES.

By the twentieth of August, everywhere in woods and swamps, we are reminded of the fall, both by the richly spotted Sarsaparilla-leaves and Brakes, and the withering and blackened Skunk-Cabbage and Hellebore, and, by the river-side, the already blackening Pontederia.

The Purple Grass (*Eragrostis pectinacea*) is now in the height of its beauty. I remember still when I first noticed this grass particularly. Standing on a hillside near our river, I saw, thirty or forty rods off, a stripe of purple half a dozen rods long, under the edge of a wood, where the ground sloped toward a meadow. It was as high-colored and interesting, though not quite so bright, as the patches of Rhexia, being a darker purple, like a berry's stain laid on close and thick. On going to and examining it, I found it to be a kind of grass in bloom, hardly a foot high, with but few green blades, and a fine spreading panicle of purple flowers, a shallow, purplish mist trembling around me. Close at hand it appeared but a dull purple, and made little impression on the eye; it was even difficult to detect; and if you plucked a single plant, you were surprised to find how thin it was, and how little color it had. But viewed at a distance in a favorable light, it was of a fine lively purple, flower-like, enriching the earth. Such puny causes combine to produce these decided effects. I was the more surprised and charmed because grass is commonly of a sober and humble color.

With its beautiful purple blush it reminds me, and supplies the place, of the Rhexia, which is now leaving off, and it is one of the most interesting phenomena of August. The finest patches of it grow on waste strips or selvages of land at the base of dry hills, just above the edge of the meadows, where the greedy mower does not deign to swing his scythe; for this is a thin and poor grass, beneath his notice.

Or, it may be, because it is so beautiful he does not know that it exists; for the same eye does not see this and Timothy. He carefully gets the meadow hay and the more nutritious grasses which grow next to that, but he leaves this fine purple mist for the walker's harvest, — fodder for his fancy stock. Higher up the hill, perchance, grow also Blackberries, John's-Wort, and neglected, withered, and wiry June-Grass. How fortunate that it grows in such places, and not in the midst of the rank grasses which are annually cut! Nature thus keeps use and beauty distinct. I know many such localities, where it does not fail to present itself annually, and paint the earth with its blush. It grows on the gentle slopes, either in a continuous patch or in scattered and rounded tufts a foot in diameter, and it lasts till it is killed by the first smart frosts.

In most plants the corolla or calyx is the part which attains the highest color, and is the most attractive; in many it is the seed-vessel or fruit; in others, as the Red Maple, the leaves; and in others still it is the very culm itself which is the principal flower or blooming part.

The last is especially the case with the Poke or Garget (*Phytolacca decandra*). Some which stand under our cliffs quite dazzle me with their purple stems now and early in September. They are as interesting to me as most flowers, and one of the most important fruits of our autumn. Every part is flower, (or fruit,) such is its superfluity of color, — stem, branch, peduncle, pedicel, petiole, and even the at length yellowish purple-veined leaves. Its cylindrical racemes of berries of various hues, from green to dark purple, six or seven inches long, are gracefully drooping on all sides, offering repasts to the birds; and even the sepals from which the birds have picked the berries are a brilliant lake-red, with crimson flame-like reflections, equal to anything of the kind, — all on fire with ripeness. Hence the *lacca*, from *lac*, lake. There are at the same time flower-buds, flowers, green berries, dark purple or ripe ones, and these flower-like sepals, all on the same plant.

We love to see any redness in the vegetation of the temperate zone. It is the color of colors. This plant speaks to our blood. It asks a bright sun on it to make it show to best advantage, and it must be seen at this season of the year. On warm hillsides its stems are ripe by the twenty-third of August. At that date I walked through a

beautiful grove of them, six or seven feet high, on the side of one of our cliffs, where they ripen early. Quite to the ground they were a deep brilliant purple with a bloom, contrasting with the still clear green leaves. It appears a rare triumph of Nature to have produced and perfected such a plant, as if this were enough for a summer. What a perfect maturity it arrives at! It is the emblem of a successful life concluded by a death not premature, which is an ornament to Nature. What if we were to mature as perfectly, root and branch, glowing in the midst of our decay, like the Poke! I confess that it excites me to behold them. I cut one for a cane, for I would fain handle and lean on it. I love to press the berries between my fingers, and see their juice staining my hand. To walk amid these upright, branching casks of purple wine, which retain and diffuse a sunset glow, tasting each one with your eye, instead of counting the pipes on a London dock, what a privilege! For Nature's vintage is not confined to the vine. Our poets have sung of wine, the product of a foreign plant which commonly they never saw, as if our own plants had no juice in them more than the singers. Indeed, this has been called by some the American Grape, and, though a native of America, its juices are used in some foreign countries to improve the color of the wine; so that the poetaster may be celebrating the virtues of the Poke without knowing it. Here are berries enough to paint afresh the western sky, and play the bacchanal with, if you will. And what flutes its ensanguined stems would make, to be used in such a dance! It is truly a royal plant. I could spend the evening of the year musing amid the Poke-stems. And perchance amid these groves might arise at last a new school of philosophy or poetry. It lasts all through September.

At the same time with this, or near the end of August, a to me very interesting genus of grasses, Andropogons, or Beard-Grasses, is in its prime. *Andropogon furcatus*, Forked Beard-Grass, or call it Purple-Fingered Grass; *Andropogon scoparius,* Purple Wood Grass; and *Andropogon* (now called *Sorghum*) *nutans*, Indian-Grass. The first is a very tall and slender-culmed grass, three to seven feet high, with four or five purple finger-like spikes raying upward from the top. The second is also quite slender, growing in tufts two feet high by one wide, with culms often somewhat curving, which, as the

spikes go out of bloom, have a whitish fuzzy look. These two are prevailing grasses at this season on dry and sandy fields and hillsides. The culms of both, not to mention their pretty flowers, reflect a purple tinge, and help to declare the ripeness of the year. Perhaps I have the more sympathy with them because they are despised by the farmer, and occupy sterile and neglected soil. They are high-colored, like ripe grapes, and express a maturity which the spring did not suggest. Only the August sun could have thus burnished these culms and leaves. The farmer has long since done his upland haying, and he will not condescend to bring his scythe to where these slender wild grasses have at length flowered thinly; you often see spaces of bare sand amid them. But I walk encouraged between the tufts of Purple Wood-Grass, over the sandy fields, and along the edge of the Shrub-Oaks, glad to recognize these simple contemporaries. With thoughts cutting a broad swathe I "get" them, with horse-raking thoughts I gather them into windrows. The fine-eared poet may hear the whetting of my scythe. These two were almost the first grasses that I learned to distinguish, for I had not known by how many friends I was surrounded, — I had seen them simply as grasses standing. The purple of their culms also excites me like that of the Poke-Weed stems.

Think what refuge there is for one, before August is over, from college commencements and society that isolates! I can skulk amid the tufts of Purple Wood-Grass on the borders of the "Great Fields." Wherever I walk these afternoons, the Purple-Fingered Grass also stands like a guide-board, and points my thoughts to more poetic paths than they have lately travelled.

A man shall perhaps rush by and trample down plants as high as his head, and cannot be said to know that they exist, though he may have cut many tons of them, littered his stables with them, and fed them to his cattle for years. Yet, if he ever favorably attends to them, he may be overcome by their beauty. Each humblest plant, or weed, as we call it, stands there to express some thought or mood of ours; and yet how long it stands in vain! I had walked over those Great Fields so many Augusts, and never yet distinctly recognized these purple companions that I had there. I had brushed against them and trodden on them, forsooth; and now, at last, they, as it were, rose up

and blessed me. Beauty and true wealth are always thus cheap and despised. Heaven might be defined as the place which men avoid. Who can doubt that these grasses, which the farmer says are of no account to him, find some compensation in your appreciation of them? I may say that I never saw them before, — though, when I came to look them face to face, there did come down to me a purple gleam from previous years; and now, wherever I go, I see hardly anything else. It is the reign and presidency of the Andropogons.

Almost the very sands confess the ripening influence of the August sun, and methinks, together with the slender grasses waving over them, reflect a purple tinge. The impurpled sands! Such is the consequence of all this sunshine absorbed into the pores of plants and of the earth. All sap or blood is now wine-colored. At last we have not only the purple sea, but the purple land.

The Chestnut Beard-Grass, Indian-Grass, or Wood-Grass, growing here and there in waste places, but more rare than the former, (from two to four or five feet high,) is still handsomer and of more vivid colors than its congeners, and might well have caught the Indian's eye. It has a long, narrow, one-sided, and slightly nodding panicle of bright purple and yellow flowers, like a banner raised above its reedy leaves. These bright standards are now advanced on the distant hill-sides, not in large armies, but in scattered troops or single file, like the red men. They stand thus fair and bright, representative of the race which they are named after, but for the most part unobserved as they. The expression of this grass haunted me for a week, after I first passed and noticed it, like the glance of an eye. It stands like an Indian chief taking a last look at his favorite hunting-grounds.

THE RED MAPLE.

By the twenty-fifth of September, the Red Maples generally are beginning to be ripe. Some large ones have been conspicuously changing for a week, and some single trees are now very brilliant. I notice a small one, half a mile off across a meadow, against the green wood-side there, a far brighter red than the blossoms of any tree in summer, and more conspicuous. I have observed this tree for several

autumns invariably changing earlier than its fellows, just as one tree ripens its fruit earlier than another. It might serve to mark the season, perhaps. I should be sorry, if it were cut down. I know of two or three such trees in different parts of our town, which might, perhaps, be propagated from, as early ripeners or September trees, and their seed be advertised in the market, as well as that of radishes, if we cared as much about them.

At present these burning bushes stand chiefly along the edge of the meadows, or I distinguish them afar on the hillsides here and there. Sometimes you will see many small ones in a swamp turned quite crimson when all other trees around are still perfectly green, and the former appear so much the brighter for it. They take you by surprise, as you are going by on one side, across the fields, thus early in the season, as if it were some gay encampment of the red men, or other foresters, of whose arrival you had not heard.

Some single trees, wholly bright scarlet, seen against others of their kind still freshly green, or against evergreens, are more memorable than whole groves will be by-and-by. How beautiful, when a whole tree is like one great scarlet fruit full of ripe juices, every leaf, from lowest limb to topmost spire, all aglow, especially if you look toward the sun! What more remarkable object can there be in the landscape? Visible for miles, too fair to be believed. If such a phenomenon occurred but once, it would be handed down by tradition to posterity, and get into the mythology at last.

The whole tree thus ripening in advance of its fellows attains a singular preeminence, and sometimes maintains it for a week or two. I am thrilled at the sight of it, bearing aloft its scarlet standard for the regiment of green-clad foresters around, and I go half a mile out of my way to examine it. A single tree becomes thus the crowning beauty of some meadowy vale, and the expression of the whole surrounding forest is at once more spirited for it.

A small Red Maple has grown, perchance, far away at the head of some retired valley, a mile from any road, unobserved. It has faithfully discharged the duties of a Maple there, all winter and summer, neglected none of its economies, but added to its stature in the virtue which belongs to a Maple, by a steady growth for so many months, never having gone gadding abroad, and is nearer heaven

than it was in the spring. It has faithfully husbanded its sap, and afforded a shelter to the wandering bird, has long since ripened its seeds and committed them to the winds, and has the satisfaction of knowing, perhaps, that a thousand little well-behaved Maples are already settled in life somewhere. It deserves well of Mapledom. Its leaves have been asking it from time to time, in a whisper, "When shall we redden?" And now, in this month of September, this month of travelling, when men are hastening to the sea-side, or the mountains, or the lakes, this modest Maple, still without budging an inch, travels in its reputation, — runs up its scarlet flag on that hillside, which shows that it has finished its summer's work before all other trees, and withdraws from the contest. At the eleventh hour of the year, the tree which no scrutiny could have detected here when it was most industrious is thus, by the tint of its maturity, by its very blushes, revealed at last to the careless and distant traveller, and leads his thoughts away from the dusty road into those brave solitudes which it inhabits. It flashes out conspicuous with all the virtue and beauty of a Maple, — *Acer rubrum*. We may now read its title, or *rubric*, clear. Its *virtues*, not its sins, are as scarlet.

Notwithstanding the Red Maple is the most intense scarlet of any of our trees, the Sugar-Maple has been the most celebrated, and Michaux in his "Sylva" does not speak of the autumnal color of the former. About the second of October, these trees, both large and small, are most brilliant, though many are still green. In "sprout-lands" they seem to vie with one another, and ever some particular one in the midst of the crowd will be of a peculiarly pure scarlet, and by its more intense color attract our eye even at a distance, and carry off the palm. A large Red-Maple swamp, when at the height of its change, is the most obviously brilliant of all tangible things, where I dwell, so abundant is this tree with us. It varies much both in form and color. A great many are merely yellow, more scarlet, others scarlet deepening into crimson, more red than common. Look at yonder swamp of Maples mixed with Pines, at the base of a Pine-clad hill, a quarter of a mile off, so that you get the full effect of the bright colors, without detecting the imperfections of the leaves, and see their yellow, scarlet, and crimson fires, of all tints, mingled and contrasted with the green. Some Maples are yet green, only yellow or

crimson-tipped on the edges of their flakes, like the edges of a Hazel-Nut burr; some are wholly brilliant scarlet, raying out regularly and finely every way, bilaterally, like the veins of a leaf; others, of more irregular form, when I turn my head slightly, emptying out some of its earthiness and concealing the trunk of the tree, seem to rest heavily flake on flake, like yellow and scarlet clouds, wreath upon wreath, or like snowdrifts driving through the air, stratified by the wind. It adds greatly to the beauty of such a swamp at this season, that, even though there may be no other trees interspersed, it is not seen as a simple mass of color, but, different trees being of different colors and hues, the outline of each crescent tree-top is distinct, and where one laps on to another. Yet a painter would hardly venture to make them thus distinct a quarter of a mile off.

As I go across a meadow directly toward a low rising ground this bright afternoon, I see, some fifty rods off toward the sun, the top of a Maple swamp just appearing over the sheeny russet edge of the hill, a stripe apparently twenty rods long by ten feet deep, of the most intensely brilliant scarlet, orange, and yellow, equal to any flowers or fruits, or any tints ever painted. As I advance, lowering the edge of the hill which makes the firm foreground or lower frame of the picture, the depth of the brilliant grove revealed steadily increases, suggesting that the whole of the inclosed valley is filled with such color. One wonders that the tithing-men and fathers of the town are not out to see what the trees mean by their high colors and exuberance of spirits, fearing that some mischief is brewing. I do not see what the Puritans did at this season, when the Maples blaze out in scarlet. They certainly could not have worshipped in groves then. Perhaps that is what they built meeting-houses and fenced them round with horse-sheds for.

THE ELM.

Now, too, the first of October, or later, the Elms are at the height of their autumnal beauty, great brownish-yellow masses, warm from their September oven, hanging over the highway Their leaves are perfectly ripe. I wonder if there is any answering ripeness in the lives of the men who live beneath them. As I look down our street, which

is lined with them, they remind me both by their form and color of yellowing sheaves of grain, as if the harvest had indeed come to the village itself, and we might expect to find some maturity and *flavor* in the thoughts of the villagers at last. Under those bright rustling yellow piles just ready to fall on the heads of the walkers, how can any crudity or greenness of thought or act prevail? When I stand where half a dozen large Elms droop over a house, it is as if I stood within a ripe pumpkin-rind, and I feel as mellow as if I were the pulp, though I may be somewhat stringy and seedy withal. What is the late greenness of the English Elm, like a cucumber out of season, which does not know when to have done, compared with the early and golden maturity of the American tree? The street is the scene of a great harvest-home. It would be worth the while to set out these trees, if only for their autumnal value. Think of these great yellow canopies or parasols held over our heads and houses by the mile together, making the village all one and compact, — an *ulmarium*, which is at the same time a nursery of men! And then how gently and unobserved they drop their burden and let in the sun when it is wanted, their leaves not heard when they fall on our roofs and in our streets; and thus the village parasol is shut up and put away! I see the market-man driving into the village, and disappearing under its canopy of Elm-tops, with *his* crop, as into a great granary or barn-yard. I am tempted to go thither as to a husking of thoughts, now dry and ripe, and ready to be separated from their integuments; but, alas! I foresee that it will be chiefly husks and little thought, blasted pig-corn, fit only for cob-meal, — for, as you sow, so shall you reap.

FALLEN LEAVES.

By the sixth of October the leaves generally begin to fall, in successive showers, after frost or rain; but the principal leaf-harvest, the acme of the *Fall*, is commonly about the sixteenth. Some morning at that date there is perhaps a harder frost than we have seen, and ice formed under the pump, and now, when the morning wind rises, the leaves come down in denser showers than ever. They suddenly form thick beds or carpets on the ground, in this gentle air, or even without wind, just the size and form of the tree above. Some

trees, as small Hickories, appear to have dropped their leaves instantaneously, as a soldier grounds arms at a signal; and those of the Hickory, being bright yellow still, though withered, reflect a blaze of light from the ground where they lie. Down they have come on all sides, at the first earnest touch of autumn's wand, making a sound like rain.

Or else it is after moist and rainy weather that we notice how great a fall of leaves there has been in the night, though it may not yet be the touch that loosens the Rock-Maple leaf. The streets are thickly strewn with the trophies, and fallen Elm-leaves make a dark brown pavement under our feet. After some remarkably warm Indian-summer day or days, I perceive that it is the unusual heat which, more than anything, causes the leaves to fall, there having been, perhaps, no frost nor rain for some time. The intense heat suddenly ripens and wilts them, just as it softens and ripens peaches and other fruits, and causes them to drop.

The leaves of late Red Maples, still bright, strew the earth, often crimson-spotted on a yellow ground, like some wild apples, — though they preserve these bright colors on the ground but a day or two, especially if it rains. On causeways I go by trees here and there all bare and smoke-like, having lost their brilliant clothing; but there it lies, nearly as bright as ever, on the ground on one side, and making nearly as regular a figure as lately on the tree, I would rather say that I first observe the trees thus flat on the ground like a permanent colored shadow, and they suggest to look for the boughs that bore them. A queen might be proud to walk where these gallant trees have spread their bright cloaks in the mud. I see wagons roll over them as a shadow or a reflection, and the drivers heed them just as little as they did their shadows before.

Birds'-nests, in the Huckleberry and other shrubs, and in trees, are already being filled with the withered leaves. So many have fallen in the woods, that a squirrel cannot run after a falling nut without being heard. Boys are raking them in the streets, if only for the pleasure of dealing with such clean crisp substances. Some sweep the paths scrupulously neat, and then stand to see the next breath strew them with new trophies. The swamp-floor is thickly covered, and the *Lycopodium lucidulum* looks suddenly greener amid them. In dense

woods they half-cover pools that are three or four rods long. The other day I could hardly find a well-known spring, and even suspected that it had dried up, for it was completely concealed by freshly fallen leaves; and when I swept them aside and revealed it, it was like striking the earth, with Aaron's rod, for a new spring. Wet grounds about the edges of swamps look dry with them. At one swamp, where I was surveying, thinking to step on a leafy shore from a rail, I got into the water more than a foot deep. When I go to the river the day after the principal fall of leaves, the sixteenth, I find my boat all covered, bottom and seats, with the leaves of the Golden Willow under which it is moored, and I set sail with a cargo of them rustling under my feet. If I empty it, it will be full again to-morrow. I do not regard them as litter, to be swept out, but accept them as suitable straw or matting for the bottom of my carriage. When I turn up into the mouth of the Assabet, which is wooded, large fleets of leaves are floating on its surface, as it were getting out to sea, with room to tack; but next the shore, a little farther up, they are thicker than foam, quite concealing the water for a rod in width, under and amid the Alders, Button-Bushes, and Maples, still perfectly light and dry, with fibre unrelaxed; and at a rocky bend where they are met and stopped by the morning wind, they sometimes form a broad and dense crescent quite across the river. When I turn my prow that way, and the wave which it makes strikes them, list what a pleasant rustling from these dry substances grating on one another! Often it is their undulation only which reveals the water beneath them. Also every motion of the wood-turtle on the shore is betrayed by their rustling there. Or even in mid-channel, when the wind rises, I hear them blown with a rustling sound. Higher up they are slowly moving round and round in some great eddy which the river makes, as that at the "Leaning Hemlocks," where the water is deep, and the current is wearing into the bank.

Perchance, in the afternoon of such a day, when the water is perfectly calm and full of reflections, I paddle gently down the main stream, and, turning up the Assabet, reach a quiet cove, where I unexpectedly find myself surrounded by myriads of leaves, like fellow-voyagers, which seem to have the same purpose, or want of purpose, with myself. See this great fleet of scattered leaf-boats

which we paddle amid, in this smooth river-bay, each one curled up on every side by the sun's skill, each nerve a stiff spruce-knee, — like boats of hide, and of all patterns, Charon's boat probably among the rest, and some with lofty prows and poops, like the stately vessels of the ancients, scarcely moving in the sluggish current, — like the great fleets, the dense Chinese cities of boats, with which you mingle on entering some great mart, some New York or Canton, which we are all steadily approaching together. How gently each has been deposited on the water! No violence has been used towards them yet, though, perchance, palpitating hearts were present at the launching. And painted ducks, too, the splendid wood-duck among the rest, often come to sail and float amid the painted leaves, — barks of a nobler model still!

What wholesome herb-drinks are to be had in the swamps now! What strong medicinal, but rich, scents from the decaying leaves! The rain falling on the freshly dried herbs and leaves, and filling the pools and ditches into which they have dropped thus clean and rigid, will soon convert them into tea, — green, black, brown, and yellow teas, of all degrees of strength, enough to set all Nature a gossiping. Whether we drink them or not, as yet, before their strength is drawn, these leaves, dried on great Nature's coppers, are of such various pure and delicate tints as might make the fame of Oriental teas.

How they are mixed up, of all species, Oak and Maple and Chestnut and Birch! But Nature is not cluttered with them; she is a perfect husbandman; she stores them all. Consider what a vast crop is thus annually shed on the earth! This, more than any mere grain or seed, is the great harvest of the year. The trees are now repaying the earth with interest what they have taken from it. They are discounting. They are about to add a leaf's thickness to the depth of the soil. This is the beautiful way in which Nature gets her muck, while I chaffer with this man and that, who talks to me about sulphur and the cost of carting. We are all the richer for their decay. I am more interested in this crop than in the English grass alone or in the corn. It prepares the virgin mould for future cornfields and forests, on which the earth fattens. It keeps our homestead in good heart.

For beautiful variety no crop can be compared with this. Here is not merely the plain yellow of the grains, but nearly all the colors

that we know, the brightest blue not excepted: the early blushing Maple, the Poison-Sumach blazing its sins as scarlet, the mulberry Ash, the rich chrome-yellow of the Poplars, the brilliant red Huckleberry, with which the hills' backs are painted, like those of sheep. The frost touches them, and, with the slightest breath of returning day or jarring of earth's axle, see in what showers they come floating down! The ground is all party-colored with them. But they still live in the soil, whose fertility and bulk they increase, and in the forests that spring from it. They stoop to rise, to mount higher in coming years, by subtle chemistry, climbing by the sap in the trees, and the sapling's first fruits thus shed, transmuted at last, may adorn its crown, when, in after-years, it has become the monarch of the forest.

It is pleasant to walk over the beds of these fresh, crisp, and rustling leaves. How beautifully they go to their graves! how gently lay themselves down and turn to mould! — painted of a thousand hues, and fit to make the beds of us living. So they troop to their last resting-place, light and frisky. They put on no weeds, but merrily they go scampering over the earth, selecting the spot, choosing a lot, ordering no iron fence, whispering all through the woods about it, — some choosing the spot where the bodies of men are mouldering beneath, and meeting them half-way. How many flutterings before they rest quietly in their graves! They that soared so loftily, how contentedly they return to dust again, and are laid low, resigned to lie and decay at the foot of the tree, and afford nourishment to new generations of their kind, as well as to flutter on high! They teach us how to die. One wonders if the time will ever come when men, with their boasted faith in immortality, will lie down as gracefully and as ripe, — with such an Indian-summer serenity will shed their bodies, as they do their hair and nails.

When the leaves fall, the whole earth is a cemetery pleasant to walk in. I love to wander and muse over them in their graves. Here are no lying nor vain epitaphs. What though you own no lot at Mount Auburn? Your lot is surely cast somewhere in this vast cemetery, which has been consecrated from of old. You need attend no auction to secure a place. There is room enough here. The Loose-strife shall bloom and the Huckleberry-bird sing over your bones. The woodman

and hunter shall be your sextons, and the children shall tread upon the borders as much as they will. Let us walk in the cemetery of the leaves, — this is your true Greenwood Cemetery.

THE SUGAR-MAPLE.

But think not that the splendor of the year is over; for as one leaf does not make a summer, neither does one falling leaf make an autumn. The smallest Sugar-Maples in our streets make a great show as early as the fifth of October, more than any other trees there. As I look up the Main Street, they appear like painted screens standing before the houses; yet many are green. But now, or generally by the seventeenth of October, when almost all Red Maples, and some White Maples, are bare, the large Sugar-Maples also are in their glory, glowing with yellow and red, and show unexpectedly bright and delicate tints. They are remarkable for the contrast they often afford of deep blushing red on one half and green on the other. They become at length dense masses of rich yellow with a deep scarlet blush, or more than blush, on the exposed surfaces. They are the brightest trees now in the street.

The large ones on our Common are particularly beautiful. A delicate, but warmer than golden yellow is now the prevailing color, with scarlet cheeks. Yet, standing on the east side of the Common just before sundown, when the western light is transmitted through them, I see that their yellow even, compared with the pale lemon yellow of an Elm close by, amounts to a scarlet, without noticing the bright scarlet portions. Generally, they are great regular oval masses of yellow and scarlet. All the sunny warmth of the season, the Indian-summer, seems to be absorbed in their leaves. The lowest and inmost leaves next the bole are, as usual, of the most delicate yellow and green, like the complexion of young men brought up in the house. There is an auction on the Common to-day, but its red flag is hard to be discerned amid this blaze of color.

Little did the fathers of the town anticipate this brilliant success, when they caused to be imported from farther in the country some straight poles with their tops cut off, which they called Sugar-Maples; and, as I remember, after they were set out, a neighboring

merchant's clerk, by way of jest, planted beans about them. Those which were then jestingly called bean-poles are to-day far the most beautiful objects noticeable in our streets. They are worth all and more than they have cost, — though one of the selectmen, while setting them out, took the cold which occasioned his death, — if only because they have filled the open eyes of children with their rich color unstintedly so many Octobers. We will not ask them to yield us sugar in the spring, while they afford us so fair a prospect in the autumn. Wealth in-doors may be the inheritance of few, but it is equally distributed on the Common. All children alike can revel in this golden harvest.

Surely trees should be set in our streets with a view to their October splendor; though I doubt whether this is ever considered by the "Tree Society." Do you not think it will make some odds to these children that they were brought up under the Maples? Hundreds of eyes are steadily drinking in this color, and by these teachers even the truants are caught and educated the moment they step abroad. Indeed, neither the truant nor the studious is at present taught color in the schools. These are instead of the bright colors in apothecaries' shops and city windows. It is a pity that we have no more *Red* Maples, and some Hickories, in our streets as well. Our paint-box is very imperfectly filled. Instead of, or beside, supplying such paint-boxes as we do, we might supply these natural colors to the young. Where else will they study color under greater advantages? What School of Design can vie with this? Think how much the eyes of painters of all kinds, and of manufacturers of cloth and paper, and paper-stainers, and countless others, are to be educated by these autumnal colors. The stationer's envelopes may be of very various tints, yet, not so various as those of the leaves of a single tree. If you want a different shade or tint of a particular color, you have only to look farther within or without the tree or the wood. These leaves are not many dipped in one dye, as at the dye-house, but they are dyed in light of infinitely various degrees of strength, and left to set and dry there.

Shall the names of so many of our colors continue to be derived from those of obscure foreign localities, as Naples yellow, Prussian blue, raw Sienna, burnt Umber, Gamboge? — (surely the Tyrian

purple must have faded by this time), — or from comparatively trivial articles of commerce, — chocolate, lemon, coffee, cinnamon, claret? — (shall we compare our Hickory to a lemon, or a lemon to a Hickory?) — or from ores and oxides which few ever see? Shall we so often, when describing to our neighbors the color of something we have seen, refer them, not to some natural object in our neighborhood, but perchance to a bit of earth fetched from the other side of the planet, which possibly they may find at the apothecary's, but which probably neither they nor we ever saw? Have we not an *earth* under our feet, — ay, and a sky over our heads? Or is the last *all* ultramarine? What do we know of sapphire, amethyst, emerald, ruby, amber, and the like, — most of us who take these names in vain? Leave these precious words to cabinet-keepers, virtuosos, and maids-of-honor, — to the Nabobs, Begums, and Chobdars of Hindostan, or wherever else. I do not see why, since America and her autumn woods have been discovered, our leaves should not compete with the precious stones in giving names to colors; and, indeed, I believe that in course of time the names of some of our trees and shrubs, as well as flowers, will get into our popular chromatic nomenclature.

But of much more importance than a knowledge of the names and distinctions of color is the joy and exhilaration which these colored leaves excite. Already these brilliant trees throughout the street, without any more variety, are at least equal to an annual festival and holiday, or a week of such. These are cheap and innocent gala-days, celebrated by one and all without the aid of committees or marshals, such a show as may safely be licensed, not attracting gamblers or rum-sellers, not requiring any special police to keep the peace. And poor indeed must be that New-England village's October which has not the Maple in its streets. This October festival costs no powder, nor ringing of bells, but every tree is a living liberty-pole on which a thousand bright flags are waving.

No wonder that we must have our annual Cattle-Show, and Fall Training, and perhaps Cornwallis, our September Courts, and the like. Nature herself holds her annual fair in October, not only in the streets, but in every hollow and on every hill-side. When lately we looked into that Red-Maple swamp all ablaze, where the trees were

clothed in their vestures of most dazzling tints, did it not suggest a thousand gypsies beneath, — a race capable of wild delight, — or even the fabled fawns, satyrs, and wood-nymphs come back to earth? Or was it only a congregation of wearied wood-choppers, or of proprietors come to inspect their lots, that we thought of? Or, earlier still, when we paddled on the river through that fine-grained September air, did there not appear to be something new going on under the sparkling surface of the stream, a shaking of props, at least, so that we made haste in order to be up in time? Did not the rows of yellowing Willows and Button-Bushes on each side seem like rows of booths, under which, perhaps, some fluviatile egg-pop equally yellow was effervescing? Did not all these suggest that man's spirits should rise as high as Nature's, — should hang out their flag, and the routine of his life be interrupted by an analogous expression of joy and hilarity?

No annual training or muster of soldiery, no celebration with its scarfs and banners, could import into the town a hundredth part of the annual splendor of our October. We have only to set the trees, or let them stand, and Nature will find the colored drapery, — flags of all her nations, some of whose private signals hardly the botanist can read, — while we walk under the triumphal arches of the Elms. Leave it to Nature to appoint the days, whether the same as in neighboring States or not, and let the clergy read her proclamations, if they can understand them. Behold what a brilliant drapery is her Woodbine flag! What public-spirited merchant, think you, has contributed this part of the show? There is no handsomer shingling and paint than this vine, at present covering a whole side of some houses. I do not believe that the Ivy *never sere* is comparable to it. No wonder it has been extensively introduced into London. Let us have a good many Maples and Hickories and Scarlet Oaks, then, I say. Blaze away! Shall that dirty roll of bunting in the gun-house be all the colors a village can display? A village is not complete unless it have these trees to mark the season in it. They are important, like the town-clock. A village that has them not will not be found to work well. It has a screw loose, an essential part is wanting. Let us have Willows for spring, Elms for summer, Maples and Walnuts and Tupeloes for autumn, Evergreens for winter, and Oaks for all

seasons. What is a gallery in a house to a gallery in the streets, which every market-man rides through, whether he will or not? Of course, there is not a picture-gallery in the country which would be worth so much to us as is the western view at sunset under the Elms of our main street. They are the frame to a picture which is daily painted behind them. An avenue of Elms as large as our largest and three miles long would seem to lead to some admirable place, though only C —— were at the end of it.

A village needs these innocent stimulants of bright and cheering prospects to keep off melancholy and superstition. Show me two villages, one embowered in trees and blazing with all the glories of October, the other a merely trivial and treeless waste, or with only a single tree or two for suicides, and I shall be sure that in the latter will be found the most starved and bigoted religionists and the most desperate drinkers. Every washtub and milkcan and gravestone will be exposed. The inhabitants will disappear abruptly behind their barns and houses, like desert Arabs amid their rocks, and I shall look to see spears in their hands. They will be ready to accept the most barren and forlorn doctrine, — as that the world is speedily coming to an end, or has already got to it, or that they themselves are turned wrong side outward. They will perchance crack their dry joints at one another and call it a spiritual communication.

But to confine ourselves to the Maples. What if we were to take half as much pains in protecting them as we do in setting them out, — not stupidly tie our horses to our dahlia-stems?

What meant the fathers by establishing this *perfectly living* institution before the church, — this institution which needs no repairing nor repainting, which is continually enlarged and repaired by its growth? Surely they

"Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Themselves from God they could not free;
They *planted* better than they knew; —
The conscious *trees* to beauty grew."

Verily these Maples are cheap preachers, permanently settled, which preach their half-century, and century, ay, and century-and-a-

half sermons, with constantly increasing unction and influence, ministering to many generations of men; and the least we can do is to supply them with suitable colleagues as they grow infirm.

THE SCARLET OAK.

Belonging to a genus which is remarkable for the beautiful form of its leaves, I suspect that some Scarlet-Oak leaves surpass those of all other Oaks in the rich and wild beauty of their outlines. I judge from an acquaintance with twelve species, and from drawings which I have seen of many others.

Stand under this tree and see how finely its leaves are cut against the sky, — as it were, only a few sharp points extending from a midrib. They look like double, treble, or quadruple crosses. They are far more ethereal than the less deeply scolloped Oak-leaves. They have so little leafy *terra firma* that they appear melting away in the light, and scarcely obstruct our view. The leaves of very young plants are, like those of full-grown Oaks of other species, more entire, simple, and lumpish in their outlines; but these, raised high on old trees, have solved the leafy problem. Lifted higher and higher, and sublimated more and more, putting off some earthiness and cultivating more intimacy with the light each year, they have at length the least possible amount of earthy matter, and the greatest spread and grasp of skyey influences. There they dance, arm in arm with the light, — tripping it on fantastic points, fit partners in those aerial halls. So intimately mingled are they with it, that, what with their slenderness and their glossy surfaces, you can hardly tell at last what in the dance is leaf and what is light. And when no zephyr stirs, they are at most but a rich tracery to the forest-windows.

I am again struck with their beauty, when, a month later, they thickly strew the ground in the woods, piled one upon another under my feet. They are then brown above, but purple beneath. With their narrow lobes and their bold deep scollops reaching almost to the middle, they suggest that the material must be cheap, or else there has been a lavish expense in their creation, as if so much had been cut out. Or else they seem to us the remnants of the stuff out of which leaves have been cut with a die. Indeed, when they lie thus one upon

another, they remind me of a pile of scrap-tin.

Or bring one home, and study it closely at your leisure, by the fireside. It is a type, not from any Oxford font, not in the Basque nor the arrow-headed character, not found on the Rosetta Stone, but destined to be copied in sculpture one day, if they ever get to whittling stone here. What a wild and pleasing outline, a combination of graceful curves and angles! The eye rests with equal delight on what is not leaf and on what is leaf, — on the broad, free, open sinuses, and on the long, sharp, bristle-pointed lobes. A simple oval outline would include it all, if you connected the points of the leaf; but how much richer is it than that, with its half-dozen deep scollops, in which the eye and thought of the beholder are embayed! If I were a drawing-master, I would set my pupils to copying these leaves, that they might learn to draw firmly and gracefully.

Regarded as water, it is like a pond with half a dozen broad rounded promontories extending nearly to its middle, half from each side, while its watery bays extend far inland, like sharp friths, at each of whose heads several fine streams empty in, — almost a leafy archipelago.

But it oftener suggests land, and, as Dionysius and Pliny compared the form of the Morea to that of the leaf of the Oriental Plane-tree, so this leaf reminds me of some fair wild island in the ocean, whose extensive coast, alternate rounded bays with smooth strands, and sharp-pointed rocky capes, mark it as fitted for the habitation of man, and destined to become a centre of civilization at last. To the sailor's eye, it is a much-indented shore. Is it not, in fact, a shore to the aerial ocean, on which the windy surf beats? At sight of this leaf we are all mariners, — if not vikings, buccaneers, and filibusters. Both our love of repose and our spirit of adventure are addressed. In our most casual glance, perchance, we think, that, if we succeed in doubling those sharp capes, we shall find deep, smooth, and secure havens in the ample bays. How different from the White-Oak leaf, with its rounded headlands, on which no lighthouse need be placed! That is an England, with its long civil history, that may be read. This is some still unsettled New-found Island or Celebes. Shall we go and be rajahs there?

By the twenty-sixth of October the large Scarlet Oaks are in their

prime, when other Oaks are usually withered. They have been kindling their fires for a week past, and now generally burst into a blaze. This alone of *our* indigenous deciduous trees (excepting the Dogwood, of which I do not know half a dozen, and they are but large bushes) is now in its glory. The two Aspens and the Sugar-Maple come nearest to it in date, but they have lost the greater part of their leaves. Of evergreens, only the Pitch-Pine is still commonly bright.

But it requires a particular alertness, if not devotion to these phenomena, to appreciate the wide-spread, but late and unexpected glory of the Scarlet Oaks. I do not speak here of the small trees and shrubs, which are commonly observed, and which are now withered, but of the large trees. Most go in and shut their doors, thinking that bleak and colorless November has already come, when some of the most brilliant and memorable colors are not yet lit.

This very perfect and vigorous one, about forty feet high, standing in an open pasture, which was quite glossy green on the twelfth, is now, the twenty-sixth, completely changed to bright dark scarlet, — every leaf, between you and the sun, as if it had been dipped into a scarlet dye. The whole tree is much like a heart in form, as well as color. Was not this worth waiting for? Little did you think, ten days ago, that that cold green tree would assume such color as this. Its leaves are still firmly attached, while those of other trees are falling around it. It seems to say,— "I am the last to blush, but I blush deeper than any of ye. I bring up the rear in my red coat. We Scarlet ones, alone of Oaks, have not given up the fight."

The sap is now, and even far into November, frequently flowing fast in these trees, as in Maples in the spring; and apparently their bright tints, now that most other Oaks are withered, are connected with this phenomenon. They are full of life. It has a pleasantly astringent, acorn-like taste, this strong Oak-wine, as I find on tapping them with my knife.

Looking across this woodland valley, a quarter of a mile wide, how rich those Scarlet Oaks, embosomed in Pines, their bright red branches intimately intermingled with them! They have their full effect there. The Pine-boughs are the green calyx to their red petals. Or, as we go along a road in the woods, the sun striking endwise

through it, and lighting up the red tents of the Oaks, which on each side are mingled with the liquid green of the Pines, makes a very gorgeous scene. Indeed, without the evergreens for contrast, the autumnal tints would lose much of their effect.

The Scarlet Oak asks a clear sky and the brightness of late October days. These bring out its colors. If the sun goes into a cloud, they become comparatively indistinct. As I sit on a cliff in the southwest part of our town, the sun is now getting low, and the woods in Lincoln, south and east of me, are lit up by its more level rays; and in the Scarlet Oaks, scattered so equally over the forest, there is brought out a more brilliant redness than I had believed was in them. Every tree of this species which is visible in those directions, even to the horizon, now stands out distinctly red. Some great ones lift their red backs high above the woods, in the next town, like huge roses with a myriad of fine petals; and some more slender ones, in a small grove of White Pines on Pine Hill in the east, on the very verge of the horizon, alternating with the Pines on the edge of the grove, and shouldering them with their red coats, look like soldiers in red amid hunters in green. This time it is Lincoln green, too. Till the sun got low, I did not believe that there were so many red coats in the forest army. Theirs is an intense burning red, which would lose some of its strength, methinks, with every step you might take toward them; for the shade that lurks amid their foliage does not report itself at this distance, and they are unanimously red. The focus of their reflected color is in the atmosphere far on this side. Every such tree becomes a nucleus of red, as it were, where, with the declining sun, that color grows and glows. It is partly borrowed fire, gathering strength from the sun on its way to your eye. It has only some comparatively dull red leaves for a rallying-point, or kindling-stuff, to start it, and it becomes an intense scarlet or red mist, or fire, which finds fuel for itself in the very atmosphere. So vivacious is redness. The very rails reflect a rosy light at this hour and season. You see a redder tree than exists.

If you wish to count the Scarlet Oaks, do it now. In a clear day stand thus on a hill-top in the woods, when the sun is an hour high, and every one within range of your vision, excepting in the west, will be revealed. You might live to the age of Methuselah and never find

a tithe of them, otherwise. Yet sometimes even in a dark day I have thought them as bright as I ever saw them. Looking westward, their colors are lost in a blaze of light; but in other directions the whole forest is a flower-garden, in which these late roses burn, alternating with green, while the so-called "gardeners," walking here and there, perchance, beneath, with spade and water-pot, see only a few little asters amid withered leaves.

These are *my* China-asters, *my* late garden-flowers. It costs me nothing for a gardener. The falling leaves, all over the forest, are protecting the roots of my plants. Only look at what is to be seen, and you will have garden enough, without deepening the soil in your yard. We have only to elevate our view a little, to see the whole forest as a garden. The blossoming of the Scarlet Oak, — the forest-flower, surpassing all in splendor, (at least since the Maple)! I do not know but they interest me more than the Maples, they are so widely and equally dispersed throughout the forest; they are so hardy, a nobler tree on the whole; — our chief November flower, abiding the approach of winter with us, imparting warmth to early November prospects. It is remarkable that the latest bright color that is general should be this deep, dark scarlet and red, the intensest of colors. The ripest fruit of the year; like the cheek of a hard, glossy, red apple, from the cold Isle of Orleans, which will not be mellow for eating till next spring! When I rise to a hilltop, a thousand of these great Oak roses, distributed on every side, as far as the horizon! I admire them four or five miles off! This my unfailing prospect for a fortnight past! This late forest-flower surpasses all that spring or summer could do. Their colors were but rare and dainty specks comparatively, (created for the near-sighted, who walk amid the humblest herbs and underwoods,) and made no impression on a distant eye. Now it is an extended forest or a mountain-side, through or along which we journey from day to day, that bursts into bloom. Comparatively, our gardening is on a petty scale, — the gardener still nursing a few asters amid dead weeds, ignorant of the gigantic asters and roses, which, as it were, overshadow him, and ask for none of his care. It is like a little red paint ground on a saucer, and held up against the sunset sky. Why not take more elevated and broader views, walk in the great garden, not skulk in a little "debauched" nook of it?

consider the beauty of the forest, and not merely of a few impounded herbs?

Let your walks now be a little more adventurous; ascend the hills. If, about the last of October, you ascend any hill in the outskirts of our town, and probably of yours, and look over the forest, you may see — well, what I have endeavored to describe. All this you surely *will* see, and much more, if you are prepared to see it, — if you *look* for it. Otherwise, regular and universal as this phenomenon is, whether you stand on the hill-top or in the hollow, you will think for threescore years and ten that all the wood is, at this season, sere and brown. Objects are concealed from our view, not so much because they are out of the course of our visual ray as because we do not bring our minds and eyes to bear on them; for there is no power to see in the eye itself, any more than in any other jelly. We do not realize how far and widely, or how near and narrowly, we are to look. The greater part of the phenomena of Nature are for this reason concealed from us all our lives. The gardener sees only the gardener's garden. Here, too, as in political economy, the supply answers to the demand. Nature does not cast pearls before swine. There is just as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate, — not a grain more. The actual objects which one man will see from a particular hill-top are just as different from those which another will see as the beholders are different. The Scarlet Oak must, in a sense, be in your eye when you go forth. We cannot see anything until we are possessed with the idea of it, take it into our heads, — and then we can hardly see anything else. In my botanical rambles, I find, that, first, the idea, or image, of a plant occupies my thoughts, though it may seem very foreign to this locality, — no nearer than Hudson's Bay, — and for some weeks or months I go thinking of it, and expecting it, unconsciously, and at length I surely see it. This is the history of my finding a score or more of rare plants, which I could name. A man sees only what concerns him. A botanist absorbed in the study of grasses does not distinguish the grandest Pasture Oaks. He, as it were, tramples down Oaks unwittingly in his walk, or at most sees only their shadows. I have found that it required a different intention of the eye, in the same locality, to see different plants, even when they were closely

allied, as *Juncaceoe* and *Gramineoe*: when I was looking for the former, I did not see the latter in the midst of them. How much more, then, it requires different intentions of the eye and of the mind to attend to different departments of knowledge! How differently the poet and the naturalist look at objects!

Take a New-England selectman, and set him on the highest of our hills, and tell him to look, — sharpening his sight to the utmost, and putting on the glasses that suit him best, (ay, using a spy-glass, if he likes,) — and make a full report. What, probably, will he *spy*? — what will he *select* to look at? Of course, he will see a Brocken spectre of himself. He will see several meeting-houses, at least, and, perhaps, that somebody ought to be assessed higher than he is, since he has so handsome a wood-lot. Now take Julius Caesar, or Immanuel Swedenborg, or a Fegee-Islander, and set him up there. Or suppose all together, and let them compare notes afterward. Will it appear that they have enjoyed the same prospect? What they will see will be as different as Rome was from Heaven or Hell, or the last from the Fegee Islands. For aught we know, as strange a man as any of these is always at our elbow.

Why, it takes a sharp-shooter to bring down even such trivial game as snipes and woodcocks; he must take very particular aim, and know what he is aiming at. He would stand a very small chance, if he fired at random into the sky, being told that snipes were flying there. And so is it with him that shoots at beauty; though he wait till the sky falls, he will not bag any, if he does not already know its seasons and haunts, and the color of its wing, — if he has not dreamed of it, so that he can *anticipate* it; then, indeed, he flushes it at every step, shoots double and on the wing, with both barrels, even in cornfields. The sportsman trains himself, dresses and watches unweariedly, and loads and primes for his particular game. He prays for it, and offers sacrifices, and so he gets it. After due and long preparation, schooling his eye and hand, dreaming awake and asleep, with gun and paddle and boat he goes out after meadow-hens, which most of his townsmen never saw nor dreamed of, and paddles for miles against a head-wind, and wades in water up to his knees, being out all day without his dinner, and *therefore* he gets them. He had them half-way into his bag when he started, and has only to shove them

down. The true sportsman can shoot you almost any of his game from his windows: what else has he windows or eyes for? It comes and perches at last on the barrel of his gun; but the rest of the world never see it *with the feathers on*. The geese fly exactly under his zenith, and honk when they get there, and he will keep himself supplied by firing up his chimney; twenty musquash have the refusal of each one of his traps before it is empty. If he lives, and his game-spirit increases, heaven and earth shall fail him sooner than game; and when he dies, he will go to more extensive, and, perchance, happier hunting-grounds. The fisherman, too, dreams of fish, sees a bobbing cork in his dreams, till he can almost catch them in his sink-spout. I knew a girl who, being sent to pick huckleberries, picked wild gooseberries by the quart, where no one else knew that there were any, because she was accustomed to pick them up country where she came from. The astronomer knows where to go star-gathering, and sees one clearly in his mind before any have seen it with a glass. The hen scratches and finds her food right under where she stands; but such is not the way with the hawk.

These bright leaves which I have mentioned are not the exception, but the rule; for I believe that all leaves, even grasses and mosses, acquire brighter colors just before their fall. When you come to observe faithfully the changes of each humblest plant, you find that each has, sooner or later, its peculiar autumnal tint; and if you undertake to make a complete list of the bright tints, it will be nearly as long as a catalogue of the plants in your vicinity.

A PLEA FOR CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN

Read to the citizens of Concord, Mass., Sunday Evening, October 30, 1859

I trust that you will pardon me for being here. I do not wish to force my thoughts upon you, but I feel forced myself. Little as I know of Captain Brown, I would fain do my part to correct the tone and the statements of the newspapers, and of my countrymen generally, respecting his character and actions. It costs us nothing to be just. We can at least express our sympathy with, and admiration of, him and his companions, and that is what I now propose to do.

First, as to his history. I will endeavor to omit, as much as possible, what you have already read. I need not describe his person to you, for probably most of you have seen and will not soon forget him. I am told that his grandfather, John Brown, was an officer in the Revolution; that he himself was born in Connecticut about the beginning of this century, but early went with his father to Ohio. I heard him say that his father was a contractor who furnished beef to the army there, in the war of 1812; that he accompanied him to the camp, and assisted him in that employment, seeing a good deal of military life, — more, perhaps, than if he had been a soldier; for he was often present at the councils of the officers. Especially, he learned by experience how armies are supplied and maintained in the field, — a work which, he observed, requires at least as much experience and skill as to lead them in battle. He said that few persons had any conception of the cost, even the pecuniary cost, of firing a single bullet in war. He saw enough, at any rate, to disgust him with a military life; indeed, to excite in his a great abhorrence of it; so much so, that though he was tempted by the offer of some petty office in the army, when he was about eighteen, he not only declined that, but he also refused to train when warned, and was fined for it. He then resolved that he would never have anything to do with any war, unless it were a war for liberty.

When the troubles in Kansas began, he sent several of his sons thither to strengthen the party of the Free State men, fitting them out with such weapons as he had; telling them that if the troubles should increase, and there should be need of his, he would follow, to assist them with his hand and counsel. This, as you all know, he soon after did; and it was through his agency, far more than any other's, that Kansas was made free.

For a part of his life he was a surveyor, and at one time he was engaged in wool-growing, and he went to Europe as an agent about that business. There, as everywhere, he had his eyes about him, and made many original observations. He said, for instance, that he saw why the soil of England was so rich, and that of Germany (I think it was) so poor, and he thought of writing to some of the crowned heads about it. It was because in England the peasantry live on the soil which they cultivate, but in Germany they are gathered into villages, at night. It is a pity that he did not make a book of his observations.

I should say that he was an old-fashioned man in respect for the Constitution, and his faith in the permanence of this Union. Slavery he deemed to be wholly opposed to these, and he was its determined foe.

He was by descent and birth a New England farmer, a man of great common-sense, deliberate and practical as that class is, and tenfold more so. He was like the best of those who stood at Concord Bridge once, on Lexington Common, and on Bunker Hill, only he was firmer and higher principled than any that I have chanced to hear of as there. It was no abolition lecturer that converted him. Ethan Allen and Stark, with whom he may in some respects be compared, were rangers in a lower and less important field. They could bravely face their country's foes, but he had the courage to face his country herself, when she was in the wrong. A Western writer says, to account for his escape from so many perils, that he was concealed under a "rural exterior"; as if, in that prairie land, a hero should, by good rights, wear a citizen's dress only.

He did not go to the college called Harvard, good old Alma Mater as she is. He was not fed on the pap that is there furnished. As he phrased it, "I know no more of grammar than one of your calves."

But he went to the great university of the West, where he sedulously pursued the study of Liberty, for which he had early betrayed a fondness, and having taken many degrees, he finally commenced the public practice of Humanity in Kansas, as you all know. Such were his humanities and not any study of grammar. He would have left a Greek accent slanting the wrong way, and righted up a falling man.

He was one of that class of whom we hear a great deal, but, for the most part, see nothing at all, — the Puritans. It would be in vain to kill him. He died lately in the time of Cromwell, but he reappeared here. Why should he not? Some of the Puritan stock are said to have come over and settled in New England. They were a class that did something else than celebrate their forefathers' day, and eat parched corn in remembrance of that time. They were neither Democrats nor Republicans, but men of simple habits, straightforward, prayerful; not thinking much of rulers who did not fear God, not making many compromises, nor seeking after available candidates.

"In his camp," as one has recently written, and as I have myself heard him state, "he permitted no profanity; no man of loose morals was suffered to remain there, unless, indeed, as a prisoner of war. 'I would rather,' said he, 'have the small-pox, yellow-fever, and cholera, all together in my camp, than a man without principle.... It is a mistake, sir, that our people make, when they think that bullies are the best fighters, or that they are the fit men to oppose these Southerners. Give me men of good principles, — God-fearing men, — men who respect themselves, and with a dozen of them I will oppose any hundred such men as these Buford ruffians.'" He said that if one offered himself to be a soldier under him, who was forward to tell what he could or would do, if he could only get sight of the enemy, he had but little confidence in him.

He was never able to find more than a score or so of recruits whom he would accept, and only about a dozen, among them his sons, in whom he had perfect faith. When he was here, some years ago, he showed to a few a little manuscript book, — his "orderly book" I think he called it, — containing the names of his company in Kansas, and the rules by which they bound themselves; and he stated that several of them had already sealed the contract with their blood. When some one remarked that, with the addition of a chaplain, it

would have been a perfect Cromwellian troop, he observed that he would have been glad to add a chaplain to the list, if he could have found one who could fill that office worthily. It is easy enough to find one for the United States army. I believe that he had prayers in his camp morning and evening, nevertheless.

He was a man of Spartan habits, and at sixty was scrupulous about his diet at your table, excusing himself by saying that he must eat sparingly and fare hard, as became a soldier, or one who was fitting himself for difficult enterprises, a life of exposure.

A man of rare common-sense and directness of speech, as of action; a transcendentalist above all, a man of ideas and principles, — that was what distinguished him. Not yielding to a whim or transient impulse, but carrying out the purpose of a life. I noticed that he did not overstate anything, but spoke within bounds. I remember, particularly, how, in his speech here, he referred to what his family had suffered in Kansas, without ever giving the least vent to his pent-up fire. It was a volcano with an ordinary chimney-flue. Also referring to the deeds of certain Border Ruffians, he said, rapidly paring away his speech, like an experienced soldier, keeping a reserve of force and meaning, "They had a perfect right to be hung." He was not in the least a rhetorician, was not talking to Buncombe or his constituents anywhere, had no need to invent anything but to tell the simple truth, and communicate his own resolution; therefore he appeared incomparably strong, and eloquence in Congress and elsewhere seemed to me at a discount. It was like the speeches of Cromwell compared with those of an ordinary king.

As for his tact and prudence, I will merely say, that at a time when scarcely a man from the Free States was able to reach Kansas by any direct route, at least without having his arms taken from him, he, carrying what imperfect guns and other weapons he could collect, openly and slowly drove an ox-cart through Missouri, apparently in the capacity of a surveyor, with his surveying compass exposed in it, and so passed unsuspected, and had ample opportunity to learn the designs of the enemy. For some time after his arrival he still followed the same profession. When, for instance, he saw a knot of the ruffians on the prairie, discussing, of course, the single topic which then occupied their minds, he would, perhaps, take his

compass and one of his sons, and proceed to run an imaginary line right through the very spot on which that conclave had assembled, and when he came up to them, he would naturally pause and have some talk with them, learning their news, and, at last, all their plans perfectly; and having thus completed his real survey he would resume his imaginary one, and run on his line till he was out of sight.

When I expressed surprise that he could live in Kansas at all, with a price set upon his head, and so large a number, including the authorities, exasperated against him, he accounted for it by saying, "It is perfectly well understood that I will not be taken." Much of the time for some years he has had to skulk in swamps, suffering from poverty and from sickness, which was the consequence of exposure, befriended only by Indians and a few whites. But though it might be known that he was lurking in a particular swamp, his foes commonly did not care to go in after him. He could even come out into a town where there were more Border Ruffians than Free State men, and transact some business, without delaying long, and yet not be molested; for, said he, "No little handful of men were willing to undertake it, and a large body could not be got together in season."

As for his recent failure, we do not know the facts about it. It was evidently far from being a wild and desperate attempt. His enemy, Mr. Vallandigham, is compelled to say, that "it was among the best planned executed conspiracies that ever failed."

Not to mention his other successes, was it a failure, or did it show a want of good management, to deliver from bondage a dozen human beings, and walk off with them by broad daylight, for weeks if not months, at a leisurely pace, through one State after another, for half the length of the North, conspicuous to all parties, with a price set upon his head, going into a court-room on his way and telling what he had done, thus convincing Missouri that it was not profitable to try to hold slaves in his neighborhood? — and this, not because the government menials were lenient, but because they were afraid of him.

Yet he did not attribute his success, foolishly, to "his star," or to any magic. He said, truly, that the reason why such greatly superior numbers quailed before him was, as one of his prisoners confessed, because they lacked a cause, — a kind of armor which he and his

party never lacked. When the time came, few men were found willing to lay down their lives in defence of what they knew to be wrong; they did not like that this should be their last act in this world.

But to make haste to his last act, and its effects.

The newspapers seem to ignore, or perhaps are really ignorant of the fact, that there are at least as many as two or three individuals to a town throughout the North who think much as the present speaker does about him and his enterprise. I do not hesitate to say that they are an important and growing party. We aspire to be something more than stupid and timid chattels, pretending to read history and our Bibles, but desecrating every house and every day we breathe in. Perhaps anxious politicians may prove that only seventeen white men and five negroes were concerned in the late enterprise; but their very anxiety to prove this might suggest to themselves that all is not told. Why do they still dodge the truth? They are so anxious because of a dim consciousness of the fact, which they do not distinctly face, that at least a million of the free inhabitants of the United States would have rejoiced if it had succeeded. They at most only criticise the tactics. Though we wear no crape, the thought of that man's position and probable fate is spoiling many a man's day here at the North for other thinking. If any one who has seen him here can pursue successfully any other train of thought, I do not know what he is made of. If there is any such who gets his usual allowance of sleep, I will warrant him to fatten easily under any circumstances which do not touch his body or purse. I put a piece of paper and a pencil under my pillow, and when I could not sleep, I wrote in the dark.

On the whole, my respect for my fellow-men, except as one may outweigh a million, is not being increased these days. I have noticed the cold-blooded way in which newspaper writers and men generally speak of this event, as if an ordinary malefactor, though one of unusual "pluck," — as the Governor of Virginia is reported to have said, using the language of the cock-pit, "the gamest man he ever saw," — had been caught, and were about to be hung. He was not dreaming of his foes when the governor thought he looked so brave. It turns what sweetness I have to gall, to hear, or hear of, the remarks of some of my neighbors. When we heard at first that he was dead,

one of my townsmen observed that “he died as the fool dieth”; which, pardon me, for an instant suggested a likeness in him dying to my neighbor living. Others, craven-hearted, said disparagingly, that “he threw his life away,” because he resisted the government. Which way have they thrown their lives, pray? — such as would praise a man for attacking singly an ordinary band of thieves or murderers. I hear another ask, Yankee-like, “What will he gain by it?” as if he expected to fill his pockets by this enterprise. Such a one has no idea of gain but in this worldly sense. If it does not lead to a “surprise” party, if he does not get a new pair of boots, or a vote of thanks, it must be a failure. “But he won’t gain anything by it.” Well, no, I don’t suppose he could get four-and-sixpence a day for being hung, take the year round; but then he stands a chance to save a considerable part of his soul, — and such a soul! — when you do not. No doubt you can get more in your market for a quart of milk than for a quart of blood, but that is not the market that heroes carry their blood to.

Such do not know that like the seed is the fruit, and that, in the moral world, when good seed is planted, good fruit is inevitable, and does not depend on our watering and cultivating; that when you plant, or bury, a hero in his field, a crop of heroes is sure to spring up. This is a seed of such force and vitality, that it does not ask our leave to germinate.

The momentary charge at Balaclava, in obedience to a blundering command, proving what a perfect machine the soldier is, has, properly enough, been celebrated by a poet laureate; but the steady, and for the most part successful, charge of this man, for some years, against the legions of Slavery, in obedience to an infinitely higher command, is as much more memorable than that, as an intelligent and conscientious man is superior to a machine. Do you think that that will go unsung?

“Served him right,”— “A dangerous man,”— “He is undoubtedly insane.” So they proceed to live their sane, and wise, and altogether admirable lives, reading their Plutarch a little, but chiefly pausing at that feat of Putnam, who was let down into a wolf’s den; and in this wise they nourish themselves for brave and patriotic deeds some time or other. The Tract Society could afford to print that story of Putnam.

You might open the district schools with the reading of it, for there is nothing about Slavery or the Church in it; unless it occurs to the reader that some pastors are wolves in sheep's clothing. "The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions" even, might dare to protest against that wolf. I have heard of boards, and of American boards, but it chances that I never heard of this particular lumber till lately. And yet I hear of Northern men, and women, and children, by families, buying a "life membership" in such societies as these. A life-membership in the grave! You can get buried cheaper than that.

Our foes are in our midst and all about us. There is hardly a house but is divided against itself, for our foe is the all but universal woodenness of both head and heart, the want of vitality in man, which is the effect of our vice; and hence are begotten fear, superstition, bigotry, persecution, and slavery of all kinds. We are mere figureheads upon a hulk, with livers in the place of hearts. The curse is the worship of idols, which at length changes the worshipper into a stone image himself; and the New-Englander is just as much an idolater as the Hindoo. This man was an exception, for he did not set up even a political graven image between him and his God.

A church that can never have done with excommunicating Christ while it exists! Away with your broad and flat churches, and your narrow and tall churches! Take a step forward, and invent a new style of out-houses. Invent a salt that will save you, and defend our nostrils.

The modern Christian is a man who has consented to say all the prayers in the liturgy, provided you will let him go straight to bed and sleep quietly afterward. All his prayers begin with "Now I lay me down to sleep," and he is forever looking forward to the time when he shall go to his "long rest." He has consented to perform certain old-established charities, too, after a fashion, but he does not wish to hear of any new-fangled ones; he doesn't wish to have any supplementary articles added to the contract, to fit it to the present time. He shows the whites of his eyes on the Sabbath, and the blacks all the rest of the week. The evil is not merely a stagnation of blood, but a stagnation of spirit. Many, no doubt, are well disposed, but sluggish by constitution and by habit, and they cannot conceive of a

man who is actuated by higher motives than they are. Accordingly they pronounce this man insane, for they know that they could never act as he does, as long as they are themselves.

We dream of foreign countries, of other times and races of men, placing them at a distance in history or space; but let some significant event like the present occur in our midst, and we discover, often, this distance and this strangeness between us and our nearest neighbors. They are our Austrias, and Chinas, and South Sea Islands. Our crowded society becomes well spaced all at once, clean and handsome to the eye, — a city of magnificent distances. We discover why it was that we never got beyond compliments and surfaces with them before; we become aware of as many versts between us and them as there are between a wandering Tartar and a Chinese town. The thoughtful man becomes a hermit in the thoroughfares of the market-place. Impassable seas suddenly find their level between us, or dumb steppes stretch themselves out there. It is the difference of constitution, of intelligence, and faith, and not streams and mountains, that make the true and impassable boundaries between individuals and between states. None but the like-minded can come plenipotentiary to our court.

I read all the newspapers I could get within a week after this event, and I do not remember in them a single expression of sympathy for these men. I have since seen one noble statement, in a Boston paper, not editorial. Some voluminous sheets decided not to print the full report of Brown's words to the exclusion of other matter. It was as if a publisher should reject the manuscript of the New Testament, and print Wilson's last speech. The same journal which contained this pregnant news, was chiefly filled, in parallel columns, with the reports of the political conventions that were being held. But the descent to them was too steep. They should have been spared this contrast, — been printed in an extra, at least. To turn from the voices and deeds of earnest men to the cackling of political conventions! Office-seekers and speech-makers, who do not so much as lay an honest egg, but wear their breasts bare upon an egg of chalk! Their great game is the game of straws, or rather that universal aboriginal game of the platter, at which the Indians cried hub, bub! Exclude the reports of religious and political conventions, and

publish the words of a living man.

But I object not so much to what they have omitted, as to what they have inserted. Even the Liberator called it "a misguided, wild, and apparently insane — effort." As for the herd of newspapers and magazines, I do not chance to know an editor in the country who will deliberately print anything which he knows will ultimately and permanently reduce the number of his subscribers. They do not believe that it would be expedient. How then can they print truth? If we do not say pleasant things, they argue, nobody will attend to us. And so they do like some travelling auctioneers, who sing an obscene song, in order to draw a crowd around them. Republican editors, obliged to get their sentences ready for the morning edition, and accustomed to look at everything by the twilight of politics, express no admiration, nor true sorrow even, but call these men "deluded fanatics,"— "mistaken men,"— "insane," or "crazed." It suggests what a sane set of editors we are blessed with, not "mistaken men"; who know very well on which side their bread is buttered, at least.

A man does a brave and humane deed, and at once, on all sides, we hear people and parties declaring, "I didn't do it, nor countenance him to do it, in any conceivable way. It can't be fairly inferred from my past career." I, for one, am not interested to hear you define your position. I don't know that I ever was, or ever shall be. I think it is mere egotism, or impertinent at this time. Ye needn't take so much pains to wash your skirts of him. No intelligent man will ever be convinced that he was any creature of yours. He went and came, as he himself informs us, "under the auspices of John Brown and nobody else." The Republican party does not perceive how many his failure will make to vote more correctly than they would have them. They have counted the votes of Pennsylvania & Co., but they have not correctly counted Captain Brown's vote. He has taken the wind out of their sails, — the little wind they had, — and they may as well lie to and repair.

What though he did not belong to your clique! Though you may not approve of his method or his principles, recognize his magnanimity. Would you not like to claim kindredship with him in that, though in no other thing he is like, or likely, to you? Do you

think that you would lose your reputation so? What you lost at the spile, you would gain at the bung.

If they do not mean all this, then they do not speak the truth, and say what they mean. They are simply at their old tricks still.

"It was always conceded to him," says one who calls him crazy, "that he was a conscientious man, very modest in his demeanor, apparently inoffensive, until the subject of Slavery was introduced, when he would exhibit a feeling of indignation unparalleled."

The slave-ship is on her way, crowded with its dying victims; new cargoes are being added in mid-ocean; a small crew of slaveholders, countenanced by a large body of passengers, is smothering four millions under the hatches, and yet the politician asserts that the only proper way by which deliverance is to be obtained, is by "the quiet diffusion of the sentiments of humanity," without any "outbreak." As if the sentiments of humanity were ever found unaccompanied by its deeds, and you could disperse them, all finished to order, the pure article, as easily as water with a watering-pot, and so lay the dust. What is that that I hear cast overboard? The bodies of the dead that have found deliverance. That is the way we are "diffusing" humanity, and its sentiments with it.

Prominent and influential editors, accustomed to deal with politicians, men of an infinitely lower grade, say, in their ignorance, that he acted "on the principle of revenge." They do not know the man. They must enlarge themselves to conceive of him. I have no doubt that the time will come when they will begin to see him as he was. They have got to conceive of a man of faith and of religious principle, and not a politician or an Indian; of a man who did not wait till he was personally interfered with or thwarted in some harmless business before he gave his life to the cause of the oppressed.

If Walker may be considered the representative of the South, I wish I could say that Brown was the representative of the North. He was a superior man. He did not value his bodily life in comparison with ideal things. He did not recognize unjust human laws, but resisted them as he was bid. For once we are lifted out of the trivialness and dust of politics into the region of truth and manhood. No man in America has ever stood up so persistently and effectively

for the dignity of human nature, knowing himself for a man, and the equal of any and all governments. In that sense he was the most American of us all. He needed no babbling lawyer, making false issues, to defend him. He was more than a match for all the judges that American voters, or office-holders of whatever grade, can create. He could not have been tried by a jury of his peers, because his peers did not exist. When a man stands up serenely against the condemnation and vengeance of mankind, rising above them literally by a whole body, — even though he were of late the vilest murderer, who has settled that matter with himself, — the spectacle is a sublime one, — didn't ye know it, ye Liberators, ye Tribunes, ye Republicans? — and we become criminal in comparison. Do yourselves the honor to recognize him. He needs none of your respect.

As for the Democratic journals, they are not human enough to affect me at all. I do not feel indignation at anything they may say.

I am aware that I anticipate a little, — that he was still, at the last accounts, alive in the hands of his foes; but that being the case, I have all along found myself thinking and speaking of him as physically dead.

I do not believe in erecting statues to those who still live in our hearts, whose bones have not yet crumbled in the earth around us, but I would rather see the statue of Captain Brown in the Massachusetts State-House yard, than that of any other man whom I know. I rejoice that I live in this age, that I am his contemporary.

What a contrast, when we turn to that political party which is so anxiously shuffling him and his plot out of its way, and looking around for some available slave holder, perhaps, to be its candidate, at least for one who will execute the Fugitive Slave Law, and all those other unjust laws which he took up arms to annul!

Insane! A father and six sons, and one son-in-law, and several more men besides, — as many at least as twelve disciples, — all struck with insanity at once; while the same tyrant holds with a firmer gripe than ever his four millions of slaves, and a thousand sane editors, his abettors, are saving their country and their bacon! Just as insane were his efforts in Kansas. Ask the tyrant who is his most dangerous foe, the sane man or the insane? Do the thousands

who know him best, who have rejoiced at his deeds in Kansas, and have afforded him material aid there, think him insane? Such a use of this word is a mere trope with most who persist in using it, and I have no doubt that many of the rest have already in silence retracted their words.

Read his admirable answers to Mason and others. How they are dwarfed and defeated by the contrast! On the one side, half-brutish, half-timid questioning; on the other, truth, clear as lightning, crashing into their obscene temples. They are made to stand with Pilate, and Gesler, and the Inquisition. How ineffectual their speech and action! and what a void their silence! They are but helpless tools in this great work. It was no human power that gathered them about this preacher.

What have Massachusetts and the North sent a few sane representatives to Congress for, of late years? — to declare with effect what kind of sentiments? All their speeches put together and boiled down, — and probably they themselves will confess it, — do not match for manly directness and force, and for simple truth, the few casual remarks of crazy John Brown, on the floor of the Harper's Ferry engine-house, — that man whom you are about to hang, to send to the other world, though not to represent you there. No, he was not our representative in any sense. He was too fair a specimen of a man to represent the like of us. Who, then, were his constituents? If you read his words understandingly you will find out. In his case there is no idle eloquence, no made, nor maiden speech, no compliments to the oppressor. Truth is his inspirer, and earnestness the polisher of his sentences. He could afford to lose his Sharp's rifles, while he retained his faculty of speech, — a Sharp's rifle of infinitely surer and longer range.

And the New York Herald reports the conversation verbatim! It does not know of what undying words it is made the vehicle.

I have no respect for the penetration of any man who can read the report of that conversation, and still call the principal in it insane. It has the ring of a saner sanity than an ordinary discipline and habits of life, than an ordinary organization, secure. Take any sentence of it,— "Any questions that I can honorably answer, I will; not otherwise. So far as I am myself concerned, I have told everything truthfully. I

value my word, sir." The few who talk about his vindictive spirit, while they really admire his heroism, have no test by which to detect a noble man, no amalgam to combine with his pure gold. They mix their own dross with it.

It is a relief to turn from these slanders to the testimony of his more truthful, but frightened jailers and hangmen. Governor Wise speaks far more justly and appreciatingly of him than any Northern editor, or politician, or public personage, that I chance to have heard from. I know that you can afford to hear him again on this subject. He says: "They are themselves mistaken who take him to be madman.... He is cool, collected, and indomitable, and it is but just to him to say, that he was humane to his prisoners.... And he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth. He is a fanatic, vain and garrulous," (I leave that part to Mr. Wise,) "but firm, truthful, and intelligent. His men, too, who survive, are like him.... Colonel Washington says that he was the coolest and firmest man he ever saw in defying danger and death. With one son dead by his side, and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand, and held his rifle with the other, and commanded his men with the utmost composure, encouraging them to be firm, and to sell their lives as dear as they could. Of the three white prisoners, Brown, Stephens, and Coppic, it was hard to say which was most firm."

Almost the first Northern men whom the slaveholder has learned to respect!

The testimony of Mr. Vallandigham, though less valuable, is of the same purport, that "it is vain to underrate either the man or his conspiracy.... He is the farthest possible removed from the ordinary ruffian, fanatic, or madman."

"All is quiet at Harper's Ferry," say the journals. What is the character of that calm which follows when the law and the slaveholder prevail? I regard this event as a touchstone designed to bring out, with glaring distinctness, the character of this government. We needed to be thus assisted to see it by the light of history. It needed to see itself. When a government puts forth its strength on the side of injustice, as ours to maintain slavery and kill the liberators of the slave, it reveals itself a merely brute force, or worse, a demoniacal force. It is the head of the Plug-Uglies. It is more

manifest than ever that tyranny rules. I see this government to be effectually allied with France and Austria in oppressing mankind. There sits a tyrant holding fettered four millions of slaves; here comes their heroic liberator. This most hypocritical and diabolical government looks up from its seat on the gasping four millions, and inquires with an assumption of innocence: "What do you assault me for? Am I not an honest man? Cease agitation on this subject, or I will make a slave of you, too, or else hang you."

We talk about a representative government; but what a monster of a government is that where the noblest faculties of the mind, and the whole heart, are not represented. A semi-human tiger or ox, stalking over the earth, with its heart taken out and the top of its brain shot away. Heroes have fought well on their stumps when their legs were shot off, but I never heard of any good done by such a government as that.

The only government that I recognize, — and it matters not how few are at the head of it, or how small its army, — is that power that establishes justice in the land, never that which establishes injustice. What shall we think of a government to which all the truly brave and just men in the land are enemies, standing between it and those whom it oppresses? A government that pretends to be Christian and crucifies a million Christs every day!

Treason! Where does such treason take its rise? I cannot help thinking of you as you deserve, ye governments. Can you dry up the fountains of thought? High treason, when it is resistance to tyranny here below, has its origin in, and is first committed by, the power that makes and forever recreates man. When you have caught and hung all these human rebels, you have accomplished nothing but your own guilt, for you have not struck at the fountain-head. You presume to contend with a foe against whom West Point cadets and rifled cannon point not. Can all the art of the cannon-founder tempt matter to turn against its maker? Is the form in which the founder thinks he casts it more essential than the constitution of it and of himself?

The United States have a coffle of four millions of slaves. They are determined to keep them in this condition; and Massachusetts is one of the confederated overseers to prevent their escape. Such are not all the inhabitants of Massachusetts, but such are they who rule

and are obeyed here. It was Massachusetts, as well as Virginia, that put down this insurrection at Harper's Ferry. She sent the marines there, and she will have to pay the penalty of her sin.

Suppose that there is a society in this State that out of its own purse and magnanimity saves all the fugitive slaves that run to us, and protects our colored fellow-citizens, and leaves the other work to the government, so-called. Is not that government fast losing its occupation, and becoming contemptible to mankind? If private men are obliged to perform the offices of government, to protect the weak and dispense justice, then the government becomes only a hired man, or clerk, to perform menial or indifferent services. Of course, that is but the shadow of a government whose existence necessitates a Vigilant Committee. What should we think of the Oriental Cadi even, behind whom worked in secret a vigilant committee? But such is the character of our Northern States generally; each has its Vigilant Committee. And, to a certain extent, these crazy governments recognize and accept this relation. They say, virtually, "We'll be glad to work for you on these terms, only don't make a noise about it." And thus the government, its salary being insured, withdraws into the back shop, taking the Constitution with it, and bestows most of its labor on repairing that. When I hear it at work sometimes, as I go by, it reminds me, at best, of those farmers who in winter contrive to turn a penny by following the coopering business. And what kind of spirit is their barrel made to hold? They speculate in stocks, and bore holes in mountains, but they are not competent to lay out even a decent highway. The only free road, the Underground Railroad, is owned and managed by the Vigilant Committee. They have tunnelled under the whole breadth of the land. Such a government is losing its power and respectability as surely as water runs out of a leaky vessel, and is held by one that can contain it.

I hear many condemn these men because they were so few. When were the good and the brave ever in a majority? Would you have had him wait till that time came? — till you and I came over to him? The very fact that he had no rabble or troop of hirelings about him would alone distinguish him from ordinary heroes. His company was small indeed, because few could be found worthy to pass muster. Each one who there laid down his life for the poor and oppressed was a picked

man, culled out of many thousands, if not millions; apparently a man of principle, of rare courage, and devoted humanity; ready to sacrifice his life at any moment for the benefit of his fellow-man. It may be doubted if there were as many more their equals in these respects in all the country — I speak of his followers only — for their leader, no doubt, scoured the land far and wide, seeking to swell his troop. These alone were ready to step between the oppressor and the oppressed. Surely they were the very best men you could select to be hung. That was the greatest compliment which this country could pay them. They were ripe for her gallows. She has tried a long time, she has hung a good many, but never found the right one before.

When I think of him, and his six sons, and his son-in-law, not to enumerate the others, enlisted for this fight, proceeding coolly, reverently, humanely to work, for months if not years, sleeping and waking upon it, summering and wintering the thought, without expecting any reward but a good conscience, while almost all America stood ranked on the other side — I say again that it affects me as a sublime spectacle. If he had any journal advocating 'his cause,' any organ, as the phrase is, monotonously and wearisomely playing the same old tune, and then passing round the hat, it would have been fatal to his efficiency. If he had acted in any way so as to be let alone by the government, he might have been suspected. It was the fact that the tyrant must give place to him, or he to the tyrant, that distinguished him from all the reformers of the day that I know.

It was his peculiar doctrine that a man has a perfect right to interfere by force with the slaveholder, in order to rescue the slave. I agree with him. They who are continually shocked by slavery have some right to be shocked by the violent death of the slaveholder, but no others. Such will be more shocked by his life than by his death. I shall not be forward to think him mistaken in his method who quickest succeeds to liberate the slave. I speak for the slave when I say that I prefer the philanthropy of Captain Brown to that philanthropy which neither shoots me nor liberates me. At any rate, I do not think it is quite sane for one to spend his whole life in talking or writing about this matter, unless he is continuously inspired, and I have not done so. A man may have other affairs to attend to. I do not wish to kill nor to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which

both these things would be by me unavoidable. We preserve the so-called peace of our community by deeds of petty violence every day. Look at the policeman's billy and handcuffs! Look at the jail! Look at the gallows! Look at the chaplain of the regiment! We are hoping only to live safely on the outskirts of this provisional army. So we defend ourselves and our hen-roosts, and maintain slavery. I know that the mass of my countrymen think that the only righteous use that can be made of Sharp's rifles and revolvers is to fight duels with them, when we are insulted by other nations, or to hunt Indians, or shoot fugitive slaves with them, or the like. I think that for once the Sharp's rifles and the revolvers were employed in a righteous cause. The tools were in the hands of one who could use them.

The same indignation that is said to have cleared the temple once will clear it again. The question is not about the weapon, but the spirit in which you use it. No man has appeared in America, as yet, who loved his fellow-man so well, and treated him so tenderly. He lived for him. He took up his life and he laid it down for him. What sort of violence is that which is encouraged, not by soldiers, but by peaceable citizens, not so much by laymen as by ministers of the Gospel, not so much by the fighting sects as by the Quakers, and not so much by Quaker men as by Quaker women?

This event advertises me that there is such a fact as death, — the possibility of a man's dying. It seems as if no man had ever died in America before; for in order to die you must first have lived. I don't believe in the hearses, and palls, and funerals that they have had. There was no death in the case, because there had been no life; they merely rotted or sloughed off, pretty much as they had rotted or sloughed along. No temple's veil was rent, only a hole dug somewhere. Let the dead bury their dead. The best of them fairly ran down like a clock. Franklin, — Washington, — they were let off without dying; they were merely missing one day. I hear a good many pretend that they are going to die; or that they have died, for aught that I know. Nonsense! I'll defy them to do it. They haven't got life enough in them. They'll deliquesce like fungi, and keep a hundred eulogists mopping the spot where they left off. Only half a dozen or so have died since the world began. Do you think that you are going to die, sir? No! there's no hope of you. You haven't got

your lesson yet. You've got to stay after school. We make a needless ado about capital punishment, — taking lives, when there is no life to take. Memento mori! We don't understand that sublime sentence which some worthy got sculptured on his gravestone once. We've interpreted it in a grovelling and snivelling sense; we've wholly forgotten how to die.

But be sure you do die nevertheless. Do your work, and finish it. If you know how to begin, you will know when to end.

These men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live. If this man's acts and words do not create a revival, it will be the severest possible satire on the acts and words that do. It is the best news that America has ever heard. It has already quickened the feeble pulse of the North, and infused more and more generous blood into her veins and heart, than any number of years of what is called commercial and political prosperity could. How many a man who was lately contemplating suicide has now something to live for!

One writer says that Brown's peculiar monomania made him to be "dreaded by the Missourians as a supernatural being." Sure enough, a hero in the midst of us cowards is always so dreaded. He is just that thing. He shows himself superior to nature. He has a spark of divinity in him.

"Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!"

Newspaper editors argue also that it is a proof of his insanity that he thought he was appointed to do this work which he did, — that he did not suspect himself for a moment! They talk as if it were impossible that a man could be "divinely appointed" in these days to do any work whatever; as if vows and religion were out of date as connected with any man's daily work; as if the agent to abolish slavery could only be somebody appointed by the President, or by some political party. They talk as if a man's death were a failure, and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success.

When I reflect to what a cause this man devoted himself, and how religiously, and then reflect to what cause his judges and all who condemn him so angrily and fluently devote themselves, I see that they are as far apart as the heavens and earth are asunder.

The amount of it is, our "leading men" are a harmless kind of folk, and they know well enough that they were not divinely appointed, but elected by the votes of their party.

Who is it whose safety requires that Captain Brown be hung? Is it indispensable to any Northern man? Is there no resource but to cast this man also to the Minotaur? If you do not wish it, say so distinctly. While these things are being done, beauty stands veiled and music is a screeching lie. Think of him, — of his rare qualities! — such a man as it takes ages to make, and ages to understand; no mock hero, nor the representative of any party. A man such as the sun may not rise upon again in this benighted land. To whose making went the costliest material, the finest adamant; sent to be the redeemer of those in captivity; and the only use to which you can put him is to hang him at the end of a rope! You who pretend to care for Christ crucified, consider what you are about to do to him who offered himself to be the savior of four millions of men.

Any man knows when he is justified, and all the wits in the world cannot enlighten him on that point. The murderer always knows that he is justly punished; but when a government takes the life of a man without the consent of his conscience, it is an audacious government, and is taking a step towards its own dissolution. Is it not possible that an individual may be right and a government wrong? Are laws to be enforced simply because they were made? or declared by any number of men to be good, if they are not good? Is there any necessity for a man's being a tool to perform a deed of which his better nature disapproves? Is it the intention of law-makers that good men shall be hung ever? Are judges to interpret the law according to the letter, and not the spirit? What right have you to enter into a compact with yourself that you will do thus or so, against the light within you? Is it for you to make up your mind, — to form any resolution whatever, — and not accept the convictions that are forced upon you, and which ever pass your understanding? I do not believe in lawyers, in that mode of attacking or defending a man, because you descend to meet the judge on his own ground, and, in cases of the highest importance, it is of no consequence whether a man breaks a human law or not. Let lawyers decide trivial cases. Business men may arrange that among themselves. If they were the interpreters of

the everlasting laws which rightfully bind man, that would be another thing. A counterfeiting law-factory, standing half in a slave land and half in free! What kind of laws for free men can you expect from that?

I am here to plead his cause with you. I plead not for his life, but for his character, — his immortal life; and so it becomes your cause wholly, and is not his in the least. Some eighteen hundred years ago Christ was crucified; this morning, perchance, Captain Brown was hung. These are the two ends of a chain which is not without its links. He is not Old Brown any longer; he is an angel of light.

I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in all the country should be hung. Perhaps he saw it himself. I almost fear that I may yet hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life, if any life, can do as much good as his death.

"Misguided"! "Garrulous"! "Insane"! "Vindictive"! So ye write in your easy-chairs, and thus he wounded responds from the floor of the Armory, clear as a cloudless sky, true as the voice of nature is: "No man sent me here; it was my own prompting and that of my Maker. I acknowledge no master in human form."

And in what a sweet and noble strain he proceeds, addressing his captors, who stand over him: "I think, my friends, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity, and it would be perfectly right for any one to interfere with you so far as to free those you willfully and wickedly hold in bondage."

And, referring to his movement: "It is, in my opinion, the greatest service a man can render to God."

"I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them; that is why I am here; not to gratify any personal animosity, revenge, or vindictive spirit. It is my sympathy with the oppressed and the wronged, that are as good as you, and as precious in the sight of God."

You don't know your testament when you see it.

"I want you to understand that I respect the rights of the poorest and weakest of colored people, oppressed by the slave power, just as much as I do those of the most wealthy and powerful."

"I wish to say, furthermore, that you had better, all you people at the South, prepare yourselves for a settlement of that question, that

must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it. The sooner you are prepared the better. You may dispose of me very easily. I am nearly disposed of now; but this question is still to be settled, — this negro question, I mean; the end of that is not yet."

I foresee the time when the painter will paint that scene, no longer going to Rome for a subject; the poet will sing it; the historian record it; and, with the Landing of the Pilgrims and the Declaration of Independence, it will be the ornament of some future national gallery, when at least the present form of slavery shall be no more here. We shall then be at liberty to weep for Captain Brown. Then, and not till then, we will take our revenge.

MARTYRDOM OF JOHN BROWN

SO universal and widely related is any transcendent moral greatness — so nearly identical with greatness every where and in every age, as a pyramid contracts the nearer you approach its apex — that, when I now look over my commonplace book of poetry, I find that the best of it is oftenest applicable, in part or wholly, to the case of Captain Brown. Only what is true, and strong, and solemnly earnest will recommend itself to our mood at this time. Almost any noble verse may be read, either as his elegy, or eulogy, or be made the text of an oration on him. Indeed, such are now discerned to be the parts of a universal liturgy, applicable to those rare cases of heroes and martyrs, for which the ritual of no church has provided. This is the formula established on high, — their burial service — to which every great genius has contributed its stanza or line. As Marvell wrote,

"When the sword glitters o'er the judge's head,
And fear has coward churchmen silenced,
Then is the poet's time; 'tis then he draws,
And single fights forsaken virtue's cause.
He when the wheel of empire whirleth back,
And though the world's disjointed axel crack,
Sings still of ancient rights and better times,
Seeks suff'ring good, arraigns successful crimes."

The sense of grand poetry, read by the light of this event, is brought out distinctly, like an invisible writing held to the fire.

"All heads must come
To the cold tomb,
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

We have heard that the Boston lady who recently visited our hero

in prison found him wearing still the clothes all cut and torn by sabres and by bayonet thrusts, in which he had been taken prisoner; and thus he had gone to his trial, and without a hat. She spent her time in the prison mending those clothes, and, for a memento, brought home a pin covered with blood. — What are the clothes that endure?

"The garments lasting evermore
Are works of mercy to the poor;
And neither tetter, time, nor moth
Shall fray that silk, or fret this cloth."

The well known verses called "The Soul's Errand," supposed, by some, to have been written by Sir Walter Raleigh, when he was expecting to be executed the following day, are at least worthy of such an origin, and are equally applicable to the present case. Hear them.

Go, Soul, the body's guest,
Upon a thankless arrant;
Fear not to touch the best,
The truth shall be thy warrant:

Go, since I needs must die,
And give the world the lie.

Go, tell the court it glows
And shines like rotten wood;
Go, tell the church it shows
What's good, and doth no good;
If church and court reply,
Then give them both the lie.

Tell potentates they live Acting by others' actions;
Not loved unless they give,
Not strong but by their factions:

If potentates reply,
Give potentates the lie.

Tell men of high condition,
That rule affairs of state,
Their purpose is ambition,
Their practice only hate;
And if they once reply,
Then give them all the lie.
Tell zeal, it lacks devotion;
Tell love, it is but lust;
Tell time, it is but motion;
Tell flesh, it is but dust;
And wish them not reply,
For thou must give the lie.

Tell age, it daily wasteth;
Tell honor, how it alters;
Tell beauty, how she blasteth;
Tell favor, how she falters;
And as they shall reply,
Give each of them the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness;
Tell nature of decay;
Tell friendship of unkindness;
Tell justice of delay;
And if they dare reply,
Then give them all the lie.

And when thou hast, as I
Commanded thee, done blabbing,
Although to give the lie
Deserves no less than stabbing,
Yet stab at thee who will,
No stab the soul can kill.

“When I am dead,
Let not the day be writ— “

Nor bell be tolled —

“Love will remember it.”

When hate is cold.

You, Agricola, are fortunate, not only because your life was glorious, but because your death was timely. As they tell us who heard your last words, unchanged and willing you accepted your fate; as if, as far as in your power, you would make the emperor appear innocent. But, besides the bitterness of having lost a parent, it adds to our grief, that it was not permitted us to minister to your health,... to gaze on your countenance, and receive your last embrace; surely, we might have caught some words and commands which we could have treasured in the inmost part of our souls. This is our pain, this our wound.... You were buried with the fewer tears, and in your last earthly light, your eyes looked around for something which they did not see.

If there is any abode for the spirits of the pious; if, as wise men suppose, great souls are not extinguished with the body, may you rest placidly, and call your family from weak regrets, and womanly laments, to the contemplation of your virtues, which must not be lamented, either silently or aloud. Let us honor you by our admiration, rather than by short-lived praises, and, if nature aid us, by our emulation of you. That is true honor, that the piety of whoever is most akin to you. This also I would teach your family, so to venerate your memory, as to call to mind all your actions and words, and embrace your character and the form of your soul, rather than of your body; not because I think that statues which are made of marble or brass are to be condemned, but as the features of men, so images of the features, are frail and perishable. The form of the soul is eternal; and this we can retain and express, not by a foreign material and art, but by our own lives. Whatever of Agricola we have loved, whatever we have admired, remains, and will remain, in the minds of

men, and the records of history, through the eternity of ages. For oblivion will overtake many of the ancients, as if they were inglorious and ignoble: Agricola, described and transmitted to posterity, will survive.

THE LAST DAYS OF JOHN BROWN

John Brown's career for the last six weeks of his life was meteor-like, flashing through the darkness in which we live. I know of nothing so miraculous in our history.

If any person, in a lecture or conversation at that time, cited any ancient example of heroism, such as Cato or Tell or Winkelried, passing over the recent deeds and words of Brown, it was felt by any intelligent audience of Northern men to be tame and inexcusably far-fetched.

For my own part, I commonly attend more to nature than to man, but any affecting human event may blind our eyes to natural objects. I was so absorbed in him as to be surprised whenever I detected the routine of the natural world surviving still, or met persons going about their affairs indifferent. It appeared strange to me that the "little dipper" should be still diving quietly into the river, as of yore; and it suggested that this bird might continue to dive here when Concord should be no more.

I felt that he, a prisoner in the midst of his enemies and under sentence of death, if consulted as to his next step or resource, could answer more wisely than all his countrymen beside. He best understood his position; he contemplated it most calmly. Comparatively, all other men, North and South, were beside themselves. Our thoughts could not revert to any greater or wiser or better man with whom to contrast him, for he, then and there, was above them all. The man this country was about to hang appeared the greatest and best in it.

Years were not required for a revolution of public opinion; days, nay hours, produced marked changes in this case. Fifty who were ready to say, on going into our meeting in honor of him in Concord, that he ought to be hung, would not say it when they came out. They heard his words read; they saw the earnest faces of the congregation; and perhaps they joined at last in singing the hymn in his praise.

The order of instructions was reversed. I heard that one preacher,

who at first was shocked and stood aloof, felt obliged at last, after he was hung, to make him the subject of a sermon, in which, to some extent, he eulogized the man, but said that his act was a failure. An influential class-teacher thought it necessary, after the services, to tell his grown-up pupils that at first he thought as the preacher did then, but now he thought that John Brown was right. But it was understood that his pupils were as much ahead of the teacher as he was ahead of the priest; and I know for a certainty that very little boys at home had already asked their parents, in a tone of surprise, why God did not interfere to save him. In each case, the constituted teachers were only half conscious that they were not leading, but being dragged, with some loss of time and power.

The more conscientious preachers, the Bible men, they who talk about principle, and doing to others as you would that they should do unto you, — how could they fail to recognize him, by far the greatest preacher of them all, with the Bible in his life and in his acts, the embodiment of principle, who actually carried out the golden rule? All whose moral sense had been aroused, who had a calling from on high to preach, sided with him.

What confessions he extracted from the cold and conservative! It is remarkable, but on the whole it is well, that it did not prove the occasion for a new sect of Brownites being formed in our midst.

They, whether within the Church or out of it, who adhere to the spirit and let go the letter, and are accordingly called infidel, were as usual foremost to recognize him. Men have been hung in the South before for attempting to rescue slaves, and the North was not much stirred by it. Whence, then, this wonderful difference? We were not so sure of their devotion to principle. We made a subtle distinction, forgot human laws, and did homage to an idea. The North, I mean the living North, was suddenly all transcendental. It went behind the human law, it went behind the apparent failure, and recognized eternal justice and glory. Commonly, men live according to a formula, and are satisfied if the order of law is observed, but in this instance they, to some extent, returned to original perceptions, and there was a slight revival of old religion. They saw that what was called order was confusion, what was called justice, injustice, and that the best was deemed the worst. This attitude suggested a more

intelligent and generous spirit than that which actuated our forefathers, and the possibility, in the course of ages, of a revolution in behalf of another and an oppressed people.

Most Northern men, and a few Southern ones, were wonderfully stirred by Brown's behavior and words. They saw and felt that they were heroic and noble, and that there had been nothing quite equal to them in their kind in this country, or in the recent history of the world. But the minority were unmoved by them. They were only surprised and provoked by the attitude of their neighbors. They saw that Brown was brave, and that he believed that he had done right, but they did not detect any further peculiarity in him. Not being accustomed to make fine distinctions, or to appreciate magnanimity, they read his letters and speeches as if they read them not. They were not aware when they approached a heroic statement, — they did not know when they burned. They did not feel that he spoke with authority, and hence they only remembered that the law must be executed. They remembered the old formula, but did not hear the new revelation. The man who does not recognize in Brown's words a wisdom and nobleness, and therefore an authority, superior to our laws, is a modern Democrat. This is the test by which to discover him. He is not willfully but constitutionally blind on this side, and he is consistent with himself. Such has been his past life; no doubt of it. In like manner he has read history and his Bible, and he accepts, or seems to accept, the last only as an established formula, and not because he has been convicted by it. You will not find kindred sentiments in his commonplace-book, if he has one.

When a noble deed is done, who is likely to appreciate it? They who are noble themselves. I was not surprised that certain of my neighbors spoke of John Brown as an ordinary felon, for who are they? They have either much flesh, or much office, or much coarseness of some kind. They are not ethereal natures in any sense. The dark qualities predominate in them. Several of them are decidedly pachydermatous. I say it in sorrow, not in anger.

How can a man behold the light who has no answering inward light? They are true to their sight, but when they look this way they see nothing, they are blind. For the children of the light to contend with them is as if there should be a contest between eagles and owls.

Show me a man who feels bitterly toward John Brown, and let me hear what noble verse he can repeat. He'll be as dumb as if his lips were stone.

It is not every man who can be a Christian, even in a very moderate sense, whatever education you give him. It is a matter of constitution and temperament, after all. He may have to be born again many times. I have known many a man who pretended to be a Christian, in whom it was ridiculous, for he had no genius for it. It is not every man who can be a free man, even.

Editors persevered for a good while in saying that Brown was crazy; but at last they said only that it was "a crazy scheme," and the only evidence brought to prove it was that it cost him his life. I have no doubt that if he had gone with five thousand men, liberated a thousand slaves, killed a hundred or two slaveholders, and had as many more killed on his own side, but not lost his own life, these same editors would have called it by a more respectable name. Yet he has been far more successful than that. He has liberated many thousands of slaves, both North and South. They seem to have known nothing about living or dying for a principle. They all called him crazy then; who calls him crazy now?

All through the excitement occasioned by his remarkable attempt and subsequent behavior the Massachusetts legislature, not taking any steps for the defense of her citizens who were likely to be carried to Virginia as witnesses and exposed to the violence of a slaveholding mob, was wholly absorbed in a liquor-agency question, and indulging in poor jokes on the word "extension." Bad spirits occupied their thoughts. I am sure that no statesman up to the occasion could have attended to that question at all at that time, — a very vulgar question to attend to at any time!

When I looked into a liturgy of the Church of England, printed near the end of the last century, in order to find a service applicable to the case of Brown, I found that the only martyr recognized and provided for it was King Charles the First, an eminent scamp. Of all the inhabitants of England and of the world, he was the only one, according to this authority, whom that church had made a martyr and saint of; and for more than a century it had celebrated his martyrdom, so called, by an annual service. What a satire on the Church is that!

Look not to legislatures and churches for your guidance, nor to any soulless incorporated bodies, but to inspirited or inspired ones.

What avail all your scholarly accomplishments and learning, compared with wisdom and manhood? To omit his other behavior, see what a work this comparatively unread and unlettered man wrote within six weeks. Where is our professor of belles-lettres, or of logic and rhetoric, who can write so well? He wrote in prison, not a History of the World, like Raleigh, but an American book which I think will live longer than that. I do not know of such words, uttered under such circumstances, and so copiously withal, in Roman or English or any history.

What a variety of themes he touched on in that short space! There are words in that letter to his wife, respecting the education of his daughters, which deserve to be framed and hung over every mantelpiece in the land. Compare this earnest wisdom with that of Poor Richard.

The death of Irving, which at any other time would have attracted universal attention, having occurred while these things were transpiring, went almost unobserved. I shall have to read of it in the biography of authors.

Literary gentlemen, editors, and critics think that they know how to write, because they have studied grammar and rhetoric; but they are egregiously mistaken. The art of composition is as simple as the discharge of a bullet from a rifle, and its masterpieces imply an infinitely greater force behind them. This unlettered man's speaking and writing are standard English. Some words and phrases deemed vulgarisms and Americanisms before, he has made standard American; such as "It will pay." It suggests that the one great rule of composition — and if I were a professor of rhetoric I should insist on this — is, to speak the truth. This first, this second, this third; pebbles in your mouth or not. This demands earnestness and manhood chiefly.

We seem to have forgotten that the expression "a liberal education" originally meant among the Romans one worthy of free men; while the learning of trades and professions by which to get your livelihood merely was considered worthy of slaves only. But taking a hint from the word, I would go a step further, and say that it

is not the man of wealth and leisure simply, though devoted to art, or science, or literature, who, in a true sense, is liberally educated, but only the earnest and free man. In a slaveholding country like this, there can be no such thing as a liberal education tolerated by the State; and those scholars of Austria and France who, however learned they may be, are contented under their tyrannies have received only a servile education.

Nothing could his enemies do but it redounded to his infinite advantage, — that is, to the advantage of his cause. They did not hang him at once, but reserved him to preach to them. And then there was another great blunder. They did not hang his four followers with him; that scene was still postponed; and so his victory was prolonged and completed. No theatrical manager could have arranged things so wisely to give effect to his behavior and words. And who, think you, was the manager? Who placed the slave-woman and her child, whom he stooped to kiss for a symbol, between his prison and the gallows?

We soon saw, as he saw, that he was not to be pardoned or rescued by men. That would have been to disarm him, to restore him a material weapon, a Sharp's rifle, when he had taken up the sword of the spirit, — the sword with which he has really won his greatest and most memorable victories. Now he has not laid aside the sword of the spirit, for he is pure spirit himself, and his sword is pure spirit also.

"He nothing common did or mean
Upon that memorable scene,
Nor called the gods with vulgar spite,
To vindicate his helpless right;
But bowed his comely head
Down, as upon a bed.

What a transit was that of his horizontal body alone, but just cut down from the gallows-tree! We read that at such a time it passed through Philadelphia, and by Saturday night had reached New York. Thus like a meteor it shot through the Union from the Southern regions toward the North! No such freight had the cars borne since they carried him southward alive.

On the day of his translation, I heard, to be sure, that he was hung, but I did not know what that meant; I felt no sorrow on that account; but not for a day or two did I even hear that he was dead, and not after any number of days shall I believe it. Of all the men who were said to be my contemporaries, it seemed to me that John Brown was the only one who had not died. I never hear of a man named Brown now, — and I hear of them pretty often, — I never hear of any particularly brave and earnest man, but my first thought is of John Brown, and what relation he may be to him. I meet him at every turn. He is more alive than he ever was. He has earned immortality. He is not confined to North Elba nor to Kansas. He is no longer working in secret. He works in public, and in the clearest light that shines on this land.

THE SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES

An Address read to the Middlesex Agricultural Society, in Concord, September, 1860

Every man is entitled to come to Cattle-show, even a transcendentalist; and for my part I am more interested in the men than in the cattle. I wish to see once more those old familiar faces, whose names I do not know, which for me represent the Middlesex country, and come as near being indigenous to the soil as a white man can; the men who are not above their business, whose coats are not too black, whose shoes do not shine very much, who never wear gloves to conceal their hands. It is true, there are some queer specimens of humanity attracted to our festival, but all are welcome. I am pretty sure to meet once more that weak-minded and whimsical fellow, generally weak-bodied too, who prefers a crooked stick for a cane; perfectly useless, you would say, only *bizarre*, fit for a cabinet, like a petrified snake. A ram's horn would be as convenient, and is yet more curiously twisted. He brings that much indulged bit of the country with him, from some town's end or other, and introduces it to Concord groves, as if he had promised it so much sometime. So some, it seems to me, elect their rulers for their crookedness. But I think that a straight stick makes the best cane, and an upright man the best ruler. Or why choose a man to do plain work who is distinguished for his oddity? However, I do not know but you will think that they have committed this mistake who invited me to speak to you to-day.

In my capacity of surveyor, I have often talked with some of you, my employers, at your dinner-tables, after having gone round and round and behind your farming, and ascertained exactly what its limits were. Moreover, taking a surveyor's and a naturalist's liberty, I have been in the habit of going across your lots much oftener than is usual, as many of you, perhaps to your sorrow, are aware. Yet many of you, to my relief, have seemed not to be aware of it; and when I

came across you in some out-of-the-way nook of your farms, have inquired, with an air of surprise, if I were not lost, since you had never seen me in that part of the town or county before; when, if the truth were known, and it had not been for betraying my secret, I might with more propriety have inquired if *you* were not lost, since I had never seen *you* there before. I have several times shown the proprietor the shortest way out of his wood-lot.

Therefore, it would seem that I have some title to speak to you to-day; and considering what that title is, and the occasion that has called us together, I need offer no apology if I invite your attention, for the few moments that are allotted me, to a purely scientific subject.

At those dinner-tables referred to, I have often been asked, as many of you have been, if I could tell how it happened, that when a pine wood was cut down an oak one commonly sprang up, and *vice versa*. To which I have answered, and now answer, that I can tell, — that it is no mystery to me. As I am not aware that this has been clearly shown by any one, I shall lay the more stress on this point. Let me lead you back into your wood-lots again.

When, hereabouts, a single forest tree or a forest springs up naturally where none of its kind grew before, I do not hesitate to say, though in some quarters still it may sound paradoxical, that it came from a seed. Of the various ways by which trees are *known* to be propagated, — by transplanting, cuttings, and the like, — this is the only supposable one under these circumstances. No such tree has ever been known to spring from anything else. If any one asserts that it sprang from something else, or from nothing, the burden of proof lies with him.

It remains, then, only to show how the seed is transported from where it grows, to where it is planted. This is done chiefly by the agency of the wind, water, and animals. The lighter seeds, as those of pines and maples, are transported chiefly by wind and water; the heavier, as acorns and nuts, by animals.

In all the pines, a very thin membrane, in appearance much like an insect's wing, grows over and around the seed, and independent of it, while the latter is being developed within its base. Indeed this is often perfectly developed, though the seed is abortive; nature being,

you would say, more sure to provide the means of transporting the seed, than to provide the seed to be transported. In other words, a beautiful thin sack is woven around the seed, with a handle to it such as the wind can take hold of, and it is then committed to the wind, expressly that it may transport the seed and extend the range of the species; and this it does, as effectually, as when seeds are sent by mail in a different kind of sack from the patent-office. There is a patent-office at the seat of government of the universe, whose managers are as much interested in the dispersion of seeds as anybody at Washington can be, and their operations are infinitely more extensive and regular.

There is then no necessity for supposing that the pines have sprung up from nothing, and I am aware that I am not at all peculiar in asserting that they come from seeds, though the mode of their propagation *by nature* has been but little attended to. They are very extensively raised from the seed in Europe, and are beginning to be here.

When you cut down an oak wood, a pine wood will not *at once* spring up there unless there are, or have been, quite recently, seed-bearing pines near enough for the seeds to be blown from them. But, adjacent to a forest of pines, if you prevent other crops from growing there, you will surely have an extension of your pine forest, provided the soil is suitable.

As for the heavy seeds and nuts which are not furnished with wings, the notion is still a very common one that, when the trees which bear these spring up where none of their kind were noticed before, they have come from seeds or other principles spontaneously generated there in an unusual manner, or which have lain dormant in the soil for centuries, or perhaps been called into activity by the heat of a burning. I do not believe these assertions, and I will state some of the ways in which, according to my observation, such forests are planted and raised.

Every one of these seeds, too, will be found to be winged or legged in another fashion. Surely it is not wonderful that cherry-trees of all kinds are widely dispersed, since their fruit is well known to be the favorite food of various birds. Many kinds are called bird-cherries, and they appropriate many more kinds, which are not so

called. Eating cherries is a bird-like employment, and unless we disperse the seeds occasionally, as they do, I shall think that the birds have the best right to them. See how artfully the seed of a cherry is placed in order that a bird may be compelled to transport it — in the very midst of a tempting pericarp, so that the creature that would devour this must commonly take the stone also into its mouth or bill. If you ever ate a cherry, and did not make two bites of it, you must have perceived it — right in the centre of the luscious morsel, a large earthy residuum left on the tongue. We thus take into our mouths cherry stones as big as peas, a dozen at once, for Nature can persuade us to do almost anything when she would compass her ends. Some wild men and children instinctively swallow these, as the birds do when in a hurry, it being the shortest way to get rid of them. Thus, though these seeds are not provided with vegetable wings, Nature has impelled the thrush tribe to take them into their bills and fly away with them; and they are winged in another sense, and more effectually than the seeds of pines, for these are carried even against the wind. The consequence is, that cherry-trees grow not only here but there. The same is true of a great many other seeds.

But to come to the observation which suggested these remarks. As I have said, I suspect that I can throw some light on the fact, that when hereabouts a dense pine wood is cut down, oaks and other hard woods may at once take its place. I have got only to show that the acorns and nuts, provided they are grown in the neighborhood, are regularly planted in such woods; for I assert that if an oak-tree has not grown within ten miles, and man has not carried acorns thither, then an oak wood will not spring up *at once*, when a pine wood is cut down.

Apparently, there were only pines there before. They are cut off, and after a year or two you see oaks and other hard woods springing up there, with scarcely a pine amid them, and the wonder commonly is, how the seed could have lain in the ground so long without decaying. But the truth is, that it has not lain in the ground so long, but is regularly planted each year by various quadrupeds and birds.

In this neighborhood, where oaks and pines are about equally dispersed, if you look through the thickest pine wood, even the seemingly unmixed pitch-pine ones, you will commonly detect many

little oaks, birches, and other hard woods, sprung from seeds carried into the thicket by squirrels and other animals, and also blown thither, but which are over-shadowed and choked by the pines. The denser the evergreen wood, the more likely it is to be well planted with these seeds, because the planters incline to resort with their forage to the closest covert. They also carry it into birch and other woods. This planting is carried on annually, and the oldest seedlings annually die; but when the pines are cleared off, the oaks, having got just the start they want, and now secured favorable conditions, immediately spring up to trees.

The shade of a dense pine wood, is more unfavorable to the springing up of pines of the same species than of oaks within it, though the former may come up abundantly when the pines are cut, if there chance to be sound seed in the ground.

But when you cut off a lot of hard wood, very often the little pines mixed with it have a similar start, for the squirrels have carried off the nuts to the pines, and not to the more open wood, and they commonly make pretty clean work of it; and moreover, if the wood was old, the sprouts will be feeble or entirely fail; to say nothing about the soil being, in a measure, exhausted for this kind of crop.

If a pine wood is surrounded by a white oak one chiefly, white oaks may be expected to succeed when the pines are cut. If it is surrounded, instead by an edging of shrub-oaks, then you will probably have a dense shrub-oak thicket.

I have no time to go into details, but will say, in a word, that while the wind is conveying the seeds of pines into hard woods and open lands, the squirrels and other animals are conveying the seeds of oaks and walnuts into the pine woods, and thus a rotation of crops is kept up.

I affirmed this confidently many years ago, and an occasional examination of dense pine woods confirmed me in my opinion. It has long been known to observers that squirrels bury nuts in the ground, but I am not aware that any one has thus accounted for the regular succession of forests.

On the 24th of September, in 1857, as I was paddling down the Assabet, in this town, I saw a red squirrel run along the bank under some herbage, with something large in its mouth. It stopped near the

foot of a hemlock, within a couple of rods of me, and, hastily pawing a hole with its forefeet, dropped its booty into it, covered it up, and retreated part way up the trunk of the tree. As I approached the shore to examine the deposit, the squirrel, descending part way, betrayed no little anxiety about its treasure, and made two or three motions to recover it before it finally retreated. Digging there, I found two green pig-nuts joined together, with the thick husks on, buried about an inch and a half under the reddish soil of decayed hemlock leaves, — just the right depth to plant it. In short, this squirrel was then engaged in accomplishing two objects, to wit, laying up a store of winter food for itself, and planting a hickory wood for all creation. If the squirrel was killed, or neglected its deposit, a hickory would spring up. The nearest hickory tree was twenty rods distant. These nuts were there still just fourteen days later, but were gone when I looked again, November 21, or six weeks later still.

I have since examined more carefully several dense woods, which are said to be, and are apparently exclusively pine, and always with the same result. For instance, I walked the same day to a small, but very dense and handsome white-pine grove, about fifteen rods square, in the east part of this town. The trees are large for Concord, being from ten to twenty inches in diameter, and as exclusively pine as any wood that I know. Indeed, I selected this wood because I thought it the least likely to contain anything else. It stands on an open plain or pasture, except that it adjoins another small pine wood, which has a few little oaks in it, on the southeast side. On every other side, it was at least thirty rods from the nearest woods. Standing on the edge of this grove and looking through it, for it is quite level and free from underwood, for the most part bare, red-carpeted ground, you would have said that there was not a hard wood tree in it, young or old. But on looking carefully along over its floor I discovered, though it was not till my eye had got used to the search, that, alternating with thin ferns, and small blueberry bushes, there was, not merely here and there, but as often as every five feet and with a degree of regularity, a little oak, from three to twelve inches high, and in one place I found a green acorn dropped by the base of a pine.

I confess, I was surprised to find my theory so perfectly proved in this case. One of the principal agents in this planting, the red

squirrels, were all the while curiously inspecting me, while I was inspecting their plantation. Some of the little oaks had been browsed by cows, which resorted to this wood for shade.

After seven or eight years, the hard woods evidently find such a locality unfavorable to their growth, the pines being allowed to stand. As an evidence of this, I observed a diseased red-maple twenty-five feet long, which had been recently prostrated, though it was still covered with green leaves, the only maple in any position in the wood.

But although these oaks almost invariably die if the pines are not cut down, it is probable that they do better for a few years under their shelter than they would anywhere else.

The very extensive and thorough experiments of the English, have at length led them to adopt a method of raising oaks almost precisely like this, which somewhat earlier had been adopted by nature and her squirrels here; they have simply rediscovered the value of pines as nurses for oaks. The English experimenters seem early and generally, to have found out the importance of using trees of some kind, as nurse-plants for the young oaks. I quote from Loudon what he describes as "the ultimatum on the subject of planting and sheltering oaks,"— "an abstract of the practice adopted by the government officers in the national forests" of England, prepared by Alexander Milne.

At first some oaks had been planted by themselves, and others mixed with Scotch pines; "but in all cases," says Mr. Milne, "where oaks were planted actually among the pines, and surrounded by them, [though the soil might be inferior,] the oaks were found to be much the best." "For several years past, the plan pursued has been to plant the inclosures with Scotch pines only, [a tree very similar to our pitch-pine,] and when the pines have got to the height of five or six feet, then to put in good strong oak plants of about four or five years' growth among the pines, — not cutting away any pines at first, unless they happen to be so strong and thick as to overshadow the oaks. In about two years, it becomes necessary to shred the branches of the pines, to give light and air to the oaks, and in about two or three more years to begin gradually to remove the pines altogether, taking out a certain number each year, so that, at the end of twenty or

twenty-five years, not a single Scotch pine shall be left; although, for the first ten or twelve years, the plantation may have appeared to contain nothing else but pine. The advantage of this mode of planting has been found to be that the pines dry and ameliorate the soil, destroying the coarse grass and brambles which frequently choke and injure oaks; and that no mending over is necessary, as scarcely an oak so planted is found to fail."

Thus much the English planters have discovered by patient experiment, and, for aught I know, they have taken out a patent for it; but they appear not to have discovered that it was discovered before, and that they are merely adopting the method of Nature, which she long ago made patent to all. She is all the while planting the oaks amid the pines without our knowledge, and at last, instead of government officers, we send a party of wood-choppers to cut down the pines, and so rescue an oak forest, at which we wonder as if it had dropped from the skies.

As I walk amid hickories, even in August, I hear the sound of green pig-nuts falling from time to time, cut off by the chickaree over my head. In the fall, I notice on the ground, either within or in the neighborhood of oak woods, on all sides of the town, stout oak twigs three or four inches long, bearing half-a-dozen empty acorn-cups, which twigs have been gnawed off by squirrels, on both sides of the nuts, in order to make them more portable. The jays scream and the red squirrels scold while you are clubbing and shaking the chestnut trees, for they are there on the same errand, and two of a trade never agree. I frequently see a red or gray squirrel cast down a green chestnut bur, as I am going through the woods, and I used to think, sometimes, that they were cast at me. In fact, they are so busy about it, in the midst of the chestnut season, that you cannot stand long in the woods without hearing one fall. A sportsman told me that he had, the day before, — that was in the middle of October, — seen a green chestnut bur dropt on our great river meadow, fifty rods from the nearest wood, and much further from the nearest chestnut-tree, and he could not tell how it came there. Occasionally, when chestnutting in midwinter, I find thirty or forty nuts in a pile, left in its gallery, just under the leaves, by the common wood-mouse (*mus leucopus*).

But especially, in the winter, the extent to which this

transportation and planting of nuts is carried on is made apparent by the snow. In almost every wood, you will see where the red or gray squirrels have pawed down through the snow in a hundred places, sometimes two feet deep, and almost always directly to a nut or a pine-cone, as directly as if they had started from it and bored upward, — which you and I could not have done. It would be difficult for us to find one before the snow falls. Commonly, no doubt, they had deposited them there in the fall. You wonder if they remember the localities, or discover them by the scent. The red squirrel commonly has its winter abode in the earth under a thicket of evergreens, frequently under a small clump of evergreens in the midst of a deciduous wood. If there are any nut-trees, which still retain their nuts, standing at a distance without the wood, their paths often lead directly to and from them. We, therefore, need not suppose an oak standing here and there *in* the wood in order to seed it, but if a few stand within twenty or thirty rods of it, it is sufficient.

I think that I may venture to say that every white-pine cone that falls to the earth naturally in this town, before opening and losing its seeds, and almost every pitch-pine one that falls at all, is cut off by a squirrel, and they begin to pluck them long before they are ripe, so that when the crop of white-pine cones is a small one, as it commonly is, they cut off thus almost every one of these before it fairly ripens. I think, moreover, that their design, if I may so speak, in cutting them off green, is, partly, to prevent their opening and losing their seeds, for these are the ones for which they dig through the snow, and the only white-pine cones which contain anything then. I have counted in one heap, within a diameter of four feet, the cores of 239 pitch-pine cones which had been cut off and stripped by the red squirrel the previous winter.

The nuts thus left on the surface, or buried just beneath it, are placed in the most favorable circumstances for germinating. I have sometimes wondered how those which merely fell on the surface of the earth got planted; but, by the end of December, I find the chestnut of the same year partially mixed with the mould, as it were, under the decaying and mouldy leaves, where there is all the moisture and manure they want, for the nuts fall first. In a plentiful year, a large proportion of the nuts are thus covered loosely an inch deep, and are,

of course, somewhat concealed from squirrels. One winter, when the crop had been abundant, I got, with the aid of a rake, many quarts of these nuts as late as the tenth of January, and though some bought at the store the same day were more than half of them mouldy, I did not find a single mouldy one among these which I picked from under the wet and mouldy leaves, where they had been snowed on once or twice. Nature knows how to pack them best. They were still plump and tender. Apparently, they do not heat there, though wet. In the spring they were all sprouting.

Loudon says that "when the nut [of the common walnut of Europe] is to be preserved through the winter for the purpose of planting in the following spring, it should be laid in a rot-heap, as soon as gathered, with the husk on; and the heap should be turned over frequently in the course of the winter."

Here, again, he is stealing Nature's "thunder." How can a poor mortal do otherwise? for it is she that finds fingers to steal with, and the treasure to be stolen. In the planting of the seeds of most trees, the best gardeners do no more than follow Nature, though they may not know it. Generally, both large and small ones are most sure to germinate, and succeed best, when only beaten into the earth with the back of a spade, and then covered with leaves or straw. These results to which planters have arrived, remind us of the experience of Kane and his companions at the North, who, when learning to live in that climate, were surprised to find themselves steadily adopting the customs of the natives, simply becoming Esquimaux. So, when we experiment in planting forests, we find ourselves at last doing as Nature does. Would it not be well to consult with Nature in the outset? for she is the most extensive and experienced planter of us all, not excepting the Dukes of Athol.

In short, they who have not attended particularly to this subject are but little aware to what an extent quadrupeds and birds are employed, especially in the fall, in collecting, and so disseminating and planting the seeds of trees. It is the almost constant employment of the squirrels at that season and you rarely meet with one that has not a nut in its mouth, or is not just going to get one. One squirrel-hunter of this town told me that he knew of a walnut-tree which bore particularly good nuts, but that on going to gather them one fall, he

found that he had been anticipated by a family of a dozen red squirrels. He took out of the tree, which was hollow, one bushel and three pecks by measurement, without the husks, and they supplied him and his family for the winter. It would be easy to multiply instances of this kind. How commonly in the fall you see the cheek-pouches of the striped squirrel distended by a quantity of nuts! This species gets its scientific name *Tamias*, or the steward, from its habit of storing up nuts and other seeds. Look under a nut-tree a month after the nuts have fallen, and see what proportion of sound nuts to the abortive ones and shells you will find ordinarily. They have been already eaten, or dispersed far and wide. The ground looks like a platform before a grocery, where the gossips of the village sit to crack nuts and less savory jokes. You have come, you would say, after the feast was over, and are presented with the shells only.

Occasionally, when threading the woods in the fall, you will hear a sound as if some one had broken a twig, and, looking up, see a jay pecking at an acorn, or you will see a flock of them at once about it, in the top of an oak, and hear them break them off. They then fly to a suitable limb, and placing the acorn under one foot, hammer away at it busily, making a sound like a woodpecker's tapping, looking round from time to time to see if any foe is approaching, and soon reach the meat, and nibble at it, holding up their heads to swallow, while they hold the remainder very firmly with their claws. Nevertheless, it often drops to the ground before the bird has done with it. I can confirm what Wm. Bartram wrote to Wilson, the Ornithologist, that "The jay is one of the most useful agents in the economy of nature, for disseminating forest trees and other nuciferous and hard-seeded vegetables on which they feed. Their chief employment during the autumnal season is foraging to supply their winter stores. In performing this necessary duty they drop abundance of seed in their flight over fields, hedges, and by fences, where they alight to deposit them in the post-holes, &c. It is remarkable what numbers of young trees rise up in fields and pastures after a wet winter and spring. These birds alone are capable, in a few years' time, to replant all the cleared lands."

I have noticed that squirrels also frequently drop their nuts in open land, which will still further account for the oaks and walnuts which

spring up in pastures, for, depend on it, every new tree comes from a seed. When I examine the little oaks, one or two years old, in such places, I invariably find the empty acorn from which they sprung.

So far from the seed having lain dormant in the soil since oaks grew there before, as many believe, it is well known that it is difficult to preserve the vitality of acorns long enough to transport them to Europe; and it is recommended in Loudon's Arboretum, as the safest course, to sprout them in pots on the voyage. The same authority states that "very few acorns of any species will germinate after having been kept a year," that beechmast, "only retains its vital properties one year," and the black-walnut, "seldom more than six months after it has ripened." I have frequently found that in November, almost every acorn left on the ground had sprouted or decayed. What with frost, drouth, moisture, and worms, the greater part are soon destroyed. Yet it is stated by one botanical writer that "acorns that have lain for centuries, on being ploughed up, have soon vegetated."

Mr. George B. Emerson, in his valuable Report on the Trees and Shrubs of this State, says of the pines: "The tenacity of life of the seeds is remarkable. They will remain for many years unchanged in the ground, protected by the coolness and deep shade of the forest above them. But when the forest is removed, and the warmth of the sun admitted, they immediately vegetate." Since he does not tell us on what observation his remark is founded, I must doubt its truth. Besides, the experience of nurserymen makes it the more questionable.

The stories of wheat raised from seed buried with an ancient Egyptian, and of raspberries raised from seed found in the stomach of a man in England, who is supposed to have died sixteen or seventeen hundred years ago, are generally discredited, simply because the evidence is not conclusive.

Several men of science, Dr. Carpenter among them, have used the statement that beach-plums sprang up in sand which was dug up forty miles inland in Maine, to prove that the seed had lain there a very long time, and some have inferred that the coast has receded so far. But it seems to me necessary to their argument to show, first, that beach-plums grow only on a beach. They are not uncommon here,

which is about half that distance from the shore; and I remember a dense patch a few miles north of us, twenty-five miles inland, from which the fruit was annually carried to market. How much further inland they grow, I know not. Dr. Chas. T. Jackson speaks of finding "beach-plums" (perhaps they were this kind) more than one hundred miles inland in Maine.

It chances that similar objections lie against all the more notorious instances of the kind on record.

Yet I am prepared to believe that some seeds, especially small ones, may retain their vitality for centuries under favorable circumstances. In the spring of 1859, the old Hunt House, so called, in this town, whose chimney bore the date 1703, was taken down. This stood on land which belonged to John Winthrop, the first Governor of Massachusetts, and a part of the house was evidently much older than the above date, and belonged to the Winthrop family. For many years, I have ransacked this neighborhood for plants, and I consider myself familiar with its productions. Thinking of the seeds which are said to be sometimes dug up at an unusual depth in the earth, and thus to reproduce long extinct plants, it occurred to me last fall that some new or rare plants might have sprung up in the cellar of this house, which had been covered from the light so long. Searching there on the 22d of September, I found, among other rank weeds, a species of nettle (*Urtica urens*), which I had not found before; dill, which I had not seen growing spontaneously; the Jerusalem oak (*Chenopodium botrys*), which I had seen wild in but one place; black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*), which is quite rare hereabouts, and common tobacco, which, though it was often cultivated here in the last century, has for fifty years been an unknown plant in this town, and a few months before this not even I had heard that one man in the north part of the town, was cultivating a few plants for his own use. I have no doubt that some or all of these plants sprang from seeds which had long been buried under or about that house, and that that tobacco is an additional evidence that the plant was formerly cultivated here. The cellar has been filled up this year, and four of those plants, including the tobacco, are now again extinct in that locality.

It is true, I have shown that the animals consume a great part of

the seeds of trees, and so, at least, effectually prevent their becoming trees; but in all these cases, as I have said, the consumer is compelled to be at the same time the disperser and planter, and this is the tax which he pays to nature. I think it is Linnaeus, who says, that while the swine is rooting for acorns, he is planting acorns.

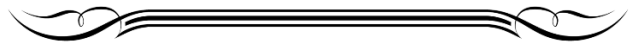
Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed — a, to me, equally mysterious origin for it. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders. I shall even believe that the millennium is at hand, and that the reign of justice is about to commence, when the Patent Office, or Government, begins to distribute, and the people to plant the seeds of these things.'

In the spring of 1857, I planted six seeds sent to me from the Patent Office, and labelled, I think, "*Poitrine jaune grosse,*" large yellow squash. Two came up, and one bore a squash which weighed 123-1/2 pounds, the other bore four, weighing together 186-1/4 pounds. Who would have believed that there was 310 pounds of *poitrine jaune grosse* in that corner of my garden? These seeds were the bait I used to catch it, my ferrets which I sent into its burrow, my brace of terriers which unearthed it. A little mysterious hoeing and manuring was all the *abra cadabra presto-change,* that I used, and lo! true to the label, they found for me 310 pounds of *poitrine jaune grosse* there, where it never was known to be, nor was before. These talismen had perchance sprung from America at first, and returned to it with unabated force. The big squash took a premium at your fair that fall, and I understood that the man who bought it, intended to sell the seeds for ten cents a piece. (Were they not cheap at that?) But I have more hounds of the same breed. I learn that one which I despatched to a distant town, true to its instinct, points to the large yellow squash there, too, where no hound ever found it before, as its ancestors did here and in France.

Other seeds I have which will find other things in that corner of my garden, in like fashion, almost any fruit you wish, every year for ages, until the crop more than fills the whole garden. You have but little more to do, than throw up your cap for entertainment these American days. Perfect alchemists I keep, who can transmute substances without end; and thus the corner of my garden is an

inexhaustible treasure-chest. Here you can dig, not gold, but the value which gold merely represents; and there is no Signor Blitz about it. Yet farmers' sons will stare by the hour to see a juggler draw ribbons from his throat, though he tells them it is all deception. Surely, men love darkness rather than light.

WILD APPLES



THE HISTORY OF THE APPLE-TREE.

It is remarkable how closely the history of the Apple-tree is connected with that of man. The geologist tells us that the order of the *Rosaceae*, which includes the Apple, also the true Grasses, and the *Labiatae* or Mints, were introduced only a short time previous to the appearance of man on the globe.

It appears that apples made a part of the food of that unknown primitive people whose traces have lately been found at the bottom of the Swiss lakes, supposed to be older than the foundation of Rome, so old that they had no metallic implements. An entire black and shrivelled Crab-Apple has been recovered from their stores.

Tacitus says of the ancient Germans, that they satisfied their hunger with wild apples (*agrestia poma*) among other things.

Niebuhr observes that "the words for a house, a field, a plough, ploughing, wine, oil, milk, sheep, apples, and others relating to agriculture and the gentler way of life, agree in Latin and Greek, while the Latin words for all objects pertaining to war or the chase are utterly alien from the Greek." Thus the apple-tree may be considered a symbol of peace no less than the olive.

The apple was early so important, and generally distributed, that its name traced to its root in many languages signifies fruit in general. [Greek: Maelon], in Greek, means an apple, also the fruit of other trees, also a sheep and any cattle, and finally riches in general.

The apple-tree has been celebrated by the Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and Scandinavians. Some have thought that the first human pair were tempted by its fruit. Goddesses are fabled to have contended for it, dragons were set to watch it, and heroes were employed to pluck it.

The tree is mentioned in at least three places in the Old Testament, and its fruit in two or three more. Solomon sings,— "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." And again,— "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with

apples." The noblest part of man's noblest feature is named from this fruit, "the apple of the eye."

The apple-tree is also mentioned by Homer and Herodotus. Ulysses saw in the glorious garden of Alcinous "pears and pomegranates, and apple-trees bearing beautiful fruit" (kai maeleui aglaokarpoi). And according to Homer, apples were among the fruits which Tantalus could not pluck, the wind ever blowing their boughs away from him. Theophrastus knew and described the apple-tree as a botanist.

According to the Prose Edda, "Iduna keeps in a box the apples which the gods, when they feel old age approaching, have only to taste of to become young again. It is in this manner that they will be kept in renovated youth until Ragnarök" (or the destruction of the gods).

I learn from Loudon that "the ancient Welsh bards were rewarded for excelling in song by the token of the apple-spray;" and "in the Highlands of Scotland the apple-tree is the badge of the-clan Lamont."

The apple-tree (*Pyrus malus*) belongs chiefly to the northern temperate zone. Loudon says, that "it grows spontaneously in every part of Europe except the frigid zone, and throughout Western Asia, China, and Japan." We have also two or three varieties of the apple indigenous in North America. The cultivated apple-tree was first introduced into this country by the earliest settlers, and is thought to do as well or better here than anywhere else. Probably some of the varieties which are now cultivated were first introduced into Britain by the Romans.

Pliny, adopting the distinction of Theophrastus, says,— "Of trees there are some which are altogether wild (*sylvestres*), some more civilized (*urbaniores*)." Theophrastus includes the apple among the last; and, indeed, it is in this sense the most civilized of all trees. It is as harmless as a dove, as beautiful as a rose, and as valuable as flocks and herds. It has been longer cultivated than any other, and so is more humanized; and who knows but, like the dog, it will at length be no longer traceable to its wild original? It migrates with man, like the dog and horse and cow: first, perchance, from Greece to Italy, thence to England, thence to America; and our Western emigrant is

still marching steadily toward the setting sun with the seeds of the apple in his pocket, or perhaps a few young trees strapped to his load. At least a million apple-trees are thus set farther westward this year than any cultivated ones grew last year. Consider how the Blossom-Week, like the Sabbath, is thus annually spreading over the prairies; for when man migrates, he carries with him not only his birds, quadrupeds, insects, vegetables, and his very sward, but his orchard also.

The leaves and tender twigs are an agreeable food to many domestic animals, as the cow, horse, sheep, and goat; and the fruit is sought after by the first, as well as by the hog. Thus there appears to have existed a natural alliance between these animals and this tree from the first. “The fruit of the Crab in the forests of France” is said to be “a great resource for the wild-boar.”

Not only the Indian, but many indigenous insects, birds, and quadrupeds, welcomed the apple-tree to these shores. The tent-caterpillar saddled her eggs on the very first twig that was formed, and it has since shared her affections with the wild cherry; and the canker-worm also in a measure abandoned the elm to feed on it. As it grew apace, the bluebird, robin, cherry-bird, king-bird, and many more, came with haste and built their nests and warbled in its boughs, and so became orchard-birds, and multiplied more than ever. It was an era in the history of their race. The downy woodpecker found such a savory morsel under its bark, that he perforated it in a ring quite round the tree, before he left it, — a thing which he had never done before, to my knowledge. It did not take the partridge long to find out how sweet its buds were, and every winter eve she flew, and still flies, from the wood, to pluck them, much to the farmer’s sorrow. The rabbit, too, was not slow to learn the taste of its twigs and bark; and when the fruit was ripe, the squirrel half-rolled, half-carried it to his hole; and even the musquash crept up the bank from the brook at evening, and greedily devoured it, until he had worn a path in the grass there; and when it was frozen and thawed, the crow and the jay were glad to taste it occasionally. The owl crept into the first apple-tree that became hollow, and fairly hooted with delight, finding it just the place for him; so, settling down into it, he has remained there ever since.

My theme being the Wild Apple, I will merely glance at some of the seasons in the annual growth of the cultivated apple, and pass on to my special province.

The flowers of the apple are perhaps the most beautiful of any tree's, so copious and so delicious to both sight and scent. The walker is frequently tempted to turn and linger near some more than usually handsome one, whose blossoms are two thirds expanded. How superior it is in these respects to the pear, whose blossoms are neither colored nor fragrant!

By the middle of July, green apples are so large as to remind us of coddling, and of the autumn. The sward is commonly strewed with little ones which fall still-born, as it were, — Nature thus thinning them for us. The Roman writer Palladius said,— "If apples are inclined to fall before their time, a stone placed in a split root will retain them." Some such notion, still surviving, may account for some of the stones which we see placed to be overgrown in the forks of trees. They have a saying in Suffolk, England, —

"At Michaelmas time, or a little before,
Half an apple goes to the core."

Early apples begin to be ripe about the first of August; but I think that none of them are so good to eat as some to smell. One is worth more to scent your handkerchief with than any perfume which they sell in the shops. The fragrance of some fruits is not to be forgotten, along with that of flowers. Some gnarly apple which I pick up in the road reminds me by its fragrance of all the wealth of Pomona, — carrying me forward to those days when they will be collected in golden and ruddy heaps in the orchards and about the cider-mills.

A week or two later, as you are going by orchards or gardens, especially in the evenings, you pass through a little region possessed by the fragrance of ripe apples, and thus enjoy them without price, and without robbing anybody.

There is thus about all natural products a certain volatile and ethereal quality which represents their highest value, and which cannot be vulgarized, or bought and sold. No mortal has ever enjoyed the perfect flavor of any fruit, and only the godlike among men begin

to taste its ambrosial qualities. For nectar and ambrosia are only those fine flavors of every earthly fruit which our coarse palates fail to perceive, — just as we occupy the heaven of the gods without knowing it. When I see a particularly mean man carrying a load of fair and fragrant early apples to market, I seem to see a contest going on between him and his horse, on the one side, and the apples on the other, and, to my mind, the apples always gain it. Pliny says that apples are the heaviest of all things, and that the oxen begin to sweat at the mere sight of a load of them. Our driver begins to lose his load the moment he tries to transport them to where they do not belong, that is, to any but the most beautiful. Though he gets out from time to time, and feels of them, and thinks they are all there, I see the stream of their evanescent and celestial qualities going to heaven from his cart, while the pulp and skin and core only are going to market. They are not apples, but pomace. Are not these still Iduna's apples, the taste of which keeps the gods forever young? and think you that they will let Loki or Thjassi carry them off to Jötunheim, while they grow wrinkled and gray? No, for Ragnarök, or the destruction of the gods, is not yet.

There is another thinning of the fruit, commonly near the end of August or in September, when the ground is strewn with windfalls; and this happens especially when high winds occur after rain. In some orchards you may see fully three quarters of the whole crop on the ground, lying in a circular form beneath the trees, yet hard and green, — or, if it is a hill-side, rolled far down the hill. However, it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. All the country over, people are busy picking up the windfalls, and this will make them cheap for early apple-pies.

In October, the leaves falling, the apples are more distinct on the trees. I saw one year in a neighboring town some trees fuller of fruit than I remember to have ever seen before, small yellow apples hanging over the road. The branches were gracefully drooping with their weight, like a barberry-bush, so that the whole tree acquired a new character. Even the topmost branches, instead of standing erect, spread and drooped in all directions; and there were so many poles supporting the lower ones, that they looked like pictures of banian-trees. As an old English manuscript says, "The mo appelen the tree

bereth, the more sche boweth to the folk."

Surely the apple is the noblest of fruits. Let the most beautiful or the swiftest have it. That should be the "going" price of apples.

Between the fifth and twentieth of October I see the barrels lie under the trees. And perhaps I talk with one who is selecting some choice barrels to fulfil an order. He turns a specked one over many times before he leaves it out. If I were to tell what is passing in my mind, I should say that every one was specked which he had handled; for he rubs off all the bloom, and those fugacious ethereal qualities leave it. Cool eveings prompt the farmers to make haste, and at length I see only the ladders here and there left leaning against the trees.

It would be well, if we accepted these gifts with more joy and gratitude, and did not think it enough simply to put a fresh load of compost about the tree. Some old English customs are suggestive at least. I find them described chiefly in Brand's "Popular Antiquities." It appears that "on Christmas eve the farmers and their men in Devonshire take a large bowl of cider, with a toast in it, and carrying it in state to the orchard, they salute the apple-trees with much ceremony, in order to make them bear well the next season." This salutation consists in "throwing some of the cider about the roots of the tree, placing bits of the toast on the branches," and then, "encircling one of the best bearing trees in the orchard, they drink the following toast three several times: —

'Here's to thee, old apple-tree,
Whence thou mayst bud, and whence thou mayst blow,
And whence thou mayst bear apples enow!
Hats-full! caps-full!
Bushel, bushel, sacks-full!
And my pockets full, too! Hurra!'"

Also what was called "apple-howling" used to be practised in various counties of England on New-Year's eve. A troop of boys visited the different orchards, and, encircling the apple-trees, repeated the following words: —

"Stand fast, root! bear well, top!
Pray God send us a good howling crop:
Every twig, apples big;
Every bow, apples enow!"

"They then shout in chorus, one of the boys accompanying them on a cow's horn. During this ceremony they rap the trees with their sticks." This is called "wassailing" the trees, and is thought by some to be "a relic of the heathen sacrifice to Pomona."

Herrick sings, —

"Wassaile the trees that they may beare
You many a plum and many a peare;
For more or less fruits they will bring
As you so give them wassailing."

Our poets have as yet a better right to sing of cider than of wine; but it behooves them to sing better than English Phillips did, else they will do no credit to their Muse.

THE WILD APPLE.

So much for the more civilized apple-trees (*urbaniores*, as Pliny calls them). I love better to go through the old orchards of ungrafted apple-trees, at whatever season of the year, — so irregularly planted: sometimes two trees standing close together; and the rows so devious that you would think that they not only had grown while the owner was sleeping, but had been set out by him in a somnambulic state. The rows of grafted fruit will never tempt me to wander amid them like these. But I now, alas, speak rather from memory than from any recent experience, such ravages have been made!

Some soils, like a rocky tract called the Easterbrooks Country in my neighborhood, are so suited to the apple, that it will grow faster in them without any care, or if only the ground is broken up once a year, than it will in many places with any amount of care. The owners of this tract allow that the soil is excellent for fruit, but they say that it is so rocky that they have not patience to plough it, and

that, together with the distance, is the reason why it is not cultivated. There are, or were recently, extensive orchards there standing without order. Nay, they spring up wild and bear well there in the midst of pines, birches, maples, and oaks. I am often surprised to see rising amid these trees the rounded tops of apple-trees glowing with red or yellow fruit; in harmony with the autumnal tints of the forest.

Going up the side of a cliff about the first of November, I saw a vigorous young apple-tree, which, planted by birds or cows, had shot up amid the rocks and open woods there, and had now much fruit on it, uninjured by the frosts, when all cultivated apples were gathered. It was a rank wild growth, with many green leaves on it still, and made an impression of thorniness. The fruit was hard and green, but looked as if it would be palatable in the winter. Some was dangling on the twigs, but more half-buried in the wet leaves under the tree, or rolled far down the hill amid the rocks. The owner knows nothing of it. The day was not observed when it first blossomed, nor when it first bore fruit, unless by the chickadee. There was no dancing on the green beneath it in its honor, and now there is no hand to pluck its fruit, — which is only gnawed by squirrels, as I perceive. It has done double duty, — not only borne this crop, but each twig has grown a foot into the air. And this is *such* fruit! bigger than many berries, we must admit, and carried home will be sound and palatable next spring. What care I for Iduna's apples so long as I can get these?

When I go by this shrub thus late and hardy, and see its dangling fruit, I respect the tree, and I am grateful for Nature's bounty, even though I cannot eat it. Here on this rugged and woody hill-side has grown an apple-tree, not planted by man, no relic of a former orchard, but a natural growth, like the pines and oaks. Most fruits which we prize and use depend entirely on our care. Corn and grain, potatoes, peaches, melons, etc., depend altogether on our planting; but the apple emulates man's independence and enterprise. It is not simply carried, as I have said, but, like him, to some extent, it has migrated to this New World, and is even, here and there, making its way amid the aboriginal trees; just as the ox and dog and horse sometimes run wild and maintain themselves.

Even the sourest and crabbedest apple, growing in the most unfavorable position, suggests such thoughts as these, it is so noble a

fruit.

THE CRAB.

Nevertheless, *our* wild apple is wild only like myself, perchance, who belong not to the aboriginal race here, but have strayed into the woods from the cultivated stock. Wilder still, as I have said, there grows elsewhere in this country a native and aboriginal Crab-Apple, *Malus coronaria*, "whose nature has not yet been modified by cultivation." It is found from Western New-York to Minnesota, and southward. Michaux says that its ordinary height "is fifteen or eighteen feet, but it is sometimes found twenty-five or thirty feet high," and that the large ones "exactly resemble the common apple-tree." "The flowers are white mingled with rose-color, and are collected in corymbs." They are remarkable for their delicious odor. The fruit, according to him, is about an inch and a half in diameter, and is intensely acid. Yet they make fine sweetmeats, and also cider of them. He concludes, that "if, on being cultivated, it does not yield new and palatable varieties, it will at least be celebrated for the beauty of its flowers, and for the sweetness of its perfume."

I never saw the Crab-Apple till May, 1861. I had heard of it through Michaux, but more modern botanists, so far as I know, have not treated it as of any peculiar importance. Thus it was a half-fabulous tree to me. I contemplated a pilgrimage to the "Glades," a portion of Pennsylvania where it was said to grow to perfection. I thought of sending to a nursery for it, but doubted if they had it, or would distinguish it from European varieties. At last I had occasion to go to Minnesota, and on entering Michigan I began to notice from the cars a tree with handsome rose-colored flowers. At first I thought it some variety of thorn; but it was not long before the truth flashed on me, that this was my long-sought Crab-Apple. It was the prevailing flowering shrub or tree to be seen from the cars at that season of the year, — about the middle of May. But the cars never stopped before one, and so I was launched on the bosom of the Mississippi without having touched one, experiencing the fate of Tantalus. On arriving at St. Anthony's Falls, I was sorry to be told that I was too far north for the Crab-Apple. Nevertheless I succeeded

in finding it about eight miles west of the Falls; touched it and smelled it, and secured a lingering corymb of flowers for my herbarium. This must have been near its northern limit.

HOW THE WILD APPLE GROWS.

But though these are indigenous, like the Indians, I doubt whether they are any hardier than those backwoodsmen among the apple-trees, which, though descended from cultivated stocks, plant themselves in distant fields and forests, where the soil is favorable to them. I know of no trees which have more difficulties to contend with, and which more sturdily resist their foes. These are the ones whose story we have to tell. It oftentimes reads thus: —

Near the beginning of May, we notice little thickets of apple-trees just springing up in the pastures where cattle have been, — as the rocky ones of our Easterbrooks Country, or the top of Nobscot Hill, in Sudbury. One or two of these perhaps survive the drought and other accidents, — their very birthplace defending them against the encroaching grass and some other dangers, at first.

In two years' time 't had thus
  Reached the level of the rocks,
Admired the stretching world,
  Nor feared the wandering flocks.

But at this tender age
  Its sufferings began:
There came a browsing ox
 And cut it down a span.

This time, perhaps, the ox does not notice it amid the grass; but the next year, when it has grown more stout, he recognizes it for a fellow-emigrant from the old country, the flavor of whose leaves and twigs he well knows; and though at first he pauses to welcome it, and express his surprise, and gets for answer, "The same cause that brought you here brought me," he nevertheless browses it again, reflecting, it may be, that he has some title to it.

Thus cut down annually, it does not despair; but, putting forth two short twigs for every one cut off, it spreads out low along the ground in the hollows or between the rocks, growing more stout and scrubby, until it forms, not a tree as yet, but a little pyramidal, stiff, twiggy mass, almost as solid and impenetrable as a rock. Some of the densest and most impenetrable clumps of bushes that I have ever seen, as well on account of the closeness and stubbornness of their branches as of their thorns, have been these wild-apple scrubs. They are more like the scrubby fir and black spruce on which you stand, and sometimes walk, on the tops of mountains, where cold is the demon they contend with, than anything else. No wonder they are prompted to grow thorns at last, to defend themselves against such foes. In their thorniness, however, there is no malice, only some malic acid.

The rocky pastures of the tract I have referred to, — for they maintain their ground best in a rocky field, — are thickly sprinkled with these little tufts, reminding you often of some rigid gray mosses or lichens, and you see thousands of little trees just springing up between them, with the seed still attached to them.

Being regularly clipped all around each year by the cows, as a hedge with shears, they are often of a perfect conical or pyramidal form, from one to four feet high, and more or less sharp, as if trimmed by the gardener's art. In the pastures on Nobscot Hill and its spurs, they make fine dark shadows when the sun is low. They are also an excellent covert from hawks for many small birds that roost and build in them. Whole flocks perch in them at night, and I have seen three robins' nests in one which was six feet in diameter.

No doubt many of these are already old trees, if you reckon from the day they were planted, but infants still when you consider their development and the long life before them. I counted the annual rings of some which were just one foot high, and as wide as high, and found that they were about twelve years old, but quite sound and thrifty! They were so low that they were unnoticed by the walker, while many of their contemporaries from the nurseries were already bearing considerable crops. But what you gain in time is perhaps in this case, too, lost in power, — that is, in the vigor of the tree. This is their pyramidal state.

The cows continue to browse them thus for twenty years or more, keeping them down and compelling them to spread, until at last they are so broad that they become their own fence, when some interior shoot, which their foes cannot reach, darts upward with joy: for it has not forgotten its high calling, and bears its own peculiar fruit in triumph.

Such are the tactics by which it finally defeats its bovine foes. Now, if you have watched the progress of a particular shrub, you will see that it is no longer a simple pyramid or cone, but that out of its apex there rises a sprig or two, growing more lustily perchance than an orchard-tree, since the plant now devotes the whole of its repressed energy to these upright parts. In a short time these become a small tree, an inverted pyramid resting on the apex of the other, so that the whole has now the form of a vast hour-glass. The spreading bottom, having served its purpose, finally disappears, and the generous tree permits the now harmless cows to come in and stand in its shade, and rub against and redden its trunk, which has grown in spite of them, and even to taste a part of its fruit, and so disperse the seed.

Thus the cows create their own shade and food; and the tree, its hour-glass being inverted, lives a second life, as it were.

It is an important question with some nowadays, whether you should trim young apple-trees as high as your nose or as high as your eyes. The ox trims them up as high as he can reach, and that is about the right height, I think.

In spite of wandering kine, and other adverse circumstances, that despised shrub, valued only by small birds as a covert and shelter from hawks, has its blossom-week at last, and in coarse of time its harvest, sincere, though small.

By the end of some October, when its leaves have fallen, I frequently see such a central sprig, whose progress I have watched, when I thought it had forgotten its destiny, as I had, bearing its first crop of small green or yellow or rosy fruit, which the cows cannot get at over the bushy and thorny hedge which surrounds it, and I make haste to taste the new and undescribed variety. We have all heard of the numerous varieties of fruit invented by Van Mons and Knight. This is the system of Van Cow, and she has invented far

more and more memorable varieties than both of them.

Through what hardships it may attain to bear a sweet fruit! Though somewhat small, it may prove equal, if not superior, in flavor to that which has grown in a garden, — will perchance be all the sweeter and more palatable for the very difficulties it has had to contend with. Who knows but this chance wild fruit, planted by a cow or a bird on some remote and rocky hillside, where it is as yet unobserved by man, may be the choicest of all its kind, and foreign potentates shall hear of it, and royal societies seek to propagate it, though the virtues of the perhaps truly crabbed owner of the soil may never be heard of, — at least, beyond the limits of his village? It was thus the Porter and the Baldwin grew.

Every wild-apple shrub excites our expectation thus, somewhat as every wild child. It is, perhaps, a prince in disguise. What a lesson to man! So are human beings, referred to the highest standard, the celestial fruit which they suggest and aspire to bear, browsed on by fate; and only the most persistent and strongest genius defends itself and prevails, sends a tender scion upward at last, and drops its perfect fruit on the ungrateful earth. Poets and philosophers and statesmen thus spring up in the country pastures, and outlast the hosts of unoriginal men.

Such is always the pursuit of knowledge. The celestial fruits, the golden apples of the Hesperides, are ever guarded by a hundred-headed dragon which never sleeps, so that it is an Herculean labor to pluck them.

This is one, and the most remarkable way, in which the wild apple is propagated; but commonly it springs up at wide intervals in woods and swamps, and by the sides of roads, as the soil may suit it, and grows with comparative rapidity. Those which grow in dense woods are very tall and slender. I frequently pluck from these trees a perfectly mild and tamed fruit. As Palladius says, "*Et injussu consternitur ubere mali*": And the ground is strewn with the fruit of an unbidden apple-tree.

It is an old notion, that, if these wild trees do not bear a valuable fruit of their own, they are the best stocks by which to transmit to posterity the most highly prized qualities of others. However, I am not in search of stocks, but the wild fruit itself, whose fierce gust has

suffered no “inteneration.” It is not my

“highest plot To plant the Bergamot.”

THE FRUIT, AND ITS FLAVOR.

The time for wild apples is the last of October and the first of November. They then get to be palatable, for they ripen late, and they are still perhaps as beautiful as ever. I make a great account of these fruits, which the farmers do not think it worth the while to gather, — wild flavors of the Muse, vivacious and inspiriting. The farmer thinks that he has better in his barrels, but he is mistaken, unless he has a walker’s appetite and imagination, neither of which can he have.

Such as grow quite wild, and are left out till the first of November, I presume that the owner does not mean to gather. They belong to children as wild as themselves, — to certain active boys that I know, — to the wild-eyed woman of the fields, to whom nothing comes amiss, who gleans after all the world, — and, moreover, to us walkers. We have met with them, and they are ours. These rights, long enough insisted upon, have come to be an institution in some old countries, where they have learned how to live. I hear that “the custom of grippling, which may be called apple-gleaning, is, or was formerly, practised in Herefordshire. It consists in leaving a few apples, which are called the gripples, on every tree, after the general gathering, for the boys, who go with climbing-poles and bags to collect them.”

As for those I speak of, I pluck them as a wild fruit, native to this quarter of the earth, — fruit of old trees that have been dying ever since I was a boy and are not yet dead, frequented only by the woodpecker and the squirrel, deserted now by the owner, who has not faith enough to look under their boughs. From the appearance of the tree-top, at a little distance, you would expect nothing but lichens to drop from it, but your faith is rewarded by finding the ground strewn with spirited fruit, — some of it, perhaps, collected at squirrel-holes, with the marks of their teeth by which they carried them, — some containing a cricket or two silently feeding within, and some, especially in damp days, a shelless snail. The very sticks and stones lodged in the tree-top might have convinced you of the

savoriness of the fruit which has been so eagerly sought after in past years.

I have seen no account of these among the "Fruits and Fruit-Trees of America," though they are more memorable to my taste than the grafted kinds; more racy and wild American flavors do they possess, when October and November, when December and January, and perhaps February and March even, have assuaged them somewhat. An old farmer in my neighborhood, who always selects the right word, says that "they have a kind of bow-arrow tang."

Apples for grafting appear to have been selected commonly, not so much for their spirited flavor, as for their mildness, their size, and bearing qualities, — not so much for their beauty, as for their fairness and soundness. Indeed, I have no faith in the selected lists of pomological gentlemen. Their "Favorites" and "None-suches" and "Seek-no-farthers," when I have fruited them, commonly turn out very tame and forgetable. They are eaten with comparatively little zest, and have no real *tang* nor *smack* to them.

What if some of these wildings are acrid and puckery, genuine *verjuice*, do they not still belong to the *Pomaceae*, which are uniformly innocent and kind to our race? I still begrudge them to the cider-mill. Perhaps they are not fairly ripe yet.

No wonder that these small and high-colored apples are thought to make the best cider. Loudon quotes from the "Herefordshire Report," that "apples of a small size are always, if equal in quality, to be preferred to those of a larger size, in order that the rind and kernel may bear the greatest proportion to the pulp, which affords the weakest and most watery juice." And he says, that, "to prove this, Dr. Symonds, of Hereford, about the year 1800, made one hogshead of cider entirely from the rinds and cores of apples, and another from the pulp only, when the first was found of extraordinary strength and flavor, while the latter was sweet and insipid."

Evelyn says that the "Red-strake" was the favorite cider-apple in his day; and he quotes one Dr. Newburg as saying, "In Jersey 't is a general observation, as I hear, that the more of red any apple has in its rind, the more proper it is for this use. Pale-faced apples they exclude as much as may be from their cider-vat." This opinion still prevails.

All apples are good in November. Those which the farmer leaves out as unsalable, and unpalatable to those who frequent the markets, are choicest fruit to the walker. But it is remarkable that the wild apple, which I praise as so spirited and racy when eaten in the fields or woods, being brought into the house, has frequently a harsh and crabbed taste. The Saunterer's Apple not even the saunterer can eat in the house. The palate rejects it there, as it does haws and acorns, and demands a tamed one; for there you miss the November air, which is the sauce it is to be eaten with. Accordingly, when Tityrus, seeing the lengthening shadows, invites Meliboeus to go home and pass the night with him, he promises him *mild* apples and soft chestnuts, — *mitia poma, castaneae molles*. I frequently pluck wild apples of so rich and spicy a flavor that I wonder all orchardists do not get a scion from that tree, and I fail not to bring home my pockets full. But perchance, when I take one out of my desk and taste it in my chamber, I find it unexpectedly crude, — sour enough to set a squirrel's teeth on edge and make a jay scream.

These apples have hung in the wind and frost and rain till they have absorbed the qualities of the weather or season, and thus are highly *seasoned,* and they *pierce* and *sting* and *permeate* us with their spirit. They must be eaten in *season*, accordingly, — that is, out-of-doors.

To appreciate the wild and sharp flavors of these October fruits, it is necessary that you be breathing the sharp October or November air. The out-door air and exercise which the walker gets give a different tone to his palate, and he craves a fruit which the sedentary would call harsh and crabbed. They must be eaten in the fields, when your system is all aglow with exercise, when the frosty weather nips your fingers, the wind rattles the bare boughs or rustles the few remaining leaves, and the jay is heard screaming around. What is sour in the house a bracing walk makes sweet. Some of these apples might be labelled, "To be eaten in the wind."

Of course no flavors are thrown away; they are intended for the taste that is up to them. Some apples have two distinct flavors, and perhaps one-half of them must be eaten in the house, the other out-doors. One Peter Whitney wrote from Northborough in 1782, for the Proceedings of the Boston Academy, describing an apple-tree in that

town "producing fruit of opposite qualities, part of the same apple being frequently sour and the other sweet;" also some all sour, and others all sweet, and this diversity on all parts of the tree.

There is a wild apple on Nawshawtuck Hill in my town which has to me a peculiarly pleasant bitter tang, not perceived till it is three-quarters tasted. It remains on the tongue. As you eat it, it smells exactly like a squash-bug. It is a sort of triumph to eat and relish it.

I hear that the fruit of a kind of plum-tree in Provence is "called *Prunes sibarelles*, because it is impossible to whistle after having eaten them, from their sourness." But perhaps they were only eaten in the house and in summer, and if tried out-of-doors in a stinging atmosphere, who knows but you could whistle an octave higher and clearer?

In the fields only are the sours and bitters of Nature appreciated; just as the wood-chopper eats his meal in a sunny glade, in the middle of a winter day, with content, basks in a sunny ray there and dreams of summer in a degree of cold which, experienced in a chamber, would make a student miserable. They who are at work abroad are not cold, but rather it is they who sit shivering in houses. As with temperatures, so with flavors; as, with cold and heat, so with sour and sweet. This natural raciness, the sours and bitters which the diseased palate refuses, are the true condiments.

Let your condiments be in the condition of your senses. To appreciate the flavor of these wild apples requires vigorous and healthy senses, *papillae* firm and erect on the tongue and palate, not easily flattened and tamed.

From my experience with wild apples, I can understand that there may be reason for a savage's preferring many kinds of food which the civilized man rejects. The former has the palate of an out-door man. It takes a savage or wild taste to appreciate a wild fruit.

What a healthy out-of-door appetite it takes to relish the apple of life, the apple of the world, then!

"Nor is it every apple I desire,
Nor that which pleases every palate best;
'T is not the lasting Deuxan I require,
Nor yet the red-cheeked Greening I request,

Nor that which first beshrewed the name of wife,
Nor that whose beauty caused the golden strife:
No, no I bring me an apple from the tree of life."

So there is one *thought* for the field, another for the house. I would have my thoughts, like wild apples, to be food for walkers, and will not warrant them to be palatable, if tasted in the house.

THEIR BEAUTY.

Almost all wild apples are handsome. They cannot be too gnarly and crabbed and rusty to look at. The gnarliest will have some redeeming traits even to the eye. You will discover some evening redness dashed or sprinkled on some protuberance or in some cavity. It is rare that the summer lets an apple go without streaking or spotting it on some part of its sphere. It will have some red stains, commemorating the mornings and evenings it has witnessed; some dark and rusty blotches, in memory of the clouds and foggy, mildewy days that have passed over it; and a spacious field of green reflecting the general face of Nature, — green even as the fields; or a yellow ground, which implies a milder flavor, — yellow as the harvest, or russet as the hills.

Apples, these I mean, unspeakably fair, — apples not of Discord, but of Concord! Yet not so rare but that the homeliest may have a share. Painted by the frosts, some a uniform clear bright yellow, or red, or crimson, as if their spheres had regularly revolved, and enjoyed the influence of the sun on all sides alike, — some with the faintest pink blush imaginable, — some brindled with deep red streaks like a cow, or with hundreds of fine blood-red rays running regularly from the stem-dimple to the blossom-end, like meridional lines, on a straw-colored ground, — some touched with a greenish rust, like a fine lichen, here and there, with crimson blotches or eyes more or less confluent and fiery when wet, — and others gnarly, and freckled or peppered all over on the stem side with fine crimson spots on a white ground, as if accidentally sprinkled from the brush of Him who paints the autumn leaves. Others, again, are sometimes red inside, perfused with a beautiful blush, fairy food, too beautiful to

eat, — apple of the Hesperides, apple of the evening sky! But like shells and pebbles on the sea-shore, they must be seen as they sparkle amid the withering leaves in some dell in the woods, in the autumnal air, or as they lie in the wet grass, and not when they have wilted and faded in the house.

THE NAMING OF THEM.

It would be a pleasant pastime to find suitable names for the hundred varieties which go to a single heap at the cider-mill. Would it not tax a man's invention, — no one to be named after a man, and all in the *lingua vernacula*? Who shall stand godfather at the christening of the wild apples? It would exhaust the Latin and Greek languages, if they were used, and make the *lingua vernacula* flag. We should have to call in the sunrise and the sunset, the rainbow and the autumn woods and the wild flowers, and the woodpecker and the purple finch and the squirrel and the jay and the butterfly, the November traveller and the truant boy, to our aid.

In 1836 there were in the garden of the London Horticultural Society more than fourteen hundred distinct sorts. But here are species which they have not in their catalogue, not to mention the varieties which our Crab might yield to cultivation.

Let us enumerate a few of these. I find myself compelled, after all, to give the Latin names of some for the benefit of those who live where English is not spoken, — for they are likely to have a world-wide reputation.

There is, first of all, the Wood-Apple (*Malus sylvatica*); the Blue-Jay Apple; the Apple which grows in Dells in the Woods, (*sylvestrivallis*,) also in Hollows in Pastures (*campestrivallis*); the Apple that grows in an old Cellar-Hole (*Malus cellaris*); the Meadow-Apple; the Partridge-Apple; the Truant's Apple, (*Cessatoris*,) which no boy will ever go by without knocking off some, however *late* it may be; the Saunterer's Apple, — you must lose yourself before you can find the way to that; the Beauty of the Air (*Decus Aeris*); December-Eating; the Frozen-Thawed *(gelato-soluta),* good only in that state; the Concord Apple, possibly the same with the *Musketaquidensis*; the Assabet Apple; the Brindled

Apple; Wine of New England; the Chickaree Apple; the Green Apple *(Malus viridis);* — this has many synonymes; in an imperfect state, it is the *Cholera morbifera aut dysenterifera, puerulis dilectissima*; — the Apple which Atalanta stopped to pick up; the Hedge-Apple *(Malus Sepium*); the Slug-Apple *(limacea)*; the Railroad-Apple, which perhaps came from a core thrown out of the cars; the Apple whose Fruit we tasted in our Youth; our Particular Apple, not to be found in any catalogue, — *Pedestrium Solatium*; also the Apple where hangs the Forgotten Scythe; Iduna's Apples, and the Apples which Loki found in the Wood; and a great many more I have on my list, too numerous to mention, — all of them good. As Bodaeus exclaims, referring to the cultivated kinds, and adapting Virgil to his case, so I, adapting Bodaeus, —

"Not if I had a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths,
An iron voice, could I describe all the forms
And reckon up all the names of these *wild apples*."

THE LAST GLEANING.

By the middle of November the wild apples have lost some of their brilliancy, and have chiefly fallen. A great part are decayed on the ground, and the sound ones are more palatable than before. The note of the chickadee sounds now more distinct, as you wander amid the old trees, and the autumnal dandelion is half-closed and tearful. But still, if you are a skilful gleaner, you may get many a pocket-full even of grafted fruit, long after apples are supposed to be gone out-of-doors. I know a Blue-Pearmain tree, growing within the edge of a swamp, almost as good as wild. You would not suppose that there was any fruit left there, on the first survey, but you must look according to system. Those which lie exposed are quite brown and rotten now, or perchance a few still show one blooming cheek here and there amid the wet leaves. Nevertheless, with experienced eyes, I explore amid the bare alders and the huckleberry-bushes and the withered sedge, and in the crevices of the rocks, which are full of leaves, and pry under the fallen and decaying ferns, which, with apple and alder leaves, thickly strew the ground. For I know that they

lie concealed, fallen into hollows long since and covered up by the leaves of the tree itself, — a proper kind of packing. From these lurking-places, anywhere within the circumference of the tree, I draw forth the fruit, all wet and glossy, maybe nibbled by rabbits and hollowed out by crickets and perhaps with a leaf or two cemented to it (as Curzon an old manuscript from a monastery's mouldy cellar), but still with a rich bloom on it, and at least as ripe and well kept, if not better than those in barrels, more crisp and lively than they. If these resources fail to yield anything, I have learned to look between the bases of the suckers which spring thickly from some horizontal limb, for now and then one lodges there, or in the very midst of an alder-clump, where they are covered by leaves, safe from cows which may have smelled them out. If I am sharp-set, for I do not refuse the Blue-Pearmain, I fill my pockets on each side; and as I retrace my steps in the frosty eve, being perhaps four or five miles from home, I eat one first from this side, and then from that, to keep my balance.

I learn from Topsell's Gesner, whose authority appears to be Albertus, that the following is the way in which the hedgehog collects and carries home his apples. He says,— "His meat is apples, worms, or grapes: when he findeth apples or grapes on the earth, he rolleth himself upon them, until he have filled all his prickles, and then carrieth them home to his den, never bearing above one in his mouth; and if it fortune that one of them fall off by the way, he likewise shaketh off all the residue, and walloweth upon them afresh, until they be all settled upon his back again. So, forth he goeth, making a noise like a cart-wheel; and if he have any young ones in his nest, they pull off his load wherewithal he is loaded, eating thereof what they please, and laying up the residue for the time to come."

THE "FROZEN-THAWED" APPLE.

Toward the end of November, though some of the sound ones are yet more mellow and perhaps more edible, they have generally, like the leaves, lost their beauty, and are beginning to freeze. It is finger-cold, and prudent farmers get in their barrelled apples, and bring you the

apples and cider which they have engaged; for it is time to put them into the cellar. Perhaps a few on the ground show their red cheeks above the early snow, and occasionally some even preserve their color and soundness under the snow throughout the winter. But generally at the beginning of the winter they freeze hard, and soon, though undecayed, acquire the color of a baked apple.

Before the end of December, generally, they experience their first thawing. Those which a month ago were sour, crabbed, and quite unpalatable to the civilized taste, such at least as were frozen while sound, let a warmer sun come to thaw them, for they are extremely sensitive to its rays, are found to be filled with a rich, sweet cider, better than any bottled cider that I know of, and with which I am better acquainted than with wine. All apples are good in this state, and your jaws are the cider-press. Others, which have more substance, are a sweet and luscious food, — in my opinion of more worth than the pine-apples which are imported from the West Indies. Those which lately even I tasted only to repent of it, — for I am semi-civilized, — which the farmer willingly left on the tree, I am now glad to find have the property of hanging on like the leaves of the young oaks. It is a way to keep cider sweet without boiling. Let the frost come to freeze them first, solid as stones, and then the rain or a warm winter day to thaw them, and they will seem to have borrowed a flavor from heaven through the medium of the air in which they hang. Or perchance you find, when you get home, that those which rattled in your pocket have thawed, and the ice is turned to cider. But after the third or fourth freezing and thawing they will not be found so good.

What are the imported half-ripe fruits of the torrid South, to this fruit matured by the cold of the frigid North? These are those crabbed apples with which I cheated my companion, and kept a smooth face that I might tempt him to eat. Now we both greedily fill our pockets with them, — bending to drink the cup and save our lappets from the overflowing juice, — and grow more social with their wine. Was there one that hung so high and sheltered by the tangled branches that our sticks could not dislodge it?

It is a fruit never carried to market, that I am aware of, — quite distinct from the apple of the markets, as from dried apple and cider,

— and it is not every winter that produces it in perfection.

* * * * *

The era of the Wild Apple will soon be past. It is a fruit which will probably become extinct in New England. You may still wander through old orchards of native fruit of great extent, which for the most part went to the cider-mill, now all gone to decay. I have heard of an orchard in a distant town, on the side of a hill, where the apples rolled down and lay four feet deep against a wall on the lower side, and this the owner cut down for fear they should be made into cider. Since the temperance reform and the general introduction of grafted fruit, no native apple-trees, such as I see everywhere in deserted pastures, and where the woods have grown up around them, are set out. I fear that he who walks over these fields a century hence will not know the pleasure of knocking off wild apples. Ah, poor man, there are many pleasures which he will not know! Notwithstanding the prevalence of the Baldwin and the Porter, I doubt if so extensive orchards are set out to-day in my town as there were a century ago, when those vast straggling cider-orchards were planted, when men both ate and drank apples, when the pomace-heap was the only nursery, and trees cost nothing but the trouble of setting them out. Men could afford then to stick a tree by every wall-side and let it take its chance. I see nobody planting trees to-day in such out-of-the-way places, along the lonely roads and lanes, and at the bottom of dells in the wood. Now that they have grafted trees, and pay a price for them, they collect them into a plat by their houses, and fence them in, — and the end of it all will be that we shall be compelled to look for our apples in a barrel.

This is "The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

"Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land! Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?…

"That which the palmer-worm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the canker-worm eaten; and that

which the canker-worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.

"Awake, ye drunkards, and weep! and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine! for it is cut off from your mouth.

"For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek-teeth of a great lion.

"He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree; he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white….

"Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen! howl, O ye vine-dressers!…

"The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate-tree, the palm-tree also, and the apple-tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men."

NIGHT AND MOONLIGHT

Chancing to take a memorable walk by moonlight some years ago, I resolved to take more such walks, and make acquaintance with another side of nature: I have done so.

According to Pliny, there is a stone in Arabia called Selenites, "wherein is a white, which increases and decreases with the moon." My journal for the last year or two, has been *selenitic* in this sense.

Is not the midnight like Central Africa to most of us? Are we not tempted to explore it, — to penetrate to the shores of its lake Tchad, and discover the source of its Nile, perchance the Mountains of the Moon? Who knows what fertility and beauty, moral and natural, are there to be found? In the Mountains of the Moon, in the Central Africa of the night, there is where all Niles have their hidden heads. The expeditions up the Nile as yet extend but to the Cataracts, or perchance to the mouth of the White Nile; but it is the Black Nile that concerns us.

I shall be a benefactor if I conquer some realms from the night, if I report to the gazettes anything transpiring about us at that season worthy of their attention, — if I can show men that there is some beauty awake while they are asleep, — if I add to the domains of poetry.

Night is certainly more novel and less profane than day. I soon discovered that I was acquainted only with its complexion, and as for the moon, I had seen her only as it were through a crevice in a shutter, occasionally. Why not walk a little way in her light?

Suppose you attend to the suggestions which the moon makes for one month, commonly in vain, will it not be very different from anything in literature or religion? But why not study this Sanscrit? What if one moon has come and gone with its world of poetry, its weird teachings, its oracular suggestions, — so divine a creature freighted with hints for me, and I have not used her? One moon gone by unnoticed?

I think it was Dr. Chalmers who said, criticising Coleridge, that

for his part he wanted ideas which he could see all round, and not such as he must look at away up in the heavens. Such a man, one would say, would never look at the moon, because she never turns her other side to us. The light which comes from ideas which have their orbit as distant from the earth, and which is no less cheering and enlightening to the benighted traveller than that of the moon and stars, is naturally reproached or nicknamed as moonshine by such. They are moonshine, are they? Well, then do your night-travelling when there is no moon to light you; but I will be thankful for the light that reaches me from the star of least magnitude. Stars are lesser or greater only as they appear to us so. I will be thankful that I see so much as one side of a celestial idea, — one side of the rainbow, — and the sunset sky.

Men talk glibly enough about moonshine, as if they knew its qualities very well, and despised them; as owls might talk of sunshine. None of your sunshine, — but this word commonly means merely something which they do not understand, — which they are abed and asleep to, however much it may be worth their while to be up and awake to it.

It must be allowed that the light of the moon, sufficient though it is for the pensive walker, and not disproportionate to the inner light we have, is very inferior in quality and intensity to that of the sun. But the moon is not to be judged alone by the quantity of light she sends to us, but also by her influence on the earth and its inhabitants. “The moon gravitates toward the earth, and the earth reciprocally toward the moon.” The poet who walks by moonlight is conscious of a tide in his thought which is to be referred to lunar influence. I will endeavor to separate the tide in my thoughts from the current distractions of the day. I would warn my hearers that they must not try my thoughts by a daylight standard, but endeavor to realize that I speak out of the night. All depends on your point of view. In Drake’s “Collection of Voyages,” Wafer says of some Albinoes among the Indians of Darien, “They are quite white, but their whiteness is like that of a horse, quite different from the fair or pale European, as they have not the least tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion. * * * Their eyebrows are milk-white, as is likewise the hair of their heads,

which is very fine. * * * They seldom go abroad in the daytime, the sun being disagreeable to them, and causing their eyes, which are weak and poring, to water, especially if it shines towards them, yet they see very well by moonlight, from which we call them moon-eyed."

Neither in our thoughts in these moonlight walks, methinks, is there "the least tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion," but we are intellectually and morally Albinoes, — children of Endymion, — such is the effect of conversing much with the moon.

I complain of Arctic voyagers that, they do not enough remind us of the constant peculiar dreariness of the scenery, and the perpetual twilight of the Arctic night. So he whose theme is moonlight, though he may find it difficult, must, as it were, illustrate it with the light of the moon alone.

Many men walk by day; few walk by night. It is a very different season. Take a July night, for instance. About ten o'clock, — when man is asleep, and day fairly forgotten, — the beauty of moonlight is seen over lonely pastures where cattle are silently feeding. On all sides novelties present themselves. Instead of the sun there are the moon and stars, instead of the wood-thrush there is the whip-poor-will, — instead of butterflies in the meadows, fire-flies, winged sparks of fire! who would have believed it? What kind of cool deliberate life dwells in those dewy abodes associated with a spark of fire? So man has fire in his eyes, or blood, or brain. Instead of singing birds, the half-throttled note of a cuckoo flying over, the croaking of frogs, and the intenser dream of crickets. But above all, the wonderful trump of the bull-frog, ringing from Maine to Georgia. The potato-vines stand upright, the corn grows apace, the bushes loom, the grain-fields are boundless. On our open river terraces once cultivated by the Indian, they appear to occupy the ground like an army, — their heads nodding in the breeze.

Small trees and shrubs are seen in the midst, overwhelmed as by an inundation. The shadows of rocks and trees, and shrubs and hills, are more conspicuous than the objects themselves. The slightest irregularities in the ground are revealed by the shadows, and what the feet find comparatively smooth, appears rough and diversified in

consequence. For the same reason the whole landscape is more variegated and picturesque than by day. The smallest recesses in the rocks are dim and cavernous; the ferns in the wood appear of tropical size. The sweet fern and indigo in overgrown wood-paths wet you with dew up to your middle. The leaves of the shrub-oak are shining as if a liquid were flowing over them. The pools seen through the trees are as full of light as the sky. "The light of the day takes refuge in their bosoms," as the Purana says of the ocean. All white objects are more remarkable than by day. A distant cliff looks like a phosphorescent space on a hillside. The woods are heavy and dark. Nature slumbers. You see the moonlight reflected from particular stumps in the recesses of the forest, as if she selected what to shine on. These small fractions of her light remind one of the plant called moon-seed, — as if the moon were sowing it in such places.

In the night the eyes are partly closed or retire into the head. Other senses take the lead. The walker is guided as well by the sense of smell. Every plant and field and forest emits its odor now, swamp-pink in the meadow and tansy in the road; and there is the peculiar dry scent of corn which has begun to show its tassels. The senses both of hearing and smelling are more alert. We hear the tinkling of rills which we never detected before. From time to time, high up on the sides of hills, you pass through a stratum of warm air. A blast which has come up from the sultry plains of noon. It tells of the day, of sunny noon-tide hours and banks, of the laborer wiping his brow and the bee humming amid flowers. It is an air in which work has been done, — which men have breathed. It circulates about from wood-side to hill-side like a dog that has lost its master, now that the sun is gone. The rocks retain all night the warmth of the sun which they have absorbed. And so does the sand. If you dig a few inches into it you find a warm bed. You lie on your back on a rock in a pasture on the top of some bare hill at midnight, and speculate on the height of the starry canopy. The stars are the jewels of the night, and perchance surpass anything which day has to show. A companion with whom I was sailing one very windy but bright moonlight night, when the stars were few and faint, thought that a man could get along with *them*, — though he was considerably reduced in his circumstances, — that they were a kind of bread and cheese that

never failed.

No wonder that there have been astrologers, that some have conceived that they were personally related to particular stars. Dubartas, as translated by Sylvester, says he'll

"not believe that the great architect
With all these fires the heavenly arches decked
Only for show, and with these glistering shields,
T' awake poor shepherds, watching in the fields."
He'll "not believe that the least flower which pranks
Our garden borders, or our common banks,
And the least stone, that in her warming lap
Our mother earth doth covetously wrap,
Hath some peculiar virtue of its own,
And that the glorious stars of heav'n have none."

And Sir Walter Raleigh well says, "the stars are instruments of far greater use, than to give an obscure light, and for men to gaze on after sunset;" and he quotes Plotinus as affirming that they "are significant, but not efficient;" and also Augustine as saying, "*Deus regit inferiora corpora per superiora*:" God rules the bodies below by those above. But best of all is this which another writer has expressed: "*Sapiens adjuvabit opus astrorum quemadmodum agricola terrae naturam*:" a wise man assisteth the work of the stars as the husbandman helpeth the nature of the soil.

It does not concern men who are asleep in their beds, but it is very important to the traveller, whether the moon shines brightly or is obscured. It is not easy to realize the serene joy of all the earth, when she commences to shine unobstructedly, unless you have often been abroad alone in moonlight nights. She seems to be waging continual war with the clouds in your behalf. Yet we fancy the clouds to be *her* foes also. She comes on magnifying her dangers by her light, revealing, displaying them in all their hugeness and blackness, then suddenly casts them behind into the light concealed, and goes her way triumphant through a small space of clear sky.

In short, the moon traversing, or appearing to traverse, the small clouds which lie in her way, now obscured by them, now easily

dissipating and shining through them, makes the drama of the moonlight night to all watchers and night-travellers. Sailors speak of it as the moon eating up the clouds. The traveller all alone, the moon all alone, except for his sympathy, overcoming with incessant victory whole squadrons of clouds above the forests and lakes and hills. When she is obscured he so sympathizes with her that he could whip a dog for her relief, as Indians do. When she enters on a clear field of great extent in the heavens, and shines unobstructedly, he is glad. And when she has fought her way through all the squadron of her foes, and rides majestic in a clear sky unscathed, and there are no more any obstructions in her path, he cheerfully and confidently pursues his way, and rejoices in his heart, and the cricket also seems to express joy in its song.

How insupportable would be the days, if the night with its dews and darkness did not come to restore the drooping world. As the shades begin to gather around us, our primeval instincts are aroused, and we steal forth from our lairs, like the inhabitants of the jungle, in search of those silent and brooding thoughts which are the natural prey of the intellect.

Richter says that "The earth is every day overspread with the veil of night for the same reason as the cages of birds are darkened, viz: that we may the more readily apprehend the higher harmonies of thought in the hush and quiet of darkness. Thoughts which day turns into smoke and mist, stand about us in the night as light and flames; even as the column which fluctuates above the crater of Vesuvius, in the daytime appears a pillar of cloud, but by night a pillar of fire."

There are nights in this climate of such serene and majestic beauty, so medicinal and fertilizing to the spirit, that methinks a sensitive nature would not devote them to oblivion, and perhaps there is no man but would be better and wiser for spending them out of doors, though he should sleep all the next day to pay for it; should sleep an Endymion sleep, as the ancients expressed it, — nights which warrant the Grecian epithet ambrosial, when, as in the land of Beulah, the atmosphere is charged with dewy fragrance, and with music, and we take our repose and have our dreams awake, — when the moon, not secondary to the sun,

"gives us his blaze again,
Void of its flame, and sheds a softer day.
Now through the passing cloud she seems to stoop,
Now up the pure cerulean rides sublime."

Diana still hunts in the New England sky.

"In Heaven queen she is among the spheres.
She, mistress-like, makes all things to be pure.
Eternity in her oft change she bears;
She Beauty is; by her the fair endure.

Time wears her not; she doth his chariot guide;
Mortality below her orb is placed;
By her lie virtues of the stars down slide;
By her is Virtue's perfect image cast."

The Hindoos compare the moon to a saintly being who has reached the last stage of bodily existence.

Great restorer of antiquity, great enchanter. In a mild night, when the harvest or hunter's moon shines unobstructedly, the houses in our village, whatever architect they may have had by day, acknowledge only a master. The village street is then as wild as the forest. New and old things are confounded. I know not whether I am sitting on the ruins of a wall, or on the material which is to compose a new one. Nature is an instructed and impartial teacher, spreading no crude opinions, and flattering none; she will be neither radical nor conservative. Consider the moonlight, so civil, yet so savage!

The light is more proportionate to our knowledge than that of day. It is no more dusky in ordinary nights, than our mind's habitual atmosphere, and the moonlight is as bright as our most illuminated moments are.

"In such a night let me abroad remain
Till morning breaks, and all's confused again."

Of what significance the light of day, if it is not the reflection of an inward dawn? — to what purpose is the veil of night withdrawn,

if the morning reveals nothing to the soul? It is merely garish and glaring.

When Ossian in his address to the sun exclaims,

"Where has darkness its dwelling?
Where is the cavernous home of the stars,
When thou quickly followest their steps,
Pursuing them like a hunter in the sky, —
Thou climbing the lofty hills,
They descending on barren mountains?"

who does not in his thought accompany the stars to their "cavernous home," "descending" with them "on barren mountains?"

Nevertheless, even by night the sky is blue and not black, for we see through the shadow of the earth into the distant atmosphere of day, where the sunbeams are revelling.

HUCKLEBERRIES

Agrestem tenui meditabor arundine musam
I am going to play a rustic strain on my slender reed —
non injussa cano —
but I trust that I do not sing unbidden things.

Many public speakers are accustomed, as I think foolishly, to talk about what they call *little things* in a patronising way sometimes, advising, perhaps, that they be not wholly neglected; but in making this distinction they really use no juster measure than a ten-foot pole, and their own ignorance. According to this rule a small potatoe is a little thing, a big one a great thing. A hogshead-full of anything — the big cheese which it took so many oxen to draw — a national salute — a state-muster — a fat ox — the horse Columbus — or Mr. Blank — the Ossian Boy — there is no danger that any body will call these *little things.* A cartwheel is a great thing — a snow flake a little thing. The *Wellingtoniagigantea* — the famous California tree, is a great thing — the seed from which it sprang a little thing — scarcely one traveller has noticed the seed at all — and so with all the seeds or origins of things. But Pliny said — *In minimis Natura praestat* — Nature excels in the least things.

In this country a political speech, whether by Mr. Seward or Caleb Cushing, is a great thing, a ray of light a little thing. It would be felt to be a greater national calamity if you should take six inches from the corporeal bulk of one or two gende- men in Congress, than if you should take a yard from their wisdom and manhood.

I have noticed that whatever is thought to be covered by the word *education* — whether reading, writing or 'rith- metick — is a great thing, but almost all that constitutes education is a little thing in the estimation of such speakers as I refer to. In short, whatever they know and care but *little* about is a little thing, and accordingly almost everything good or great is little in their sense, and is very slow to grow any bigger.

When the husk gets separated from the kernel, almost all men run after the husk and pay their respects to that. It is only the husk of Christianity that is so bruited and wide spread in this world, the kernel is still the very least and rarest of all things. There is not a single church founded on it. To obey the higher law is generally considered the last manifestation of littleness.

I have observed that many English naturalists have a pitiful habit of speaking of their proper pursuit as a sort of trifling or waste of time — a mere interruption to more important employments and 'severer studies' — for which they must ask pardon of the reader. As if they would have you believe that all the rest of their lives was consecrated to some truly great and serious enterprise. But it happens that we never hear more of this, as we certainly should, if it were only some great public- or philanthropic service, and therefore conclude that they have been engaged in the heroic and magnanimous enterprise of feeding, clothing, housing and warming themselves and their dependents, the chief value of all which was that it enabled them to pursue just these studies of which they speak so slightingly. The 'severer study' they refer to was keeping their accounts. Comparatively speaking — what they call their graver pursuits and severer studies was the real trifling and misspense of life — and were they such fools as not to know it? It is, in effect at least, mere cant. All mankind have depended on them for this intellectual food.

I presume that every one of my audience knows what a huckleberry is — has seen a huckleberry — gathered a huckleberry — nay tasted a huckleberry — and that being the case, that you will not be averse to revisiting the huckleberry field in imagination this evening, though the pleasure of this excursion may fall as far short of the reality, as the flavor of a dried huckleberry is inferior to that of a fresh one.

Huckleberries begin to be ripe July third (or generally the thirteenth), are thick enough to pick about the twenty- second, at their height about the fifth of August, and last fresh till after the middle of that month.

This, as you know, is an upright shrub more or less stout depending on the exposure, with a spreading bushy top — a dark

brown bark — red recent shoots and thick leaves. The flowers are smaller and much more red than those of the other species.

It is said to range from the Saskatchewan to the mountains of Georgia, and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi in this latitude — but it abounds over but a small part of this area, and there are large tracts where it is not found at all.

By botanists it is called of late, but I think without good reason, *Gaylussacia resinosa*, after the celebrated French chemist. If he had been the first to distil its juices and put them in this globular bag, he would deserve this honor, or if he had been a celebrated picker of huckleberries, perchance paid for his schooling so, or only notoriously a lover of them, we should not so much object. But it does not appear that he ever saw one. What if a committee of Parisian naturalists had been appointed to break this important news to an Indian maiden who had just filled her basket on the shore of Lake Huron! It is as if we should hear that the Daguerreotype had been *finally* named after the distinguished Chippeway conjurer, The-Wind-that-Blows. By another it has been called *Andromeda baccata*, the berry bearing andromeda — but he evidently lived far away from huckleberries and milk.

I observe green huckleberries by the nineteenth of June, and perhaps three weeks later, when I have forgotten them, I first notice on some hill side exposed to the light, some black or blue ones amid the green ones and the leaves, always sooner than I had expected, and though they may be manifestly premature, I make it a point to taste them, and so inaugurate the huckleberry season.

In a day or two the black are so thick among the green ones that they no longer incur the suspicion of being worm- eaten, and perhaps a day later I pluck a handful from one bush, and I do not fail to make report of it when I get home, though it is rarely believed, most people are so behind hand in their year's accounts.

Early in August, in a favorable year, the hills are black with them. At Nagog Pond I have seen a hundred bushels in one field — the bushes drooping over the rocks with the weight of them — and a very handsome sight they are, though you should not pluck one of them. They are of various forms, colors and flavors — some round — some pear-shaped — some glossy black — some dull black, some

blue with a tough and thick skin (though they are never of the peculiar light blue of blueberries with a bloom) — some sweeter, some more insipid — etc., etc., more varieties than botanists take notice of.

To-day perhaps you gather some of those large, often pear-shaped, sweet blue ones which grow tall and thinly amid the rubbish where woods have been cut. They have not borne there before for a century — being over-shadowed and stinted by the forest — but they have the more concentrated their juices — and profited by the new recipes which nature has given them — and now they offer to you fruit of the very finest flavor, like wine of the oldest vintage.

And tomorrow you come to a strong moist soil where the black ones shine with such a gloss — every one its eye on you, and the blue are so large and firm, that you can hardly believe them to be huckleberries at all, or edible; but you seem to have travelled into a foreign country, or else are dreaming.

They are a firmer berry than most of the whortleberry family — and hence are the most marketable.

If you look closely at a huckleberry you will see that it is dotted, as if sprinkled over with a yellow dust or meal, which looks as if it could be rubbed off. Through a microscope, it looks like a resin which has exuded, and on the small green fruit is of a conspicuous light orange or lemon color, like small specks of yellow lichens. It is apparently the same with that shining resinous matter which so conspicously covers the leaves when they are unfolding, making them sticky to the touch — whence this species is called *resinosa* or resinous.

There is a variety growing in swamps — a very tall and slender bush drooping or bent like grass to one side — commonly three or four feet high, but often seven feet — the berries, which are later than the former, are round and glossy black — with resinous dots as usual — and grow in flattish topped racemes — sometimes ten or twelve together, though generally more scattered. I call it the swamp-huckleberry.

But the most marked variety is the red-huckleberry — the *white* of some, (for the less ripe are whitish) — which ripens at the same time with the black. It is red with a white cheek, often slightly pear-

shaped, semitransparent with a luster, very finely and indistinctly white dotted. It is as easily distinguished from the common in the green state as when ripe. I know of but three or four places in the town where they grow. It might be called *Gaylussacia resinosa var erythrocarpa.*

I once did some surveying for a man, who remarked, but not till the job was nearly done, that he did not know when he should pay me. I did not at first pay much heed to this observation, though it was unusual, supposing that he meant to pay me within a reasonable time. Nevertheless it occurred to me that if he did not know when he should pay me still less did I know when I should be paid. He added, however, that I was perfecdy secure, for there were the pigs in the stye (and as nice pigs as ever were seen) and there was his farm itself which I had surveyed, and knew was there as much as he. All this had its due influence in increasing my sense of security, as you may suppose. After many months he sent me a quart of red huckleberries, for they grew on his farm, and this I thought was ominous; he distinguished me altogether too much by this gift, since I was not his particular friend. I saw that it was the first installment of my dues — and that it would go a great way toward being the last. In the course of years he paid a part of the debt in money, and that is the last that I have heard of it. I shall beware of red huckleberry gifts in the future.

Then there is the Late Whordeberry — Dangleberry or Blue Tangles — whose fruit does not begin to be ripe until about a month after huckleberries begin, when these and blueberries are commonly shrivelled and spoiling — on about August seventh, and is in its prime near the end of August.

This is a tall and handsome bush about twice as high as a huckleberry bush, with altogether a glaucous aspect, growing in shady copses where it is rather moist, and to produce much fruit it seems to require wet weather.

The fruit is one of the handsomest of berries, smooth, round and blue, larger than most huckleberries and more transparent, on long stems dangling two or three inches, and more or less tangled. By the inexperienced it is suspected to be poisonous, and so avoided, and perhaps is the more fair and memorable to them on that account. Though quite good to eat, it has a peculiar, slighdy astringent, and

compared with most huckleberries, not altogether pleasant flavor, and a tough skin.

At the end of the first week of September, they are commonly the only edible Whortleberries which are quite fresh. They are rare hereabouts however, and it is only in certain years that you can find enough for a pudding.

There is still another kind of Huckleberry growing in this town, called the *Hairy Huckleberry,* which ripens about the same time with the last. It is quite rare, growing only in the wildest and most neglected places, such as cold sphagnous swamps where the *Andromeda polifolia* and *Kalmia glauca* are found, and in some almost equally neglected but firmer low ground. The berries are oblong and black, and, with us, roughened with short hairs. It is the only species of *Vaccinieae* that I know of in this town whose fruit is inedible; though I have seen another kind of Whortleberry, the *Deerberry* or Squaw Huckleberry, growing in another part of the state, whose fruit is said to be equally inedible. The former is merely insipid however. Some which grow on firmer ground have a little more flavor, but the thick and shaggy-feeling coats of the berries left in the mouth are far from agreeable to the palate.

Both these and Dangleberries are placed in the same genus (or section) with the common huckleberry.

Huckleberries are very apt to dry up and not attain their proper size — unless rain comes to save them before the end of July. They will be dried quite hard and black by drought even before they have ripened. On the other hand they frequently burst open and are so spoiled in consequence of copious rains when they are fully ripe.

They *begin* to be soft and wormy as early as the middle of August, and generally about the twentieth the children cease to carry them round to sell, as they are suspected by the purchasers.

How late when the huckleberries begin to be wormy and the pickers are deserting the fields! The walker feels very solitary now.

But in woods and other cool places they commonly last quite fresh a week or more longer, depending on the season. In some years when there are far more berries than pickers or even worms, and the birds appear to pass them by, I have found them plump, fresh, and quite thick, though with a somewhat dried taste, the fourteenth of

October, when the bushes were mostly leafless, and the leaves that were left, were all red, and they continued to hold on after the leaves had all fallen, till they were softened and spoiled by rain.

Sometimes they begin to dry up generally by the middle of August — after they are ripe, but before spoiling, and by the end of that month I have seen the bushes so withered and brown owing to the drought, that they appeared dead like those which you see broken off by the pickers, or as if burnt.

I have seen the hills still black with them, though hard and shrivelled as if dried in a pan, late in September. And one year I saw an abundance of them still holding on the eleventh of December, they having dried ripe prematurely, but these had no sweetness left. The sight of them thus dried by nature may have originally suggested to the Indians to dry them artificially.

High-blueberries, the second kind of low-blueberries, huckleberries and low-blackberries are all at their height generally during the first week of August. In the dog-days (or the first ten of them) they abound and attain their full size.

Huckleberries are classed by botanists with the cranberries (both bog and mountain) — snowberry, bearberry — mayflower, checkerberry — the andromedas, clethra, laurels, azaleas, rhodora, ledum, pyrolas, prince's pine, Indian pipes, and many other plants, and they are called all together the Heath Family, they being in many respects similar to and occupying similar ground with the heaths of the Old World, which we have not. If the first botanists had been American this might have been called the Huckleberry Family including the heaths. Plants of this order (*Ericaceae)* are said to be among the earliest ones found in a fossil state, and one would say that they promised to last as long as any on this globe. George B. Emerson says that the whortleberry differs from the heath proper, 'essentially only in its juicy fruit surrounded by the calyx segments.'

The genus to which the whortleberries belong, is called by most botanists *Vaccinium*, which I am inclined to think is properly derived from *bacca*, a berry, as if these were the chief of all berries, though the etymology of this word is in dispute.

Whortle or Hurtleberry, Bilberry, and Blae or Blea, that is *blue* berry are the names given in England originally to the fruit of the

Vaccinium myrtillus which we have not in New England and also to the more scarce and local *Vaccinium uliginosum* which we have.

The word whortleberry is said to be derived from the Saxon *heort-berg* (or h*eorot-berg*), the hart's berry.

Hurts is an old English word used in heraldry, where, according to Bailey, it is 'certain balls resembling hurtleberries.' The Germans say *Heidel-beere*, that is *heath berry.* Huckleberry — this word is used by Lawson in 1709 — appears to be an American word derived from Whortleberry — and applied to fruits of the same family, but for the most part of different species from the English whortleberries. According to the Dictionary the word berry is from the Saxon *beria* — a grape or cluster of grapes. A French name of whortleberry is 'raisin des bois' — grape of the woods. It is evident that the word berry has a new significance in America.

We do not realize how rich our country is in berries. The ancient Greeks and Romans appear not to have made much account of strawberries, huckleberries, melons etc because they had not got them.

The Englishman Lindley, in his *Natural System of Botany*, says that the *Vaccinieae* are 'Natives of North America, where they are found in great abundance as far as high northern latitudes; sparingly in Europe; and not uncommonly on high land in the Sandwich Islands.'

Or as George B. Emerson states it, they 'are found chiefly in the temperate, or on mountains in the warmer regions of America. Some are found in Europe; some on the continent and islands of Asia, and on islands in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans.'

'The whortleberries and cranberries,' says he, 'take the place, throughout the northern part of this continent, of the heaths of the corresponding climates of Europe; and fill it with no less of beauty, and incomparably more of use.' According to the last arrangement of our plants, we have fourteen species of the Whordeberry Family (*Vaccinieae)* in New England, eleven of which bear edible berries, eight, berries which are eaten raw, and five of the last kind are abundant — to wit — the huckleberry — the bluet or Pennsylvania blueberry — the Canada blueberry (in the northern part of New

England) — the second or common low blueberry — and the high or swamp-blueberry (not to mention the Dangle- berry, which is common in some seasons and localities).

On the other hand I gather from Loudon and others that there are only two species growing in England, which are eaten raw, answering to our eight — to wit, the Bilberry (V. *myrtillus*) and the Blea-berry or Bog Whortleberry (*V. uliginosum*), both of which are found in North America, and the last is the common one on the summit of the White Mountains, but in Great Britain it is found only in the northern part of England and in Scotland. This leaves only one in England to our five which are abundant.

In short, it chances that of the thirty-two species of *Vaccinium* which Loudon describes, all except the above two and four more are referred to North America alone, and only three or possibly four are found in Europe.

Yet the few Englishmen with whom I have spoken on this subject love to think and to say that they have as many huckleberries as we. I will therefore quote the most which their own authorities say not already quoted, about the abundance and value of their only two kinds which are eaten raw.

Loudon says of the bog whortleberry (*V. uliginosum)*, 'The berries are agreeable but inferior in flavor to those of *Vaccinium myrtillus* [the bilberry]; eaten in large quantities, they occasion giddiness, and a slight headache.'

And of their only common whortleberry (*V. myrtillus*), he says, 'It is found in every country in Britain, from Cornwall to Caithness, least frequentiy in the south-eastern countries, and increases in quantity as we advance northward.' It 'is an elegant and also a fruit-bearing plant.' The berries 'are eaten in tarts or with cream, or made into a jelly, in the northern and western counties of England; and, in other parts of the country they are made into pies and puddings.' They 'are very acceptable to children either eaten by themselves, or with milk' or otherwise. They 'have an astringent quality.'

Coleman in his "Woodlands, Heaths, and Hedges," says 'The traveller in our upland and mountain districts can hardly have failed to notice, as his almost constant companion, this cheerful little shrub,... it flourishes best in a high airy situation, only the summits of

the very loftiest mountains of which this country can boast being too elevated for this hardy little mountaineer.'

'In Yorkshire, and many parts of the north, large quantities of bilberries are brought into the market, being extensively used as an ingredient in pies and puddings, or preserved in the form of jam.... Much, however, of the relish of these wilding fruits must be set down to the exhilarating air, and those charms of scenery that form the accessories of a mountain feast;... One of the prettiest sights that greet one's eye in the districts where it abounds, is that of a party of rustic children "a-bilberrying" (for the greater portion of those that come to market are collected by children); there they may be seen, knee deep in the "wires," or clambering over the broken gray rocks to some rich nest of berries, their tanned faces glowing with health, and their picturesque dress (or undress) — with here and there bits of bright red, blue, or white — to the painter's eye contrasting beautifully with the purple, gray and brown of the moorland, and forming altogether rich pictorial subjects.'

These authorities tell us that children and others eat the fruit, just as they tell us that the birds do. It is evident from all this that whortleberries do not make an important part of the regular food of the Old English people in their season, as they do of the New Englanders. What should we think of a summer in which we did not taste a huckleberry pudding? That is to Jonathan what his plum pudding is to John Bull.

Yet Dr. Manassah Cutler, one of the earliest New England botanists, speaks of the huckleberry lightly as being merely a fruit which children love to eat with their milk. What ingratitude thus to shield himself behind the children! I should not wonder if it turned out that Dr. Manassah Cutler ate his huckleberry pudding or pie regularly through the season, as many his equals do. I should have pardoned him had he frankly put in his thumb and pulled out a plum, and cried 'What a Great Doctor am I?' But probably he was lead astray by reading English books or it may be that the Whites did not make so much use of them in his time.

Widely dispersed as their bilberry may still be in England, it was undoubtedly far more abundant there once. One botanist says that 'This is one of the species, that if allowed, would overrun Britain,

and form, with *Culluna vulgaris* (heather) and *Empetrum nigrum* (crowberry, which grows on our White Mountains), much of the natural physiognomical character of its vegetation.'

The genus *Gaylussacia,* to which our huckleberry belongs, has no representative in Great Britain, nor does our species extend very far northward in this country.

So I might say of edible berries generally, that there are far fewer kinds in Old than in New England.

Take the *rubuses* or what you might call bramble berries, for instance, to which genus our raspberries, blackberries and thimbleberries belong. According to Loudon there are five kinds indigenous in Britain to our eight. But of these five only two appear to be at all common, while we have four kinds both very common and very good. The Englishman Coleman says of their best, the English raspberry, which species we also cultivate, that 'the wilding is not sufficiently abundant to have much importance.'

And the same is true of wild fruits generally. Hips and haws are much more important comparatively there than here, where they have hardly got any popular name.

I state this to show how contented and thankful we ought to be.

It is to be remembered that the vegetation of Great Britain is that of a much more northern latitude than where we live, that some of our alpine shrubs are found on the plain there and their two whortleberries are alpine or extreme northern plants with us.

If you look closely you will find blueberry and huckleberry bushes under your feet, though they may be feeble and barren, throughout all our woods, the most persevering Native Americans, ready to shoot up into place and power at the next election among the plants, ready to reclothe the hills when man has laid them bare and feed all kinds of pensioners. What though the woods be cut down; it appears that this emergency was long ago anticipated and provided for by Nature, and the interregnum is not allowed to be a barren one. She not only begins instantly to heal that scar, but she compensates us for the loss and refreshes us with fruits such as the forest did not produce. As the sandal wood is said to diffuse a perfume around the woodman who cuts it — so in this case Nature rewards with unexpected fruits the hand that lays her waste.

I have only to remember each year where the woods have been cut just long enough to know where to look for them. It is to refresh us thus once in a century that they bide their time on the forest floor. If the farmer mows and burns over his overgrown pasture for the benefit of the grass, or to keep the children out, the huckleberries spring up there more vigorous than ever, and the fresh blueberry shoots tinge the earth crimson. All our hills are, or have been, huckleberry hills, the three hills of Boston and no doubt Bunker Hill among the rest. My mother remembers a woman who went a-whortleberrying where Dr. Lowell's church now stands.

In short the whortleberry bushes in the Northern States and British America are a sort of miniature forest surviving under the great forest, and reappearing when the latter is cut, and also extending northward beyond it. The small berry- bearing shrubs of this family, as the crowberry, bilberry, and cranberry, are called by the Esquimaux in Greenland, 'berry grass,' and Crantz says that the Greenlanders cover their winter houses with 'bilberry bushes,' together with turf and earth. They also burn them; and I hear that some body in this neighborhood has invented a machine for cutting up huckleberry bushes for fuel.

It is remarkable how universally, as it respects soil and exposure, the whortleberry family is distributed with us, almost we may say a new species for every thousand feet of elevation. One kind or another, of those of which I am speaking, flourishing in every soil and locality.

There is the high blueberry in swamps — the second low blueberry, with the huckleberry, on almost all fields and hills — the Pennsylvanian and Canada blueberries especially in cool and airy places in openings in the woods and on hills and mountains, while we have two kinds confined to the alpine tops of our highest mountains — the family thus ranging from the lowest valleys to the highest mountain tops, and forming the prevailing small shrubbery of a great part of New England.

The same is true *hereabouts* of a single species of this family, the huckleberry proper. I do not know of a spot where any shrub grows in this neighborhood, but one or another variety of the huckleberry may also grow there. It is stated in Loudon that all the plants of this

order ‘require a peat soil, or a soil of a close cohesive nature,’ but this is not the case with the huckleberry. It grows on the tops of our highest hills — no pasture is too rocky or barren for it — it grows in such deserts as we have, standing in pure sand — and at the same time it flourishes in the strongest and most fertile soil. One variety is peculiar to quaking bogs where there can hardly be said to be any soil beneath, to say nothing of another but unpalatable species, the hairy huckleberry, which is found there. It also extends through all our woods more or less thinly, and a distinct species, the dangleberry, belongs especially to moist woods and thickets.

Such care has Nature taken to furnish to birds and quadrupeds, and to men, a palatable berry of this kind, slightly modified by soil and climate, wherever the consumer may chance to be. Corn and potatoes, apples and pears, have comparatively a narrow range, but we can fill our basket with whortleberries on the summit of Mount Washington, above almost all other shrubs with which we are familiar, the same kind which they have in Greenland, and again when we get home, with another species in our lowest swamps, such as the Greenlanders never dreamed of.

The berries *which I celebrate*, appear to have a range, most of them, very nearly coterminous with what has been called the Algonquin Family of Indians, whose territories embraced what are now the Eastern, Middle and Northwestern States — and the Canadas — and surrounded those of the Iroquois in what is now New York. These were the small fruits of the Algonquin and Iroquois Families.

Of course the Indians naturally made a much greater account of wild fruits than we do, and among the most important of these were huckleberries.

They taught us not only the use of corn and how to plant it, but also of whortleberries and how to dry them for winter. We should have hesitated long before we tasted some kinds if they had not set us the example, knowing by old experience that they were not only harmless but salutary. I have added a few to my number of edible berries, by walking behind an Indian in Maine, and observing that he ate some which I never thought of tasting before.

To convince you of the extensive use which the Indians made of

huckleberries, I will quote at length the testimony of the most observing travellers, on this subject, as nearly as possible in the order in which it was given us; for it is only after listening patiently to such reiterated and concurring testimony, of various dates — and respecting widely distant localities — that we come to realize the truth.

But little is said by the discoverers of the use which the Indians made of the fresh berries in their season — the hand to mouth use of them — because there was little to be said — though in this form they may have been much the most important to them. We have volumes of recipes, called cookbooks — but when a fruit or a tart is ready for the table, nothing remains but to eat it without any more words. We therefore have few or no accounts of Indians going a-huckleberrying — though they had more than a six weeks' vacation for that purpose, and probably camped on the huckleberry field.

I will go far enough back for my authorities to show that they did not learn the use of these berries from us whites.

In the year 1615, Champlain, the founder of Quebec, being far up the Ottawa spying out the land and taking notes among the Algonquins, on his way to the Fresh Water Sea since called Lake Huron — observed that the natives made a business of collecting and drying for winter use, a small berry which he calls blues, and also raspberries — the former is the common blueberry of those regions, by some considered a variety of our early low blueberry (*Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum*); and again when near the lake he observes that the natives make a kind of bread of pounded corn sifted and mixed with mashed beans which have been boiled — and sometimes they put dried blueberries and raspberries into it.

This was five years before the Pilgrims crossed the Atlantic, and is the first account of huckleberry cake that I know of.

Gabriel Sagard, a Franciscan Friar, in the account of his visit to the Huron Country in 1624, says, 'There is so great a quantity of blues, which the Hurons call *Ohentaque*, and other little fruits which they call by a general name *Hahique*, that the savages regularly dry them for the winter, as we do prunes in the sun, and that serves them for comfits for the sick, and to give taste to their *sagamite* [or gruel, making a kind of plum porridge], and also to put into the little loaves

(or cakes, *pains*) which they cook under the ashes.'

According to him they put not only blueberries and raspberries into their bread but strawberries, 'wild mulberries (*meures champestres)* and other little fruits dry and green.' Indeed the gathering of blueberries by the savages is spoken of by the early French explorers as a regular and important harvest with them.

Le Jeune, the Superior of the Jesuits in Canada — residing at Quebec — in his Relation for 1639 — says of the savages that 'Some figure to themselves a paradise full of *bluets.''*

Roger Williams, who knew the Indians well, in his account of those in his neighborhood — published in 1643 — tells us that '*Sautaash* are those currants (grapes and whortleberries) dried by the natives, and so preserved all the year, which they beat to powder and mingle it with their parched meal, and make a delicate dish which they call *Sautauthig*, which is as sweet to them as plum or spice cake to the English.'

But Nathaniel Morton, in his *New England's Memorial*, printed in 1669 — speaking of white men going to treat with Canonicus, a Narraghanset Indian, about Mr. Oldham's death in 1636 — says 'Boiled chestnuts is their white bread, and because they would be extraordinary in their feasting, they strove for variety after the English manner, boiling puddings made of beaten corn, putting therein great store of black berries, somewhat like currants' — no doubt whortleberries. This *seems* to *imply* that the Indians imitated the English — or set before their guests dishes to which they themselves were not accustomed — or which were extra-ordinary. But we have seen that these dishes were not new or unusual to them and it was the whites who imitated the Indians rather.

John Josselyn — in his *New England's Rarities*, published in 1672 — says under the fruits of New England, 'Bill-berries, two kinds, black and sky colored, which is more frequent.... The Indians dry them in the sun and sell them to the English by the bushel, who make use of them instead of currence, putting of them into puddens, both boyled and baked, and into water gruel.'

The largest Indian huckleberry party that I have heard of is mentioned in the life of Captain Church who, it is said, when in pursuit of King Phillip in the summer of 1676, came across a large

body of Indians, chiefly squaws, gathering whortleberries on a plain near where New Bedford now is, and killed and took prisoner sixty-six of them — some throwing away their baskets and their berries in their flight. They told him that their husbands and brothers, a hundred of them, who with others had their rendezvous in a great cedar swamp nearby, had recently left them to gather whortleberries there, while they went to Sconticut Neck to kill cattle and horses for further and more substantial provisions.

La Hontan in 1689, writing from the Great Lakes, repeats what so many French travellers had said about the Indians drying and preserving blueberries — saying, 'The savages of the north make a great harvest of them in summer, which is a great resource especially when the chase fails them.' They were herein more provident than we commonly suppose.

Father Rasies — who was making a Dictionary of the Abenaki Language in 1691 (at Norridgewock?) — says that their word for blueberries was fresh *Satar*, dry *Sakisatar* — and the words in their name for July meant when the blueberries are ripe. This shows how important they were to them.

Father Hennepin — who writes in 1697 — says that his captors, Naudowessi (the Sioux!), near the falls of St. Anthony, feasted on wild-rice seasoned with blueberries, 'which they dry in the sun during the summer, and which are as good as raisins of Corinth' — [that is, the imported currants].

The Englishman John Lawson, who published an account of the Carolinas in 1709, says of North Carolina, 'The hurts, huckleberries or blues of this country are four sorts.... The first sort is the same blue or bilberry that grows plentifully in the North of England.'

'The second sort grows on a small bush,' the fruit being larger than the last. The third grows three or four feet high in low land. 'The fourth sort grows upon trees, some ten and twelve foot high, and the thickness of a man's arm; these are found in the runs and low grounds.... The Indians get many bushels, and dry them on mats, whereof they make plum bread, and many other eatables.' He is the first author that I remember who uses the word 'huckleberry.'

The well known natural botanist John Bartram, when returning to Philadelphia in 1743 from a Journey through what was then the

wilderness of Pennsylvania and New York, to the Iroquois and Lake Ontario, says that he 'found [when in Pennsylvania] an Indian squaw drying huckleberries. This is done by setting four forked sticks in the ground, about three or four feet high, then others across, over them the stalks of our common *Jacea* or *Saratula*, on these lie the berries, as malt is spread on the hair cloth over the kiln. Underneath she had kindled a smoke fire, which one of her children was tending.' Kalm, in his travels in this country in 1748-9, writes, 'On my travels through the country of the Iroquois, they offered me, whenever they designed to treat me well, fresh maize bread, baked in an oblong shape, mixed with dried huckleberries, which lay as close in it as the raisins in a plumb pudding.'

The Moravian missionary Heckewelder, who spent a great part of his life among the Delawares toward the end of the last century, states that they mixed with their bread, which was six inches in diameter by one inch thick— 'whortleberries green or dry, but not boiled.'

Lewis and Clarke in 1805 found the Indians west of the Rocky Mountains using dried berries extensively.

And finally in Owen's Geological Survey of *Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota* — published in 1852 — occurs the following.

'*Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum (Lam.)* [that is, our early low blueberry] — Barrens on the upper St. Croix. This is the common Huckleberry, associated with the characteristic growth of the *Pinus Banksiana,* covering its sandy ridges with a verdant undergrowth, and an unsurpassed luxuriance of fruit. By the Indians these are collected and smoke dried in great quantities, and in this form constitute an agreeable article of food.' Hence you see that the Indians from time immemorial, down to the present day, all over the northern part of America — have made far more extensive use of the whortleberry — at all seasons and in various ways — than we — and that they were far more important to them than to us.

It appears from the above evidence that the Indians used their dried berries commonly in the form of a cake, and also of huckleberry porridge or pudding.

What we call huckleberry cake made of Indian meal and huckleberries was evidently the principal cake of the aborigines —

though they also used other berries and fruits in a similar manner and often put things into their cake which would not have been agreeable to our palates — though I do not hear that they ever put any soda or pearl ash or alum into it. We have no national cake so universal and well known as this was in all parts of the country where corn and huckleberries grew.

They enjoyed it all alone ages before our ancestors heard of their Indian corn — or their huckleberries — and probably if you had travelled here a thousand years ago it would have been offered you alike on the Connecticut, the Potomac, the Niagara, the Ottawa and the Mississippi.

The last Indian of Nantucket, who died a few years ago, was very properly represented in a painting which I saw there, with a basket full of huckleberries in his hand, as if to hint at the employment of his last days. I trust that I may not outlive the last of the huckleberries.

Tanner, who was taken captive by the Indians in 1789, and spent a good part of his life as an Indian, gives the Chippeway names of at least five kinds of whortleberries. He gives '*meen* — blue berry, *meen-un* — blue berries,' and says that 'this is a word that enters into the composition of almost all words which are used as the names of fruits,' that is as a terminal syllable. Hence this would appear to have been the typical berry — or berry of berries — among the Chippeway as it is among us.

I think that it would be well if the Indian names, were as far as possible restored and applied to the numerous species of huckleberries, by our botanists — instead of the very inadequate — Greek and Latin or English ones at present used. They might serve both a scientific and popular use. Certainly it is not the best point of view to look at this peculiarly American family as it were from the other side of the Atlantic. It is still in doubt whether the Latin word for the genus *Vaccinium* means a berry or a flower.

Botanists, on the look out for what they thought a respectable descent, have long been inclined to trace this family backward to Mount Ida. Tourneforte does not hesitate to give it the ancient name of *Vine of Mount Ida.* The common English Raspberry also is called *Rubus Idaea* or the Mount Ida bramble — from the old Greek name.

The truth of it seems to be that blueberries and raspberries flourish best in cool and airy situations, on hills and mountains, and I can easily believe that something *like* these at least grows on Mount Ida. But Mount Monadnoc is as good as Mount Ida, and probably better for blueberries, though its name is said to mean *Bad Rock.* But the worst rocks are the best for poets' uses. Let us then exchange that oriental uncertainty for this western certainty.

We have in the northern states a few wild plums and inedible crab apples — a few palatable grapes — and many tolerable nuts — but I think that the various species of berries are our *wild fruits* which are to be compared with the more celebrated ones of the tropics, and for my part I would not exchange fruits with them — for the object is not merely to get a ship-load of something which you can eat or sell, but the pleasure of gathering it is to be taken into the account.

What is the pear crop as yet to the huckleberry crop? Horticulturists make a great ado about their pears, but how many families raise or buy a barrel of pears in a year all told? They are comparatively insignificant. I do not taste more than half a dozen pears annually, and I suspect that the majority fare worse even than I. (This was written before my neighbor's pear-orchard began to bear. Now he frequently fills my own and others' pockets with the fruit.) But Nature heaps the table with berries for six weeks or more. Indeed the apple crop is not so important as the huckleberry crop. Probably the apples consumed in this town annually do not amount to more than one barrel per family. But what is this to a month or more of huckleberrying to every man, woman and child, and the birds into the bargain. Even the crop of oranges, lemons, nuts, raisins, figs, quinces, etc is of little importance to us compared with these.

They are not unprofitable in a pecuniary sense; I hear that some of the inhabitants of Ashby sold $2000 worth of huckleberries in'56.

In May and June all our hills and fields are adorned with a profusion of the pretty little more or less bell-shaped flowers of this family, commonly turned toward the earth and more or less tinged with red or pink, and resounding with the hum of insects, each one the forerunner of a berry the most natural, wholesome and palatable that the soil can produce. I think to myself, these are the blossoms of the *Vaccinieae* or Whortleberry family, which affords so large a

portion of our berries; the berry-promising flower of the *Vaccinieael* This crop grows wild all over the country — wholesome, bountiful and free, a real ambrosia. And yet men, the foolish demons that they are, devote themselves to the culture of tobacco, inventing slavery and a thousand other curses for that purpose — with infinite pains and inhumanity go raise tobacco all their lives, and that is the staple instead of huckleberries. Wreathes of tobacco smoke go up from this land, the only incense which its inhabitants burn in honor of their gods. With what authority can such as we distinguish between Christians and Mahometans? Almost every interest, as the codfish and mackerel interest, gets represented at the General Court — but not the huckleberry interest. The first discoverers and explorers of the land make report of this fruit — but the last make comparatively little account of them.

Blueberries and huckleberries are such simple, wholesome and universal fruits that they concern our race much. It is hard to imagine any country without this kind of berry, on which men live like birds. Still covering our hills as when the red men lived here. Are they not the the principal wild fruit?

What means this profusion of berries at this season only? Nature does her best to feed her children, and the broods of birds just matured find plenty to eat now. Every bush and vine does its part and offers a wholesome and palatable diet to the way-farer. He need not go out of the road to get as many berries as he wants — of various kinds and qualities according as his road leads him over high or low, wooded or open ground — huckleberries of different colors and flavors almost everywhere — the second kind of low blueberry largest in the moist ground — high blueberries with their agreeable acid when his way lies through a swamp, and low blackberries of two or more varieties on almost every sandy plain and bank and stone heap.

Man at length stands in such a relation to Nature as the animals which pluck and eat as they go. The fields and hills are a table constantly spread. Diet-drinks, cordials, wines of all kinds and qualities, are bottled up in the skins of countless berries for their refreshment, and they quaff them at every turn. They seem offered to us not so much for food as for sociality, inviting us to a pic-nic with

Nature. We pluck and eat in remembrance of her. It is a sort of sacrament — a communion — the *not* forbidden fruits, which no serpent tempts us to eat. Slight and innocent savors which relate us to Nature, make us her guests, and entitle us to her regard and protection.

When I see, as now, in climbing one of our hills, huckleberry and blueberry bushes bent to the ground with fruit, I think of them as fruits fit to grow on the most Olympian or heaven-pointing hills.

It does not occur to you at first that where such thoughts are suggested is Mount Olympus, and that you who taste these berries are a god. Why in his only royal moments should man abdicate his throne?

You eat these berries in the dry pastures where they grow not to gratify an appetite, but as simply and naturally as thoughts come into your mind, as if they were the food of thought, dry as itself, and surely they nourish the brain there.

Occasionally there is an unusual profusion of these fruits to compensate for the scarcity of a previous year. I remember some seasons when favorable moist weather had expanded the berries to their full size, so that the hill-sides were literally black with them. There were infinitely more of all kinds than any and all creatures could use.

One such year, on the side of Conantum Hill, they were literally five or six species deep. First, if you searched low down in the shade under all, you found still fresh the great light blue earliest blueberries, bluets, in heavy clusters — that most Olympian fruit of all — delicate flavored, thin-skinned and cool — then, next above, the still denser masses or clusters of the second low blueberry of various varieties, firm and sweet food — and rising above these large blue and black huckleberries of various qualities — and over these ran rampant the low blackberry weighing down the thicket with its wreathes of black fruit, and binding it together in a trembling mass — while here and there the high blackberry, just beginning to be ripe, towered over all the rest. Thus, as it were, the berries hung up lightly in masses or heaps, separated by their leaves and twigs so that the air could circulate through and preserve them; and you went daintily wading through this thicket, picking perhaps only the finest

of the high blackberries, as big as the end of your thumb, however big that may be, or clutching here and there a handful of huckleberries for variety, but never suspecting the delicious, cool blue-bloomed ones, which you were crushing with your feet under all. I have in such a case spread aside the bushes and revealed the last kind to those who had never in all their lives seen or heard of it before.

Each such patch, each bush — seems fuller and blacker than the last, as you proceed, and the huckleberries at length swell so big, as if aping the blackberries, that you mark the spot for future years.

There is all this profusion and yet you see neither birds nor beasts eating them — only ants and the huckleberry-bug. It seems fortunate for us that those cows in their pasture do not love them, but pass them by. We do not perceive that birds and quadrupeds make any use of them because they are so abundant we do not miss them, and they are not compelled to come when we are for them. Yet they are far more important to them than to us. We do not notice the robin when it plucks a huckleberry as we do when it visits our favorite cherry tree — and the fox pays his visits to the fields when we are not there.

I once carried my arms full of these bushes to my boat, and while I was rowing homeward two ladies, who were my companions, picked three pints from these alone, casting the bare bushes into the stream from time to time.

Even in ordinary years, when berries are comparatively scarce, I sometimes unexpectedly find so many in some distant and unfrequented part of the town, between and about the careless farmers' houses and walls, that the soil seems more fertile than where I live. Every bush and bramble bears its fruit. The very sides of the road are a fruit garden. The earth there teems with blackberries, huckleberries, thimble- berries, fresh and abundant — no signs of drought nor of pickers. Great shining black berries peep out at me from under the leaves upon the rocks. Do the rocks hold moisture? or are there no fingers to pluck these fruits? I seem to have wan- dered into a land of greater fertility — some up country Eden. These are the Delectable Hills. It is a land flowing with milk and huckleberries, only they have not yet put the berries into the milk. *There* the herbage never withers, *there* are abundant dews. I ask

myself, What are the virtues of the inhabitants that they are thus blessed?

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint Agricolas —
O too fortunate husbandmen if they knew their own happiness.

These berries are further important as introducing children to the fields and woods. The season of berrying is so far respected that the school children have a vacation then — and many little fingers are busy picking these small fruits. It is even a pastime, not a drudgery — though it often pays well beside. The First of August is to them the anniversary of Emancipation in New England.

Women and children who never visit distant hills, fields and swamps on any other errand are seen making haste thither now with half their domestic utensils in their hands. The wood-chopper goes into the swamp for fuel in the winter; his wife and children for berries in the summer.

Now you will see who is the thorough countrywoman who does not go to the beach — conversant with berries and nuts — a masculine wild-eyed woman of the fields.

Now for a ride in the hay-rigging to that far off Elysium that Zachariah See-all alighted on — but has not mentioned to every person — in the hay-rigging without springs — trying to sensitive nerves and to full pails, for all alike sit on the bottom — such a ride is favorable to conversation for the incessant rumble hides all defects and fills the otherwise aweful pauses — to be introduced to new scenes more memorable than the berries — but to the old walker the straggling party itself half concealed amid the bushes is the most novel and interesting feature. If hot the boys break up the bushes and carry them to some shady place where the girls can pick them at their ease. But this is a lazy and improvident way — and gives an unsightly look to the hill. There are many events not in the program. If you have an ear for music — perhaps one is the sound of a cow bell — never heard before — or a sudden thunder shower putting you to flight — or a breakdown.

I served my apprenticeship and have since done considerable journeywork in the huckleberry field. Though I never paid for my

schooling and clothing in that way, it was some of the best schooling that I got and paid for itself. Theodore Parker is not the only New England boy who has got his education by picking huckleberries, though he may not have gone to Harvard thereafter, nor to any school more distant than the huckleberry field. *There* was the university itself where you could learn the everlasting Laws, and Medicine and Theology, not under Story, and Warren, and Ware, but far wiser professors than they. Why such haste to go from the huckleberry field to the College yard?

As in old times they who dwelt on the heath, remote from towns, being backward to adopt the doctrines which prevailed in towns, were called heathen in a bad sense, so I trust that we dwellers in the huckleberry pastures, which are our heath- lands, shall be slow to adopt the notions of large towns and cities, though perchance we may be nicknamed huckleberry people. But the worst of it is that the emissaries of the towns come more for our berries than they do for our salvation.

Occasionally, in still summer forenoons, when perhaps a mantua-maker was to be dined, and a huckleberry pudding had been decided on (by the authorities), I a lad of ten was despatched to a neighboring hill alone. My scholastic education could be thus far tampered with, and an excuse might be found. No matter how scarce the berries on the near hills, the exact number necessary for a pudding could surely be collected by eleven o'clock — and all ripe ones too though I turned some round three times to be sure they were not premature. My rule in such cases was never to eat one till my dish was full; for going a-berrying implies more things than eating the berries. They at home got nothing but the pudding, a comparatively heavy affair — but I got the forenoon out of doors — to say nothing about the appetite for the pudding. They got only the plums that were in the pudding, but I got the far sweeter plums that never go into it.

At other times, when I had companions, some of them used to bring such remarkably shaped dishes, that I was often curious to see how the berries disposed of themselves in them. Some brought a coffee-pot to the huckleberry field, and such a vessel possessed this advantage at least, that if a greedy boy had skimmed off a handful or two on his way home, he had only to close the lid and give his vessel

a shake to have it full again. I have seen this done all round when the party got as far homeward as the Dutch House. It can probably be done with any vessel that has much side to it.

There was a Young America then, which has become Old America, but its principles and motives are still the same, only applied to other things. Sometimes, just before reaching the spot — every boy rushed to the hill side and hastily selecting a spot — shouted 'I speak for this place,' indicating its bounds, and another 'I speak for that,' and so on — and this was sometimes considered good law for the huckleberry field. At any rate it is a law similar to this by which we have taken possession of the territory of Indians and Mexicans.

I once met with a whole family, father, mother, and children, ravaging a huckleberry field in this wise. They cut up the bushes as they went and beat them over the edge of a bushel basket, till they had it full of berries, ripe and green, leaves, sticks etc., and so they passed along out of my sight like wild men.

I well remember with what a sense of freedom and spirit of adventure I used to take my way across the fields with my pail, some years later, toward some distant hill or swamp, when dismissed for all day, and I would not now exchange such an expansion of all my being for all the learning in the world. Liberation and enlargement — such is the fruit which all culture aims to secure. I suddenly knew more about my books than if I had never ceased studying them. I found myself in a schoolroom where I could not fail to see and hear things worth seeing and hearing — where I could not help getting my lesson — for my lesson came to me. Such experience often repeated, was the chief encouragement to go to the Academy and study a book at last.

But ah we have fallen on evil days! I hear of pickers ordered out of the huckleberry fields, and I see stakes set up with written notices forbidding any to pick them. Some let their fields or allow so much for the picking. *Sic transit gloria ruris.* I do not mean to blame any, but all — to bewail our fates generally. We are not grateful enough that we have lived a part of our lives before these things occurred. What becomes of the true value of country life — what, if you must go to market for it? It has come to this, that the butcher now brings

round our huckleberries in his cart. Why, it is as if the hangman were to perform the marriage ceremony. Such is the inevitable tendency of our civilization, to reduce huckleberries to a level with beef-steaks — that is to blot out four fifths of it, or the going a-huckleberrying, and leave only a pudding, that part which is the fittest accompaniment to a beef-steak. You all know what it is to go a-beef-steaking. It is to knock your old fellow laborer Bright on the head to begin with — or possibly to cut a steak from him running in the Abyssinian fashion and wait for another to grow there. The butcher's item in chalk on the door is now 'Calf's head and huckleberries.'

I suspect that the inhabitants of England and the continent of Europe have thus lost in a measure their natural rights, with the increase of population and monopolies. The wild fruits of the earth disappear before civilization, or only the husks of them are to be found in large markets. The whole country becomes, as it were, a town or beaten common, and almost the only fruits left are a few hips and haws.

What sort of a country is that where the huckleberry fields are private property? When I pass such fields on the highway, my heart sinks within me. I see a blight on the land. Nature is under a veil there. I make haste away from the accursed spot. Nothing could deform her fair face more. I cannot think of it ever after but as the place where fair and palatable berries, are converted into money, where the huckleberry is desecrated.

It is true, we have as good a right to make berries private property, as to make wild grass and trees such — it is not worse than a thousand other practices which custom has sanctioned — but that is the worst of it, for it suggests how bad the rest are, and to what result our civilization and division of labor naturally tend, to make all things venal.

A., a professional huckleberry picker, has hired B.'s field, and, we will suppose, is now gathering the crop, with a patent huckleberry horse rake.

C., a professed cook, is superintending the boiling of a pudding made of some of the berries.

While Professor D. — for whom the pudding is intended, sits in his library writing a book — a work on the *Vaccinieae* of course.

And now the result of this downward course will be seen in that work — which should be the ultimate fruit of the huckleberry field. It will be worthless. It will have none of the spirit of the huckleberry in it, and the reading of it will be a weariness of the flesh.

I believe in a different kind of division of labor — that Professor D. should be encouraged to divide himself freely between his library and the huckleberry field.

What I chiefly regret in this case, is the in effect dog-in-the-manger result; for at the same time that we exclude mankind from gathering berries in our field, we exclude them from gathering health and happiness and inspiration, and a hundred other far finer and nobler fruits than berries, which are found there, but which we have no notion of gathering and shall not gather ourselves, nor ever carry to market, for there is no market for them, but let them rot on the bushes.

We thus strike only one more blow at a simple and wholesome relation to nature. I do not know but this is the excuse of those who have lately taken to swinging bags of beans and ringing dumb bells. As long as the berries are free to all comers they are beautiful, though they may be few and small, but tell me that this is a blueberry swamp which somebody has hired, and I shall not want even to look at it. We so commit the berries to the wrong hands, that is to the hands of those who cannot appreciate them. This is proved by the fact that if we do not pay them some money, these parties will at once cease to pick them. They have no other interest in berries but a pecuniary one. Such is the constitution of our society that we make a compromise and permit the berries to be degraded, to be enslaved, as it were.

Accordingly in laying claim for the first time to the spontaneous fruit of our pastures, we are inevitably aware of a little meanness, and the merry berry party which we turn away naturally looks down on and despises us. If it were left to the berries to say who should have them, is it not likely that they would prefer to be gathered by the party of children in the hay-rigging, who have come to have a good time merely?

This is one of the taxes which we pay for having a rail-road. All our improvements, so called, tend to convert the country into the

town. But I do not see clearly that these successive losses are ever quite made up to us. This suggests, as I have said, what origin and foundation many of our institutions have. I do not say this by way of complaining of this custom in particular, which is beginning to prevail — not that I love Caesar less but Rome more. It is my own way of living that I complain of as well as yours — and therefore I trust that my remarks will come home to you. I hope that I am not so poor a shot, like most clergymen, as to fire into a crowd of a thousand men without hitting somebody — though I do not aim at any one.

Thus we behave like oxen in a flower garden. The true fruit of Nature can only be plucked with a fluttering heart and a delicate hand, not bribed by any earthly reward. No hired man can help us to gather that crop.

Among the Indians, the earth and its productions generally were common and free to all the tribe, like the air and water — but among us who have supplanted the Indians, the public retain only a small yard or common in the middle of the village, with perhaps a grave-yard beside it, and the right of way, by sufferance, by a particular narrow route, which is annually becoming narrower, from one such yard to another. I doubt if you can ride out five miles in any direction without coming to where some individual is tolling in the road — and he expects the time when it will all revert to him or his heirs. This is the way we civilized men have arranged it.

I am not overflowing with respect and gratitude to the fathers who thus laid out our New England villages, whatever precedent they were influenced by, for I think that a 'prentice hand liberated from Old English prejudices could have done much better in this new world. If they were in earnest seeking thus far away 'freedom to worship God,' as some assure us — why did they not secure a little more of it, when it was so cheap and they were about it? At the same time that they built meeting-houses why did they not preserve from desecration and destruction far grander temples not made with hands?

What are the natural features which make a township handsome — and worth going tar to dwell in? A river with its waterfalls — meadows, lakes — hills, cliffs or individual rocks, a forest and single

ancient trees — such things are beautiful. They have a high use which dollars and cents never represent. If the inhabitants of a town were wise they would seek to preserve these things though at a considerable expense. For such things educate far more than any hired teachers or preachers, or any at present recognized system of school education.

I do not think him fit to be the founder of a state or even of a town who does not foresee the use of these things, but legislates as it were, for oxen chiefly.

It would be worth the while if in each town there were a committee appointed, to see that the beauty of the town received no detriment. If here is the largest boulder in the country, then it should not belong to an individual nor be made into door-steps. In some countries precious metals belong to the crown — so here more precious objects of great natural beauty should belong to the public.

Let us try to keep the new world new, and while we make a wary use of the city, preserve as far as possible the advantages of living in the country.

I think of no natural feature which is a greater ornament and treasure to this town than the river. It is one of the things which determine whether a man will live here or in another place, and it is one of the first objects which we show to a stranger. In this respect we enjoy a great advantage over those neighboring towns which have no river. Yet the town, as a corporation, has never turned any but the most purely utilitarian eyes upon it — and has done nothing to preserve its natural beauty.

They who laid out the town should have made the river available as a common possession forever. The town collectively should at least have done as much as an individual of taste who owns an equal area commonly does in England. Indeed I think that not only the channel but one or both banks of every river should be a public highway — for a river is not useful merely to float on. In this case, one bank might have been reserved as a public walk and the trees that adorned it have been protected, and frequent avenues have been provided leading to it from the main street. This would have cost but few acres of land and but little wood, and we should all have been gainers by it. Now it is accessible only at the bridges at points

comparatively distant from the town, and there there is not a foot of shore to stand on unless you trespass on somebody's lot — and if you attempt a quiet stroll down the bank — you soon meet with fences built at right angles with the stream and projecting far over the water — where individuals, naturally enough, under the present arrangement — seek to monopolize the shore. At last we shall get our only view of the stream from the meeting house belfry.

As for the trees which fringed the shore within my remembrance — where are they? and where will the remnant of them be after ten years more?

So if there is any central and commanding hill-top, it should be reserved for the public use. Think of a mountain top in the township — even to the Indians a sacred place — only accessible through private grounds. A temple as it were which you cannot enter without trespassing — nay the temple itself private property and standing in a man's cow yard — for such is commonly the case. New Hampshire courts have lately been deciding, as if it was for them to decide, whether the top of Mount Washington belonged to A or B — and it being decided in favor of B, I hear that he went up one winter with the proper officers and took formal possession. That area should be left unappropriated for modesty and reverence's sake — if only to suggest that the traveller who climbs thither in a degree rises above himself, as well as his native valley, and leaves some of his grovelling habits behind.

I know it is a mere figure of speech to talk about temples nowadays, when men recognize none, and associate the word with heathenism. Most men, it appears to me, do not care for Nature, and would sell their share in all her beauty, for as long as they may live, for a stated and not very large sum. Thank God they cannot yet fly and lay waste the sky as well as the earth. We are safe on that side for the present. It is for the very reason that some do not care for these things that we need to combine to protect all from the vandalism of a few.

It is true, we as yet take liberties and go across lots in most directions but we naturally take fewer and fewer liberties every year, as we meet with more resistance, and we shall soon be reduced to the same straights they are in England, where going across lots is out of

the question — and we must ask leave to walk in some lady's park.

There are a few hopeful signs. There is the growing *library* — and then the town does set trees along the highways. But does not the broad landscape itself deserve attention?

We cut down the few old oaks which witnessed the transfer of the township from the Indian to the white man, and perchance commence our museum with a cartridge box taken from a British soldier in 1775. How little we insist on truly grand and beautiful natural features. There may be the most beautiful landscapes in the world within a dozen miles of us, for aught we know — for their inhabitants do not value nor perceive them — and so have not made them known to others — but if a grain of gold were picked up there, or a pearl found in a fresh-water clam, the whole state would resound with the news.

Thousands annually seek the White Mountains to be refreshed by their wild and primitive beauty — but when the country was discovered a similar kind of beauty prevailed all over it — and much of this might have been preserved for our present refreshment if a little foresight and taste had been used.

I do not believe that there is a town in this country which realizes in what its true wealth consists.

I visited the town of Boxboro only eight miles west of us last fall — and far the handsomest and most memorable thing which I saw there, was its noble oak wood. I doubt if there is a finer one in Massachusetts. Let it stand fifty years longer and men will make pilgrimages to it from all parts of the country, and for a worthier object than to shoot squirrels in it — and yet I said to myself, Boxboro would be very like the rest of New England, if she were ashamed of that wood-land. Probably, if the history of this town is written, the historian will have omitted to say a word about this forest — the most interesting thing in it — and lay all the stress on the history of the parish.

It turned out that I was not far from right — for not long after I came across a very brief historical notice of Stow — which then included Boxboro — written by the Reverend John Gardiner in the *Massachusetts Historical Collections*, nearly a hundred years ago. In which Mr. Gardiner, after telling us who was his predecessor in the

ministry, and when he himself was settled, goes on to say, 'As for any remarkables, I am of mind there have been the fewest of any town of our standing in the Province.... I can't call to mind above one thing worthy of public notice, and that is the grave of Mr. John Green' who, it appears, when in England, 'was made clerk of the exchequer' by Cromwell. 'Whether he was excluded the act of oblivion or not I cannot tell,' says Mr. Gardiner. At any rate he returned to New England and as Gardiner tells us 'lived and died, and lies buried in this place.'

I can assure Mr. Gardiner that he was not excluded from the act of oblivion.

It is true Boxboro was less peculiar for its woods at that date — but they were not less interesting absolutely.

I remember talking a few years ago with a young man who had undertaken to write the history of his native town — a wild and mountainous town far up country, whose very name suggested a hundred things to me, and I almost wished I had the task to do myself — so few of the original settlers had been driven out — and not a single clerk of the exchequer buried in it. But to my chagrin I found that the author was complaining of want of materials, and that the crowning fact of his story was that the town had been the residence of General C — and the family mansion was still standing.

I have since heard, however, that Boxboro is content to have that forest stand, instead of the houses and farms that might supplant it — not because of its beauty — but because the land pays a much larger tax now than it would then.

Nevertheless it is likely to be cut off within a few years for ship-timber and the like. It is too precious to be thus disposed of. I think that it would be wise for the state to purchase and preserve a few such forests.

If the people of Massachusetts are ready to found a professorship of Natural History — so they must see the importance of preserving some portions of nature herself unimpaired.

I find that the rising generation in this town do not know what an oak or a pine is, having seen only inferior specimens. Shall we hire a man to lecture on botany, on oaks for instance, our noblest plants — while we permit others to cut down the few best specimens of these

trees that are left? It is like teaching children Latin and Greek while we burn the books printed in those languages.

I think that each town should have a park, or rather a primitive forest, of five hundred or a thousand acres, either in one body or several — where a stick should never be cut for fuel — nor for the navy, nor to make wagons, but stand and decay for higher uses — a common possession forever, for instruction and recreation.

All Walden wood might have been reserved, with Walden in the midst of it, and the Easterbrooks country, an uncultivated area of some four square miles in the north of the town, might have been our huckleberry field. If any owners of these tracts are about to leave the world without natural heirs who need or deserve to be specially remembered, they will do wisely to abandon the possession to all mankind, and not will them to some individual who perhaps has enough already — and so correct the error that was made when the town was laid out. As some give to Harvard College or another Institution, so one might give a forest or a huckleberry field to Concord. This town surely is an institution which deserves to be remembered. Forget the heathen in foreign parts, and remember the pagans and savages here.

We hear of cow commons and ministerial lots, but we want *men* commons and *lay* lots as well. There is meadow and pasture and woodlot for the town's poor, why not a forest and huckleberry field for the town's rich?

We boast of our system of education, but why stop at schoolmasters and schoolhouses? We are all schoolmasters and our schoolhouse is the universe. To attend chiefly to the desk or schoolhouse, while we neglect the scenery in which it is placed, is absurd. If we do not look out we shall find our fine schoolhouse standing in a cow yard at last.

It frequently happens that what the city prides itself on most is its park — those acres which require to be the least altered from their original condition.

Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influences of each. Let these be your only diet-drink and botanical medicines.

In August live on berries, not dried meats and pemmican as if you

were on shipboard making your way through a waste ocean, or in the Darien Grounds, and so die of ship-fever and scurvy. Some will die of ship-fever and scurvy in an Illinois prairie, they lead such stifled and scurvy lives.

Be blown on by all the winds. Open all your pores and bathe in all the tides of nature, in all her streams and oceans, at all seasons. Miasma and infection are from within, not without. The invalid brought to the brink of the grave by an unnatural life, instead of imbibing the great influence that nature is — drinks only of the tea made of a particular herb — while he still continues his unnatural life — saves at the spile and wastes at the bung. He does not love nature or his life and so sickens and dies and no doctor can save him.

Grow green with spring — yellow and ripe with autumn. Drink of each season's influence as a vial, a true panacea of all remedies mixed for your especial use. The vials of summer never made a man sick, only those which he had stored in his cellar. Drink the wines not of your own but of nature's bottling — not kept in a goat- or pig-skin, but in the skins of a myriad fair berries.

Let Nature do your bottling, as also your pickling and preserving.

For all nature is doing her best each moment to make us well. She exists for no other end. Do not resist her. With the least inclination to be well we should not be sick. Men have discovered, or think that they have discovered the salutariness of a few wild things only, and not of all nature. Why nature is but another name for health. Some men think that they are not well in Spring or Summer or Autumn or Winter, (if you will excuse the pun) it is only because they are not indeed *well*, that is fairly *in* those seasons.

The Poems



The replica of Thoreau's cabin at Walden

LIST OF POEMS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Fair Haven
Voyagers Song
Life is a summer's day
Let's make the most of morn
In days of yore, tis said
Like torrents of the mountain
Each summer sound
Friendship
I love a careless streamlet
When breathless noon hath paused on hill and vale
Pens to mend, and hands to guide
The Bluebirds
May Morning
Walden
Truth — Goodness — Beauty — those celestial thrins
Strange that so many fickle gods
In the busy streets, domains of trade
Cliffs
My Boots
Noon
Fair Haven
The Thaw
Last night as I lay gazing with shut eyes
Love
I knew a man by sight
The deeds of king and meanest hedger
T will soon appear if we but look
The Evening Wind
The Peal of the Bells
The Shrike
Sympathy
The "Book of Gems."

The Assabet
The Breezed Invitation
Stanzas
Loves Farewell
Each more melodious note I hear
The Fisher's Son
Friendship
The Freshet
The Poet's Delay
The Summer Rain
Guido's Aurora
I've heard my neighbor's pump at night
Who sleeps by day and walks by night
When with pale cheek and sunken eye I sang
I arose before light
I'm guided in the darkest night
Friends —
When in some cove I lie
Who hears the parson
Sic Vita
Wait not till I invite thee
Friendship
On the Sun Coming Out in the Afternoon
They who prepare my evening meal below
My ground is high
If from your price ye will not swerve
Death cannot come too soon
The Mountains in the Horizon
The needles of the pine
The Echo of the Sabbath Bell — heard in the Woods
Low in the eastern sky
My life has been the poem I would have writ
To the Mountains
Greater is the depth of sadness
Where I have been
Better wait
Independence

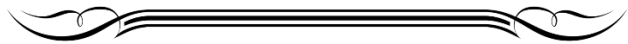
Cock-crowing
Inspiration
The Soul's Season
The Fall of the Leaf
Delay
Inspiration
Ive searched my faculties around
Who equallest the coward's haste
The Vireo
The coward ever sings no song
Only the slave knows of the slave
Great God, I ask thee for no meaner pelf
The Inward Morning
Within the circuit of this plodding life
To Edith
Delay in Friendship
Ah, 'tis in vain the peaceful din
Between the traveller and the setting sun
Have ye no work for a man to do
I sailed up a river with a pleasant wind
I was made erect and lone
I'm not alone
Our Country
Pray to what earth does this sweet cold belong
True kindness is a pure divine affinity
Until at length the north winds blow
Wait not till slaves pronounce the word
The Funeral Bell
Sometimes I hear the veery's clarion
Thou dusky spirit of the wood
Not unconcerned Wachusett rears his head
Nature
Godfrey of Boulogne
The Rabbit leaps
I am the Autumnal sun
Where'er thou sail'st who sailed with me
I was born upon thy bank river

Salmon Brook
The moon now rises to her absolute rule
My friends, why should we live?
I mark the summer's swift decline
My love must be as free
The Moon
Rumors From an Aeolian Harp
On shoulders whirled in some eccentric orbit
Far oer The bow
Methinks that by a strict behavior
I have rolled near some other spirits path
Fog
How little curious is man
To the Comet
Haze
Smoke
To a Stray Fowl
The Departure
Brother where dost thou dwell?
All things are current found
On fields oer which the reaper's hand has passed
Epitaph on an Engraver
Epitaph on Pursy
Ep on a Good Man
Epitaph
Ep on the World
The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell
On Ponkawtasset, since, we took our way
To a Marsh Hawk in Spring
Great Friend
The Offer
Morning
The Friend
Yet let us Thank the purblind race
Ye do command me to all virtue ever
Ive seen ye, sisters, on the mountain-side
I am bound, I am bound, for a distant shore

The Hero
At midnight's hour I raised my head
I seek the Present Time
Tell me ye wise ones if ye can
Behold these flowers
My friends, my noble friends, know ye —
The Earth
But now "no war nor battle's sound."
Such water do the gods distill
Die and be buried who will
I have seen some frozenfaced Connecticut
Such near aspects had we
Travelling
The Atlantides
Conscience is instinct bred in the house
That Phaeton of our day
Then spend an age in whetting thy desire
We should not mind if on our ear there fell
Men say they know many things
Away! away! away! away!
In the East fames are won
We see the planet fall
The good how can we trust?
Greece
Poverty
The respectable folks
Farewell
For though the eaves were rabitted
You Boston folks & Roxbury people
I will obey the strictest law of love
Why toll the bell today —
And once again
The Old Marlborough Road
Old meeting-house bell
It is a real place
Among the worst of men that ever lived
What's the rail-road to me?

Tall Ambrosia
Tis very fit the ambrosia of the gods
I saw a delicate flower had grown up 2 feet high
I am the little Irish boy
In Adams fall
Life
The moon moves up her smooth and sheeny path
I'm thankful that my life doth not deceive
Manhood
Music
To day I climbed a handsome rounded hill
The Just Made Perfect
I do not fear my thoughts will die
I'm contented you should stay
Man Man is the Devil
You must not only aim aright
The Chicadee
He knows no change who knows the true
When the toads begin to ring
Twas 30 years ago
The Rosa Sanguined
Forever in my dream & in my morning thought
Except, returning, by the Marlboro
All things decay
Any fool can make a rule

LIST OF POEMS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER



A-D E-H I-L M-O P-S T-V W-Z

Ah, 'tis in vain the peaceful din
All things are current found
All things decay
Among the worst of men that ever lived
And once again
Any fool can make a rule
At midnight's hour I raised my head
Away! away! away! away!
Behold these flowers
Better wait
Between the traveller and the setting sun
Brother where dost thou dwell?
But now "no war nor battle's sound."
Cliffs
Cock-crowing
Conscience is instinct bred in the house
Death cannot come too soon
Delay
Delay in Friendship
Die and be buried who will
Each more melodious note I hear
Each summer sound
Ep on a Good Man
Ep on the World
Epitaph
Epitaph on an Engraver
Epitaph on Pursy
Except, returning, by the Marlboro
Fair Haven
Fair Haven

Far oer The bow
Farewell
Fog
For though the eaves were rabitted
Forever in my dream & in my morning thought
Friends —
Friendship
Friendship
Friendship
Godfrey of Boulogne
Great Friend
Great God, I ask thee for no meaner pelf
Greater is the depth of sadness
Greece
Guido's Aurora
Have ye no work for a man to do
Haze
He knows no change who knows the true
How little curious is man
I am bound, I am bound, for a distant shore
I am the Autumnal sun
I am the little Irish boy
I arose before light
I do not fear my thoughts will die
I have rolled near some other spirits path
I have seen some frozenfaced Connecticut
I knew a man by sight
I love a careless streamlet
I mark the summer's swift decline
I sailed up a river with a pleasant wind
I saw a delicate flower had grown up 2 feet high
I seek the Present Time
I was born upon thy bank river
I was made erect and lone
I will obey the strictest law of love
I'm contented you should stay
I'm guided in the darkest night

I’m not alone
I’m thankful that my life doth not deceive
I’ve heard my neighbor’s pump at night
If from your price ye will not swerve
In Adams fall
In days of yore, tis said
In the busy streets, domains of trade
In the East fames are won
Independence
Inspiration
Inspiration
It is a real place
Ive searched my faculties around
Ive seen ye, sisters, on the mountain-side
Last night as I lay gazing with shut eyes
Let’s make the most of morn
Life
Life is a summer’s day
Like torrents of the mountain
Love
Loves Farewell
Low in the eastern sky
Man Man is the Devil
Manhood
May Morning
Men say they know many things
Methinks that by a strict behavior
Morning
Music
My Boots
My friends, my noble friends, know ye —
My friends, why should we live?
My ground is high
My life has been the poem I would have writ
My love must be as free
Nature
Noon

Not unconcerned Wachusett rears his head
Old meeting-house bell
On fields oer which the reaper's hand has passed
On Ponkawtasset, since, we took our way
On shoulders whirled in some eccentric orbit
On the Sun Coming Out in the Afternoon
Only the slave knows of the slave
Our Country
Pens to mend, and hands to guide
Poverty
Pray to what earth does this sweet cold belong
Rumors From an Aeolian Harp
Salmon Brook
Sic Vita
Smoke
Sometimes I hear the veery's clarion
Stanzas
Strange that so many fickle gods
Such near aspects had we
Such water do the gods distill
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Tall Ambrosia
Tell me ye wise ones if ye can
That Phaeton of our day
The "Book of Gems."
The Assabet
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The Breezed Invitation
The Chicadee
The coward ever sings no song
The deeds of king and meanest hedger
The Departure
The Earth
The Echo of the Sabbath Bell — heard in the Woods
The Evening Wind

The Fall of the Leaf
The Fisher's Son
The Freshet
The Friend
The Funeral Bell
The good how can we trust?
The Hero
The Inward Morning
The Just Made Perfect
The Moon
The moon moves up her smooth and sheeny path
The moon now rises to her absolute rule
The Mountains in the Horizon
The needles of the pine
The Offer
The Old Marlborough Road
The Peal of the Bells
The Poet's Delay
The Rabbit leaps
The respectable folks
The Rosa Sanguined
The Shrike
The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell
The Soul's Season
The Summer Rain
The Thaw
The Vireo
Then spend an age in whetting thy desire
They who prepare my evening meal below
Thou dusky spirit of the wood
Tis very fit the ambrosia of the gods
To a Marsh Hawk in Spring
To a Stray Fowl
To day I climbed a handsome rounded hill
To Edith
To the Comet
To the Mountains

Travelling
True kindness is a pure divine affinity
Truth — Goodness — Beauty — those celestial thrins
Twas 30 years ago
Until at length the north winds blow
Voyagers Song
Wait not till I invite thee
Wait not till slaves pronounce the word
Walden
We see the planet fall
We should not mind if on our ear there fell
What's the rail-road to me?
When breathless noon hath paused on hill and vale
When in some cove I lie
When the toads begin to ring
When with pale cheek and sunken eye I sang
Where I have been
Where'er thou sail'st who sailed with me
Who equallest the coward's haste
Who hears the parson
Who sleeps by day and walks by night
Why toll the bell today —
Within the circuit of this plodding life
Ye do command me to all virtue ever
Yet let us Thank the purblind race
You Boston folks & Roxbury people
You must not only aim aright

Fair Haven

When little hills like lambs did skip,
And Joshua ruled in heaven,
Unmindful rolled Musketuquid,
Nor budged an inch Fair Haven.

When principle is like to yield,
To selfish fear, or craven,
And fickle mortals round me fall,
I'll not forget Fair Haven.

If there's a cliff in this wide world,
'S, a stepping stone to heaven,
A pleasant, craggy, short hand cut,
It sure must be Fair Haven.

Oft have I climbed thy craggy steep,
Where ceaseless wheels the raven,
And whiled away an hour at e'en,
For love of thee, Fair Haven.

If e'er my bark be tempest-tossed,
And every hope the wave in,
And this frail hulk shall spring a leak,
I'll steer for thee, Fair Haven.

When cares press heavy on my soul,
And devils blue are craven,
Or e'er I lay me down to rest,
I'll think of thee, Fair Haven.

And when I take my last long rest,
And quiet sleep my grave in,
What kindlier covering for my breast,
Than thy warm turf Fair Haven.

Voyagers Song

Gentle river, gentle river
Swift as glides thy stream along,
Many a bold Canadian voyageur,
Bravely swelled the gay chanson

Thus of old our valiant fathers,
Many a lagging year agone
Gliding oer the rippling waters,
Taught to banish care in song.

Now the sun's behind the willows,
Now he gleams along the lake,
Hark across the bounding billows
Liquid songs the echoes wake.

Rise Apollo up before us,
E'ne the lark's begun her lay
Let us all in deafning chorus
Praise the glorious king of day.

Thus we lead a life of pleasure,
Thus we while the hours away,
Thus we revel beyond measure,
Gaily live we while we may.

Life is a summer's day

Life is a summer's day
When as it were for aye
We sport and play.

Anon the night comes on,
The ploughman's work is done,
And day is gone.

We read in this one page
Both Youth, Manhood, and Age
That hoary Sage.

The morning is our prime,
That laughs to scorn old Time,
And knows no crime.

The noon comes on apace,
And then with swel'tring face
We run our race.

When eve comes stealing o'er
We ponder at our door
On days of yore.

The patient kine, they say,
At dawn do frisk and play,
And well they may.

By noon their sports abate,
For then, as bards relate,
They vegetate.

When eventide hath come,
And grey flies cease their hum,
And now are dumb,

They leave the tender bud,
That’s cooling to the blood,
And chew the cud.

Let’s make the most of morn

Let’s make the most of morn,
Ere grey flies wind their horn,
And it is gone.

In days of yore, tis said

In days of yore, tis said, the swimming alder
Fashioned rude, with branches lopt, and stripped of its smooth coat,
Where fallen tree was none, and rippling streams vast breadth
Forbade adventurous leap, the brawny swain did bear
Secure to farthest shore.
The book has passed away, and with the book the lay
Which in my youthful days I loved to ponder.
Of curious things it told, how wise men 3 of Gotham
In a bowl did venture out to sea,
And darkly hints their awful fate
If men have dared the main to tempt in such frail barks,
Why may not wash tub round, or bread-troughs square oblong
Suffice to cross the purling wave and gain the destin'd port.

Like torrents of the mountain

Like torrents of the mountain
We've coursed along the lea,
From many a crystal fountain
Toward the far-distant sea.

And now we've gained life's valley,
And through the lowlands roam,
No longer may'st thou dally,
No longer spout and foam.

May pleasant meads await thee,
Where thou may'st freely roll
Towards that bright heavenly sea,
Thy resting place and goal.

And when thou reach'st life's down-hill,
So gentle be thy stream,
As would not turn a grist-mill
Without the aid of steam.

Each summer sound

Each summer sound
Is a summer round.

Friendship

I think awhile of Love, and while I think,
Love is to me a world,
Sole meat and sweetest drink,
And close connecting link
Tween heaven and earth.

I only know it is, not how or why,
My greatest happiness;
However hard I try,
Not if I were to die,
Can I explain.

I fain would ask my friend how it can be,
But when the time arrives,
Then Love is more lovely
Than anything to me,
And so I'm dumb.

For if the truth were known, Love cannot speak,
But only thinks and does;
Though surely out 'twill leak
Without the help of Greek,
Or any tongue.

A man may love the truth and practise it,
Beauty he may admire,
And goodness not omit,
As much as may befit
To reverence.

But only when these three together meet,
As they always incline,
And make one soul the seat,
And favorite retreat

Of loveliness;
When under kindred shape, like loves and hates
And a kindred nature,
Proclaim us to be mates,
Exposed to equal fates
Eternally;

And each may other help, and service do,
Drawing Love's bands more tight,
Service he ne'er shall rue
While one and one make two,
And two are one;

In such case only doth man fully prove
Fully as man can do,
What power there is in Love
His inmost soul to move
Resistlessly.

Two sturdy oaks I mean, which side by side,
Withstand the winter's storm,
And spite of wind and tide,
Grow up the meadow's pride,
For both are strong

Above they barely touch, but undermined
Down to their deepest source,
Admiring you shall find
Their roots are intertwined
Insep'rably.

I love a careless streamlet

“Long life and success to you.”
UBIQUE.

I love a careless streamlet,
That takes a mad cap leap,
And like a sparkling beamlet
Goes dashing down the steep.

When breathless noon hath paused on hill and vale

When breathless noon hath paused on hill and vale,
And now no more the woodman plies his axe,
Nor mower whets his scythe,
Somewhat it is, sole sojourner on earth,
To hear the veery on her oaken perch
Ringing her modest trill —
Sole sound of all the din that makes a world,
And I sole ear.
Fondly to nestle me in that sweet melody,
And own a kindred soul, speaking to me
From out the depths of universal being.
O'er birch and hazle, through the sultry air,
Comes that faint sound this way,
On Zephyr borne, straight to my ear.
No longer time or place, nor faintest trace
Of earth, the landscape's shimmer is my only space,
Sole remnant of a world.
Anon that throat has done, and familiar sounds
Swell strangely on the breeze, the low of cattle,
And the novel cries of sturdy swains
That plod the neighboring vale —
And I walk once more confounded a denizen of earth.

Pens to mend, and hands to guide

Pens to mend, and hands to guide.
Oh who would a schoolmaster be?

The Bluebirds

In the midst of the poplar that stands by our door,
We planted a bluebird box,
And we hoped before the summer was o'er
A transient pair to coax.

One warm summer's day the bluebirds came
And lighted on our tree,
But at first the wand'rers were not so tame
But they were afraid of me.

They seemed to come from the distant south,
Just over the Walden wood,
And they skimmed it along with open mouth
Close by where the bellows stood.

Warbling they swept round the distant cliff,
And they warbled it over the lea,
And over the blacksmith's shop in a jiff
Did they come warbling to me.

They came and sat on the box's top
Without looking into the hole,
And only from this side to that did they hop,
As 'twere a common well-pole.

Methinks I had never seen them before,
Nor indeed had they seen me,
Till I chanced to stand by our back door,
And they came to the poplar tree.

In course of time they built their nest
And reared a happy brood,
And every morn they piped their best
As they flew away to the wood.

Thus wore the summer hours away
To the bluebirds and to me,
And every hour was a summer's day,
So pleasantly lived we.

They were a world within themselves,
And I a world in me,
Up in the tree — the little elves —
With their callow family.

One morn the wind blowed cold and strong,
And the leaves when whirling away;
The birds prepared for their journey long
That raw and gusty day.

Boreas came blust'ring down from the north,
And ruffled their azure smocks,
So they launched them forth, though somewhat loth,
By way of the old Cliff rocks.

Meanwhile the earth jogged steadily on
In her mantle of purest white,
And anon another spring was born
When winter was vanished quite.

And I wandered forth o'er the steamy earth,
And gazed at the mellow sky,
But never before from the hour of my birth
Had I wandered so thoughtfully.

For never before was the earth so still,
And never so mild was the sky,
The river, the fields, the woods, and the hill,
Seemed to heave an audible sigh.

I felt that the heavens were all around,
And the earth was all below,
As when in the ears there rushes a sound

Which thrills you from top to toe.

I dreamed that I was an waking thought —
A something I hardly knew —
Not a solid piece, nor an empty nought,
But a drop of morning dew.

'Twas the world and I at a game of bo-peep,
As a man would dodge his shadow,
An idea becalmed in eternity's deep —
'Tween Lima and Segraddo.

Anon a faintly warbled note
From out the azure deep,
Into my ears did gently float
As is the approach of sleep.

It thrilled but startled not my soul;
Across my mind strange mem'ries gleamed,
As often distant scenes unroll
When we have lately dreamed

The bluebird had come from the distant South
To his box in the poplar tree,
And he opened wide his slender mouth,
On purpose to sing to me.

May Morning

The school boy loitered on his way to school,
Scorning to live so rare a day by rule.
So mild the air a pleasure ’twas to breathe,
For what seems heaven above was earth beneath.

Soured neighbors chatted by the garden pale,
Nor quarrelled who should drive the needed nail —
The most unsocial made new friends that day,
As when the sun shines husbandmen make hay

How long I slept I know not, but at last
I felt my consciousness returning fast,
For Zephyr rustled past with leafy tread,
And heedlessly with one heel grazed my head.

My eyelids opened on a field of blue,
For close above a nodding violet grew,
A part of heaven it seemed, which one could scent,
Its blue commingling with the firmament.

Walden

— True, our converse a stranger is to speech,
Only the practised ear can catch the surging words,
That break and die upon thy pebbled lips.
Thy flow of thought is noiseless as the lapse of thy own waters,
Wafted as is the morning mist up from thy surface,
So that the passive Soul doth breathe it in,
And is infected with the truth thou wouldst express.

E'en the remotest stars have come in troops
And stooped low to catch the benediction
Of thy countenance. Oft as the day came round,
Impartial has the sun exhibited himself
Before thy narrow skylight — nor has the moon
For cycles failed to roll this way
As oft as elsewhither, and tell thee of the night.
No cloud so rare but hitherward it stalked,
And in thy face looked doubly beautiful.
O! tell me what the winds have writ within these thousand years,
On the blue vault that spans thy flood —
Or sun transferred and delicately reprinted
For thy own private reading. Somewhat
Within these latter days I've read,
But surely there was much that would have thrilled the Soul,
Which human eye saw not
I would give much to read that first bright page,
Wet from a virgin press, when Eurus — Boreas —
And the host of airy quill-drivers
First dipped their pens in mist.

Truth — Goodness — Beauty — those celestial thrins

Truth — Goodness — Beauty — those celestial thrins,
Continually are bom; e’en now the Universe,
With thousand throats — and eke with greener smiles,
Its joy confesses at their recent birth.

Strange that so many fickle gods

Strange that so many fickle gods, as fickle as the weather,
Throughout Dame Natures provinces should always pull together.

In the busy streets, domains of trade

In the busy streets, domains of trade,
Man is a surly porter, or a vain and hectoring bully,
Who can claim no nearer kindredship with me
Than brotherhood by law.

Cliffs

The loudest sound that burdens here the breeze
Is the wood's whisper; 'tis when we choose to list
Audible sound, and when we list not,
It is calm profound. Tongues were provided
But to vex the ear with superficial thoughts.
When deeper thoughts upswell, the jarring discord
Of harsh speech is hushed, and senses seem
As little as may be to share the extacy.

My Boots

Anon with gaping fearlessness they quaff
The dewy nectar with a natural thirst,
Or wet their leathern lungs where cranberries lurk,
With sweeter wine than Chian, Lesbian, or Falernian far.
Theirs was the inward lustre that bespeaks
An open sole — unknowing to exclude
The cheerful day — a worthier glory far
Than that which gilds the outmost rind with darkness visible —
Virtues that fast abide through lapse of years,
Rather rubbed in than off.

Noon

What time the bittern, solitary bird,
Hides now her head amid the whispering fern,
And not a paddock vexes all the shore —
Nor feather ruffles the incumbent air,
Save where the wagtail interrupts the noon.

Fair Haven

When Winter fringes every bough
With his fantastic wreath,
And puts the seal of silence now
Upon the leaves beneath;

When every stream in its pent-house
Goes gurgling on its way,
And in his gallery the mouse
Nibbleth the meadow hay;

Methinks the summer still is nigh,
And lurketh underneath,
As that same meadow mouse doth lie
Snug in the last year's heath.

And if perchance the chicadee
Lisp a faint note anon,
The snow in summer's canopy,
Which she herself put on.

Fair blossoms deck the cheerful trees,
And dazzling fruits depend,
The north wind sighs a summer breeze,
The nipping frosts to fend,

Bringing glad tidings unto me,
The while I stand all ear,
Of a serene eternity,
Which need not winter fear.

Out on the silent pond straightway
The restless ice doth crack,
And pond sprites merry gambols play
Amid the deafening rack.

Eager I hasten to the vale,
As if I heard brave news,
How nature held high festival,
Which it were hard to lose.

I gambol with my neighbor ice,
And sympathizing quake,
As each new crack darts in a trice
Across the gladsome lake.

One with the cricket in the ground,
And faggot on the hearth,
Resounds the rare domestic sound
Along the forest path.

The Thaw

I saw the civil sun drying earth's tears —
Her tears of joy that only faster flowed,

Fain would I stretch me by the highway side,
To thaw and trickle with the melting snow,
That mingled soul and body with the tide,
I too may through the pores of nature flow.

But I alas nor tinkle can nor fume,
One jot to forward the great work of Time,
'Tis mine to hearken while these ply the loom,
So shall my silence with their music chime.

Last night as I lay gazing with shut eyes

Last night as I lay gazing with shut eyes
Into the golden land of dreams,
I thought I gazed adown a quiet reach
Of land and water prospect,
Whose low beach
Was peopled with the now subsiding hum
Of happy industry — whose work is done.

And as I turned me on my pillow o’er,
I heard the lapse of waves upon the shore,
Distinct as it had been at broad noonday,
An I were wandering at Rockaway.

Love

We two that planets erst had been
Are now a double star,
And in the heavens may be seen,
Where that we fixed are.

Yet whirled with subtle power along,
Into new space we enter,
And evermore with spheral song
Revolve about one centre.

I knew a man by sight

I knew a man by sight,
A blameless wight,
Who, for a year or more,
Had daily passed my door,
Yet converse none had had with him.

I met him in a lane,
Him and his cane,
About three miles from home,
Where I had chanced to roam,
And volumes stared at him, and he at me.

In a more distant place
I glimpsed his face,
And bowed instinctively;
Starting he bowed to me,
Bowed simultaneously, and passed along.

Next, in a foreign land
I grasped his hand,
And had a social chat,
About this thing and that,
As I had known him well a thousand years.

Late in a wilderness
I shared his mess,
For he had hardships seen,
And I a wanderer been;
He was my bosom friend, and I was his.

And as, methinks, shall all,
Both great and small,
That ever lived on earth,
Early or late their birth,

Stranger and foe, one day each other know.

The deeds of king and meanest hedger

The deeds of king and meanest hedger,
Stand side by side in heaven’s ledger.

T will soon appear if we but look

‘T will soon appear if we but look
At evening into earth’s day book,
Which way the great account doth stand
Between the heavens and the land.

The Evening Wind

The eastern mail comes lumbering in
With outmost waves of Europe's din;
The western sighs adown the slope,
Or mid the rustling leaves doth grope,
Laden with news from Californ',
Whateer transpired hath since morn,
How wags The world by brier and brake,
From hence to Athabasca lake.

The Peal of the Bells

When the world grows old by the chimney side,
Then forth to the youngling rocks I glide —
Where over the water, and over the land,
The bells are booming on either hand.

Now up they go ding, then down again dong,
And awhile they swing to the same old song,
And the metal goes round ‘t a single bound,
A-lulling the fields with its measured sound —
Till the tired tongue falls with a lengthened boom,
As solemn and loud as the crack of doom.
Then changed is their measure to tone upon tone,
And seldom it is that one sound comes alone,
For they ring out their peals in a mingled throng,
And the breezes waft the loud ding-dong along.

When the echo has reached me in this lone vale,
I am straightway a hero in coat of mail,
I tug at my belt and I march on my post,
And feel myself more than a match for a host.

I am on the alert for some wonderful Thing,
Which somewhere’s a taking place,
’Tis perchance the salute which our planet doth ring
When it meeteth another in space.

The Shrike

Hark — hark — from out the thickest fog
Warbles with might and main
The fearless shrike, as all agog
To find in fog his gain.

His steady sail he never furls
At any time o’ year,
And perched now on winter’s curls,
He whistles in his ear.

Sympathy

Lately alas I knew a gentle boy,
Whose features all were cast in Virtue's mould,
As one she had designed for Beauty's toy,
But after manned him for her own stronghold.

On every side he open was as day,
That you might see no lack of strength within,
For walls and ports do only serve alway
For a pretence to feebleness and sin.

Say not that Caesar was victorious,
With toil and strife who stormed the House of Fame
In other sense this youth was glorious,
Himself a kingdom wheresoe'er he came.

No strength went out to get him victory,
When all was income of its own accord;
For where he went none other was to see,
But all were parcel of their noble lord.

He forayed like the subtle haze of summer,
That stilly shows fresh landscapes to our eyes,
And revolutions works without a murmur,
Or rustling of a leaf beneath the skies.

So was I taken unawares by this,
I quite forgot my homage to confess;
Yet now am forced to know, though hard it is,
I might have loved him, had I loved him less.

Each moment, as we nearer drew to each,
A stern respect withheld us farther yet,
So that we seemed beyond each other's reach,
And less acquainted than when first we met.

We two were one while we did sympathize
So could we not the simplest bargain drive;
And what avails it now that we are wise,
If absence doth this doubleness contrive?

Eternity may not the chance repeat,
But I must tread my single way alone,
In sad remembrance that we once did meet,
And know that bliss irrevocably gone.

The spheres henceforth my elegy shall sing,
For elegy has other subject none;
Each strain of music in my ears shall ring
Knell of departure from that other one.

Make haste and celebrate my tragedy;
With fitting strain resound ye woods and fields;
Sorrow is dearer in such case to me
Than all the joys other occasion yields.

Is't then too late the damage to repair?
Distance, forsooth, from my weak grasp hath reft
The empty husk, and clutched the useless tare,
But in my hands the wheat and kernel left.

If I but love that virtue which he is,
Though it be scented in the morning air,
Still shall we be truest acquaintances,
Nor mortals know a sympathy more rare.

The “Book of Gems.”

— With cunning plates the polished leaves were decked,
Each one a window to the poet’s world,
So rich a prospect that you might suspect
In that small space all paradise unfurled.
It was a right delightful road to go,
marching through pastures of such fair herbage,
O’er hill and dale it lead, and to and fro,
From bard to bard, making an easy stage.
Where ever and anon I slaked my thirst
Like a tired traveller at some poet’s well,
Which from the teeming ground did bubbling burst,
And tinkling thence adown the page it fell.
Still through the leaves its music you might hear,
Till other springs fell faintly on the ear.

The Assabet

Up this pleasant stream let's row
For the livelong summer's day,
Sprinkling foam where'er we go
In wreaths as white as driven snow —
Ply the oars, away! away!

Now we glide along the shore,
Chucking lilies as we go,
While the yellow-sanded floor
Doggedly resists the oar,
Like some turtle dull and slow.

Now we stem the middle tide
Ploughing through the deepest soil,
Ridges pile on either side,
While we through the furrow glide,
Reaping bubbles for our toil.

Dew before and drought behind,
Onward all doth seem to fly;
Nought contents the eager mind,
Only rapids now are kind,
Forward are the earth and sky.

Sudden music strikes the ear,
Leaking out from yonder bank,
Fit such voyagers to cheer —
Sure there must be naiads here,
Who have kindly played this prank.

There I know the cunning pack
Where yon self-sufficient rill
All its telltale hath kept back,
Through the meadows held its clack,

And now babbleth its fill.

Silent flows the parent stream,
And if rocks do lie below
Smothers with her waves the din,
As it were a youthful sin,
Just as still and just as slow.

But this gleeful little rill,
Purling round its storied pebble,
Tinldes to the self same tune
From December until June,
Nor doth any drought enfeeble.

See the sun behind the willows,
Rising through the golden haze,
How he gleams along the billows —
Their white crests the easy pillows
Of his dew besprinkled rays.

Forward press we to the dawning,
For Aurora leads the way,
Sultry noon and twilight scorning,
In each dew drop of the morning
Lies the promise of a day.

Rivers from the sun do flow,
Springing with the dewy morn,
Voyageurs ‘gainst time do row,
Idle noon nor sunset know,
Even even with the dawn.

Since that first away! away!
Many a lengthy league we’ve rowed,
Still the sparrow on the spray,
Hastes to usher in the day
With her simple stanza’d ode.

The Breezed Invitation

Come let's roam the breezy pastures,
Where the freest zephyrs blow,
Batten on the oak tree's rustle,
And the pleasant insect bustle,
Dripping with the streamlet's flow.

What if I no wings do wear,
Thro' this solid seeming air
I can skim like any swallow
Who so dareth let her follow,
And we'll be a jovial pair.

Like two careless swifts let's sail,
Zephyrus shall think for me —
Over hill and over dale,
Riding on the easy gale,
We will scan the earth and sea.

Yonder see that willow tree
Winnowing the buxom air,
You a gnat and I a bee,
With our merry minstrelsy
We will make a concert there.

One green leaf shall be our screen,
Till the sun doth go to bed,
I the king and you the queen
Of that peaceful little green,
Without any subject's aid.

To our music Time will linger,
And earth open wide her ear,
Nor shall any need to tarry
To immortal verse to marry

Such sweet music as he’ll hear.

Stanzas

Nature doth have her dawn each day,
But mine are far between;
Content, I cry, for sooth to say,
Mine brightest are, I ween.

For when my sun doth deign to rise,
Though it be her noontide,
Her fairest field in shadow lies,
Nor can my light abide.

Sometimes I bask me in her day,
Conversing with my mate;
But if we interchange one ray,
Forthwith her heats abate.

Through his discourse I climb and see,
As from some eastern hill,
A brighter morrow rise to me
Than lieth in her skill.

As't were two summer days in one,
Two Sundays come together,
Our rays united make one Sun,
With fairest summer weather.

Loves Farewell

Light hearted, careless, shall I take my way,
When I to thee this being have resigned,
Well knowing where upon a future day,
With usurer's craft, more than myself to find.

Each more melodious note I hear

Each more melodious note I hear
Brings this reproach to me,
That I alone afford the ear,
Who would the music be.

The Fisher's Son

I know the world where land and water meet,
By yonder hill abutting on the main,
One while I hear the waves incessant beat,
Then turning round survey the land again.

Within a humble cot that looks to sea
Daily I breathe this curious warm life,
Beneath a friendly haven's sheltering lea
My noiseless day with myst'ry still is rife.

'Tis here, they say, my simple life began,
And easy credit to the tale I lend,
For well I know 'tis here I am a man,
But who will simply tell me of the end?

These eyes fresh opened spied the far off Sea,
Which like a silent godfather did stand,
Nor uttered one explaining word to me,
But introduced straight godmother Land.

And yonder still stretches that silent main,
With many glancing ships besprinkled o'er,
And earnest still I gaze and gaze again
Upon the self same waves and friendly shore.

Till like a watery humor on the eye
It still appears whichever way I turn,
Its silent waste and mute oerarching sky
With close shut eyes I clearly still discern.

And yet with lingering doubt I haste each mom
To see if Ocean still my gaze will greet,
And with each day once more to life am born,
And tread the earth once more with tott'ring feet.

My years are like a stroll upon the beach,
As near the ocean's edge as I can go;
My tardy steps its waves sometimes o'erreach,
Sometimes I stay to let them overflow.

Infinite work my hands find there to do,
Gathering the relics which the waves up cast;
Each tempest scours the deep for something new,
And every time the strangest is the last.

My sole employment 'tis and scrupulous care,
To place my gains beyond the reach of tides,
Each smoother pebble and each shell more rare
Which Ocean kindly to my hand confides.

I have but few companions on the shore,
They scorn the strand who sail upon the sea,
Yet oft I think the ocean they've sailed oer
Is deeper known upon the strand to me.

My neighbors sometimes come with lumb'ring carts,
As if they wished my pleasant toil to share,
But straight they go again to distant marts
For only weeds and ballast are their care.

'Tis by some strange coincidence if I
Make common cause with Ocean when he storms
Who can so well support a separate sky,
And people it with multitude of forms.

Oft in the stillness of the night I hear
Some restless bird presage the coming din,
And distant murmurs faintly strike my ear
From some bold bluff projecting far within.

My stillest depths straightway do inly heave
More genially than rests the summer's calm,
The howling winds through my soul's cordage grieve,

Till every shelf and ledge gives the alarm.

Oft at some ruling star my tide has swelled,
The sea can scarcely brag more wrecks than I,
Ere other influence my waves has quelled
The staunchest bark that floats is high and dry.

Friendship

"Friends, Romans, Countrymen, and Lovers."
Let such pure hate still underprop
Our love, that we may be
Each other's conscience,
And have our sympathy
Mainly from thence.

We'll one another treat like gods,
And all the faith we have
In virtue and in truth, bestow
On either, and suspicion leave
To gods below.

Two solitary stars —
Unmeasured systems far
Between us roll,
But by our conscious light we are
Determined to one pole.

What need confound the sphere —
God can afford to wait,
For him no hour's too late
That witnesseth one duty's end,
Or to another doth beginning lend.

Love will subserve no use,
More than the tints of flowers,
Only the independent guest
Frequents its bowers,
Inherits its bequest.

No speech though kind has it,
But kinder silence doles
Unto its mates,

By night consoles,
By day congratulates.

What saith the tongue to tongue?
What heareth ear of ear?
By the decrees of fate
From year to year,
Does it communicate.

Pathless the gulf of feeling yawns —
No trivial bridge of words,
Or arch of boldest span,
Can leap the moat that girds
The sincere man.

No show of bolts and bars
Can keep the foeman out,
Or ‘scape his secret mine
Who entered with the doubt
That drew the line.

No warder at the gate
Can let the friendly in,
But like the sun o’er all
He will the castle win,
And shine along the wall.

There’s nothing in the world I know
That can escape from love,
For every depth it goes below,
And every height above.
It waits as waits the sky,

Until the clouds go by,
Yet shines serenely on
With an eternal day,
Alike when they are gone,
And when they stay.

Implacable is Love, —
Foes may be bought or teased
From their hostile intent,
But he goes unappeased
Who is on kindness bent.

The Freshet

— A stir is on the Worc'ter hills,
And Nobscott too the valley fills —
Where scarce you'd fill an acorn cup
In summer when the sun was up,
No more you'll find a cup at all,
But in its place a waterfall.

Oh that the moon were in conjunction
To the dry land's extremest unction,
Till every dyke and pier were flooded,
And all the land with islands studded,
For once to teach all human kind,
Both those that plough and those that grind,
There is no fixture in the land,
But all unstable is as sand.

The river swelleth more and more,
Like some sweet influence stealing o'er
The passive town; and for awhile
Each tussock makes a tiny isle,
Where, on some friendly Ararat,
Resteth the weary water rat.

No ripple shows Musketaquid,
Her very current e'en is hid,
As deepest souls do calmest rest
When thoughts are swelling in the breast;
And she that in the summer's drought
Doth make a rippling and a rout,
Sleeps from Nawshawtuct to the cliff,
Unruffled by a single skiff;
So like a deep and placid mind
Whose currents underneath it wind —
For by a thousand distant hills

The louder roar a thousand rills,
And many a spring which now is dumb,
And many a stream with smothered hum,
Doth faster well and swifter glide
Though buried deep beneath the tide.

Our village shows a rural Venice,
Its broad lagunes where yonder fen is,
Far lovelier than the Bay of Naples
Yon placid cove amid the maples,
And in my neighbor's field of corn
I recognise the Golden Horn.

Here Nature taught from year to year,
When only red men came to hear,
Methinks 'twas in this school of art
Venice and Naples learned their part,
But still their mistress, to my mind,
Her young disciples leaves behind.

The Poet’s Delay

In vain I see the morning rise,
In vain observe the western blaze,
Who idly look to other skies,
Expecting life by other ways.

Amidst such boundless wealth without,
I only still am poor within,
The birds have sung their summer out,
But still my spring does not begin.

Shall I then wait the autumn wind,
Compelled to seek a milder day,
And leave no curious nest behind,
No woods still echoing to my lay?

The Summer Rain

My books I'd fain cast off, I cannot read,
'Twixt every page my thoughts go stray at large
Down in the meadow, where is richer feed,
And will not mind to hit their proper targe.

Plutarch was good, and so was Homer too,
Our Shakspeare's life was rich to live again,
What Plutarch read that was not good nor true,
Nor Shakspeare's books, unless his books were men.

Here while I lie beneath this walnut bough,
What care I for the Greeks, or for Troy town,
If juster battles are enacted now
Between the ants upon this hummock's crown.

Bid Homer wait till I the issue learn,
If red or black the gods will favor most,
Or yonder Ajax will the phalanx turn,
Struggling to heave some rock against the host.

Tell Shakspeare to attend some leisure hour,
For now I've business with this drop of dew,
And see you not, the clouds prepare a shower, —
I'll meet him shortly when the sky is blue.

This bed of herdsgrass and wild oats was spread
Last year w ith nicer skill than monarchs use,
A clover tuft is pillow for my head,
And violets quite overtop my shoes.

And now the cordial clouds have shut all in,
And gently swells the wind to say all's well,
The scattered drops are falling fast and thin,
Some in the pond, some in the lily bell.

Drip, drip the trees for all the country round,
And richness rare distils from every bough,
The wind alone it is makes every sound,
Shaking down crystals on the leaves below.

For shame the sun will never show himself,
Who could not with his beams e'er melt me so,
My dripping locks — they would become an elf
Who in a beaded coat does gaily go.

Guido's Aurora

The God of day rolls his car up the slopes,
Reining his prancing steeds with steady hand,
The moon's pale orb through western shadows gropes,
While morning sheds its light o'er sea and land.

Casdes and cities by the sounding main
Resound with all the busy din of life,
The fisherman unfurls his sails again
And the recruited warrior bides the strife.

The early breeze ruffles the poplar leaves,
The curling waves reflect the washed light,
The slumbering sea with the day's impulse heaves,
While o'er the western hills retires the drowsy night.

The sea birds dip their bills in ocean's foam,
Far circling out over the frothy waves —

I’ve heard my neighbor’s pump at night

I’ve heard my neighbor’s pump at night,
Long after Lyra sunk her light,
As if it were a natural sound,
And proper utterance of the ground —
Perchance some bittern in a fen —
Or else the squeak of a meadow hen.

Who sleeps by day and walks by night

Who sleeps by day and walks by night,
Will meet no spirit but some sprite.

When with pale cheek and sunken eye I sang

When with pale cheek and sunken eye I sang
Unto the slumbering world at midnights hour,
How it no more resounded with war's clang,
And virtue was decayed in Peace's bower;

How in these days no hero was abroad,
But puny men, afraid of war's alarms,
Stood forth to fight the battles of their Lord,
Who scarce could stand beneath a hero's arms;

A faint, reproachful, reassuring strain,
From some harp's strings touched by unskilful hands
Brought back the days of chivalry again,
And the surrounding fields made holy lands.

A bustling camp and an embattled host
Extending far on either hand I saw,
For I alone had slumbered at my post,
Dreaming of peace when all around was war.

I arose before light

I arose before light
To work with all my might,
With my arms braced for toil
Which no obstacle could foil,
For it robbed me of my rest
Like an anvil on my breast.

But as a brittle cup
I've held the hammer up,
And no sound from my forge
Has been heard in the gorge.
I look forward into night,
And seem to get some light;
E're long the forge will ring
With its ding-dong-ding,
For the iron will be hot
And my wages will be got.

I’m guided in the darkest night

I’m guided in the darkest night
By flashes of auroral light,
Which over dart thy eastern home
And teach me not in vain to roam.
Thy steady light on t’other side
Pales the sunset, makes day abide,
And after sunrise stays the dawn,
Forerunner of a brighter morn.

There is no being here to me
But staying here to be
When others laugh I am not glad,
When others cry I am not sad,
But be they grieved or be they merry
I’m supernumerary.
I am a miser without blame
Am conscience stricken without shame.
An idler am I without leisure,
A busy body without pleasure.
I did not think so bright a day
Would issue in so dark a night.
I did not think such sober play
Would leave me in so sad a plight,
And I should be most sorely spent
Where first I was most innocent.
I thought by loving all beside
To prove to you my love was wide,
And by the rites I soared above
To show you my peculiar love.

Friends —

They cannot help,
They cannot hurt,
Nor in indifference rest,
But when for a host's service girt,
They are a mutual guest.

They are a single power
Plenipotentiary,
No minister of state,
Anxious and wary
Decides their fate.

Where interest's self is
There is no go-between,
But where another reaps,
They do but glean
In scanty heaps.
They have learned well to hate,
And never grant reprieve,
Nor e'er succumb to love,
But sternly grieve,
And look above.

If faults arise, my friend will send for me
As some great god,
Who will the matter try,
Holding the scales, even or odd,
Under the sky —

Who will award strict justice
All the while,
Confounding mine and thine,
And share his smile,
When they 'gainst me incline.

When in some cove I lie

When in some cove I lie,
A placid lake at rest,
Scanning the distant hills,
A murmur from the west,
And gleam of thousand rills
Which gently swell my breast,
Announce the friendly thought,
And in one wave sun-lit
I’m softly brought
Seaward with it.

Who hears the parson

Who hears the parson
Will not hear the bell,
But if he deafly pass on
He will hear of hell.

I’ faith the people go to church
To leave the devil in the lurch,
But since they’ve carpeted the pews
To squat with hymn book he doth use.

Sic Vita

I am a parcel of vain strivings tied
By a chance bond together,
Dangling this way and that, their links
Were made so loose and wide,
Methinks,
For milder weather.

A bunch of violets without their roots,
And sorrel intermixed,
Encircled by a wisp of straw
Once coiled about their shoots,
The law
By which I'm fixed.

A nosegay which Time clutched from out
Those fair Elysian fields,
With weeds and broken stems, in haste,
Doth make the rabble rout
That waste
The day he yields.

And here I bloom for a short hour unseen,
Drinking my juices up,
Which have no root in the land
To keep my branches green,

But stand
In a bare cup.

Some tender buds were left upon my stem
In mimicry of life,
But ah! the children will not know
Till time has withered them,
The woe

With which they're rife.

But now I see I was not plucked for nought,
And after in life's vase
Of glass set while I might survive,
But by a kind hand brought
Alive
To a strange place.

That stock thus thinned will soon redeem its hours,
And by another year
Such as God knows, with freer air,
More fruits and fairer flowers
Will bear,
While I droop here.

Wait not till I invite thee

Wait not till I invite thee, but observe
I’m glad to see thee when thou com’st.

Friendship

Now we are partners in such legal trade,
We'll look to the beginnings, not the ends,
Nor to pay day — knowing true wealth is made
For current stock and not for dividends.

On the Sun Coming Out in the Afternoon

Methinks all things have travelled since you shined,
But only Time, and clouds, Time's team, have moved;
Again foul weather shall not change my mind,
But In the shade I will believe what in the sun I loved.

They who prepare my evening meal below

They who prepare my evening meal below
Carelessly hit the kettle as they go
With tongs or shovel,
And ringing round and round,
Out of this hovel
It makes an eastern temple by the sound.

At first I thought a cow-bell right at hand
Mid birches sounded o’er the open land,
Where I plucked flowers
Many years ago,
Spending midsummer hours
With such secure delight they hardly seemed to flow.

My ground is high

My ground is high,
But ’tis not dry,
What you call dew
Comes filtering through;
Though in the sky,
It still is nigh;
Its soil is blue
And virgin too.

If from your price ye will not swerve

If from your price ye will not swerve,
Why then Ill think the gods reserve
A greater bargain there above,
Out of their sup'rabundant love,
Have meantime better for me cared,
And so will get my stock prepared,
Plows of new pattern, hoes the same,
Designed a different soil to tame,
And sow my seed broadcast in air,
Certain to reap my harvest there.

Death cannot come too soon

Death cannot come too soon
Where it can come at all,
But always is too late
Unless the fates it call.

The Mountains in the Horizon

With frontier strength ye stand your ground —
With grand content ye circle round —
Tumultuous silence for all sound,
Ye springing nursery of rills,
Monadnock and the Peterborough hills —
Staid argument that never stirs,
Outcircling the philosophers.
While we enjoy a lingering ray,
Ye still oertop the western day,
Reposing yonder on God's croft
Like solid stacks of hay
The iris of the sky,
Ye run
Round the horizon of its eye
Whose pupil is the sun.
Upon a fresh and airy day,
When our globe ploughs its way
In salter seas of light,
Right opposite the bight
Of some elysian bay,
Ye are its dorsal fin,
Tossing th'etherial spray
With breezy din.
From on Fair Haven's pier,
For many a year.
I've seen ye westward bound,
Without a sound,
Like some vast fleet
Sailing through rain and sleet,
Through winters cold and summer's heat.
Ships of the line each one
That westward run,
Always before the gale,
Under a press of sail,

Convoying clouds
Which cluster in your shrouds —
With your slant masts ’tis sixes and sevens
But that ye rake the heavens,
So near the edge ye go,
Under the roof so low;
With weight of metal all untold,
I seem to feel ye in my firm seat here,
Immeasurable depth of hold,
And breadth of beam, and length of running gear.
The vessels on the sea
Are relative to ye,
Sailing by sympathy.
Late enterprises of mankind
Some near income to find.
Flitting from shore to shore,
Their voyages soon are oer,
But ye hold on upon your high emprise,
Until ye find a shore
Amid the skies.
Crossing the pliant flood
By swifter period,
They with the noontide weigh,
And glide before its ray
To some retired bay,
Their haunt —
Whence under tropic sun,
They ceaseless run,
Bearing gum Senegal and Tragicant.
For such small ends
Time gladly spends
Itself into eternity,
For this was ocean meant,
For this the sun was sent,
And moon was lent,
And ’tis the winds’ employment.
Time waits but till the field is tilled,

With such small deeds
His lap is filled
As that with seeds.

Man's little acts are grand
Beheld from land to land,
There as they lie in time
Within their native clime
For which the world did wait,
They are so great.
  No doubt that in the port from whence ye hail
Your masters did not fail
To register your wealth,
  For ye sail not by stealth,
  Skulking close in to land,
  With cargo contraband,
  But they who sent a venture out by ye
Have set the sun to see
Their honesty.

Especial I remember thee,
Wachusett, who like me
Standest alone without society.
My life is like a western sky
Unto an eastern eye
Of calm repose,
Each moment tinted variously
As the wind blows.
Now streaming like the northern light,
Each yet more north, more high, more bright,
Subsiding on the shores of night,
Like yonder field of grain
It alway doth remain
Firm at its root,
Bending through all its length
With graceful strength,
Only the shadows glide

From side to side,
But still the deep grain doth abide.
  Anon it sighs along
Like the breath of a song,
  Or the wind on the sedge,
  Or a tempest on the ledge,
  First swells then dies away
Like a harp strain,
  Only a string doth stay
To invite the wind again, —
  But thou art far and blue and still,
  Mocking my infirm will,
  Thou steadfast hill.
  Upholding heaven, holding down earth,
  Thy pastime from thy birth,
  Not steadied by the one nor leaning on the other,
May I approve myself thy worthy brother.

  Thy far blue eye,
  A remnant of the sky,
  See through the clearing or the gorge,
  Or from the windows of the forge
Doth leaven all it passes by.
  Thou art our rostrum in the west,
  Some ancient victory's bequest,
With nature's trophies fringed,
And natural colors tinged,
Not with the Tyrian dye,
But with the azure of the sky
Fronting an amphitheater of glory
Greater than Greek or Roman story —
Their old nobility westering with the sun,
Here to be done, perchance, or else begun.

  Nothing is true
  But stands 'tween me and you,
  Thou western pioneer

Who know’st not shame nor fear,
By venturous spirit driven
Under the eaves of heaven,
And canst expand thee there?
And breath enough of air?
The sun doth go behind thee not before,
Briefly to mend his store,
Even beyond the west
With thy small stock thou migratest
Into unclouded tracts,
Without a pilgrims axe,
Upon a loftier way
Than our low western rout,
Cleaving thy road on high
With thy well tempered brow,
And mak’st thyself a clearing in the sky.

The needles of the pine

The needles of the pine,
All to the west incline.

The Echo of the Sabbath Bell — heard in the Woods

Dong — sounds the brass in the east —
As if for a civic feast,
But I like that sound the best
Out of the fluttering west.

The steeple rings a knell,
But the fairies' silvery bell
Is the voice of that gentle folk —
Or else the horizon that spoke.

Its metal is not of brass,
But air and water and glass,
And under a cloud it is swung,
And by the wind is rung,
With a slim silver tongue

When the steeple tolls the noon
It soundeth not so soon,
Yet it rings an earlier hour,
And the sun has not reached its tower.

Low in the eastern sky

Low in the eastern sky
Is set thy glancing eye;
And though its gracious light
Ne'er riseth to my sight,
Yet every star that climbs
Above the gnarled limbs
Of yonder hill,
Conveys thy gentle will.

Believe I knew thy thought,
And that the zephyrs brought
Thy kindest wishes through,
As mine they bear to you,

That some attentive cloud
Did pause amid the crowd
Over my head,
While gentle things were said.

Believe the thrushes sung,
And that the flower-bells rung,
That herbs exhaled their scent,
And beasts knew what was meant,
The trees a welcome waved,
And lakes their margins laved,
When thy free mind
To my retreat did wind.

It was a summer eve,
The air did gently heave
While yet a low-hung cloud
Thy eastern skies did shroud;
The lightning's silent gleam,
Startling my drowsy dream,

Seemed like the flash
Under thy dark eyelash.

Still will I strive to be
As if thou wert with me;
Whatever path I take,
It shall be for thy sake,
Of gentle slope and wide,
As thou wert by my side,
Without a root
To trip thy gentle foot.

I'll walk with gentle pace,
And choose the smoothest place,
And careful dip the oar,
And shun the winding shore,
And gently steer my boat
Where water-lilies float,
And cardinal flowers
Stand in their sylvan bowers.

My life has been the poem I would have writ

My life has been the poem I would have writ,
But I could not both live and utter it.

To the Mountains

And when the sun puts out his lamp
We'll sleep serene within the camp,
Trusting to his invet'rate skill
Who leads the stars oer yonder hill,
Whose discipline doth never cease
To watch the slumberings of peace,
And from the virtuous hold afar
The melancholy din of war. —
For ye our sentries still outlie,
The earth your pallet and your screen the sky.

From steadfastness I will not swerve
Remembering my sweet reserve.

With all your kindness shown from year to year
Ye do but civil demons still appear,
Still to my mind
Ye are inhuman and unkind,
And bear an untamed aspect to my sight
After the "civil-suited" night
As if ye had lain out
Like to the Indian scout
Who lingers in the purlieus of the towns
With unexplored grace and savage frowns.

Greater is the depth of sadness

Greater is the depth of sadness
Than is any height of gladness.

Where I have been

Where I have been
There was none seen.

Better wait

Better wait
Than be too late.

Independence

My life more civil is and free
Than any civil polity.

Ye princes keep your realms
And circumscribed power,
Not wide as are my dreams,
Nor rich as is this hour.

What can ye give which I have not?
What can ye take which I have got?
Can ye defend the dangerless?
Can ye inherit nakedness?

To all true wants times ear is deaf,
Penurious states lend no relief
Out of their pelf —
But a free soul — thank God —
Can help itself.

Be sure your fate
Doth keep apart its state —
Not linked with any band —
Even the nobles of the land
In tented fields with cloth of gold —
No place doth hold
But is more chivalrous than they are.
And sigheth for a nobler war.
A finer strain its trumpet sings —
A brighter gleam its armor flings.

The life that I aspire to live
No man proposeth me —
No trade upon the street
Wears its emblazonry.

Cock-crowing

Upon my bed at early dawn
I hear the cocks proclaim the day,
Though the moon shines serenely on,
As if her queenly course they could not stay —

Nor pull her down with their faint din
From riding at that lofty height,
Who in her shining knows no sin,
As if unconscious of a nobler light.

Far in the east their larum rings,
As if a watchful host there thronged,
Where now its early clarion sings,
So bravely is their martial note prolonged.

One on more distant perch, more clear,
But fainter brags him still,
But ah! he promises, I fear,
More than his master's household will fulfill.

The stars withhold their shining not
Or singly or in scattered crowds,
But seem like Parthian arrows shot
By yielding night 'mid the advancing clouds.

Some wakeful steer exalts his trump
Afar oer the sonorous ground,
And with a sounding eastern pomp
It grandly marcheth the horizon round.

Invades each recess of the wood,
Awakes each slumbering bird,
Till every fowl leads forth her brood,
Which on her nest the tuneful summons heard.

Methinks that Time has reached his prime,
Eternity is in the flower,
I hear their faint confused chime
Now ushering in the sacred hour.

Over the hill top I have run
For fear to be too late,
I've left behind the luggard sun,
Travelling at such a rate,
To be in at creation,
To be up with fate.

And has time got so forward then?
From what perennial fount of joy,
Do ye inspire the hearts of men,
And teach them how the day-light to employ?

From your abundance pray impart
Who dost so freely spill,
Some bravery unto my heart,
Or let me taste of thy perennial rill.

There is such health and length of years
In the elixir of that note,
That God himself more young appears,
And a more youthful world through space doth float.

The tidy night with woolen feet,
I'm sure has lately passed this way,
And with her trim despatch so neat,
She has arranged the furniture of the day.

In yon thin sheet of mist spread oer
The lowland trees of leaves bereft,
Which round her head at eve she wore,
Methinks I see the housewife's duster left.

The fragrant mist exhales the scent

Of aromatic herbs, so you
Would say she blest whereer she went,
And through the fields had sprinkled perfumed dew.

Inspiration

Whate'er we leave to God, God does,
And blesses us;
The work we choose should be our own,
God lets alone.

If with light head erect I sing,
Though all the muses lend their force,
From my poor love of anything,
The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

But if with bended neck I grope,
Listening behind me for my wit,
With faith superior to hope,
More anxious to keep back than forward it,

Making my soul accomplice there
Unto the flame my heart hath lit,
Then will the verse forever wear,
Time cannot bend the line which God hath writ.

Always the general show of things
Floats in review before my mind,
And such true love and reverence brings,
That sometimes I forget that I am blind.

But soon there comes unsought, unseen,
Some clear divine electuary,
And I, who had but sensual been,
Grow sensible, and as God is am wary.

I hearing get who had but ears,
And sight who had but eyes before,
I moments live who lived but years,
And truth discern who knew but learning's lore.

I hear beyond the range of sound,
I see beyond the verge of sight,
New earths — new skies — new seas — around,
And in my noon the sun doth pale his light.

A clear and ancient harmony
Peirces my soul through all its din,
As through its utmost melody,
Further behind than they, further within.

More swift its bolt than lightning is,
Its voice than thunder is more loud,
It doth expand my privacies
To all, and leave me single in the crowd.

It speaks with such authority,
With so serene and lofty tone,
That idle Time runs gadding by,
And leaves me with Eternity alone.

Then chiefly is my natal hour,
And only then my prime of life,
Of manhood's strength it is the flower,
'T is peace's end and wars beginning strife.

'T hath come in summer's broadest noon,
By a grey wall or some chance place,
Unseasoned time, insulted June,
And vexed the day with its presuming face.

Such fragrance round my sleep it makes,
More rich than are Arabian drugs,
That my soul scents its life, and wakes
The body up — from 'neath its perfumed rugs.

Such is the Muse — the heavenly maid,
The star that guides our mortal course,
Which shows where life's true kernel's laid,

Its wheat's fine flower, and its undying force.

Who with one breath attunes the spheres,
And also my poor human heart,
With one impulse propels the years
Around, and gives my throbbing pulse its start.

I will not doubt forever more,
Nor falter from an iron faith,
For if the system be turned oer,
God takes not back the word which once he saith.

I will believe the love untold,
Which not my worth nor want hath bought,
Which wood me young and woos me old,
And call the stars to witness now my thought.

My memory I'll educate
To know the one historic truth,
Remembering to the latest date
The only true, and sole immortal youth.

Be but thy inspiration given,
No matter through what dangers sought,
I'll fathom hell or climb to heaven,
And yet esteem that cheap which love has bought.

Fame cannot tempt the bard
Who's famous with his God,
Nor laurel him reward,
Who hath his maker's nod.

The Soul's Season

Thank God who seasons thus the year,
And sometimes kindly slants his rays,
For in his winter he's most near,
And plainest seen upon the shortest days.

Who gently tempers now his heats,
And then his harsher cold, lest we
Should surfeit on the Summer's sweets,
Or pine upon the Winter's crudity.

Grown tired of this rank summer's wealth,
Its raw and superficial show,
I fain would hie away by stealth
Where no roads meet, but still't doth trivial grow.

Methinks by dalliance it hath caught
The shallow habits of the town,
Itself infected most, which ought
With sterner face upon our tameness frown.

A sober mind will walk alone
Apart from nature if need be,
And only its own seasons own,
For nature having its humanity.

Sometimes a late Autumnal thought
Has crossed my mind in green July,
And to its early freshness brought
Late ripened fruits and an autumnal sky.

A dry but golden thought which gleamed
Across the greenness of my mind,
And prematurely wise it seemed,
Too ripe 'mid summer's youthful bowers to find.

So have I seen one yellow leaf
Amid the glossy leaves of June,
Which pensive hung, though not with grief,
Like some fair flower, it had changed so soon.

I scent my med'cine from afar,
Where the rude simpler of the year,
October leads the rustling war,
And strews his honors on the summer's bier.

The Fall of the Leaf

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Its raw and superficial show,
I fain would hie away by stealth
Where no roads meet, but still't doth trivial grow.

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For nature having its humanity.

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Has crossed my mind in green July,
And to its early freshness brought
Late ripend fruits and an autumnal sky.

A dry but golden thought which gleamed
Athwart the greenness of my mind,
And prematurely wise it seemed,
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Amid the glossy leaves of June,
Which pensive hung, though not with grief,
Like some fair flower, it had changed so soon.

I scent my med'cine from afar,
Where the rude simpler of the year
October leads the rustling war,
And strews his honors on the summer's bier.

The evening of the year draws on,
The fields a later aspect wear,
Since summer's garishness is gone
Some grains of night tincture the noontide air.

Behold the shadows of the trees
Now circle wider ‘bout their stem,
Like sentries which by slow degrees
Perform their rounds, gently protecting them.

And as the season doth decline
The sun affords a scantier light,
Behind each needle of the pine
There lurks a small auxiliar of the night.

After each shrub and straggling fence
That marks the meadow’s pensive green,
And shows the meadow’s opulence,
Evening’s insidious foot at noon is seen.

Wave upon wave a mellower air
Flows over all the region,
As if there were some tincture there
Of ripeness caught from the long summer’s sun.

I hear the cricket’s slumbrous lay
Around, beneath me, and on high,
It rocks the night, it lulls the day,
And everywhere ’tis nature’s lullaby.

But most he chirps beneath the sod,
Where he hath made his winter’s bed,
His creak grown fainter, but more broad,
A film of autumn o’er the summer spread.

Upon my bed at early dawn
I hear the cocks proclaim the day,
Though the moon shines serenely on
As if her queenly course they could not stay;

Nor pull her down with their faint din
From riding at that lofty height,
Who in her shining knows no sin,

But is unconscious of a nobler light.

The stars withhold their shining not
Or singly or in scattered crowds,
But seem like Parthian arrows shot
By yielding night ‘mid the advancing clouds.

And has time got so forward then?
From what perennial fount of joy
Do ye inspire the hearts of men,
And teach them how the daylight to employ?

From your abundance pray impart,
Who dost so freely spill,
Some bravery unto my heart,
Or let me taste of thy perennial rill.

Small birds in fleets migrating by
Now beat across some meadow’s bay,
And as they tack and veer on high,
With faint and hurried click beguile the way.

The moon is ripe fruit in the sky
Which overhangs her harvest now,
The sun doth break his stem well nigh
From summer’s height he has declined so low.

The greedy earth doth pluck his fruit,
And cast it in night’s lap,
The stars more brightly glisten, mute
Though their tears be, to see their lords mishap.

The harvest rattles in the wind,
Ripe apples overhang the hay,
The cereal flavor of my mind
Natheless, tells me I am as ripe as they.

I hearing get who had but ears,

And sight who had but eyes before,
I moments live who lived but years,
And truth discern who knew but learning's lore.

Far in the woods these golden days
Some leaf obeys its maker's call,
And through their hollow aisles it plays
With delicate touch the prelude of the fall.

Gently withdrawing from its stem
It lightly lays itself along,
Where the same hand hath pillowed them
Resigned to sleep upon the old year's throng.

The loneliest birch is brown and sere,
The farthest pool is strewn with leaves,
Which float upon their watery bier,
Where is no eye that sees, no heart that grieves.

I marked when first the wind grew rude
Each leaf curled like a living thing,
As if with the ripe air it would
Secure some faint memorial of the spring.

Then for its sake it turned a boat
And dared new elements to brave,
A painted palace which did float
A summer's hoarded wealth to save.

Oh could I catch these sounds remote,
Could I preserve to human ear,
The strains which on the breezes float,
And sing the requiem of the dying year.

I stood beside an oaken copse
When the first gale of autumn sighed,
It gently waved the birch tree tops
Then rustled the oak leaves and died

But not the strains which it awoke,
For in my inmost sense I hear
The melody of which it spoke
Still faintly rising on my inward ear.

A ripple on the river fell,
A shadow o'er the landscape passed,
And still the whispering ferns could tell
Whither the stranger travelled so fast.

How stand the cottages of men
In these so fair October days,
Along the wood along the fen
I see them looming through the mellow haze.

Immersed in Nature there they lie
Against some cliff or chestnuts shade
Scarce obvious to the travellers eye
Who thoughtful traverses the forest glade.

The harvest lies about the door
The chestnut drops its burs around
As if they were the stock that bore
The yellow crops that strew the ground.

The lily loves the river's tide
The meadow's are the daisy's haunt
The aspens on the mountain side
Here child of nature grows the human plant.

The jay screams through the chestnut wood
The crisped and yellow leaves around
Are hue and texture of my mood,
And these rough burs my heirlooms on the ground.

The thread bare trees so poor and thin
They are no wealthier than I,
But with as brave a core within

They rear their boughs to the October sky.

Poor knights they are which bravely wait
The charge of winter's cavalry,
Keeping a simple Roman state
Discumbered of their Persian luxury.

Thank God who seasons thus the year
And sometimes kindly slants his rays,
For in his winter he's most near
And plainest seen upon the shortest days.

Who gently tempers now his heats
And then his harsher cold, lest we
Should surfeit on the summer's sweets,
Or pine upon the winter's crudity.

Delay

No generous action can delay
Or thwart our higher, steadier aims,
But if sincere and true are they,
It will arouse our sight and nerve our frames.

Inspiration

If thou wilt but stand by my ear,
When through the field thy anthem's rung,
When that is done I will not fear
But the same power will abet my tongue.

Ive searched my faculties around

Ive searched my faculties around
To learn why life to me was lent
I will attend his faintest sound
And then declare to man what God hath meant

Who equallest the coward’s haste

Who equallest the coward’s haste
And still inspires the faintest heart
Whose lofty fame is not disgraced
Though it assume the lowest part

The Vireo

Upon the lofty elm tree sprays
The vireo rings the changes sweet,
During the trivial summer days,
Striving to lift our thoughts above the street.

The coward ever sings no song

The coward ever sings no song,
He listens to no chime,
He has no heart, he has no tongue,
To build the lofty rhyme.

Only the slave knows of the slave

Only the slave knows of the slave,
Only the free the free,
For what ye principally have,
That only can ye see.

Great God, I ask thee for no meaner pelf

Great God, I ask thee for no meaner pelf
Than that I may not disappoint myself,
That in my action I may soar as high,
As I can now discern with this clear eye.

And next in value, which thy kindness lends,
That I may greatly disappoint my friends,
Howe'er they think or hope that it may be,
They may not dream how thou'st distinguished me.

That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,
And my life practice more than my tongue saith;
That my low conduct may not show,
Nor my relenting lines,
That I thy purpose did not know,
Or overrated thy designs.

The Inward Morning

Packed in my mind lie all the clothes
Which outward nature wears,
And in its fashion's hourly change
It all things else repairs.

In vain I look for change abroad,
And can no difference find,
Till some new ray of peace uncalled
Illumes my inmost mind.

What is it gilds the trees and clouds,
And paints the heavens so gay,
But yonder fast abiding light
With its unchanging ray?

Lo, when the sun streams through the wood
Upon a winter's morn,
Wher'er his silent beams intrude
The murky night is gone.

How could the patient pine have known
The morning breeze would come,
Or humble flowers anticipate
The insect's noonday hum?

Till the new light with morning cheer
From far streamed through the aisles,
And nimbly told the forest trees
For many stretching miles.

I've heard within my inmost soul
Such cheerful morning news,
In the horizon of my mind
Have seen such orient hues,

As in the twilight of the dawn,
When the first birds awake,
Are heard within some silent wood,
Where they the small twigs break,

Or in the eastern skies are seen,
Before the sun appears,
The harbingers of summer heats
Which from afar he bears.

Within the circuit of this plodding life

Within the circuit of this plodding life
There enter moments of an azure hue,
Untarnished fair as is the violet
Or anemone, when the spring strews them
By some meandering rivulet, which make
The best philosophy untrue that aims
But to console man for his grievances.
I have remembered when the winter came,
High in my chamber in the frosty nights,
When in the still light of the cheerful moon,
On every twig and rail and jutting spout,
The icy spears were adding to their length
Against the arrows of the coming sun,
How in the shimmering noon of summer past
Some unrecorded beam slanted across
The upland pastures where the Johnswort grew;
Or heard, amid the verdure of my mind,
The bee's long smothered hum, on the blue flag
Loitering amidst the mead; or busy rill,
Which now through all its course stands still and dumb
Its own memorial, — purling at its play
Along the slopes, and through the meadows next,
Until its youthful sound was hushed at last
In the staid current of the lowland stream;
Or seen the furrows shine but late upturned,
And where the fieldfare followed in the rear,
When all the fields around lay bound and hoar
Beneath a thick integument of snow.
So by God's cheap economy made rich
To go upon my winter's task again.

To Edith

Thou little bud of being, Edith named,
With whom I've made acquaintance on this earth,
Who knowest me without impediment,
As flowers know the winds that stir their leaves,
And rid'st upon my shoulders as the sphere,
Turning on me thy sage reserved eye,
Behind whose broad & charitable gaze
Floats the still true & universal soul
With the pure azure of the general day,
Not yet a peopled & a vulgar town,
Rather a pure untarnished country ground;
For thou art whole, not yet begun to die,
While men look on me with their shrivelled rays
Streaming through some small chink of the broad sky;
Pure youthful soul, thou hast begun to be,
To cumulate thy sin & piety.

Delay in Friendship

The blossoms on the tree
Swell not too fast for me.
God does not want quick work but sure
Not to be tempted by so cheap a lure.

Owing to slow steps I shall be never
By my friend out run,
More than the tide can land from ocean sever,
Or earth distance the sun.

The friend is patient, he can stay
Some centuries yet,
Though then I may not get
So on my way
As fit to be his mate.

Wilt thou not wait for me my friend,
Or give a longer lease?
Why think I can wait for myself,
If so I please.
Now as ye take one step away
Thinking to leave me here —
The heavens will still beyond ye lay,
And though ye are far they will be near.

Ye will be pilgrims on the road
Whither my heart has single gone,
And never looks back from its abode
On ye thus left forlorn.

Love equals swift and slow
And high & low —
Racer and lame —
The hunter and his game.

Ah, ’tis in vain the peaceful din

Ah, ’tis in vain the peaceful din
That wakes the ignoble town,
Not thus did braver spirits win
A patriot’s renown.

There is one field beside this stream,
Wherein no foot does fall,
But yet it beareth in my dream
A richer crop than all.

Let me believe a dream so dear,
Some heart beat high that day,
Above the petty Province here,
And Britain far away;

Some hero of the ancient mould,
Some arm of knightly worth,
Of strength unbought, and faith unsold,
Honored this spot of earth;
Who sought the prize his heart described,
And did not ask release,
Whose free-born valor was not bribed
By prospect of a peace.

The men who stood on yonder height
That day are long since gone;
Not the same hand directs the fight
And monumental stone.

Ye were the Grecian cities then,
The Romes of modern birth,
Where the New England husbandmen
Have shown a Roman worth.

In vain I search a foreign land

To find our Bunker Hill,
And Lexington and Concord stand
By no Laconian rill.

Between the traveller and the setting sun

Between the traveller and the setting sun,
Upon some drifting sand heap of the shore,
A hound stands o’er the carcass of a man.

Have ye no work for a man to do

Have ye no work for a man to do —
No earnest work that will expand the frame,
And give a soundness to the muscles too?
How ye do waste your time!
Pray make it worth the while to live,
Or worth the while to die.
Show us great actions piled on high,
Tasking our utmost strength touching the sky,
As if we lived in a mountainous country.
Hell were not quite so hard to bear
If one were honored with its hottest place.
And did ye fear ye should spoil Hell
By making it sublime?

I sailed up a river with a pleasant wind

I sailed up a river with a pleasant wind,
New lands, new people, and new thoughts to find;
Many fair reaches and headlands appeared,
And many dangers were there to be feared;
But when I remember where I have been,
And the fair landscapes that I have seen,
THOU seemest the only permanent shore,
The cape never rounded, nor wandered o’er.

I was made erect and lone

I was made erect and lone
And within me is the bone
Still my vision will be clear
Still my life will not be drear
To the center all is near
Where I sit there is my throne
If age choose to sit apart
If age choose give me the start
Take the sap and leave the heart.

I’m not alone

I’m not alone
If I stand by myself,
But more than one,
And not in my own pelf.

I’m understood
If my intent is good,
For who obeys
The truth finds his own praise.

Our Country

It is a noble country where we dwell,
Fit for a stalwart race to summer in;
From Madawaska to Red River raft,
From Florid keys to the Missouri forks,
See what unwearied (and) copious streams
Come tumbling to the east and southern shore,
To find a man stand on their lowland banks:
Behold the innumerous rivers and the licks
Where he may drink to quench his summer's thirst,
And the broad corn and rice fields yonder, where
His hands may gather for his winter's store.

See the fair reaches of the northern lakes
To cool his summer with their inland breeze,
And the long slumbering Appalachian range
Offering its slopes to his unwearied knees!
See what a long lipped sea doth clip the shores,
And noble strands where navies may find port;
See Boston, Baltimore, and New York stand
Fair in the sunshine on the eastern sea,
And yonder too the fair green prairie.

See the red race with sullen step retreat,
Emptying its graves, striking the wigwam tent,
And where the rude camps of its brethern stand,
Dotting the distant green, their herds around;
In serried ranks, and with a distant clang,
Their fowl fly o'er, bound to the northern lakes,
Whose plashing waves invite their webbéd feet.
Such the fair reach and prospect of the land,
The journeying summer creeps from south to north
With wearied feet, resting in many a vale;
Its length doth tire the seasons to o'ercome,
Its widening breadth doth make the sea-breeze pause

And spend its breath against the mountain's side:
Still serene Summer paints the southern fields,
While the stern Winter reigns on northern hills.

Look nearer, — know the lineaments of each face, —
Learn the far-travelled race, and find here met
The so long gathering congress of the world!
The Afric race brought here to curse its fate,
Erin to bless, — the patient German too,
Th' industrious Swiss, the fickle, sanguine Gaul,
And manly Saxon, leading all the rest.
All things invite this earth's inhabitants
To rear their lives to an unheard-of height,
And meet the expectation of the land;
To give at length the restless race of man
A pause in the long westering caravan.

Pray to what earth does this sweet cold belong

Pray to what earth does this sweet cold belong,
Which asks no duties and no conscience?
The moon goes up by leaps her cheerful path
In some far summer stratum of the sky,
While stars with their cold shine bedot her way.
The fields gleam mildly back upon the sky,
And far and near upon the leafless shrubs
The snow dust still emits a silvery light.
Under the hedge, where drift banks are their screen,
The titmice now pursue their downy dreams,
As often in the sweltering summer nights
The bee doth drop asleep in the flower cup,
When evening overtakes him with his load.
By the brooksides, in the still genial night,
The more adventurous wanderer may hear
The crystals shoot and form, and winter slow
Increase his rule by gentlest summer means.

True kindness is a pure divine affinity

True kindness is a pure divine affinity,
Not founded upon human consanguinity.
It is a spirit, not a blood relation,
Superior to family and station.

Until at length the north winds blow

Until at length the north winds blow,
And beating high mid ice and snow,
The sturdy goose brings up the rear,
Leaving behind the cold cold year.

Wait not till slaves pronounce the word

Spes sibi quisque
Each one his own hope

Wait not till slaves pronounce the word
To set the captive free,
Be free yourselves, be not deferred,
And farewell slavery.

Ye are all slaves, ye have your price,
And gang but cries to gang.
Then rise, the highest of ye rise,
I hear your fetters clang.
Think not the tyrant sits afar
In your own breasts ye have
The District of Columbia
And power to free the Slave.

The warmest heart the north doth breed,
Is still too cold and far,
The colored man's release must come
From outcast Africa.

Make haste & set the captive free! —
Are ye so free that cry?
The lowest depths of slavery
Leave freedom for a sigh.

The Funeral Bell

One more is gone
Out of the busy throng
That tread these paths;
The church bell tolls,
Its sad knell rolls
To many hearths.

Flower bells toll not,
Their echoes roll not
Unto my ear; —
There still perchance,
That gentle spirit haunts
A fragrant bier.

Low lies the pall,
Lowly the mourners all
Their passage grope; —
No sable hue
Mars the serene blue
Of heaven's cope.
In distant dell
Faint sounds the funeral bell,
A heavenly chime;
Some poet there
Weaves the light burthened air
Into sweet rhyme.

Sometimes I hear the veery’s clarion

Sometimes I hear the veery’s clarion,
Or brazen trump of the impatient jay,
And in secluded woods the chicadee
Doles out her scanty notes, which sing the praise
Of heroes, and set forth the loveliness
Of virtue evermore.

Thou dusky spirit of the wood

Thou dusky spirit of the wood,
Bird of an ancient brood,
Flitting thy lonely way,
A meteor in the summer's day,
From wood to wood, from hill to hill,
Low over forest, field and rill,
What wouldst thou say?
Why shouldst thou haunt the day?
What makes thy melancholy float?
What bravery inspires thy throat,
And bears thee up above the clouds,
Over desponding human crowds,
Which far below
Lay thy haunts low?

Not unconcerned Wachusett rears his head

Not unconcerned Wachusett rears his head
Above the fields so late from nature won
With patient brow unmoved as one who read
New annals in the history of man.

Nature

O nature I do not aspire
To be the highest in thy quire,
To be a meteor in the sky
Or comet that may range on high,
Only a zephyr that may blow
Among the reeds by the river low.
Give me thy most privy place
Where to run my airy race.
In some withdrawn unpublic mead
Let me sigh upon a reed,
Or in the woods with leafy din
Whisper the still evening in,
For I had rather be thy child
And pupil in the forest wild
Than be the king of men elsewhere
And most sovereign slave of care
To have one moment of thy dawn
Than share the city's year forlorn.
Some still work give me to do
Only be it near to you.

Godfrey of Boulogne

The moon hung low o'er Provence vales,
'Twas night upon the sea,
Fair France was woo'd by Afric gales
And paid in minstrelsy
Along the Rhone then moves a band,
Their banner in the breeze,
Of mail-clad men with iron hand,
And steel on breast and knees.
The herdsman following his droves
Far in the night alone,
Read faintly through the olive groves, —
'Twas Godfrey of Boulogne

The mist still slumbered on the heights
The glaciers lay in shade,
The stars withdrew with faded lights,
The moon went down the glade.
Proud Jura saw the day from far,
And showed it to the plain;
She heard the din of coming war,
But told it not again.
The goatherd seated on the rocks,
Dreaming of battles none
Was wakened by his startled flocks, —
'Twas Godfrey of Boulogne.

Night hung upon the Danube's stream,
Deep midnight on the vales,
Along the shore no beacons gleam,
No sound is on the gales.
The Turkish lord has banished care
The harem sleeps profound,
Save one fair Georgian sitting there
Upon the Moslem ground.

The lightning flashed a transient gleam,
A glancing banner shone,
A host swept swiftly down the stream, —
’Twas Godfrey of Boulogne.
’Twas noon upon Byzantium,
On street and tower and sea,
On Europe’s edge a warlike hum
Of gathered chivalry.
A troop went boldly through the throng,
Of Ethiops, Arabs, Huns,
Jews Greeks and Turk, to right their wrong
Their swords flashed thousand suns.
Their banner cleaved Byzantium’s dust,
And like the sun it shone,
their armor had acquired no rust, —
’Twas Godfrey of Boulogne.

The Rabbit leaps

The Rabbit leaps
The mouse outcreeps
The flag out-peeps
Beside the brook.

The ferret weeps
The marmot sleeps
The owlet keeps
In his snug nook.

The apples thaw
The ravens caw
The squirrels gnaw
The frozen fruit;

To their retreat
We track the feet
Of mice that eat
The apples root.

The willows droop
The alders stoop
The pheasants group
Beneath the snow.

The catkins green
Cast o'er the scene
A summer sheen
A genial glow.

The snow dust falls
The otter crawls
The partridge calls
Far in the wood

The traveller dreams
The tree-ice gleams
The blue jay screams
In angry mood.

I am the Autumnal sun

I am the Autumnal sun,
With Autumn gales my race is run.
When will the hazle put forth its flowers,
And the grape ripen under my bowers?
When will the harvest and the hunter's moon
Turn my midnight into midnoon?
I am all sere & yellow,
And to my core mellow.
The mast is dropping within my woods
The winter is lurking within my moods
And the rusding of the withered leaf
Is the constant music of my grief,
My gay colored grief,
My autumnal relief.

Where’er thou sail’st who sailed with me

Where’er thou sail’st who sailed with me,
Though now thou climbest loftier mounts
And fairer rivers dost ascend
Be thou my muse, my Brother.

I was born upon thy bank river

I was born upon thy bank river
My blood flows in thy stream
And thou meanderest forever
At the bottom of my dream

Salmon Brook

Salmon Brook
Pennichook
Ye sweet waters of my brain
When shall I look
Or cast the hook
In thy waves again?

Silver eels
Wooden creels
These the baits that still allure
And dragon fly
That floated by
May they still endure?

The moon now rises to her absolute rule

The moon now rises to her absolute rule,
And the husbandman and hunter
Acknowledge her for their mistress.
Asters and golden reign in the fields
And the life everlasting withers not.
The fields are reaped and shorn of their pride
But an inward verdure still crowns them
The thistle scatters its down on the pool
And yellow leaves clothe the river —
And nought disturbs the serious life of men.
But behind the sheaves and under the sod
There lurks a ripe fruit which the reapers have not gathered
The true harvest of the year — the boreal fruit
Which it bears forever.
With fondness annually watering and maturing it.
But man never severs the stalk
Which bears this palatable fruit.

My friends, why should we live?

My friends, why should we live?
Life is an idle war a toilsome peace;
To-day I would not give
One small consent for its securest ease.

Shall we out-wear the year
In our pavilions on its dusty plain
And yet no signal hear
To strike our tents and take the road again?

Or else drag up the slope
The heavy ordnance of nature's train?
Useless but in the hope,
Some far remote and heavenward hill to gain.

I mark the summer's swift decline

I mark the summer's swift decline
The springing sward its grave clothes weaves
Whose rustling woods the gales confine
The aged year turns on its couch of leaves.

Oh could I catch the sounds remote
Could I but tell to human ear —
The strains which on the breezes float
And sing the requiem of the dying year.

My love must be as free

My love must be as free
As is the eagle's wing,
Hovering o'er land and sea
And everything.

I must not dim my eye
In thy saloon,
I must not leave my sky
And nightly moon.

Be not the fowler's net
Which stays my flight,
And craftily is set
T' allure the sight.

But be the favoring gale
That bears me on,
And still doth fill my sail
When thou art gone.

I cannot leave my sky
For thy caprice,
True love would soar as high
As heaven is.

The eagle would not brook
Her mate thus won,
Who trained his eye to look
Beneath the sun.

The Moon

Time wears her not; she doth his chariot guide;
Mortality below her orb is placed.
— RALEIGH.

The full-orbed moon with unchanged ray
Mounts up the eastern sky,
Not doomed to these short nights for aye,
But shining steadily.

She does not wane, but my fortune,
Which her rays do not bless,
My wayward path declineth soon,
But she shines not the less.

And if she faintly glimmers here,
And paled is her light,
Yet always in her proper sphere
She’s mistress of the night.

Rumors From an Aeolian Harp

There is a vale which none hath seen,
Where foot of man has never been,
Such as here lives with toil and strife,
An anxious and a sinful life.

There every virtue has its birth,
Ere it descends upon the earth,
And thither every deed returns,
Which in the generous bosom burns.

There love is warm, and youth is young,
And poetry is yet unsung,
For Virtue still adventures there,
And freely breathes her native air.

And ever, if you hearken well,
You still may hear its vesper bell,
And tread of high-souled men go by,
Their thoughts conversing with the sky.

On shoulders whirled in some eccentric orbit

On shoulders whirled in some eccentric orbit
Just by old Paestum’s temples and the perch
Where Time doth plume his wings.

Far oer The bow

Amid the drowsy noon
Souhegan creeping slow
Appeareth soon.

Where gleaming fields of haze
Meet the voyageurs gaze,
And above the heated air
Seems to make a river there.

The pines stand up with pride
By the Souhegan's side,
And the hemlock and the larch
With their triumphal arch
Flave accompanied its march
To the sea.

No wind stirs its waves
But the spirits of the braves
Hov'ring o'er
Whose antiquated graves
Its still water laves
On the shore.

But with an Indian's stealthy tread
It goes sleeping in its bed
Without joy or grief
Or the rusde of a leaf
From the Lyndeboro' hills
To the merrimack mills

Without a ripple or a billow
Or the sigh of a willow
Which trails in its stream
The mid current of its dream.

Not a sound is floated o’er
save the mallet on shore
Which echoing on high
Seems a caulking the sky.

experienced river
Hast thou flown for ever?
Souhegan soundeth old
But the half is not told.

What names hast thou borne
In the ages far gone?
When the Xanthus and Meander
Commenced to wander —
Eer the brown bear hunted
On thy forest floor
Or nature had planted
The pines by thy shore.

With a louder din
Did thy current begin
When melted the snow
On the far mountain’s brow
And the drops came together
In that rainy weather.

Methinks that by a strict behavior

Methinks that by a strict behaviorI could elicit back the brightest star
That lurks behind a cloud.

I have rolled near some other spirits path

I have rolled near some other spirits path
And with a pleased anxiety have felt
Its purer influence on my opaque mass
But always was I doomed to learn, alas!
I had scarce changed its sidireal time.

Fog

Thou drifting meadow of the air
Where bloom The dasied banks & violets
And in whose fenny labyrinths
The bittern booms, and curlew peeps
The heron wades and boding rain crow clucks;
Low anchored cloud,
Newfoundland air,
Fountain head and source of rivers,
Ocean branch that flowest to the sun,
Diluvian spirit, or Deucaleon shroud,
Dew cloth dream drapery
And napkin spread by fays —
Spirit of lakes and seas and rivers —
Sea fowl that with the east wind
Seeks't the shore — Groping thy way inland
By which ever name I please to call thee
Bear only perfumes and the scent
Of healing herbs to just men's fields.

How little curious is man

How little curious is man
Who hath not searched his mystery a span
But dreams of mines of treasure
Which he neglects to measure
For three score years and ten
Walks to and fro amid his fellow men
Oer this firm tract of continental land
His fancy bearing no divining wand.
Our uninquiring corpses lie more low
Than our lifes curiosity doth go
Our most ambitious steps climb not so high
As in their hourly sport the sparrows fly.
And yonder cloud's blown farther in a day
Than our most vagrant feet may ever stray.
Surely, O Lord, he hath not greatly erred
Who hath so little from his birth place stirred.
He wanders through this low and shallow world
Scarcely his bolder thoughts and hopes unfurled
Through this low walled world which his huge sin
Hath hardly room to rest and harbor in.
Bearing his head just oer some fallow ground
Some cowslip'd meadows where the bitterns sound.
He wanders round until his end draws nigh
And then lays down his aged head to die.
And this is life — this is that famous strife.

His head doth coast a fathom from the land
Six feet from where his grovelling feet do stand.

To the Comet

My sincerity doth surpass
The pretence of optic glass.

Say what are the highlands yonder
Which do keep the spheres asunder
The streams of light which centre in our sun
And those which from some other system run?
Distinguished stranger, system ranger,
Plenipotentiary to our sphere,
Dost thou know of any danger,
War or famine near?

Special envoy, foreign minister,
From the empire of the sky,
Dost thou threaten aught that's sinister
By thy course on high?

Runner of the firmament
On what errand wast thou sent,
Art thou some great general's scout
Come to spy our weakness out?
Sculling thy way without a sail,
Mid the stars and constellations,
The pioneerer of a tail
Through the stary nations.
Thou celestial privateer
We entreat thee come not near.

Haze

Woof of the sun, ethereal gauze,
Woven of Nature's richest stuffs,
Visible heat, air-water, and dry sea,
Last conquest of the eye;
Toil of the day displayed, sun-dust,
Aerial surf upon the shores of earth,
Ethereal estuary, frith of light,
Breakers of air, billows of heat,
Fine summer spray on inland seas;
Bird of the sun, transparent-winged
Owlet of noon, soft-pinioned,
From heath or stubble rising without song;
Establish thy serenity o'er the fields.

Smoke

Light-winged smoke, Icarian bird,
Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight,
Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,
Circling above the hamlets as thy nest;
Or else, departing dream, and shadowy form
Of midnight vision, gathering up thy skirts;
By night star-veiling, and by day
Darkening the light and blotting out the sun;
Go thou my incense upward from this hearth,
And ask the Gods to pardon this clear flame.

To a Stray Fowl

Poor bird! destined to lead thy life
Far in the adventurous west,
And here to be debarred to-night
From thy accustomed nest;
Must thou fall back upon old instinct now —
Well nigh extinct under man's fickle care?
Did heaven bestow its quenchless inner light
So long ago, for thy small want to-night?
Why stand'st upon thy toes to crow so late?
The moon is deaf to thy low feathered fate;
Or dost thou think so to possess the night,
And people the drear dark with thy brave sprite?
And now with anxious eye thou look'st about,
While the relentless shade draws on its veil,
For some sure shelter from approaching dews,
And the insidious steps of nightly foes.
I fear imprisonment has dulled thy wit,
Or ingrained servitude extinguished it.
But no, — dim memory of the days of yore,
By Brahmapootra and the Jumna's shore,
Where thy proud race flew swiftly o'er the heath,
And sought its food the jungle's shade beneath,
Fias taught thy wings to seek yon friendly trees,
As erst by Indus' bank and far Ganges.

The Departure

In this roadstead I have ridden
In this covert I have hidden
Friendly thoughts were cliffs to me
And I hid beneath their lea.

This true people took the stranger
And warm hearted housed the ranger
They received their roving guest,
And have fed him with the best

Whatsoe'er the land afforded
To the stranger's wish accorded,
Shook the olive, stripped the vine,
And expressed the strengthening wine.

And at night they did spread o'er him
What by day they spread before him,
That good-will which was repast
Was his covering at last.

The stranger moored him to their pier
Without anxiety or fear;
By day he walked the sloping land,
By night the gentle heavens he scanned.

When first his bark stood inland
To the coast of this far Finland,
Sweet-watered brooks came tumbling to the shore
The weary mariner to restore.

And still he stayed from day to day
If he their kindness might repay
But more and more
The sullen waves came rolling to the shore.

And still the more the stranger waited
The less his argosy was freighted,
And still the more he stayed
The less his debt was paid.

So He unfurled his mast
To receive the fragrant blast,
And that same refreshing gale
Which had woo'd him to remain

Again and again —
It was that filled his sail
And drove him to the main.

All day the low hung clouds
Dropt tears into the sea
And the wind amid the shrouds
Sighed plaintively.

Brother where dost thou dwell?

Brother where dost thou dwell?
What sun shines for thee now?
Dost thou indeed farewell?
As we wished here below.

What season didst thou find?
'Twas winter here.
Are not the fates more kind
Than they appear?

Is thy brow clear again
As in thy youthful years?
And was that ugly pain
The summit of thy fears?

Yet thou wast cheery still,
They could not quench thy fire,
Thou dids't abide their will,
And then retire.

Where chiefly shall I look
To feel thy presence near?
Along the neighboring brook
May I thy voice still hear?

Dost thou still haunt the brink
Of yonder river's tide?
And may I ever think
That thou art at my side?

What bird wilt thou employ
To bring me word of thee?
For it would give them joy,
'Twould give them liberty,
To serve their former lord

With wing and minstrelsy.

A sadder strain has mixed with their song,
They've slowlier built their nests,
Since thou art gone
Their lively labor rests.

Where is the finch — the thrush,
I used to hear?
Ah! they could well abide
The dying year.

Now they no more return,
I hear them not;
They have remained to mourn,
Or else forgot.

All things are current found

All things are current found
Oer the uneven ground.
Spirits and elements
Have their descents.

Night and day — year on year,
High and low far and near,
These are our own aspects
These are our own regrets.
Ye gods of the shore
Who abide evermore,
I see your far headland
Stretching on either hand.

I hear the sweet evening sounds
From your undecaying grounds
Cheat me no more with time
Take me to your clime.

On fields oer which the reaper’s hand has passed

On fields oer which the reaper’s hand has passed,
Lit by the harvest moon and autumn sun,
My thoughts like stubble floating in the wind
And of such fineness as October airs,
There after harvest could I glean my life
A richer harvest reaping without toil,
And weaving gorgeous fancies at my will
In subtler webs than finest summer haze.

Epitaph on an Engraver

By death's favor
Here lies the engraver
And now I think o't
Where lies he not?
If the archangel look but where he lies
He ne'er will get translated to the skies.

Epitaph on Pursy

Traveller, this is no prison,
He is not dead, but risen.
Then is there need,
To fill his grave,
And truth to save,
That we should read, —
In Pursy's favor
Here lies the engraver.

Ep on a Good Man

Here lies — the world
There rises one.

Epitaph

Here lies an honest man
Rear Admiral Van.
Faith, then ye have
Two in one grave,
For by your favor
Here too lies the engraver.

Ep on the World

Here lies the body of this world,
Whose soul alas to hell is hurled.
This golden youth long since was past,
Its silver manhood went as fast,
And iron age drew on at last;
’Tis vain its character to tell,
The several fates which it befell,
What year it died, when ‘twill arise,
We only know that here it lies.

The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell

The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell,
The stiffened air exploring in the dawn,
And making slow acquaintance with the day;
Delaying now upon its heavenward course,
In wreathed loiterings dallying with itself,
With as uncertain purpose and slow deed,
As its half-wakened master by the hearth,
Whose mind still slumbering and sluggish thoughts
Have not yet swept into the onward current
Of the new day; — and now it streams afar,
The while the chopper goes with step direct,
And mind intent to swing the early axe.
First in the dusky dawn he sends abroad
His early scout, his emissary, smoke,
The earliest, latest pilgrim from the roof,
To feel the frosty air, inform the day;
And while he crouches still beside the hearth,
Nor musters courage to unbar the door,
It has gone down the glen with the light wind,
And o'er the plain unfurled its venturous wreath,
Draped the tree tops, loitered upon the hill,
And warmed the pinions of the early bird;
And now, perchance, high in the crispy air,
Has caught sight of the day o'er the earth's edge,
And greets its master's eye at his low door,
As some refulgent cloud in the upper sky.

On Ponkawtasset, since, we took our way

On Ponkawtasset, since, we took our way,
Down this still stream to far Billericay,
A poet wise has settled, whose fine ray
Doth often shine on Concord's twilight day

Like those first stars, whose silver beams on high,
Shining more brightly as the day goes by,
Most travellers cannot at first descry,
But eyes that wont to range the evening sky,
And know celestial lights, do plainly see,
And gladly hail them, numbering two or three;
For lore that's deep must deeply studied be,
As from deep wells men read star-poetry.

These stars are never paled, though out of sight,
But like the sun they shine forever bright;
Ay, *they* are suns, though earth must in its flight
Put out its eyes that it may see their light.

Who would neglect the least celestial sound,
Or faintest light that falls on earthly ground,
If he could know it one day would be found
That star in Cygnus whither we are bound,
And pale our sun with heavenly radiance round?

To a Marsh Hawk in Spring

There is health in thy gray wing
Health of nature's furnishing.
Say thou modern-winged antique,
Was thy mistress ever sick?
In each heaving of thy wing
Thou dost health and leisure bring,
Thou dost waive disease & pain
And resume new life again.

Great Friend

I walk in nature still alone
And know no one
Discern no lineament nor feature
Of any creature.

Though all the firmament
Is oer me bent,
Yet still I miss the grace
Of an intelligent and kindred face.

I still must seek the friend
Who does with nature blend,
Who is the person in her mask,
He is the man I ask.

Who is the expression of her meaning,
Who is the uprightness of her leaning,
Who is the grown child of her weaning

The center of this world,
The face of nature,
The site of human life,
Some sure foundation
And nucleus of a nation —
At least a private station.

We twain would walk together
Through every weather,
And see this aged nature,
Go with a bending stature.

The Offer

I make ye an offer,
Ye gods hear the scoffer,
The scheme will not hurt you,
If ye will find goodness I will find virtue.
Though I am your creature,
And child of your nature,
I have pride still unbended,
And blood undescended,
Some free independence,
And my own descendents.
If ye will deal plainly,
I will strive mainly,
If ye will discover
Great plans to your lover,
And give him a sphere
Somewhat larger than here.

Morning

Thou unconverted saint
Early Christian without taint —
Heathen without reproach
Who dost upon the evil day encroach,
Who ever since thy birth
Hast trod the outskirts of the earth.
Strict anchorite who dost simply feast
On freshest dews — I'll be thy guest,
And daily bend my steps to east
While the late risen world goes west.

The Friend

The great friend
Dwells at the land's end,
There lives he
Next to the sea.
Fleets come and go,
Carrying commerce to and fro,
But still sits he on the sand
And maketh firm that headland.
Mariners steer them by his light
Safely in the darkest night,
He holds no visible communion
For his friendship is a union.
Many men dwell far inland,
But he alone sits on the strand,
Whether he ponders men or books
Ever still he seaward looks,
Feels the sea-breeze on his cheek,
At each word the landsmen speak;
From some distant port he hears
Of the ventures of past years
In the sullen ocean's roar
Of wrecks upon a distant shore;
In every companion's eye
A sailing vessel doth descry;
Marine news he ever reads
And the slightest glances heeds.

Near is India to him
Though his native shore is dim,
But the bark which long was due,
Never — never — heaves in view,
Which shall put an end to commerce
And bring back what it took from us,
(Which shall make Siberia free

Of the climes beyond the sea)
Fetch the Indies in its hold,
All their spices and their gold,
And men sail the sea no more
The sea itself become a shore,
To a broader deeper sea,
A profounder mystery.

Yet let us Thank the purblind race

Yet let us Thank the purblind race,
Who still have thought it good
With lasting stone to mark the place
Where braver men have stood.

In concord, town of quiet name
And quiet fame as well,

Ye do command me to all virtue ever

Ye do command me to all virtue ever
And simple truth the law by which we live
Methinks that I can trust your clearer sense
And your immediate knowledge of the truth
I would obey your influence — one with fate

Ive seen ye, sisters, on the mountain-side

Ive seen ye, sisters, on the mountain-side
When your green mantles fluttered in the wind
Ive seen your foot-prints on the lakes smooth shore
Lesser than man's, a more ethereal trace,
I have heard of ye as some far-famed race —
Daughters of gods whom I should one day meet —
Or mothers I might say of all our race.
I reverence your natures so like mine
Yet strangely different, like but still unlike
Thou only stranger that hast crossed my path
Accept my hospitality — let me hear
The message which thou bring'st
Made different from me
Perchance thou't made to be
The creature of a different destiny.
I know not who ye are that meekly stand
Thus side by side with man in every land.
When did ye form alliance with our race
Ye children of the moon who in placid nights
Vaulted upon the hills and sought this earth.
Reveal that which I fear ye can not tell
Wherein ye are not I, wherein ye dwell
Where I can never come.
What boots it that I do regard ye so
Does it make suns to shine or crops to grow?
What boots that I never should forget
Thee, I have sisters sitting for me yet
And what are sisters
The robust man who can so stoutly strive
In this bleak world is hardly kept alive.
And who is it protects *ye* smooths *your* way

I am bound, I am bound, for a distant shore

I am bound, I am bound, for a distant shore,
By a lonely isle, by a far Azore,
There it is, there it is, the treasure I seek,
On the barren sands of a desolate creek.

The Hero

What doth he ask?
Some worthy task.
Never to run
Till that be done,
that never done
Under the sun.
Here to begin
All things to win
By his endeavor
Forever and ever —
Happy and well
On this ground to dwell
This soil subdue
Plant and renew.
By might & main
Health & strength gain
So to give nerve
To his slenderness
Yet Some mighty pain
He would sustain.
So to preserve
His tenderness.
Not be deceived
Of suffring bereaved
Not lose his life
By living too well
Nor escape strife
In his lonely cell
And so find out Heaven
By not knowing Hell.
Strength like the rock
To withstand any shock —
Yet some Aaron's rod
Some smiting by god

Occasion to gain
To shed human tears
And to entertain
Still divine fears.
Not once for all, forever, blest,
Still to be cheered out of the west
Not from his heart to banish all sighs
Still be encouraged by the sun rise
Forever to love and to love and to love
Within him, around him — beneath him above
To love is to know, is to feel, is to be
At once 'tis his birth & his destiny
For earthly pleasures
Celestial pains
Heavenly losses
For earthly gains.
Must we still eat
The bread we have spurned
Must we rekindle
The faggots we've burned —
Must we go out
By the poor man's gate
Die by degrees
Not by new fate.
Is then no road
This way my friend
Is there no road
Without any end —
When I have slumbered
I have heard sounds
As travellers passing
Over my grounds —
'Twas a sweet music
Wafted them by
I could not tell
If far off or nigh.
Unless I dreamed it

This was of yore —
But I never told it
To mortal before —
Never remembered
But in my dreams
What to me waking
A miracle seems
If you will give of your pulse or your grain
We will rekindle those flames again
Here will we tarry it is without doubt
Till a miracle putteth that fire out.

At midnight’s hour I raised my head

At midnight’s hour I raised my head
The owls were seeking for their bread
The foxes barked impatient still
At their wan fate they bear so ill —
I thought me of eternities delayed
And of commands but half obeyed —
The night wind rustled through the glade
As if a force of men there staid
The word was whispered through the ranks
And every hero seized his lance
The word was whispered through the ranks
Advance.

I seek the Present Time

I seek the Present Time,
No other clime,
Life in to-day,
Not to sail another way,
To Paris or to Rome,
Or farther still from home.
That man, whoe'er he is,
Lives but a moral death,
Whose life is not coeval
With his breath.
What are deeds done
Away from home?
What the best essay
On the Ruins of Rome?
The dusty highways,
What Scripture says,
This pleasant weather
And all signs together —
The river's meander,
All things, in short,
Forbid me to wander
In deed or in thought.
In cold or in drouth,
seek Not the sunny South,
But make the whole tour
Of the sunny Present Hour.
For here if thou fail,
Where canst thou prevail?
If you love not
Your own land most,
You'll find nothing lovely
Upon a distant coast.
If you love not
The latest sunset,

What is there in pictures
Or old gems set?

If no man should travel
Till he had the means,
There'd be little travelling
For kings or for Queens.
The means, what are they!
They are the wherewithal
Great expenses to pay; —
Life got, and some to spare,
Great works on hand,
And freedom from care.
Plenty of time well spent,
To use, —
Clothes paid for, and no rent
In your shoes; —
Something to eat,
And something to burn,
And, above all, no need to return; —
For they who come back,
have they not failed,
Wherever they've ridden
Or steamed it, or sailed?
All your grass hayed, —
All your debts paid, —
All your wills made?
Then you might as well have stayed,
For are you not dead,
Only not buried?

The way unto "Today",
The rail road to "Here,"
They never'll grade that way,
Nor shorten it, I fear.
There are plenty of depots
All the world o'er,

But not a single station
At a man's door;
If we would get near
To the secret of things,
We shall not have to hear
When the engine bell rings.

Tell me ye wise ones if ye can

Tell me ye wise ones if ye can
Whither and whence the race of man.
For I have seen his slender clan
Clinging to hoar hills with their feet
Threading the forest for their meat
Moss and lichens bark & grain
They racke together with might & main
And they digest them with anxiety & pain.
I meet them in their rags and unwashed hair
Instructed to eke out their scanty fare
Brave race — with a yet humbler prayer
Beggars they are aye on the largest scale
They beg their daily bread at heavens door
And if their this years crop alone shoud fail
They neither bread nor begging would know more.
They are the Titmans of their race
And hug the vales with mincing pace
Like Troglodites, and fight with cranes
We walk ‘mid great relations feet
What they let fall alone we eat
We are only able
to catch the fragments from their table
These elder brothers of our race
By us unseen with larger pace
Walk oer our heads, and live our lives
embody our desires and dreams
Anticipate our hoped for gleams
We grub the earth for our food
We know not what is good.
Where does the fragrance of our orchards go
Our vineyards whiie we toil below —
A finer race and finer fed
Feast and revel above our head.
The tints and fragrance of the flowers & fruits

Are but the crumbs from off their table
While we consume the pulp and roots
Some times we do assert our kin
And stand a moment where once they have been
We hear their sounds and see their sights
And we experience their delights —
But for the moment that we stand
Astonished on the Olympian land.
We do discern no traveller's face
No elder brother of our race.
To lead us to the monarch's court
And represent our case.
But straightway we must journey back
retracing slow the arduous track
Without the privelege to tell
Even, the sight we know so well

Behold these flowers

Behold these flowers —
let us be up with Time
not dreaming of 3000 years
ago. Erect ourselves and let
those columns lie — not stoop
to raise a foil against the
sky — Where is the *spirit*
of that time but in this
present day this present line
3000 years ago are not
agone — they are still lingering
here aye every one, Where
there is memory which compelleth time the muse's mother
and the muses nine — There are
all ages — past and future
time unwearied memory that
does not forget the actions
of the past — that does
not forego — to stamp them
freshly — . That old mortality
industrious to retouch the mon-
uments of time, in the world's
cemetery through-out every clime/
And Memnon's mother sprightly greets us now
Wears still her youthful blushes on her brow
And Carnac's columns why stand they on the plain?
T'enjoy our opportunities they would fain remain

This is my Carnac whose unmeasured dome
Shelters the measuring art & measurer's home
Whose propylaeum is the system nigh
And sculptured facade the visible sky

My friends, my noble friends, know ye —

My friends, my noble friends, know ye —
That in my waking hours I think of ye
 — Ever in godlike band uncompromised & free

The Earth

Which seems so barren once gave birth
To heroes — who oerran her plains,
Who plowed her seas and reaped her grains

But now “no war nor battle’s sound.”

But now “no war nor battle’s sound.”
Invades this peaceful battleground
But waves of Concord murmuring by
flowing with gentle harmony.
Yet since we sailed, some things have failed
And many a dream gone down the stream
Here then an aged shepherd dwellt
Who to his flock his substance dealt
And ruled them with a vigorous crook
According to the sacred Book.
But he the pierless bridge passed o’er
And solitary left the shore
Anon a youthful pastor came
Whose crook was not unknown to fame
His lambs he viewed with gentle glance
Spread oer the country’s wide expanse
And fed with “mosses from the manse” —
Yonder the rocky seat where late
With soothed and patient ear we sat
Beside our Hawthorne in the dale
And listened to his Twice told Tale. —

Such water do the gods distill

Such water do the gods distill
And pour down every hill
For their new England men.
A draught of this wild water bring
And I will never taste the spring
Of Helicon again.
But yesterday in dew it fell
This morn its streams began to swell
And with the sun it downward flowd
So fresh it hardly knew its road.

Die and be buried who will

Die and be buried who will,
I mean to live my fill.
My nature grows ever more young
The primitive pines among.

I have seen some frozenfaced Connecticut

I have seen some frozenfaced Connecticut
Or Down east man in his crack coaster
With tort sail, with folded arms standing
Beside his galley with his dog & man
While his cock crowed aboard, scud thro the surf
By some fast anchored Staten island farm,
But just outside the vast and stirring line
Where the astonished Dutchman digs his clams
Or but half ploughs his cabbage garden plot
With unbroken steeds & ropy harness —
And some squat bantam whom the shore wind drownd
Feebly responded there for all reply,
While the triumphant Yankee's farm swept by.

Such near aspects had we

Such near aspects had we
Of our life’s scenery.

Travelling

If e’er our minds be ill at ease
It is in vain to cross the seas
Or when the fates do prove unkind
To leave our native land behind.
The ship becalmed at length stands still
The steed will rest beneath the hill.
But swiftly still our fortunes pace
To find us out in every place.

The Atlantides

The smothered streams of love, which flow
More bright than Phlegethon, more low,
Island us ever, like the sea,
In an Atlantic mystery.
Our fabled shores none ever reach,
No mariner has found our beach,
Scarcely our mirage now is seen,
And neighboring waves with floating green,
Yet still the oldest charts contain
Some dotted outline of our main;
In ancient times midsummer days
Unto the western islands' gaze,
To Teneriffe and the Azores,
Have shown our faint and cloud-like shores.

But sink not yet, ye desolate isles,
Anon your coast with commerce smiles,
And richer freights ye'll furnish far
Than Africa or Malabar.
Be fair, be fertile evermore,
Ye rumored but untrodden shore,
Princes and monarchs will contend
Who first unto your land shall send,
And pawn the jewels of the crown
To call your distant soil their own.

Conscience is instinct bred in the house

Conscience is instinct bred in the house,
Feeling and Thinking propagate the sin
By an unnatural breeding in and in.
I say, Turn it out doors,
Into the moors.
I love a life whose plot is simple,
And does not thicken with every pimple,
A soul so sound no sickly conscience binds it,
That makes the universe no worse than't finds it.
I love an earnest soul,
Whose mighty joy and sorrow
Are not drowned in a bowl,
And brought to life to-morrow;
That lives one tragedy,
And not seventy;
A conscience worth keeping,
Laughing not weeping;
A conscience wise and steady,
And forever ready;
Not changing with events,
Dealing in compliments;
A conscience exercised about
Large things, where one *may* doubt.
I love a soul not all of wood,
Predestinated to be good,
But true to the backbone
Unto itself alone,
And false to none;
Born to its own affairs,
Its own joys and own cares;
By whom the work which God begun
Is finished, and not undone;
Taken up where he left off,
Whether to worship or to scoff;

If not good, why then evil,
If not good god, good devil.
Goodness! you hypocrite, come out of that,
Live your life, do your work, then take your hat.
I have no patience towards
Such conscientious cowards.
Give me simple laboring folk,
Who love their work,
Whose virtue is a song
To cheer God along.

That Phaeton of our day

That Phaeton of our day,
Who'd make another milky way,
And burn the world up with his ray;

By us an undisputed seer, —
Who'd drive his flaming car so near
Unto our shuddering mortal sphere,

Disgracing all our slender worth,
And scorching up the living earth,
To prove his heavenly birth.

The silver spokes, the golden tire,
Are glowing with unwonted fire,
And ever nigher roll and nigher;

The pins and axle melted are,
The silver radii fly afar,
Ah, he will spoil his Father's car!

Who let him have the steeds he cannot steer?
Henceforth the sun will not shine for a year;
And we shall Ethiops all appear.

Then spend an age in whetting thy desire

Then spend an age in whetting thy desire,
Thou needs’t not *hasten* if thou dost *standfast.*

We should not mind if on our ear there fell

We should not mind if on our ear there fell
Some less of cunning, more of oracle.

Men say they know many things

Men say they know many things
But lo! they have taken wings,
The arts & sciences.
And a thousand appliances —
The wind that blows
Is all that anybody knows.

Away! away! away! away!

Away! away! away! away!
Ye have not kept your secret well,
I will abide that other day,
Those other lands ye tell.

Has time no leisure left for these,
The acts that ye rehearse?
Is not eternity a lease
For better deeds than verse?

‘T is sweet to hear of heroes dead,
To know them still alive,
But sweeter if we earn their bread,
And in us they survive.

Our life should feed the springs of fame
With a perennial wave,
As ocean feeds the babbling founts
Which find in it their grave.

Ye skies drop gently round my breast,
And be my corselet blue,
Ye earth receive my lance in rest,
My faithful charger you;

Ye stars my spear-heads in the sky,
My arrow-tips ye are, —
I see the routed foemen fly,
My bright spears fixed are.

Give me an angel for a foe,
Fix now the place and time,
And straight to meet him I will go
Above the starry chime.

And with our clashing bucklers' clang
The heavenly spheres shall ring,
While bright the northern lights shall hang
Beside our tourneying.

And if she lose her champion true,
Tell Heaven not despair,
For I will be her champion new,
Her fame I will repair.

In the East fames are won

In the East fames are won,
In the West deeds are done.

We see the planet fall

We see the *planet* fall,
And that is all.

The good how can we trust?

The good how can we trust?
Only the wise are just.
The good we use,
The wise we cannot choose.
These there are none above;
The good they know & love,
But are not known again
By those of lesser ken. —
They do not charm us with their eyes,
But they transfix with their advice.
No partial sympathy they feel,
With private woe or private weal,
But with the Universe joy & sigh,
Whose knowledge is their sympathy.

Greece

When life contracts into a vulgar span
And human nature tires to be a man,
I thank the gods for Greece
That permanent realm of peace,
For as the rising moon far in the night
Checquers the shade with her forerunning light,
So in my darkest hour my senses seem
To catch from her Acropolis a gleam,
Greece who am I that should remember thee?
Thy Marathon and thy Thermopylae
Is my life vulgar my fate mean
Which on such golden memories can lean?

Poverty

If I am poor it is that I am proud,
If God has made me naked and a boor
He did not think it fit his work to shroud.

The poor man comes from heaven direct to earth
As stars drop down the sky and tropic beams.
The rich receives in our gross air his birth,
As from low suns are slanted golden gleams.

Men are by birth equal in this that given
Themselves and their condition they are even.
The less of inward essence is to leaven
The more of outward circumstance is given.

Yon sun is naked bare of satellite
Unless our earths and moons that office hold,
Though his perpetual day feareth no night
And his perennial summer dreads no cold.

Where are his gilded rays but in our sky?
His solid disk doth float far from us still,
The orb which through the central way doth fly
Shall naked seem though proudly circumstanced.

Ill leave my mineral wealth hoarded in earth?
Buried in seas in mines and ocean caves
More safely kept than is the merchant's worth,
Which every storm committeth to the waves.

Man kind may delve but cannot my wealth spend,
If I no partial store appropriate
no armed ships into the Indies send
To rob me of my orient estate

The rich man's clothes keep out the genial sun

But scarce defend him from the piercing cold
If he did not his heavenly garment shun
He would not need to hide beneath a fold.

The respectable folks

The respectable folks,
Where dwell they?
They whisper in the oaks,
And they sigh in the hay,
Summer and winter, night and day,
Out on the meadow, there dwell they.
They drink at the brooks and the pilgrim's cup,
And with the owl and the nighthawk sup;
They suck the breath of the morning wind,
And they make their own all the good they find.
They never die,
Nor snivel nor cry,
For they have a lease of immortality.
A sound estate forever they mend,
To every asker readily lend,
To the ocean wealth,
To the meadow health,
To Time his length,
To the rocks strength,
To the stars light
To the weary night,
To the busy day,
To the idle play,
And so their good cheer never ends,
For all are their debtors and all their friends.

Farewell

Whether we've far withdrawn
Or come more near
Equally the outward form
Doth no more appear.
Not thou by distance lost
No — for regret doth bind
Me faster to thee now
Than neighborhood confined.
Where thy love followeth me
Is enough society.
Thy indelible mild eye
Is my sky.
Whether by land or sea
I wander to and fro,
Oft as I think of thee
The heavens hang more low
The pure glance of thy eye
Doth purge the summer's sky,
And thy breath so rare
Doth refine the winter's air.
my feet would weary be
Ere they travelled from thee.
I discover by thy face
That we are of one race
Flowed in one vein our blood
Ere the sea found its flood
The worm may be divided
And each part become a whole,
But the nobler creature man
May not separate a span.

For though the eaves were rabitted

For though the eaves were rabitted,
And the well sweeps were slanted,
Each house seemed not inhabited
But haunted.

The pensive traveller held his way,
Silent & melancholy,
For every man an ideot was,
And every house a folly.

You Boston folks & Roxbury people

You Boston folks & Roxbury people
Will want Tom Hyde to mend your kettle

I will obey the strictest law of love

I will obey the strictest law of love
As if I dealt with cherubim above.
I will accept no half gift from my friend
By which he thinks for hate to make amend.
But every friendly thought
Will come to me unbought
My friend may do whate'er he will
And I shall love him
If he doth it from love.
But let him do whateer he will
I think that I must hate him still
If lower motives move.

I love not all
I love not one alway
But that I love is one & all
And lasteth ever and aye.
I will leave him I hate
And cleave to him I love
I will forsake my earthly mate
And seek my mate above.

Though my friends are dull and cold
I will be quick and warm.
Though their love groweth old
Mine shall be new born

Though they understand me not
I shall be understood
Though by them I am forgot
Not therefore by the good.
My friend can wound me
For to him I bare my breast —
But his wounds save me

From a foe's embrace
But these are honorable scars
And fit the wounded heart for Love's more glorious wars.

These wounds are not fatal though inflicted on the heart
For the heart's not less a vital than a mortal part.
Unlike the inferior part
The wounded heart
Is not repaired with wood
But by fresh currents from above
Which fit it for a purer love
For all that's true & beautiful & good.

Why toll the bell today —

Why toll the bell today —
Its knell has died away —

And once again

And once again
When I went a-maying —
& once or twice more I had seen thee before.
For there grow the May flower
(Epigaea repens)
& the mt cranberry
& the screech owl *strepens*

The Old Marlborough Road

Where they once dug for money,
But never found any;
Where sometimes Martial Miles
Singly files,
And Elijah Wood,
I fear for no good:
No other man,
Save Elisha Dugan, —
O man of wild habits,
Partridges and rabbits,
Who hast no cares
Only to set snares,
Who liv'st all alone,
Close to the bone,
And where life is sweetest
Constantly eatest.
When the spring stirs my blood
With the instinct to travel,
I can get enough gravel
On the Old Marlborough Road.
Nobody repairs it,
For nobody wears it;
It is a living way,
As the Christians say.
Not many there be
Who enter therein,
Only the guests of the
Irishman Quin.
What is it, what is it,
But a direction out there,
And the bare possibility
Of going somewhere?
Great guide-boards of stone,
But travellers none;

Cenotaphs of the towns
Named on their crowns.
It is worth going to see
Where you *might* be.
What king
Did the thing,
I am still wondering;
Set up how or when,
By what selectmen,
Gourgas or Lee,
Clark or Darby?
They're a great endeavor
To be something forever;
Blank tablets of stone,
Where a traveller might groan,
And in one sentence
Grave all that it known;
Which another might read,
In his extreme need.
I know one or two
Lines that would do,
Literature that might stand
All over the land,
Which a man could remember
Till next December,
And read again in the spring,
After the thawing.
If with fancy unfurled
You leave your abode,
You may go round the world
By the Old Marlborough Road.

Old meeting-house bell

Old meeting-house bell
I love thy music well
It peals through the air
Sweetly full & fair
As in the early times
When I listened to its chimes.

It is a real place

It is a real place,
Boston, I tell it to your face.
And no dream of mine
To ornament a line
I can not come nearer to God & Heaven
Than I live to Walden even.
It is a part of me which I have not prophaned
I live by the shore of me detained.
Laden with my dregs
I stand on my legs,
While all my pure wine
I to nature consign.
I am its stoney shore
And the breeze that passes o’er
In the hollow of my hand
Are its water and its sand;
Its deepest resort
Lies high in my thought,

Among the worst of men that ever lived

Among the worst of men that ever lived
However we did seriously attend
A little space we let our thoughts ascend
Experienced our religion & confessed
'Twas good for us to be there — be anywhere
Then to a heap of apples we addressed
& cleared the topmost rider *sine* care
But our Icarian thoughts returned to ground
And we went on to heaven the long way round.

What’s the rail-road to me?

What’s the rail-road to me?
I never go to see
Where it ends
It fills a lew hollows
And makes banks for the swallows
It sets the sand a flowing
And blackberries a growing

Tall Ambrosia

Among the signs of autumn I perceive
The Roman wormwood (called by learned men
Ambrosia elatior, food for gods, —
For to impartial science the humblest weed
Is as immortal once as the proudest flower —)
Sprinkles its yellow dust over my shoes
As I cross the now neglected garden
— We trample under foot the food of gods
& spill their nectar in each drop of dew —
My honest shoes Fast friends that never stray
far from my couch thus powdered countryfied
Bearing many a mile the marks of their adventure
At the post-house disgrace the Gallic gloss
Of those well dressed ones who no morning dew
Nor Roman wormwood ever have been through
Who never walk but are *transported* rather —
For what old crime of theirs I do not gather

‘

Tis very fit the ambrosia of the gods

’Tis very fit the ambrosia of the gods
Should be a weed on earth. As nectar is
The morning dew with which we wet our shoes
For the gods are simple folks and we should pine upon their humble fare

I saw a delicate flower had grown up 2 feet high

I saw a delicate flower had grown up 2 feet high
Between the horse's paths & the wheel track
Which Dakin's & Maynards wagons had
Passed over many a time
An inch more to right or left had sealed its fate
Or an inch higher. And yet it lived & flourished
As much as if it had a thousand acres
Of untrodden space around it — and never
Knew the danger it incurred.
It did not borrow trouble nor invite an
Evil fate by apprehending it.
For though the distant market-wagon
Every other day — inevitably rolled
This way — it just as inevitably rolled
In those ruts — And the same
Charioteer who steered the flower
Upward — guided the horse & cart aside from it.
There were other flowers which you would say
Incurred less danger grew more out of the way
Which no cart rattled near, no walker daily passed.
But at length one rambling deviously
For no rut restrained plucked them
And then it appeared that they stood
Directly in his way though he had come
From farther than the market wagon —

I am the little Irish boy

I am the little Irish boy
That lives in the shanty
I am four years old today
And shall soon be one and twenty
I shall grow up
And be a great man
And shovel all day
As hard as I can.

Down in the deep cut
Where the men lived
Who made the Rail road.

for supper
I have some potatoe
And sometimes some bread
And then if it's cold
I go right to bed.

I lie on some straw
Under my fathers coat

My mother does not cry
And my father does not scold
For I am a little Irish Boy
And I'm four years old.

Every day I go to school
Along the Railroad
It was so cold it made me cry
The day that it snowed.

And if my feet ache
I do not mind the cold
For I am a little Irish boy

& I’m four years old.

In Adams fall

We sinned all
In Adams fall
We sinned all.
In the new Adam’s rise
We shall all reach the skies.

Life

My life is like a stately warrior horse,
That walks with fluent pace along the way,
And I the upright horseman that bestrides
His flexuous back, feeding my private thoughts. —
Alas, when will this rambling head and neck
Be welded to that firm and brawny breast? —
But still my steady steed goes proudly forth,
Mincing his stately steps along the road;
The sun may set, the silver moon may rise,
But my unresting steed holds on his way.
He is far gone ere this, you fain would say,
He is far going. Plants grow and rivers run;
You ne'er may look upon the ocean waves,
At morn or eventide, but you will see
Far in th' horizon with expanded sail,
Some solitary bark stand out to sea,
Far bound — well so my life sails far,
To double some far cape not yet explored.
A cloud ne'er standeth in the summer's sky,
The eagle sailing high, with outspread wings
Cleaving the silent air, resteth him not
A moment in his flight, the air is not his perch.
Nor doth my life fold its unwearied wings,
And hide its head within its downy breast,
But still it plows the shoreless seas of time,
Breasting the waves with an unsanded bow.

The moon moves up her smooth and sheeny path

The moon moves up her smooth and sheeny path
Without impediment; and happily
The brook Glides by lulled by its tinkling;
Meteeors drop down the sky without chagrin
And rise again; but my cares never rest.
No charitable laws alas cut me
An easy orbit round the sun, but I
Must make my way through rocks and seas and earth
my steep and devious way Uncertain still.
My current never rounds into a lake
In whose fair heart the heavens come to bathe
Nor does my life drop freely but a rod
By its resistless course
As Meteors do.

I’m thankful that my life doth not deceive

I’m thankful that my life doth not deceive
Itself with a low loftiness, half height,
And think it soars when still it dip its way
Beneath the clouds on noiseless pinion
Like the crow or owl, but it doth know
The full extent of all its trivialness,
Compared with the splendid heights above.
See how it waits to watch the mail come in
While ‘hind its back *the sun goes out perchance.*
And yet their lumbering cart brings me no word
Not one scrawled leaf such as my neighbors get
To cheer them with the slight events forsooth
Faint ups and downs of their far distant friends —
And now tis passed. What next? See the long train
Of teams wreathed in dust, their atmosphere;
Shall I attend until the last is passed?
Else why these ears that hear the leader’s bells
Or eyes that link me in procession.
But hark! the drowsy day has done its task,
Far in yon hazy field where stands a barn
Unanxious hens improve the sultry hour
And with contented voice now brag their deed —
A new laid egg — Now let the day decline —
They’ll lay another by tomorrow’s sun.

Manhood

I love to see the man, a long-lived child,
As yet uninjured by all worldly taint
As the fresh infant whose whole life is play.
’Tis a serene spectacle for a serene day;
But better still I love to contemplate
The mature soul of lesser innocence,
Who hath travelled far on life’s dusty road
Far from the starting point of infancy
And proudly bears his small degen’racy
Blazon’d on his memorial standard high
Who from the sad experience of his fate
Since his bark struck on that unlucky rock
Has proudly steered his life with his own hands.
Though his face harbors less of innocence
Yet there do chiefly lurk within its depths
Furrowed by care, but yet all over spread
With the ripe bloom of a self-wrought content
Noble resolves which do reprove the gods
And it doth more assert man’s eminence
Above the happy level of the brute
And more doth advertise me of the heights
To which no natural path doth ever lead
No natural light can ever light our steps,
 — But the far-piercing ray that shines
From the recesses of a brave man’s eye.

Music

Far from this atmosphere that music sounds
Bursting some azure chink in the dull clouds
Of sense that overarch my recent years
And steal his freshness from the noonday sun.
Ah, I have wandered many ways and lost
The boyant step, the whole responsive life
That stood with joy to hear what seemed then
Its echo, its own harmony borne back
Upon its ear. This tells of better space,
Far far beyond the hills the woods the clouds
That bound my low and plodding valley life,
Far from my sin, remote from my distrust,
When first my healthy morning life perchance
Trod lightly as on clouds, and not as yet
My weary and faint hearted noon had sunk
Upon the clod while the bright day went by.
Lately, I feared my life was empty, now
I know though a frail tenement that it still
Is worth repair, if yet its hollowness
Doth entertain so fine a guest within, and through
Its empty aisles there still doth ring
Though but the echo of so high a strain;
It shall be swept again and cleansed from sin
To be a thoroughfare for celestial airs;
Perchance the God who is proprietor
Will pity take on his poor tenant here
And countenance his efforts to improve
His property and make it worthy to revert,
At some late day Unto himself again.

To day I climbed a handsome rounded hill

To day I climbed a handsome rounded hill
Covered with hickory trees wishing to see
The country from its top — for low hills
show unexpected prospects — I looked
many miles over a woody low-land
Toward Marlborough Framingham & Sudbury
And as I sat amid the hickory trees

The Just Made Perfect

A stately music rises on my ear,
Borne on the breeze from some adjacent vale;
A host of knights, my own true ancestors,
Tread to the lofty strains and pass away
In long procession; to this music's sound
The Just move onward in deep serried ranks,
With looks serene of hope, and gleaming brows,
As if they were the temples of the Day.

Gilt by an unseen sun's resplendent ray
They firmly move, sure as the lapse of Time;
Departed worth, leaving these trivial fields
Where sedate valor finds no worthy aim,
And still is Fame the noblest cause of all.

Forward they press and with exalted eye,
As if their road, which seems a level plain,
Did still ascend, and were again subdued
'Neath their proud feet. Forward they move, and leave
The sun and moon and stars alone behind:
And now, by the still fainter strains, I know
They surely pass; and soon their quivering harp,
And faintly clashing cymbal, will have ceased
To feed my ear.

It is the steadiest motion eye hath seen,
A Godlike progress; e'en the hills and rocks
Do forward come, so to congratulate
Their feet; the rivers eddy backward, and
The waves recurl to accompany their march.

Onward they move, like to the life of man,
Which cannot rest, but goes without delay
Right to the gates of Death, not losing time

In its majestic tread to Eternity,
As if Man's blood, a river, flowed right on
Far as the eye could reach, to the Heart of hearts,
Nor eddied round about these complex limbs.
'Tis the slow march of life, — I feel the feet
Of tiny drops go pattering through *my* veins;
Their arteries flow with an Assyrian pace,
And empires rise and fall beneath their stride.

Still, as they move, flees the horizon wall;
The low-roofed sky o'erarches their true path;
For they have caught at last the pace of Heaven,
Their great Commander's true and timely tread.

Lo! how the sky before them is cast up
Into an archèd road, like to the gallery
Of the small mouse that bores the meadow's turf:
Chapels of ease swift open o'er the path,
And domes continuous span the lengthening way.

I do not fear my thoughts will die

I do not fear my thoughts will die
For never yet it was so dry
as to scorch the azure of the sky.
It knows no withering & no drought
Though all eyes crop it ne’er gives out
My eyes my flocks are
Mountains my crops are
I do not fear my flocks will stray
For they were made to roam the day
For they can wander with the latest light
Yet be at home at night.

I’m contented you should stay

I’m contented you should stay
For ever and aye
If you can take yourself away
Any day.

Man Man is the Devil

Man Man is the Devil
The source of all evil.

You must not only aim aright

You must not only aim aright,
But draw the bow with all your might.

The Chicadee

The chicadee
Hops near to me.

He knows no change who knows the true

He knows no change who knows the true,
And on it keeps his eye,
Who always still the unseen doth view;
Only the false & the apparent die.

Things change, but change not far
From what they are not but to what they are,
Or rather ’tis our ignorance that dies;
Forever lives the knowledge of the wise.

When the toads begin to ring

When the toads begin to ring,
Then thinner clothing bring
or Off your greatcoat fling

Twas 30 years ago

’Twas 30 years ago
In a rocky pasture field
Sprang an infant apple grove
low planted & concealed —
I sing the wild apple theme enough for me.

I love the racy fruit & I reverence the tree —
In that small family there was one that
loved the sun — which sent its root down deep —
& took fast hold on life — while the others
went to sleep
In 2 years time ‘t had thus
Reached the level of the rocks —
Admired the stretching world
Nor feared the wandering flocks —

But at this tender age
Its sufferings began —
There came a browsing ox
And cut it down a span.

Its heart did bleed all day
& When the birds were hushed —

The Rosa Sanguined

As often as a martyr dies,
This opes its petals to the skies;
And Nature by this trace alone
Informs us which way he is gone.

Forever in my dream & in my morning thought

Forever in my dream & in my morning thought
Eastward a mount ascends —
But when in the sunbeam its hard outline is sought —
It all dissolves & ends.
The woods that way are gates — the pastures too slope up
To an unearthly ground —
But when I ask my mates, to take the staff & cup,
It can no more be found —
Perchance I have no shoes fit for the lofty soil
Where my thoughts graze —
No properly spun clues — nor well strained mid day oil
Or — must I mend my ways?
It is a promised land which I have not yet earned,
I have not made beginning
With consecrated hand — I have not even learned
To lay the underpinning.
The mountain sinks by day — as do my lofty thoughts,
Because I'm not highminded.
If I could think alway above these hills & warts
I should see it, though blinded.
It is a spiral path within the pilgrim's soul
Leads to this mountain's brow
Commencing at his hearth he reaches to this goal
He knows not when nor how.

Except, returning, by the Marlboro

Except, returning, by the Marlboro,
A way, methinks, might safely be allowed
To pilgrims of the holiest character
We marked, I say, the barberry's brilliant fruit,
Which on our hill & pasture grows to waste
Not the less sweet to see though sour to taste —
And in a rocky lane through which we passed
Not so much lengthwise as diagonally
In our saint-terrering over hill & valley
We plucked wild apples of the fairest hew
Filling our pockets out with eagerness,
Excellent whether to eat or look at,
Or to throw at one another & the
Squirrels in sport; & afterward tame ones
In orchards heaped by a penurious hind,
Who saw but heaps of dollars in his mind;
Some what less tame to us for being stolen,
Although our pockets were already swolen;
And, one more proof, I saw at Willis Lake
Where we had come our nature's thirst to slake
The willow bed which ornaments its edge
Mixed with the cranberry — button bush & sedge
Touched by the frost send forth its scarlet flames,
Which far surpassed all oriental dyes
Reminding me of the wild wealth of the skies
And of the red man who once on this shore
Beheld it, ere *his* last summer was oer.
So we returned from Willis Pond & Hill,
I climb the last & drink the former still.

All things decay

All things decay
& so must our sleigh

Any fool can make a rule

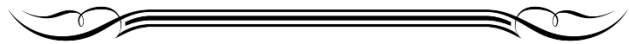
Any fool can make a rule
And every fool will mind it.

The Translations



Thoreau worked for most of his adult life in his family's pencil factory at Concord, where he rediscovered the process to make a good pencil out of inferior graphite by using clay as the binder.

PROMETHEUS BOUND OF ÆSCHYLUS



PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

Kratos *and* Bia (Strength and Force).
Hephaistus (Vulcan).
Prometheus.
Chorus of Ocean Nymphs.
Oceanus.
Io, *Daughter of Inachus*.
Hermes.
Kratos *and* Bia, Hephaistus, Prometheus.

PROMETHEUS BOUND.

Kr. We are come to the far-bounding plain of earth,
To the Scythian way, to the unapproached solitude.
Hephaistus, orders must have thy attention,
Which the Father has enjoined on thee, this bold one
To the high-hanging rocks to bind
In indissoluble fetters of adamantine bonds.
For thy flower, the splendor of fire useful in all arts,
Stealing, he bestowed on mortals; and for such
A crime ‘t is fit he should give satisfaction to the gods;
That he may learn the tyranny of Zeus
To love, and cease from his man-loving ways.

Heph. Kratos and Bia, your charge from Zeus
Already has its end, and nothing further in the way;
But I cannot endure to bind
A kindred god by force to a bleak precipice, —
Yet absolutely there’s necessity that I have courage for these things;
For it is hard the Father’s words to banish.
High-plotting son of the right-counseling Themis,
Unwilling thee unwilling in brazen fetters hard to be loosed
I am about to nail to this inhuman hill,
Where neither voice [you’ll hear], nor form of any mortal
See, but, scorched by the sun’s clear flame,
Will change your color’s bloom; and to you glad
The various-robed night will conceal the light,
And sun disperse the morning frost again;
And always the burden of the present ill
Will wear you; for he that will relieve you has not yet been born.
Such fruits you’ve reaped from your man-loving ways,
For a god, not shrinking from the wrath of gods,
You have bestowed honors on mortals more than just,
For which this pleasureless rock you’ll sentinel,
Standing erect, sleepless, not bending a knee;
And many sighs and lamentations to no purpose

Will you utter; for the mind of Zeus is hard to be changed;
And he is wholly rugged who may newly rule.

Kr. Well, why dost thou delay and pity in vain?
Why not hate the god most hostile to gods,
Who has betrayed thy prize to mortals?

Heph. The affinity indeed is appalling, and the familiarity.

Kr. I agree, but to disobey the Father's words
How is it possible? Fear you not this more?

Heph. Ay, you are always without pity, and full of confidence.

Kr. For 't is no remedy to bewail this one;
Cherish not vainly troubles which avail naught.

Heph. O much hated handicraft!

Kr. Why hatest it? for in simple truth, for these misfortunes
Which are present now Art's not to blame.

Heph. Yet I would 't had fallen to another's lot.

Kr. All things were done but to rule the gods,
For none is free but Zeus.

Heph. I knew it, and have naught to say against these things.

Kr. Will you not haste, then, to put the bonds about him,
That the Father may not observe you loitering?

Heph. Already at hand the shackles you may see.

Kr. Taking them, about his hands with firm strength
Strike with the hammer, and nail him to the rocks.

Heph. 'T is done, and not in vain this work.

Kr. Strike harder, tighten, nowhere relax,
For he is skillful to find out ways e'en from the impracticable.

Heph. Ay, but this arm is fixed inextricably.

Kr. And this now clasp securely, that
He may learn he is a duller schemer than is Zeus.

Heph. Except him would none justly blame me.

Kr. Now with an adamantine wedge's stubborn fang
Through the breasts nail strongly.

Heph. Alas! alas! Prometheus, I groan for thy afflictions.

Kr. And do you hesitate? for Zeus' enemies
Do you groan? Beware lest one day you yourself will pity.

Heph. You see a spectacle hard for eyes to behold.

Kr. I see him meeting his deserts;
But round his sides put straps.

Heph. To do this is necessity, insist not much.

Kr. Surely I will insist and urge beside;
Go downward, and the thighs surround with force.

Heph. Already it is done, the work, with no long labor.

Kr. Strongly now drive the fetters, through and through,
For the critic of the works is difficult.

Heph. Like your form your tongue speaks.

Kr. Be thou softened, but for my stubbornness
Of temper and harshness reproach me not.

Heph. Let us withdraw, for he has a net about his limbs.

Kr. There now insult, and the shares of gods
Plundering on ephemerals bestow; what thee
Can mortals in these ills relieve?
Falsely thee the divinities Prometheus
Call; for you yourself need one *foreseeing*
In what manner you will escape this fortune.
Prometheus, *alone*.
O divine ether, and ye swift-winged winds,
Fountains of rivers, and countless smilings
Of the ocean waves, and earth, mother of all,
And thou all-seeing orb of the sun I call.
Behold me what a god I suffer at the hands of gods.
See by what outrages
Tormented the myriad-yeared
Time I shall endure; such the new
Ruler of the blessed has contrived for me,
Unseemly bonds.
Alas! alas! the present and the coming
Woe I groan; where ever of these sufferings
Must an end appear.
But what say I? I know beforehand all,
Exactly what will be, nor to me strange
Will any evil come. The destined fate
As easily as possible it behooves to bear, knowing
Necessity's is a resistless strength.
But neither to be silent nor unsilent about this
Lot is possible for me; for a gift to mortals
Giving, I wretched have been yoked to these necessities;
Within a hollow reed by stealth I carry off fire's
Stolen source, which seemed the teacher
Of all art to mortals, and a great resource.
For such crimes penalty I pay,
Under the sky, riveted in chains.
Ah! ah! alas! alas!
What echo, what odor has flown to me obscure,
Of god, or mortal, or else mingled, —
Came it to this terminal hill

A witness of my sufferings, or wishing what?
Behold bound me an unhappy god,
The enemy of Zeus, fallen under
The ill will of all the gods, as many as
Enter into the hall of Zeus,
Through too great love of mortals.
Alas! alas! what fluttering do I hear
Of birds near? for the air rustles
With the soft rippling of wings.
Everything to me is fearful which creeps this way.
Prometheus *and* Chorus.

Ch. Fear nothing; for friendly this band
Of wings with swift contention
Drew to this hill, hardly
Persuading the paternal mind.
The swift-carrying breezes sent me;
For the echo of beaten steel pierced the recesses
Of the caves, and struck out from me reserved modesty;
And I rushed unsandaled in a winged chariot.

Pr. Alas! alas! alas! alas!
Offspring of the fruitful Tethys,
And of him rolling around all
The earth with sleepless stream children,
Of Father Ocean; behold, look on me;
By what bonds embraced
On this cliff's topmost rocks
I shall maintain unenvied watch.

Ch. I see, Prometheus; but to my eyes a fearful
Mist has come surcharged
With tears, looking upon thy body
Shrunk to the rocks
By these mischiefs of adamantine bonds;
Indeed, new helmsmen rule Olympus;
And with new laws Zeus strengthens himself, annulling the old,

And the before great now makes unknown.

Pr. Would that under earth, and below Hades,
Receptacle of dead, to impassable
Tartarus he had sent me, to bonds indissoluble
Cruelly conducting, that neither god
Nor any other had rejoiced at this.
But now the sport of winds, unhappy one,
A source of pleasure to my foes, I suffer.

Ch. Who so hard-hearted
Of the gods, to whom these things are pleasant?
Who does not sympathize with thy
Misfortunes, excepting Zeus? for he in wrath always
Fixing his stubborn mind,
Afflicts the heavenly race;
Nor will he cease, until his heart is sated;
Or with some palm some one may take the power hard to be taken.

Pr. Surely yet, though in strong
Fetters I am now maltreated,
The ruler of the blessed will have need of me,
To show the new conspiracy by which
He's robbed of sceptre and of honors,
And not at all me with persuasion's honey-tongued
Charms will he appease, nor ever,
Shrinking from his firm threats, will I
Declare this, till from cruel
Bonds he may release, and to do justice
For this outrage be willing.

Ch. You are bold; and to bitter
Woes do nothing yield,
But too freely speak.
But my mind piercing fear disturbs;
For I'm concerned about thy fortunes,
Where at length arriving you may see

An end to these afflictions. For manners
Inaccessible, and a heart hard to be dissuaded has the son of Kronos.

Pr. I know, that — Zeus is stern and having
Justice to himself. But after all
Gentle-minded
He will one day be, when thus he's crushed,
And his stubborn wrath allaying,
Into agreement with me and friendliness
Earnest to me earnest he at length will come.

Ch. The whole account disclose and tell us plainly,
In what crime taking you Zeus
Thus disgracefully and bitterly insults;
Inform us, if you are nowise hurt by the recital.

Pr. Painful indeed it is to me to tell these things,
And a pain to be silent, and every way unfortunate.
When first the divinities began their strife,
And discord 'mong themselves arose,
Some wishing to cast Kronos from his seat,
That Zeus might reign, forsooth, others the contrary
Striving, that Zeus might never rule the gods;
Then I, the best advising, to persuade
The Titans, sons of Uranus and Chthon,
Unable was; but crafty stratagems
Despising with rude minds,
They thought without trouble to rule by force;
But to me my mother not once only, Themis,
And Gæa, of many names one form,
How the future should be accomplished had foretold,
That not by power nor by strength
Would it be necessary, but by craft the victors should prevail.
Such I in words expounding,
They deigned not to regard at all.
The best course, therefore, of those occurring then
Appeared to be, taking my mother to me,

Of my own accord to side with Zeus glad to receive me;
And by my counsels Tartarus' black-pitted
Depths conceals the ancient Kronos,
With his allies. In such things by me
The tyrant of the gods having been helped,
With base rewards like these repays me;
For there is somehow in kingship
This disease, not to trust its friends.
What then you ask, for what cause
He afflicts me, this will I now explain.
As soon as on his father's throne
He sat, he straightway to the gods distributes honors,
Some to one and to another some, and arranged
The government; but of unhappy mortals account
Had none; but blotting out the race
Entire, wished to create another new.
And these things none opposed but I,
But I adventured; I rescued mortals
From going destroyed to Hades.
Therefore, indeed, with such afflictions am I bent,
To suffer grievous, and piteous to behold,
And, holding mortals up to pity, myself am not
Thought worthy to obtain it; but without pity
Am I thus corrected, a spectacle inglorious to Zeus.

Ch. Of iron heart and made of stone,
Whoe'er, Prometheus, with thy sufferings
Does not grieve; for I should not have wished to see
These things, and having seen them I am grieved at heart.

Pr. Indeed to friends I'm piteous to behold.

Ch. Did you in no respect go beyond this?

Pr. True, mortals I made cease foreseeing fate.

Ch. Having found what remedy for this all?

Pr. Blind hopes in them I made to dwell.

Ch. A great advantage this you gave to men.

Pr. Beside these, too, I bestowed on them fire.

Ch. And have mortals flamy fire?

Pr. From which, indeed, they will learn many arts.

Ch. Upon such charges, then, does Zeus
Maltreat you, and nowhere relax from ills?
Is there no term of suffering lying before thee?

Pr. Nay, none at all, but when to him it may seem good.

Ch. And how will it seem good? What hope? See you not that
You have erred? But how you've erred, for me to tell
Not pleasant, and to you a pain. But these things
Let us omit, and seek you some release from sufferings.

Pr. Easy, whoever out of trouble holds his
Foot, to admonish and remind those faring
Ill. But all these things I knew;
Willing, willing I erred, I'll not deny;
Mortals assisting I myself found trouble.
Not indeed with penalties like these thought I
That I should pine on lofty rocks,
Gaining this drear unneighbored hill.
But bewail not my present woes,
But alighting, the fortunes creeping on
Hear ye, that ye may learn all to the end.
Obey me, obey, sympathize
With him now suffering. Thus indeed affliction,
Wandering round, sits now by one, then by another.

Ch. Not to unwilling ears do you urge
This, Prometheus.

And now with light foot the swift-rushing
Seat leaving, and the pure ether,
Path of birds, to this peaked
Ground I come; for thy misfortunes
I wish fully to hear.
Prometheus, Chorus, *and* Oceanus.

Oc. I come to the end of a long way
Traveling to thee, Prometheus,
By my will without bits directing
This wing-swift bird;
For at thy fortunes know I grieve.
And, I think, affinity thus
Impels me, but apart from birth,
There's not to whom a higher rank
I would assign than thee.
And you will know these things as true, and not in vain
To flatter with the tongue is in me. Come, therefore,
Show how it is necessary to assist you;
For never will you say, than Ocean
There's a firmer friend to thee.

Pr. Alas! what now? And you, then, of my sufferings
Come spectator? How didst thou dare, leaving
The stream which bears thy name, and rock-roofed
Caves self-built, to the iron-mother
Earth to go? To behold my fate
Hast come, and to compassionate my ills?
Behold a spectacle, this, the friend of Zeus,
Having with him stablished his tyranny,
With what afflictions by himself I'm bent.

Oc. I see, Prometheus, and would admonish
Thee the best, although of varied craft.
Know thyself, and fit thy manners
New; for new also the king among the gods.
For if thus rude and whetted words

Thou wilt hurl out, quickly may Zeus, though sitting
Far above, hear thee, so that thy present wrath
Of troubles child's play will seem to be.
But, O wretched one, dismiss the indignation which thou hast,
And seek deliverance from these woes.
Like an old man, perhaps, I seem to thee to say these things;
Such, however, are the wages
Of the too lofty speaking tongue, Prometheus;
But thou art not yet humble, nor dost yield to ills,
And beside the present wish to receive others still.
But thou wouldst not, with my counsel,
Against the pricks extend your limbs, seeing that
A stern monarch irresponsible reigns.
And now I go, and will endeavor,
If I can, to release thee from these sufferings.
But be thou quiet, nor too rudely speak.
Know'st thou not well, with thy superior wisdom, that
On a vain tongue punishment is inflicted?

Pr. I congratulate thee that thou art without blame,
Having shared and dared all with me;
And now leave off, and let it not concern thee.
For altogether thou wilt not persuade him, for he's not easily persuaded,
But take heed yourself lest you be injured by the way.

Oc. Far better thou art to advise those near
Than thyself; by deed and not by word I judge.
But me hastening by no means mayest thou detain,
For I boast, I boast, this favor will Zeus
Grant me, from these sufferings to release thee.

Pr. So far I praise thee, and will never cease;
For zeal you nothing lack. But
Strive not; for in vain, naught helping
Me, thou 'lt strive, if aught to strive you wish.
But be thou quiet, holding thyself aloof,

For I would not, though I'm unfortunate, that on this account
Evils should come to many.

Oc. Surely not, for me too the fortunes of thy brother
Atlas grieve, who towards the evening-places
Stands, the pillar of heaven and earth
Upon his shoulders bearing, a load not easy to be borne.
And the earth-born inhabitant of the Cilician
Caves seeing, I pitied, the savage monster
With a hundred heads, by force o'ercome,
Typhon impetuous, who stood 'gainst all the gods,
With frightful jaws hissing out slaughter;
And from his eyes flashed a Gorgonian light,
Utterly to destroy by force the sovereignty of Zeus;
But there came to him Zeus' sleepless bolt,
Descending thunder, breathing flame,
Which struck him out from lofty
Boastings. For, struck to his very heart,
His strength was scorched and thundered out.
And now a useless and extended carcass
Lies he near a narrow passage of the sea,
Pressed down under the roots of Ætna.
And on the topmost summit seated, Hephaistus
Hammers the ignited mass, whence will burst out at length
Rivers of fire, devouring with wild jaws
Fair-fruited Sicily's smooth fields;
Such rage will Typhon make boil over
With hot discharges of insatiable fire-breathing tempest,
Though by the bolt of Zeus burnt to a coal.

Pr. Thou art not inexperienced, nor dost want
My counsel; secure thyself as thou know'st how;
And I against the present fortune will bear up,
Until the thought of Zeus may cease from wrath.

Oc. Know'st thou not this, Prometheus, that
Words are healers of distempered wrath?

Pr. If any seasonably soothe the heart,
And swelling passion check not rudely.

Oc. In the consulting and the daring
What harm seest thou existing? Teach me.

Pr. Trouble superfluous, and light-minded folly.

Oc. Be this my ail then, since it is
Most profitable, being wise, not to seem wise.

Pr. This will seem to be my error.

Oc. Plainly homeward thy words remand me.

Pr. Aye, let not grief for me into hostility cast thee.

Oc. To the new occupant of the all-powerful seats?

Pr. Beware lest ever his heart be angered.

Oc. Thy fate, Prometheus, is my teacher.

Pr. Go thou, depart; preserve the present mind.

Oc. To me rushing this word you utter.
For the smooth path of the air sweeps with his wings
The four-legged bird; and gladly would
In the stalls at home bend a knee.
Prometheus *and* Chorus.

Ch. I mourn for thee thy ruinous
Fate, Prometheus,
And tear-distilling from my tender
Eyes a stream has wet
My cheeks with flowing springs;
For these, unenvied, Zeus
By his own laws enforcing,
Haughty above the gods

That were displays his sceptre.
And every region now
With groans resounds,
Mourning the illustrious
And ancient honor
Of thee and of thy kindred;
As many mortals as the habitable seat
Of sacred Asia pasture,
With thy lamentable
Woes have sympathy;
And of the Colchian land, virgin
Inhabitants, in fight undaunted,
And Scythia's multitude, who the last
Place of earth, about
Mæotis lake possess,
And Arabia's martial flower,
And who the high-hung citadels
Of Caucasus inhabit near,
A hostile army, raging
With sharp-prowed spears.
Only one other god before, in sufferings
Subdued by injuries
Of adamantine bonds, I've seen, Titanian
Atlas, who always with superior strength
The huge and heavenly globe
On his back bears;
And with a roar the sea waves
Dashing, groans the deep,
And the dark depth of Hades murmurs underneath
The earth, and fountains of pure-running rivers
Heave a pitying sigh.

Pr. Think not, indeed, through weakness or through pride
That I am silent; for with the consciousness I gnaw my heart,
Seeing myself thus basely used.
And yet to these new gods their shares
Who else than I wholly distributed?

But of these things I am silent; for I should tell you
What you know; the sufferings of mortals too
You've heard, how I made intelligent
And possessed of sense them ignorant before.
But I will speak, not bearing any grudge to men,
But showing in what I gave the good intention;
At first, indeed, seeing they saw in vain,
And hearing heard not; but like the forms
Of dreams, for that long time, rashly confounded
All, nor brick-woven dwellings
Knew they, placed in the sun, nor woodwork;
But digging down they dwelt, like puny
Ants, in sunless nooks of caves.
And there was naught to them, neither of winter sign,
Nor of flower-giving spring, nor fruitful
Summer, that was sure; but without knowledge
Did they all, till I taught them the risings
Of the stars, and goings down, hard to determine.
And numbers, chief of inventions,
I found out for them, and the assemblages of letters,
And memory, Muse-mother, doer of all things;
And first I joined in pairs wild animals
Obedient to the yoke; and that they might be
Alternate workers with the bodies of men
In the severest toils, I harnessed the rein-loving horses
To the car, the ornament of over-wealthy luxury.
And none else than I invented the sea-wandering
Flaxen-winged vehicles of sailors.
Such inventions I wretched having found out
For men, myself have not the ingenuity by which
From the now present ill I may escape.

Ch. You suffer unseemly ill; deranged in mind
You err; and as some bad physician, falling
Sick you are dejected, and cannot find
By what remedies you may be healed.

Pr. Hearing the rest from me more will you wonder
What arts and what expedients I planned.
That which was greatest, if any might fall sick,
There was alleviation none, neither to eat,
Nor to anoint, nor drink, but for the want
Of medicines they were reduced to skeletons, till to them
I showed the mingling of mild remedies,
By which all ails they drive away.
And many modes of prophecy I settled,
And distinguished first of dreams what a real
Vision is required to be, and omens hard to be determined
I made known to them; and tokens by the way,
And flight of crooked-taloned birds I accurately
Defined, which lucky are,
And unlucky, and what mode of life
Have each, and to one another what
Hostilities, attachments, and assemblings;
The entrails' smoothness, and what color having
They would be to the divinities acceptable;
Of the gall and liver the various symmetry,
And the limbs concealed in fat; and the long
Flank burning, to an art hard to be guessed
I showed the way to mortals; and flammeous signs
Explained, before obscure.
Such indeed these; and under ground
Concealed the helps to men;
Brass, iron, silver, gold, who
Would affirm that he discovered before me?
None, I well know, not wishing in vain to boast.
But learn all in one word,
All arts to mortals from Prometheus.

Ch. Assist not mortals now unseasonably,
And neglect yourself unfortunate; for I
Am of good hope that, from these bonds
Released, you will yet have no less power than Zeus.

Pr. Never thus has Fate the Accomplisher
Decreed to fulfill these things, but by a myriad ills
And woes subdued, thus bonds I flee;
For art ‘s far weaker than necessity.

Ch. Who, then, is helmsman of necessity?

Pr. The Fates three-formed, and the remembering Furies.

Ch. Than these, then, is Zeus weaker?

Pr. Ay, he could not escape what has been fated.

Ch. But what to Zeus is fated, except always to rule?

Pr. This thou wilt not learn; seek not to know.

Ch. Surely some awful thing it is which you withhold.

Pr. Remember other words, for this by no means
Is it time to tell, but to be concealed
As much as possible; for keeping this do I
Escape unseemly bonds and woes.

Ch. Never may the all-ruling
Zeus put into my mind
Force antagonist to him.
Nor let me cease drawing near
The gods with holy sacrifices
Of slain oxen, by Father Ocean’s
Ceaseless passage,
Nor offend with words,
But in me this remain
And ne’er be melted out.
’Tis something sweet with bold
Hopes the long life to
Extend, in bright
Cheerfulness the cherishing spirit.

But I shudder, thee beholding
By a myriad sufferings tormented....
For, not fearing Zeus,
In thy private mind thou dost regard
Mortals too much, Prometheus.
Come, though a thankless
Favor, friend, say where is any strength,
From ephemerals any help? Saw you not
The powerless inefficiency,
Dream-like, in which the blind ...
Race of mortals are entangled?
Never counsels of mortals
May transgress the harmony of Zeus.
I learned these things looking on
Thy destructive fate, Prometheus.
For different to me did this strain come,
And that which round thy baths
And couch I hymned,
With the design of marriage, when my father's child
With bridal gifts persuading, thou didst lead
Hesione the partner of thy bed.
Prometheus, Chorus, *and* Io.

Io. What earth, what race, what being shall I is this
I see in bridles of rock
Exposed? By what crime's
Penalty dost thou perish? Show, to what part
Of earth I miserable have wandered.
Ah! ah! alas! alas!
Again some fly doth sting me wretched,
Image of earth-born Argus, cover it, earth;
I fear the myriad-eyed herdsman beholding;
For he goes having a treacherous eye,
Whom not e'en dead the earth conceals.
But me, wretched from the Infernals passing,
He pursues, and drives fasting along the seaside
Sand, while low resounds a wax-compacted reed,

Uttering sleep-giving law; alas! alas! O gods!
Where, gods! where lead me far-wandering courses?
In what sin, O son of Kronos,
In what sin ever having taken,
To these afflictions hast thou yoked me? alas! alas!
With fly-driven fear a wretched
Frenzied one dost thus afflict?
With fire burn, or with earth cover, or
To sea monsters give for food, nor
Envy me my prayers, king.
Enough much-wandered wanderings
Have exercised me, nor can I learn where
I shall escape from sufferings.

Ch. Hear'st thou the address of the cow-horned virgin?

Pr. And how not hear the fly-whirled virgin,
Daughter of Inachus, who Zeus' heart warmed
With love, and now the courses over long,
By Here hated, forcedly performs?

Io. Whence utterest thou my father's name?
Tell me, miserable, who thou art,
That to me, O suffering one, me born to suffer,
Thus true things dost address?
The god-sent ail thou'st named,
Which wastes me stinging
With maddening goads, alas! alas!
With foodless and unseemly leaps
Rushing headlong, I came,
By wrathful plots subdued.
Who of the wretched, who, alas! alas! suffers like me?
But to me clearly show
What me awaits to suffer,
What not necessary; what remedy of ill,
Teach, if indeed thou know'st; speak out,
Tell the ill-wandering virgin.

Pr. I'll clearly tell thee all you wish to learn.
Not weaving in enigmas, but in simple speech,
As it is just to open the mouth to friends.
Thou seest the giver of fire to men, Prometheus.

Io. O thou who didst appear a common help to mortals,
Wretched Prometheus, to atone for what do you endure this?

Pr. I have scarce ceased my sufferings lamenting.

Io. Would you not grant this favor to me?

Pr. Say what you ask; for you'd learn all from me.

Io. Say who has bound thee to the cliff.

Pr. The will, indeed, of Zeus, Hephaistus' hand.

Io. And penalty for what crimes dost thou pay?

Pr. Thus much only can I show thee.

Io. But beside this, declare what time will be
To me unfortunate the limit of my wandering.

Pr. Not to learn is better for thee than to learn these things.

Io. Conceal not from me what I am to suffer.

Pr. Indeed, I grudge thee not this favor.

Io. Why, then, dost thou delay to tell the whole?

Pr. There's no unwillingness, but I hesitate to vex thy mind.

Io. Care not for me more than is pleasant to me.

Pr. Since you are earnest, it behooves to speak; hear then.

Ch. Not yet, indeed; but a share of pleasure also give to me.
First we'll learn the malady of this one,
Herself relating her destructive fortunes,
And the remainder of her trials let her learn from thee.

Pr. 'T is thy part, Io, to do these a favor,
As well for every other reason, and as they are sisters of thy father.
Since to weep and to lament misfortunes,
There where one will get a tear
From those attending, is worthy the delay.

Io. I know not that I need distrust you,
But in plain speech you shall learn
All that you ask for; and yet e'en telling I lament
The god-sent tempest, and dissolution
Of my form — whence to me miserable it came.
For always visions in the night, moving about
My virgin chambers, enticed me
With smooth words: "O greatly happy virgin,
Why be a virgin long? is permitted to obtain
The greatest marriage. For Zeus with love's dart
Has been warmed by thee, and wishes to unite
In love; but do thou, O child, spurn not the couch
Of Zeus, but go out to Lerna's deep
Morass, and stables of thy father's herds,
That the divine eye may cease from desire."
With such dreams every night
Was I unfortunate distressed, till I dared tell
My father of the night-wandering visions.
And he to Pytho and Dodona frequent
Prophets sent, that he might learn what it was necessary
He should say or do, to do agreeably to the gods.
And they came bringing ambiguous
Oracles, darkly and indistinctly uttered.
But finally a plain report came to Inachus,
Clearly enjoining him and telling
Out of my home and country to expel me,

Discharged to wander to the earth's last bounds;
And if he was not willing, from Zeus would come
A fiery thunderbolt, which would annihilate all his race.
Induced by such predictions of the Loxian,
Against his will he drove me out,
And shut me from the houses; but Zeus' rein
Compelled him by force to do these things.
Immediately my form and mind were
Changed, and horned, as you behold, stung
By a sharp-mouthed fly, with frantic leaping
Rushed I to Cenchrea's palatable stream,
And Lerna's source; but a herdsman born-of-earth
Of violent temper, Argus, accompanied, with numerous
Eyes my steps observing.
But unexpectedly a sudden fate
Robbed him of life; and I, fly-stung,
By lash divine am driven from land to land.
You hear what has been done; and if you have to say aught,
What's left of labors, speak; nor pitying me
Comfort with false words; for an ill
The worst of all, I say, are made-up words.

Ch. Ah! ah! enough, alas!
Ne'er, ne'er did I presume such cruel words
Would reach my ears, nor thus unsightly
And intolerable hurts, sufferings, fears with a two-edged
Goad would chill my soul;
Alas! alas! fate! fate!
I shudder, seeing the state of Io.

Pr. Beforehand sigh'st thou, and art full of fears,
Hold till the rest also thou learn'st.

Ch. Tell, teach; for to the sick 't is sweet
To know the remaining pain beforehand clearly.

Pr. Your former wish ye got from me

With ease; for first ye asked to learn from her
Relating her own trials;
The rest now hear, what sufferings ‘t is necessary
This young woman should endure from Here.
But do thou, offspring of Inachus, my words
Cast in thy mind, that thou may’st learn the boundaries of the way.
First, indeed, hence towards the rising of the sun
Turning thyself, travel uncultivated lands,
And to the Scythian nomads thou wilt come, who woven roofs
On high inhabit, on well-wheeled carts,
With far-casting bows equipped;
Whom go not near, but to the sea-resounding cliffs
Bending thy feet, pass from the region.
On the left hand the iron-working
Chalybes inhabit, whom thou must needs beware,
For they are rude and inaccessible to strangers.
And thou wilt come to the Hybristes river, not ill named,
Which pass not, for not easy is ‘t to pass,
Before you get to Caucasus itself, highest
Of mountains, where the stream spurts out its tide
From the very temples; and passing over
The star-neighbored summits, ‘t is necessary to go
The southern way, where thou wilt come to the man-hating
Army of the Amazons, who Themiscyra one day
Will inhabit, by the Thermedon, where’s
Salmydessia, rough jaw of the sea,
Inhospitable to sailors, stepmother of ships;
They will conduct thee on thy way, and very cheerfully.
And to the Cimmerian isthmus thou wilt come,
Just on the narrow portals of a lake, which leaving
It behooves thee with stout heart to pass the Mœotic straits;
And there will be to mortals ever a great fame
Of thy passage, and Bosphorus from thy name
‘T will be called. And leaving Europe’s plain
The continent of Asia thou wilt reach. — Seemeth to thee, forsooth,
The tyrant of the gods in everything to be
Thus violent? For he a god, with this mortal

Wishing to unite, drove her to these wanderings.
A bitter wooer didst thou find, O virgin,
For thy marriage. For the words you now have heard
Think not yet to be the prelude.

Io. Ah! me! me! alas! alas!

Pr. Again dost shriek and heave a sigh? What
Wilt thou do when the remaining ills thou learn'st?

Ch. And hast thou any further suffering to tell her?

Pr. Ay, a tempestuous sea of baleful woe.

Io. What profit, then, for me to live, and not in haste
To cast myself from this rough rock,
That rushing down upon the plain I may be released
From every trouble? For better once for all to die,
Than all my days to suffer evilly.

Pr. Unhappily my trials would'st thou hear,
To whom to die has not been fated;
For this would be release from sufferings;
But now there is no end of ills lying
Before me, until Zeus falls from sovereignty.

Io. And is Zeus ever to fall from power?

Pr. Thou would'st be pleased, I think, to see this accident.

Io. How should I not, who suffer ill from Zeus?

Pr. That these things then are so, be thou assured.

Io. By what one will the tyrant's power be robbed?

Pr. Himself, by his own senseless counsels.

Io. In what way show, if there's no harm.

Pr. He will make such a marriage as one day he'll repent.

Io. Of god or mortal? If to be spoken, tell.

Pr. What matters which? For these things are not to be told.

Io. By a wife will he be driven from the throne?

Pr. Ay, she will bring forth a son superior to his father.

Io. Is there no refuge for him from this fate?

Pr. None, surely, till I may be released from bonds.

Io. Who, then, is to release thee, Zeus unwilling?

Pr. He must be some one of thy descendants.

Io. How sayest thou? that my child will deliver thee from ills?

Pr. Third of thy race after ten other births.

Io. This oracle is not yet easy to be guessed.

Pr. But do not seek to understand thy sufferings.

Io. First proffering gain to me, do not then withhold it.

Pr. I'll grant thee one of two relations.

Io. What two propose, and give to me my choice.

Pr. I give; choose whether thy remaining troubles
I shall tell thee clearly, or him that will release me.

Ch. Consent to do her the one favor,
Me the other, nor deem us undeserving of thy words;
To her indeed tell what remains of wandering,
And to me, who will release; for I desire this.

Pr. Since ye are earnest, I will not resist
To tell the whole, as much as ye ask for.
To thee first, Io, vexatious wandering I will tell,
Which engrave on the remembering tablets of the mind.
When thou hast passed the flood boundary of continents,
Towards the flaming orient sun-traveled ...
Passing through the tumult of the sea, until you reach
The Gorgonian plains of Cisthene, where
The Phorcides dwell, old virgins,
Three, swan-shaped, having a common eye,
One-toothed, whom neither the sun looks on
With his beams, nor nightly moon ever.
And near, their winged sisters three,
Dragon-scaled Gorgons, odious to men,
Whom no mortal beholding will have breath;
Such danger do I tell thee.
But hear another odious sight;
Beware the gryphons, sharp-mouthed
Dogs of Zeus, which bark not, and the one-eyed Arimaspian
Host, going on horseback, who dwell about
The golden-flowing flood of Pluto's channel;
These go not near. But to a distant land
Thou 'lt come, a dusky race, who near the fountains
Of the sun inhabit, where is the Æthiopian river.
Creep down the banks of this, until thou com'st
To a descent, where from Byblinian mounts
The Nile sends down its sacred palatable stream.
This will conduct thee to the triangled land
Nilean, where, Io, 't is decreed
Thou and thy progeny shall form the distant colony.
If aught of this is unintelligible to thee, and hard to be found out,
Repeat thy questions, and learn clearly;
For more leisure than I want is granted me.

Ch. If to her aught remaining or omitted
Thou hast to tell of her pernicious wandering,
Speak; but if thou hast said all, give us

The favor which we ask, for surely thou remember'st.

Pr. The whole term of her traveling has she heard.
But that she may know that not in vain she hears me,
I'll tell what before coming hither she endured,
Giving this as proof of my relations.
The great multitude of words I will omit,
And proceed unto the very limit of thy wanderings.
When, then, you came to the Molossian ground,
And near the high-ridged Dodona, where
Oracle and seat is of Thesprotian Zeus,
And prodigy incredible, the speaking oaks,
By whom you clearly, and naught enigmatically,
Were called the illustrious wife of Zeus
About to be, if aught of these things soothes thee;
Thence, driven by the fly, you came
The seaside way to the great gulf of Rhea,
From which by courses retrograde you are now tempest-tossed.
But for time to come the sea gulf,
Clearly know, will be called Ionian,
Memorial of thy passage to all mortals.
Proofs to thee are these of my intelligence,
That it sees somewhat more than the apparent.
But the rest to you and her in common I will tell,
Having come upon the very track of former words.
There is a city Canopus, last of the land,
By Nile's very mouth and bank;
There at length Zeus makes thee sane,
Stroking with gentle hand, and touching only.
And, named from Zeus' begetting,
Thou wilt bear dark Epaphus, who will reap
As much land as broad-flowing Nile doth water;
And fifth from him, a band of fifty children
Again to Argos shall unwilling come,
Of female sex, avoiding kindred marriage
Of their cousins; but they, with minds inflamed,
Hawks by doves not far left behind,

Will come pursuing marriages
Not to be pursued, but heaven will take vengeance on their bodies;
For them Pelasgia shall receive by Mars
Subdued with woman's hand with night-watching boldness.
For each wife shall take her husband's life,
Staining a two-edged dagger in his throat.
Such 'gainst my foes may Cypris come. —
But one of the daughters shall love soften
Not to slay her bedfellow, but she will waver
In her mind; and one of two things will prefer,
To hear herself called timid, rather than stained with blood;
She shall in Argos bear a royal race. —
Of a long speech is need this clearly to discuss.
From this seed, however, shall be born a brave,
Famed for his bow, who will release me
From these sufferings. Such oracle my ancient
Mother told me, Titanian Themis;
But how and by what means, this needs long speech
To tell, and nothing, learning, wilt thou gain.

Io. Ah me! ah wretched me?
Spasms again and brain-struck
Madness burn me within, and a fly's dart
Stings me, — not wrought by fire.
My heart with fear knocks at my breast,
And my eyes whirl round and round,
And from my course I'm borne by madness'
Furious breath, unable to control my tongue;
While confused words dash idly
'Gainst the waves of horrid woe.

Ch. Wise, wise indeed was he,
Who first in mind
This weighed, and with the tongue expressed,
To marry according to one's degree is best by far;
Nor, being a laborer with the hands,
To woo those who are by wealth corrupted,

Nor, those by birth made great.
Never, never me
Fates ...
May you behold the sharer of Zeus' couch.
Nor may I be brought near to any husband among those from heaven,
For I fear, seeing the virginhood of Io,
Not content with man, through marriage vexed
With these distressful wanderings by Here.
But for myself, since an equal marriage is without fear,
I am not concerned lest the love of the almighty
Gods cast its inevitable eye on me.
Without war, indeed, this war, producing
Troubles; nor do I know what would become of me;
For I see not how I should escape the subtlety of Zeus.

Pr. Surely shall Zeus, though haughty now,
Yet be humble, such marriage
He prepares to make, which from sovereignty
And the throne will cast him down obscure; and Father Kronos'
Curse will then be all fulfilled,
Which falling from the ancient seats he imprecated.
And refuge from such ills none of the gods
But I can show him clearly.
I know these things, and in what manner. Now, therefore,
Being bold, let him sit trusting to lofty
Sounds, and brandishing with both hands his fire-breathing weapon,
For naught will these avail him, not
To fall disgracefully intolerable falls;
Such wrestler does he now prepare,
Himself against himself, a prodigy most hard to be withstood;
Who, indeed, will invent a better flame than lightning,
And a loud sound surpassing thunder;
And shiver the trident, Neptune's weapon,
The marine earth-shaking ail.
Stumbling upon this ill he'll learn
How different to govern and to serve.

Ch. Ay, as you hope you vent this against Zeus.

Pr. What will be done, and also what I hope, I say.

Ch. And are we to expect that any will rule Zeus?

Pr. Even than these more grievous ills he'll have.

Ch. How fear'st thou not, hurling such words?

Pr. What should I fear, to whom to die has not been fated?

Ch. But suffering more grievous still than this he may inflict.

Pr. Then let him do it; all is expected by me.

Ch. Those reverencing Adrastia are wise.

Pr. Revere, pray, flatter each successive ruler.
Me less than nothing Zeus concerns.
Let him do, let him prevail this short time
As he will, for long he will not rule the gods, —
But I see here, indeed, Zeus' runner,
The new tryant's drudge;
Doubtless he brings some new message.
Prometheus, Chorus, *and* Hermes.

Her. To thee, the sophist, the bitterly bitter,
The sinner against gods, the giver of honors
To ephemerals, the thief of fire, I speak;
The Father commands thee to tell the marriage
Which you boast, by which he falls from power;
And that, too, not enigmatically,
But each particular declare; nor cause me
Double journeys, Prometheus; for thou see'st that
Zeus is not appeased by such.

Pr. Solemn-mouthed and full of wisdom

Is thy speech, as of the servant of the gods.
Ye newly rule, and think forsooth
To dwell in griefless citadels; have I not seen
Two tyrants fallen from these?
And third I shall behold him ruling now,
Basest and speediest. Do I seem to thee
To fear and shrink from the new gods?
Nay, much and wholly I fall short of this.
The way thou cam'st go through the dust again;
For thou wilt learn naught which thou ask'st of me.

Her. Ay, by such insolence before
You brought yourself into these woes.

Pr. Plainly know, I would not change
My ill fortune for thy servitude,
For better, I think, to serve this rock
Than be the faithful messenger of Father Zeus.
Thus to insult the insulting it is fit.

Her. Thou seem'st to enjoy thy present state.

Pr. I enjoy? Enjoying thus my enemies
Would I see; and thee 'mong them I count.

Her. Dost thou blame me for aught of thy misfortunes?

Pr. In plain words, all gods I hate,
As many as well treated wrong me unjustly.

Her. I hear thee raving, no slight ail.

Pr. Ay, I should ail, if ail one's foes to hate.

Her. If prosperous, thou couldst not be borne.

Pr. Ah me!

Her. This word Zeus does not know.

Pr. But time growing old teaches all things.

Her. And still thou know'st not yet how to be prudent.

Pr. For I should not converse with thee a servant.

Her. Thou seem'st to say naught which the Father wishes.

Pr. And yet his debtor I'd requite the favor.

Her. Thou mock'st me verily as if I were a child.

Pr. And art thou not a child, and simpler still than this,
If thou expectest to learn aught from me?
There is not outrage nor expedient, by which
Zeus will induce me to declare these things,
Before he loose these grievous bonds.
Let there be hurled, then, flaming fire,
And the white-winged snows, and thunders
Of the earth, let him confound and mingle all.
For none of these will bend me till I tell
By whom 't is necessary he should fall from sovereignty.

Her. Consider now if these things seem helpful.

Pr. Long since these were considered and resolved.

Her. Venture, O vain one, venture, at length,
In view of present sufferings to be wise.

Pr. In vain you vex me, as a wave, exhorting.
Ne'er let it come into thy mind that I, fearing
Zeus' anger, shall become woman-minded,
And beg him, greatly hated,
With womanish upturnings of the hands,
To loose me from these bonds. I am far from it.

Her. Though saying much I seem in vain to speak;
For thou art nothing softened nor appeased
By prayers; but champing at the bit like a new-yoked
Colt, thou strugglest and contend'st against the reins.
But thou art violent with feeble wisdom.
For stubbornness to him who is not wise,
Itself alone, is less than nothing strong.
But consider, if thou art not persuaded by my words,
What storm and triple surge of ills
Will come upon thee, not to be avoided; for first this rugged
Cliff with thunder and lightning flame
The Father'll rend, and hide
Thy body, and a strong arm will bury thee.
When thou hast spent a long length of time,
Thou wilt come back to light; and Zeus'
Winged dog, a bloodthirsty eagle, ravenously
Shall tear the great rag of thy body,
Creeping an uninvited guest all day,
And banquet on thy liver black by eating.
Of such suffering expect not any end,
Before some god appear
Succeeding to thy labors, and wish to go to rayless
Hades, and the dark depths of Tartarus.
Therefore deliberate; since this is not made
Boasting, but in earnest spoken;
For to speak falsely does not know the mouth
Of Zeus, but every word he does. So
Look about thee, and consider, nor ever think
Obstinacy better than prudence.

Ch. To us indeed Hermes appears to say not unseasonable things,
For he directs thee, leaving off
Self-will, to seek prudent counsel.
Obey; for it is base to err, for a wise man.

Pr. To me foreknowing these messages
He has uttered, but for a foe to suffer ill

From foes is naught unseemly.
Therefore ‘gainst me let there be hurled
Fire’s double-pointed curl, and air
Be provoked with thunder, and a tumult
Of wild winds; and earth from its foundations
Let a wind rock, and its very roots,
And with a rough surge mingle
The sea waves with the passages
Of the heavenly stars, and to black
Tartarus let him quite cast down my
Body, by necessity’s strong eddies.
Yet after all he will not kill me.

Her. Such words and counsels you may hear
From the brain-struck.
For what lacks he of being mad?
And if prosperous, what does he cease from madness?
Do you, therefore, who sympathize
With this one’s suffering,
From these places quick withdraw somewhere,
Lest the harsh bellowing thunder
Stupefy your minds.

Ch. Say something else, and exhort me
To some purpose; for surely
Thou hast intolerably abused this word.
How direct me to perform a baseness?
I wish to suffer with him whate’er is necessary,
For I have learned to hate betrayers;
Nor is the pest
Which I abominate more than this.

Her. Remember, then, what I foretell;
Nor by calamity pursued
Blame fortune, nor e’er say
That Zeus into unforeseen
Ill has cast you; surely not, but yourselves

You yourselves; for knowing,
And not suddenly nor clandestinely,
You'll be entangled through your folly
In an impassable net of woe.

Pr. Surely indeed, and no more in word,
Earth is shaken;
And a hoarse sound of thunder
Bellows near; and wreaths of lightning
Flash out fiercely blazing, and whirlwinds dust
Whirl up; and leap the blasts
Of all winds, 'gainst one another
Blowing in opposite array;
And air with sea is mingled;
Such impulse against me from Zeus,
Producing fear, doth plainly come.
O revered Mother, O Ether
Revolving common light to all,
You see me, how unjust things I endure!

TRANSLATIONS FROM PINDAR

ELYSIUM
Olympia ii, 109-150
Equally by night always,
And by day, having the sun, the good
Lead a life without labor, not disturbing the earth
With violent hands, nor the sea water,
For a scanty living; but honored
By the gods, who take pleasure in fidelity to oaths,
They spend a tearless existence;
While the others suffer unsightly pain.
But as many as endured threefold
Probation, keeping the mind from all
Injustice, going the way of Zeus to Kronos' tower,
Where the ocean breezes blow around
The island of the blessed; and flowers of gold shine,
Some on the land from dazzling trees,
And the water nourishes others;
With garlands of these they crown their hands and hair,
According to the just decrees of Rhadamanthus,
Whom Father Kronos, the husband of Rhea,
Having the highest throne of all, has ready by himself as his assistant judge.
Peleus and Kadmus are regarded among these;
And his mother brought Achilles, when she had
Persuaded the heart of Zeus with prayers,
Who overthrew Hector, Troy's
Unconquered, unshaken column, and gave Cycnus
To death, and Morning's Æthiop son.
Olympia v, 34-39
Always around virtues labor and expense strive toward a work
Covered with danger; but those succeeding seem to be wise even to the citizens.

Olympia vi, 14-17
Dangerless virtues,
Neither among men, nor in hollow ships,
Are honorable; but many remember if a fair deed is done.

ORIGIN OF RHODES
Olympia vii, 100-129
Ancient sayings of men relate,
That when Zeus and the Immortals divided earth,
Rhodes was not yet apparent in the deep sea;
But in salt depths the island was hid.
And, Helios being absent, no one claimed for him his lot;
So they left him without any region for his share,
The pure god. And Zeus was about to make a second drawing of lots
For him warned. But he did not permit him;
For he said that within the white sea he had seen a certain land
springing up from the bottom,
Capable of feeding many men, and suitable for flocks.
And straightway he commanded golden-filleted Lachesis
To stretch forth her hands, and not contradict
The great oath of the gods, but with the son of Kronos
Assent that, to the bright air being sent by his nod,
It should hereafter be his prize. And his words were fully performed,
Meeting with truth. The island sprang from the watery
Sea; and the genial Father of penetrating beams,
Ruler of fire-breathing horses, has it.
Olympia viii, 95, 96
A man doing fit things
Forgets Hades.

HERCULES NAMES THE HILL OF KRONOS
Olympia x, 59-68
He named the Hill of Kronos, for before nameless,
While Œnomaus ruled, it was moistened with much snow;
And at this first rite the Fates stood by,
And Time, who alone proves
Unchanging truth.

OLYMPIA AT EVENING
Olympia x, 85-92
With the javelin Phrastor struck the mark;
And Eniceus cast the stone afar,
Whirling his hand, above them all,
And with applause it rushed
Through a great tumult;
And the lovely evening light
Of the fair-faced moon shone on the scene.

FAME
Olympia x, 109-117
When, having done fair things, O Agesidamus,
Without the reward of song, a man may come
To Hades' rest, vainly aspiring
He obtains with toil some short delight.
But the sweet-voiced lyre
And the sweet flute bestow some favor;
For Zeus' Pierian daughters
Have wide fame.

TO ASOPICHUS OF ORCHOMENOS, ON HIS VICTORY IN THE STADIC COURSE
Olympia xiv
O ye, who inhabit for your lot the seat of the Cephisian
Streams, yielding fair steeds, renowned Graces,
Ruling bright Orchomenos,
Protectors of the ancient race of Minyæ,
Hear, when I pray.
For with you are all pleasant
And sweet things to mortals;
If wise, if fair, if noble,
Any man. For neither do the gods,
Without the august Graces,
Rule the dance,
Nor feasts; but stewards
Of all works in heaven,

Having placed their seats
By golden-bowed Pythian Apollo,
They reverence the eternal power
Of the Olympian Father.
August Aglaia and song-loving
Euphrosyne, children of the mightiest god,
Hear now, and Thalia loving song,
Beholding this band, in favorable fortune
Lightly dancing; for in Lydian
Manner meditating,
I come celebrating Asopichus,
Since Minya by thy means is victor at the Olympic games.
Now to Persephone's
Black-walled house go, Echo,
Bearing to his father the famous news;
That seeing Cleodamus thou mayest say,
That in renowned Pisa's vale
His son crowned his young hair
With plumes of illustrious contests.

TO THE LYRE
Pythia i, 8-11
Thou extinguishest even the spear-like bolt
Of everlasting fire. And the eagle sleeps on the sceptre of Zeus,
Drooping his swift wings on either side,
The king of birds.
Pythia i, 25-28
Whatever things Zeus has not loved
Are terrified, hearing
The voice of the Pierians,
On earth and the immeasurable sea.
Pythia ii, 159-161
A plain-spoken man brings advantage to every government, —
To a monarchy, and when the
Impetuous crowd, and when the wise, rule a city.
As a whole, the third Pythian Ode, to Hiero, on his victory in the single-horse race, is one of the most memorable. We extract first the

account of

ÆSCULAPIUS
Pythia iii, 83-110
As many, therefore, as came suffering
From spontaneous ulcers, or wounded
In their limbs with glittering steel,
Or with the far-cast stone,
Or by the summer's heat o'ercome in body,
Or by winter, relieving he saved from
Various ills; some cherishing
With soothing strains,
Others having drunk refreshing draughts, or applying
Remedies to the limbs, others by cutting off he made erect.
But even wisdom is bound by gain,
And gold appearing in the hand persuaded even him, with its bright reward,
To bring a man from death
Already overtaken. But the Kronian, smiting
With both hands, quickly took away
The breath from his breasts;
And the rushing thunderbolt hurled him to death.
It is necessary for mortal minds
To seek what is reasonable from the divinities,
Knowing what is before the feet, of what destiny we are.
Do not, my soul, aspire to the life
Of the Immortals, but exhaust the practicable means.
In the conclusion of the ode, the poet reminds the victor, Hiero, that adversity alternates with prosperity in the life of man, as in the instance of

PELEUS AND CADMUS
Pythia iii, 145-205
The Immortals distribute to men
With one good two
Evils. The foolish, therefore,
Are not able to bear these with grace,

But the wise, turning the fair outside.
But thee the lot of good fortune follows,
For surely great Destiny
Looks down upon a king ruling the people,
If on any man. But a secure life
Was not to Peleus, son of Æacus,
Nor to godlike Cadmus,
Who yet are said to have had
The greatest happiness
Of mortals, and who heard
The song of the golden-filleted Muses,
On the mountain, and in seven-gated Thebes,
When the one married fair-eyed Harmonia,
And the other Thetis, the illustrious daughter of wise-counseling Nereus.
And the gods feasted with both;
And they saw the royal children of Kronos
On golden seats, and received
Marriage gifts; and having exchanged
Former toils for the favor of Zeus,
They made erect the heart.
But in course of time
His three daughters robbed the one
Of some of his serenity by acute
Sufferings; when Father Zeus, forsooth, came
To the lovely couch of white-armed Thyone.
And the other's child, whom only the immortal
Thetis bore in Phthia, losing
His life in war by arrows,
Being consumed by fire excited
The lamentation of the Danaans.
But if any mortal has in his
Mind the way of truth,
It is necessary to make the best
Of what befalls from the blessed.
For various are the blasts
Of high-flying winds.

The happiness of men stays not a long time,
Though fast it follows rushing on.
Humble in humble estate, lofty in lofty,
I will be; and the attending dæmon
I will always reverence in my mind,
Serving according to my means.
But if Heaven extend to me kind wealth,
I have hope to find lofty fame hereafter.
Nestor and Lycian Sarpedon —
They are the fame of men —
From resounding words which skillful artists
Sung, we know.
For virtue through renowned
Song is lasting.
But for few is it easy to obtain.

APOLLO
Pythia v, 87-90
He bestowed the lyre,
And he gives the muse to whom he wishes,
Bringing peaceful serenity to the breast.

MAN
Pythia viii, 136
The phantom of a shadow are men.

HYPSEUS' DAUGHTER CYRENE
Pythia ix, 31-44
He reared the white-armed child Cyrene,
Who loved neither the alternating motion of the loom,
Nor the superintendence of feasts,
With the pleasures of companions;
But, with javelins of steel
And the sword contending,
To slay wild beasts;
Affording surely much
And tranquil peace to her father's herds;

Spending little sleep
Upon her eyelids,
As her sweet bedfellow, creeping on at dawn.

THE HEIGHT OF GLORY
Pythia x, 33-48
Fortunate and celebrated
By the wise is that man
Who, conquering by his hands or virtue
Of his feet, takes the highest prizes
Through daring and strength,
And living still sees his youthful son
Deservedly obtaining Pythian crowns.
The brazen heaven is not yet accessible to him.
But whatever glory we
Of mortal race may reach,
He goes beyond, even to the boundaries
Of navigation. But neither in ships, nor going on foot,
Couldst thou find the wonderful way to the contests of the
Hyperboreans.

TO ARISTOCLIDES, VICTOR AT THE NEMEAN GAMES
Nemea iii, 32-37
If, being beautiful,
And doing things like to his form,
The child of Aristophanes
Went to the height of manliness, no further
Is it easy to go over the untraveled sea,
Beyond the Pillars of Hercules.

THE YOUTH OF ACHILLES
Nemea iii, 69-90
One with native virtues
Greatly prevails; but he who
Possesses acquired talents, an obscure man,
Aspiring to various things, never with fearless
Foot advances, but tries

A myriad virtues with inefficient mind.
Yellow-haired Achilles, meanwhile, remaining in the house of Philyra,
Being a boy played
Great deeds; often brandishing
Iron-pointed javelins in his hands,
Swift as the winds, in fight he wrought death to savage lions;
And he slew boars, and brought their bodies
Palpitating to Kronian Centaurus,
As soon as six years old. And all the while
Artemis and bold Athene admired him,
Slaying stags without dogs or treacherous nets;
For he conquered them on foot.
Nemea iv, 66-70
Whatever virtues sovereign destiny has given me,
I well know that time, creeping on,
Will fulfill what was fated.

Nemea v, 1-8
The kindred of Pytheas, a victor in the Nemean games, had wished to procure an ode from Pindar for less than three drachmæ, asserting that they could purchase a statue for that sum. In the following lines he nobly reproves their meanness, and asserts the value of his labors, which, unlike those of the statuary, will bear the fame of the hero to the ends of the earth.
No image-maker am I, who being still make statues
Standing on the same base. But on every
Merchant-ship and in every boat, sweet song,
Go from Ægina to announce that Lampo's son,
Mighty Pytheas,
Has conquered the pancratian crown at the Nemean games.

THE DIVINE IN MAN
Nemea vi, 1-13
One the race of men and of gods;
And from one mother
We all breathe.

But quite different power
Divides us, so that the one is nothing,
But the brazen heaven remains always
A secure abode. Yet in some respect we are related,
Either in mighty mind or form, to the Immortals;
Although not knowing
To what resting-place,
By day or night, Fate has written that we shall run.

THE TREATMENT OF AJAX
Nemea viii, 44-51
In secret votes the Danaans aided Ulysses;
And Ajax, deprived of golden arms, struggled with death.
Surely, wounds of another kind they wrought
In the warm flesh of their foes, waging war
With the man-defending spear.

THE VALUE OF FRIENDS
Nemea viii, 68-75
Virtue increases, being sustained by wise men and just,
As when a tree shoots up with gentle dews into the liquid air.
There are various uses of friendly men;
But chiefest in labors; and even pleasure
Requires to place some pledge before the eyes.

DEATH OF AMPHIARAUS
Nemea ix, 41-66
Once they led to seven-gated Thebes an army of men, not according
To the lucky flight of birds. Nor did the Kronian,
Brandishing his lightning, impel to march
From home insane, but to abstain from the way.
But to apparent destruction
The host made haste to go, with brazen arms
And horse equipments, and on the banks
Of Ismenus, defending sweet return,
Their white-flowered bodies fattened fire.
For seven pyres devoured young-limbed

Men. But to Amphiaraus
Zeus rent the deep-bosomed earth
With his mighty thunderbolt,
And buried him with his horses,
Ere, being struck in the back
By the spear of Periclymenus, his warlike
Spirit was disgraced.
For in dæmonic fears
Flee even the sons of gods.

CASTOR AND POLLUX

Nemea x, 153-171

Pollux, son of Zeus, shared his immortality with his brother Castor, son of Tyndarus, and while one was in heaven, the other remained in the infernal regions, and they alternately lived and died every day, or, as some say, every six months. While Castor lies mortally wounded by Idas, Pollux prays to Zeus, either to restore his brother to life, or permit him to die with him, to which the god answers, —

Nevertheless, I give thee
Thy choice of these: if, indeed, fleeing
Death and odious age,
You wish to dwell on Olympus,
With Athene and black-speared Mars,
Thou hast this lot;
But if thou thinkest to fight
For thy brother, and share
All things with him,
Half the time thou mayest breathe, being beneath the earth,
And half in the golden halls of heaven.
The god thus having spoken, he did not
Entertain a double wish in his mind.
And he released first the eye, and then the voice,
Of brazen-mitred Castor.

TOIL

Isthmia i, 65-71

One reward of labors is sweet to one man, one to another, —

To the shepherd, and the plower, and the bird-catcher,
And whom the sea nourishes.
But every one is tasked to ward off
Grievous famine from the stomach.

THE VENALITY OF THE MUSE
Isthmia ii, 9-18
Then the Muse was not
Fond of gain, nor a laboring woman;
Nor were the sweet-sounding,
Soothing strains
Of Terpsichore sold,
With silvered front.
But now she directs to observe the saying
Of the Argive, coming very near the truth,
Who cried, "Money, money, man,"
Being bereft of property and friends.

HERCULES' PRAYER CONCERNING AJAX, SON OF TELAMON
Isthmia vi, 62-73
"If ever, O Father Zeus, thou hast heard
My supplication with willing mind,
Now I beseech thee, with prophetic
Prayer, grant a bold son from Eribœa
To this man, my fated guest;
Rugged in body
As the hide of this wild beast
Which now surrounds me, which, first of all
My contests, I slew once in Nemea; and let his mind agree."
To him thus having spoken, Heaven sent
A great eagle, king of birds,
And sweet joy thrilled him inwardly.

THE FREEDOM OF GREECE
First at Artemisium
The children of the Athenians laid the shining

Foundation of freedom,
And at Salamis and Mycale,
And in Platæa, making it firm
As adamant.

FROM STRABO

Apollo
Having risen he went
Over land and sea,
And stood over the vast summits of mountains,
And threaded the recesses, penetrating to the foundations of the groves.

FROM PLUTARCH

Heaven being willing, even on an osier thou mayest sail.
[Thus rhymed by the old translator of Plutarch:
"Were it the will of heaven, an osier bough
Were vessel safe enough the seas to plough."]

FROM SEXTUS EMPIRICUS

Honors and crowns of the tempest-footed
Horses delight one;
Others live in golden chambers;
And some even are pleased traversing securely
The swelling of the sea in a swift ship.

FROM STOBÆUS

This I will say to thee:
The lot of fair and pleasant things
It behooves to show in public to all the people;
But if any adverse calamity sent from heaven befall
Men, this it becomes to bury in darkness.
Pindar said of the physiologists, that they "plucked the unripe fruit of wisdom."
Pindar said that "hopes were the dreams of those awake."

FROM CLEMENS OF ALEXANDRIA

To Heaven it is possible from black
Night to make arise unspotted light,
And with cloud-blackening darkness to obscure
The pure splendor of day.
First, indeed, the Fates brought the wise-counseling
Uranian Themis, with golden horses,
By the fountains of Ocean to the awful ascent
Of Olympus, along the shining way,
To be the first spouse of Zeus the Deliverer.
And she bore the golden-filleted, fair-wristed
Hours, preservers of good things.
Equally tremble before God
And a man dear to God.

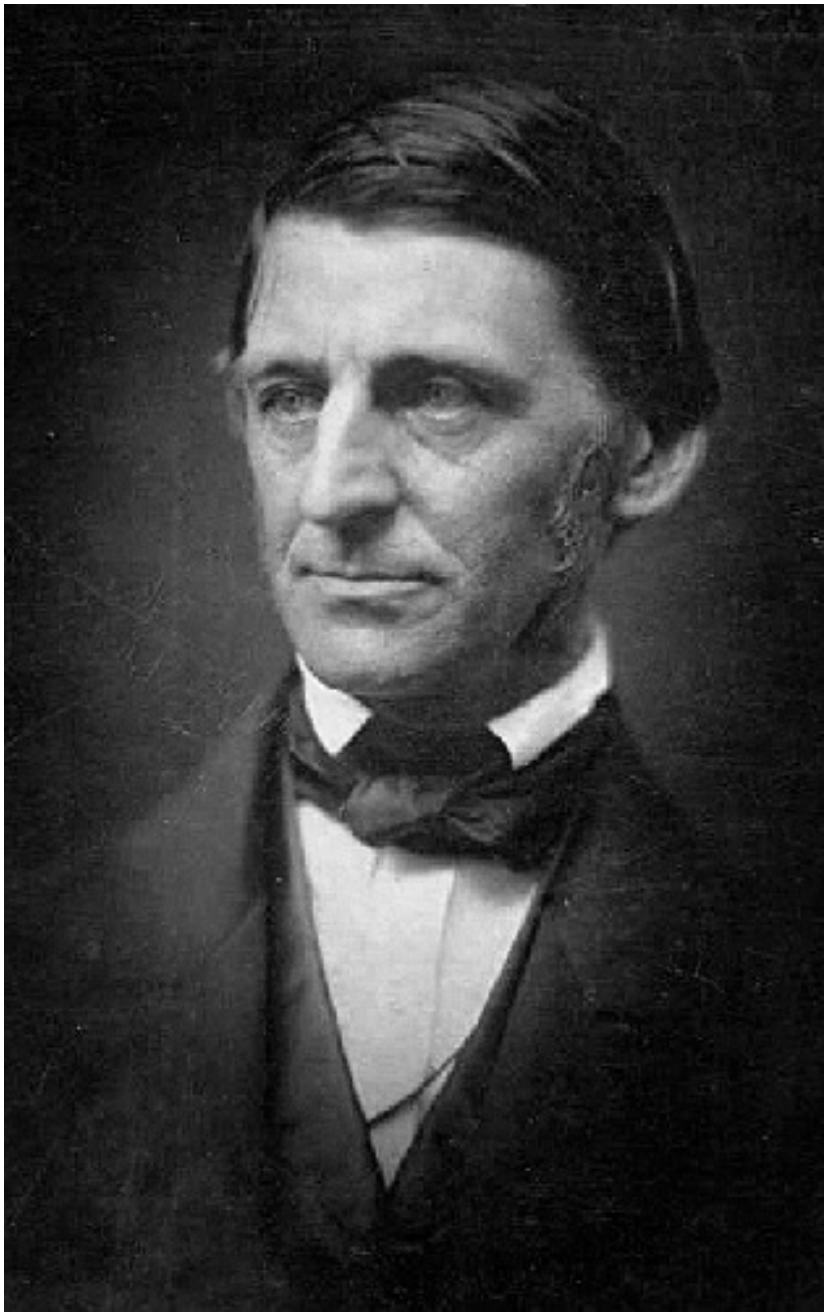
FROM ÆLIUS ARISTIDES

Pindar used such exaggerations [in praise of poetry] as to say that even the gods themselves, when at his marriage Zeus asked if they wanted anything, "asked him to make certain gods for them who should celebrate these great works and all his creation with speech and song."

The Letters



On April 18, 1841, Thoreau moved into the Emerson house, 28 Cambridge Turnpike, Concord, Massachusetts, where he served as the children's tutor, editorial assistant, repair man and gardener for three years.



Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was an American essayist, lecturer and poet, who led the Transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century, serving as a great source of inspiration to the younger Thoreau.

FAMILIAR LETTERS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

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INTRODUCTION.

THE fortune of Henry Thoreau as an author of books has been peculiar, and such as to indicate more permanence of his name and fame than could be predicted of many of his contemporaries. In the years of his literary activity (twenty-five in all), from 1837 to 1862, — when he died, not quite forty-five years old, — he published but two volumes, and those with much delay and difficulty in finding a publisher. But in the thirty-two years since his death, nine volumes have been published from his manuscripts and fugitive pieces, — the present being the tenth. Besides these, two biographies of Thoreau have appeared in America, and two others in England, with numerous reviews and sketches of the man and his writings, — enough to make several volumes more. At present, the sale of his books and the interest in his life are greater than ever; and he seems to have grown early into an American classic, like his Concord neighbors, Emerson and Hawthorne. Pilgrimages are made to his grave and his daily haunts, as to theirs, — and those who come find it to be true, as was said by an accomplished woman (Miss Elizabeth Hoar) soon after his death, that "Concord is Henry's monument, adorned with suitable inscriptions by his own hand." When Horace wrote of a noble Roman family.

Crescit occulto velut arbor aevo
Fama Marcelli, —

he pointed in felicitous phrase to the only fame that posterity has much regarded, — the slow-growing, deep-rooted laurel of renown. And Shakespeare, citing the old English rhyming saw, Small herbs have grace, Great weeds do grow apace, signified the same thing in a parable, — the popularity and suddenness of transient things, contrasted with the usefully permanent. There were plenty of authors in Thoreau's time (of whom Willis may be taken as the type) who would have smiled loftily to think that a rustic from the Shawsheen and Assabet could compete with the traveled scholar or elegant versifier who commanded the homage of drawing-rooms and

magazines, for the prize of lasting remembrance; yet who now are forgotten, or live a shadowy life in the alcoves of libraries, piping forth an ineffective voice, like the shades in Virgil's Tartarus. But Thoreau was wiser when he wrote at the end of his poem, "Inspiration,"

Fame cannot tempt the bard
Who's famous with his God;
Nor laurel him reward
Who has his Maker's nod.

He strove but little for glory, either immediate or posthumous, well knowing that it is the inevitable and unpursued result of what men do or say, —

Our fatal shadow that walks by us still.

The Letters of Thoreau, though not less remarkable in some aspects than what he wrote carefully for publication, have thus far scarcely had justice done them. The selection made for a small volume in 1865 was designedly done to exhibit one phase of his character, — the most striking, if you will, but not the most native or attractive. "In his own home," says Ellery Channing, who knew him more inwardly than any other, "he was one of those characters who may be called 'household treasures;' always on the spot, with skillful eye and hand, to raise the best melons in the garden, plant the orchard with choicest trees, or act as extempore mechanic; fond of the pets, his sister's flowers, or sacred Tabby; kittens were his favorites, — he would play with them by the half-hour. No whim or coldness, no absorption of his time by public or private business, deprived those to whom he belonged of his kindness and affection. He did the duties that lay nearest, and satisfied those in his immediate circle; and whatever the impressions from the theoretical part of his writings, when the matter is probed to the bottom, good sense and good feeling will be detected in it." This is preëminently true; and the affectionate conviction of this made his sister Sophia dissatisfied with Emerson's rule of selection among the letters. This

she confided to me, and this determined me, should occasion offer, to give the world some day a fuller and more familiar view of our friend.

For this purpose I have chosen many letters and mere notes, illustrating his domestic and gossipy moods, — for that element was in his mixed nature, inherited from the lively maternal side, — and even the colloquial vulgarity (using the word in its strict sense of "popular speech") that he sometimes allowed himself. In his last years he revolted a little at this turn of his thoughts, and, as Channing relates, "rubbed out the more humorous parts of his essays, originally a relief to their sterner features, saying, 'I cannot bear the levity I find;'" to which Channing replied that he ought to spare it, even to the puns, in which he abounded almost as much as Shakespeare. His friend was right, — the obvious incongruity was as natural to Thoreau as the grace and French elegance of his best sentences. Thus I have not rejected the common and trivial in these letters; being well assured that what the increasing number of Thoreau's readers desire is to see this piquant original just as he was, — not arrayed in the paradoxical cloak of the Stoic sage, nor sitting complacent in the cynic earthenware cave of Diogenes, and bidding Alexander stand out of his sunshine.

He did those acts also; but they were not the whole man. He was far more poet than cynic or stoic; he had the proud humility of those sects, but still more largely that unconscious pride which comes to the poet when he sees that his pursuits are those of the few and not of the multitude. This perception came early to Thoreau, and was expressed in some unpublished verses dating from his long, solitary rambles, by night and day, on the seashore at Staten Island, where he first learned the sombre magnificence of Ocean. He feigns himself the son of what might well be one of Homer's fishermen, or the shipwrecked seaman of Lucretius, —

Saevis projectus ab undis
Cui tantum in vita restet transire malorum,

and then goes on thus with his parable: —

Within a humble cot that looks to sea
Daily I breathe this curious warm life,
Beneath a friendly haven's sheltering lea
My noiseless day with mystery still is rife.

'T is here, they say, my simple life began, —
And easy credence to the tale I lend,
For well I know't is here I am a man, —
But who will simply tell me of the end?

These eyes, fresh-opened, spied the far-off Sea,
That like a silent godfather did stand,
Nor uttered one explaining word to me,
While introducing straight godmother Land.

And yonder still stretches that silent Main,
With many glancing ships besprinkled o'er:
And earnest still I gaze and gaze again
Upon the selfsame waves and friendly shore.

Infinite work my hands find there to do,
Gathering the relicts which the waves upcast:
Each storm doth scour the sea for something new, —
And every time the strangest is the last.

My neighbors sometimes come with lumbering carts,
As if they wished my pleasant toil to share;
But straight they go again to distant marts, —
For only weeds and ballast are their care.

"Only weeds and ballast?" that is exactly what Thoreau's neighbors would have said he was gathering, for the most of his days; yet now he is seen to have collected something more durable and precious than they with their implements and market-carts. If they viewed him with a kind of scorn and pity, it must be said that he returned the affront; only time seems to have sided with the poet in

the controversy that he maintained against his busy age.

Superiority, — moral elevation, without peevishness or condescension, — this was Thoreau's distinguishing quality. He softened it with humor, and sometimes sharpened it with indignation; but he directed his satire and his censure as often against himself as against mankind; men he truly loved, — if they would not obstruct his humble and strictly-chosen path. The letters here printed show this, if I mistake not, — and the many other epistles of his, still uncollected, would hardly vary the picture he has sketched of himself, though they would add new facts. Those most to be sought for are his replies to the generous letters of his one English correspondent.

The profile-portrait engraved for this volume is less known than it should be, — for it alone of the four likenesses extant shows the aquiline features as his comrades of the wood and mountain saw them, — not weakened by any effort to bring him to the standard of other men in garb or expression. The artist, Mr. Walton Ricketson, knew and admired him.

F. B. S.

Concord, Mass., March 1, 1894.

I. YEARS OF DISCIPLINE.

IT was a happy thought of Thoreau's friend Ellery Channing, himself a poet, to style our Concord hermit the "poet-naturalist;" for there seemed to be no year of his life, and no hour of his day when Nature did not whisper some secret in his ear, — so intimate was he with her from childhood. In ' another connection, speaking of natural beauty, Channing said, "There is Thoreau, — he knows about it; give him sunshine and a handful of nuts, and he has enough." He was also a naturalist in the more customary sense, — one who studied and arranged methodically in his mind the facts of outward nature; a good botanist and ornithologist, a wise student of insects and fishes; an observer of the winds, the clouds, the seasons, and all that goes to make up what we call "weather" and "climate." Yet he was in heart a poet, and held all the accumulated knowledge of more than forty years not so much for use as for delight. As Gray's poor friend West said of himself, "Like a clear-flowing stream, he reflected the beauteous prospect around;" and Mother Nature had given Thoreau for his prospect the meandering Indian River of Concord, the woodland pastures and fair lakes by which he dwelt or rambled most of his life. Born in the East Quarter of Concord, July 12, 1817, he died in the village, May 6, 1862; he was there fitted for Harvard College, which he entered in 1833, graduating in 1837; and for the rest of his life was hardly away from the town for more than a year in all. Consequently his letters to his family are few, for he was usually among them; but when separated from his elder brother John, or his sisters Helen and Sophia, he wrote to them, and these are the earliest of his letters which have been preserved. Always thoughtful for others, he has left a few facts to aid his biographer, respecting his birth and early years. In his Journal of December 27, 1855, he wrote: —

"Recalled this evening, with the aid of Mother, the various houses (and towns) in which I have lived, and some events of my life. Born in the Minott house on the Virginia Road, where Father occupied Grandmother's 'thirds', carrying on the farm. The Catherines had the

other half of the house, — Bob Catherine, and [brother] John threw up the turkeys. Lived there about eight months; Si Merriam the next neighbor. Uncle David [Dunbar] died when I was six weeks old.1 I was baptized in the old Meeting-house, by Dr. Ripley, when I was three months, and did not cry. In the Red House, where Grandmother lived, we had the west side till October, 1818, — hiring of Josiah Davis, agent for the Woodwards; there were uncle Charles and cousin Charles (Dunbar), more or less. According to the Day-Book first used by Grandfather (Thoreau),2 dated 1797 (his part cut out and then used by Father in Concord in 1808-9, and in Chelmsford in 1818-21), Father hired of Proctor (in Chelmsford), and shop of Spaulding. In Chelmsford till March, 1821; last charge there about the middle of March, 1821. Aunt Sarah taught me to walk there, when fourteen months old. We lived next the meeting-house, where they kept the powder in the garret. Father kept shop and painted signs, etc....

1 He was named David for this uncle; Dr. Ripley was the minister of the whole town in 1817. The Red House stood near the Emerson house on the Lexington road; the Woodwards were a wealthy family, afterwards in Quincy, to which town Dr. Woodward left a large bequest.

2 John Thoreau, grandfather of Henry, born at St. Helier's, Jersey, April, 1754, was a sailor on board the American privateer General Lincoln, November, 1779, and recognized La Terrible, French frigate, which carried John Adams from Boston to France. See Thoreau's *Summer*, p. 102. This John Thoreau, son of Philip, died in Concord, 1800.

"In Pope's house, South End of Boston (a ten-footer) five or six months, — moved from Chelmsford through Concord, and may have tarried in Concord a little while.

"Day-book says, 'Moved to Pinkney Street (Boston), September 10, 1821, on Monday;' Whitwell's house, Pinkney Street, to March, 1823; then brick house, Concord, to spring of 1826; Davis house (next to Samuel Hoar's) to May 7, 1827; Shattuck house (now W. Munroe's) to spring of 1835; Hollis Hall, Cambridge, 1833; Aunts' house to spring of 1837. [This was what is now the inn called 'Thoreau House.'] At Brownson's (Canton) while teaching in winter of 1835. Went to New York with Father peddling in 1836."

This brings the date down to the year in which Henry Thoreau left college, and when the family letters begin. The notes continue, and

now begin to have a literary value.

"Parkman house to fall of 1844; was graduated in 1837; kept town school a fortnight that year; began the big red Journal, October, 1837; found my first arrow-head, fall of 1837; wrote a lecture (my first) on *Society*, March 14, 1838, and read it before the Lyceum, in the Masons' Hall, April 11,1838; went to Maine for a school in May, 1838; commenced school in the Parkman house1 in the summer of that year; wrote an essay on 4 Sound and Silence' December, 1838; fall of 1839 up the Merrimack to the White Mountains; 4 Aulus Persius Flaccus' (first printed paper of consequence), February 10, 1840 — ; the Red Journal of 596 pages ended June, 1840; Journal of 396 pages ended January 31, 1841.

"Went to R. W. Emerson's in spring of 1840 — (about April 25), and stayed there till summer of 1843; went to William Emerson's, Staten Island, May, 1843, and returned in December, or to Thanksgiving, 1843; made pencils in 1844; Texas house to August 29, 1850; at Walden, July, 1845, to fall of 1847; then at R. W. Emerson's to fall of 1848, or while he was in Europe; then in the Yellow house (reformed) till the present."

1 This had been the abode of old Deacon Parkman, a grand-uncle of the late Francis Parkman, the historian, and son of the Westborough clergyman from whom this distinguished family descends. Deacon Parkman was a merchant in Concord, and lived in what was then a good house. It stood in the middle of the village, where the Public Library now is. The "Texas" house was built by Henry Thoreau and his father John; it was named from a section of the village then called "Texas," because a little remote from the churches and schools; perhaps the same odd fancy that had bestowed the name of "Virginia" on the road of Thoreau's birthplace. The "Yellow house re-formed" was a small cottage rebuilt and enlarged by the Thoreaus in 1850; in this, on the main street, Henry and his father and mother died.

As may be inferred from this simple record of the many mansions, chiefly small ones, in which he had spent his first thirty-eight years, there was nothing distinguished in the fortunes of Thoreau's family, who were small merchants, artisans, or farmers, mostly. On the father's side they were from the isle of Jersey, where a French strain mingled with his English or Scandinavian blood; on the other side he was of Scotch and English descent, counting Jones, Dunbar, and Burns among his feminine ancestors. Liveliness and humor came to

him from his Scotch connection; from father and grandfather he inherited a grave steadiness of mind rather at variance with his mother's vivacity. Manual dexterity was also inherited; so that he practiced the simpler mechanic arts with ease and skill; his mathematical training and his outdoor habits fitted him for a land-surveyor; and by that art, as well as by pencil-making, lecturing, and writing, he paid his way in the world, and left a small income from his writings to those who survived him. He taught pupils also, as did his brother and sisters; but it was not an occupation that he long followed after John's death in 1842. With these introductory statements we may proceed to Thoreau's first correspondence with his brother and sisters.

As an introduction to the correspondence, and a key to the young man's view of life, a passage may be taken from Thoreau's "Part" at his college commencement, August 16, 1837. He was one of two to hold what was called a "Conference" on "The Commercial Spirit," — his alternative or opponent in the dispute being Henry Vose, also of Concord, who, in later years, was a Massachusetts judge. Henry Thoreau,1 then just twenty, said: —

"The characteristic of our epoch is perfect freedom, — freedom of thought and action. The indignant Greek, the oppressed Pole, the jealous American assert it. The skeptic no less than the believer, the heretic no less than the faithful child of the Church, have begun to enjoy it. It has generated an unusual degree of energy and activity; it has generated the *commercial spirit.* Man thinks faster and freer than ever before. He, moreover, moves faster and freer. He is more restless, because he is more independent than ever. The winds and the waves are not enough for him; he must needs ransack the bowels of the earth, that he may make for himself a highway of iron over its surface.

1 During the greater part of his college course he signed himself D. H. Thoreau, as he was christened (David Henry); but being constantly called "Henry," he put this name first about the time he left college, and was seldom afterwards known by the former initials.

"Indeed, could one examine this beehive of ours from an observatory among the stars, he would perceive an unwonted degree of bustle in these later ages. There would be hammering and chipping in one

quarter; baking and brewing, buying and selling, money-changing and speechmaking in another. What impression would he receive from so general and impartial a survey. Would it appear to him that mankind used this world as not abusing it? Doubtless he would first be struck with the profuse beauty of our orb; he would never tire of admiring its varied zones and seasons, with their changes of living. He could not but notice that restless animal for whose sake it was contrived; but where he found one man to admire with him his fair dwelling-place, the ninety and nine would be scraping together a little of the gilded dust upon its surface.... We are to look chiefly for the origin of the commercial spirit, and the power that still cherishes and sustains it, in a blind and unmanly love of wealth. Wherever this exists, it is too sure to become the ruling spirit; and, as a natural consequence, it infuses into all our thoughts and affections a degree of its own selfishness; we become selfish in our patriotism, selfish in our domestic relations, selfish in our religion.

"Let men, true to their natures, cultivate the moral affections, lead manly and independent lives; let them make riches the means and not the end of existence, and we shall hear no more of the commercial spirit. The sea will not stagnate, the earth will be as green as ever, and the air as pure. This curious world which we inhabit is more wonderful than it is convenient; more beautiful than it is useful; it is more to be admired and enjoyed than used. The order of things should be somewhat reversed; the seventh should be man's day of toil, wherein to earn his living by the sweat of his brow; and the other six his Sabbath of the affections and the soul, — in which to range this widespread garden, and drink in the soft influences and sublime revelations of Nature.... The spirit we are considering is not altogether and without exception bad. We rejoice in it as one more indication of the entire and universal freedom that characterizes the age in which we live, — as an indication that the human race is making one more advance in that infinite series of progressions which awaits it. We glory in those very excesses which are a source of anxiety to the wise and good; as an evidence that man will not always be the slave of matter, — but erelong, casting off those earth-born desires which identify him with the brute, shall pass the days of

his sojourn in this his nether Paradise, as becomes the Lord of Creation." 1

1 The impression made on one classmate and former roommate ("chum") of Thoreau, by this utterance, will be seen by this fragment of a letter from James Richardson of Dedham (afterwards Reverend J. Richardson), dated Dedham, September 7,1837: —

"Friend Thoreau, — After you had finished your part in the Performances of Commencement (the tone and sentiment of which, by the way, I liked much, as being of a sound philosophy), I hardly saw you again at all. Neither at Mr. Quincy's levee, neither at any of our classmates' evening entertainments, did I find you; though for the purpose of taking a farewell, and leaving you some memento of an old chum, as well as on matters of business, I much wished to see your face once more. Of course you must be present at our October meeting, — notice of the time and place for which will be given in the newspapers. I hear that you are comfortably located, in your native town, as the guardian of its children, in the immediate vicinity, I suppose, of one of our most distinguished apostles of the future, R. W. Emerson, and situated under the ministry of our old friend Reverend Barzillai Frost, to whom please make my remembrances. I heard from you, also, that Concord Academy, lately under the care of Mr. Phineas Allen of Northfield, is now vacant of a preceptor; should Mr. Hoar find it difficult to get a scholar college-distinguished, perhaps he would take up with one, who, though in many respects a critical thinker, and a careful philosopher of language among other things, has never distinguished himself in his class as a regular attendant on college studies and rules. If so, could you do me the kindness to mention my name to him as of one intending to make teaching his profession, at least for a part of his life. If recommendations are necessary, President Quincy has offered me one, and I can easily get others."

This passage is noteworthy as showing how early the philosophic mind was developed in Thoreau, and how much his thought and expression were influenced by Emerson's first book, —

"Nature." But the soil in which that germinating seed fell was naturally prepared to receive it; and the wide diversity between the

master and the disciple soon began to appear. In 1863, reviewing Thoreau's work, Emerson said, "That oaken strength which I noted whenever he walked or worked, or surveyed wood-lots, — the same unhesitating hand with which a field-laborer accosts a piece of work which I should shun as a waste of strength, Henry shows in his literary task. He has muscle, and ventures on and performs feats which I am forced to decline. In reading him I find the same thoughts, the same spirit that is in me; but he takes a step beyond, and illustrates by excellent images that which I should have conveyed in a sleepy generalization." True as this is, it omits one point of difference only too well known to Emerson, — the controversial turn of Thoreau's mind, in which he was so unlike Emerson and Alcott, and which must have given to his youthful utterances in company the air of something requiring an apology.

This, at all events, seems to have been the feeling of Helen Thoreau,1 whose pride in her

1 This eldest of the children of John Thoreau and Cynthia Dunbar was born October 22, 1812, and died June 14, 1849. Her grandmother, Mary Jones of Weston, Mass., belonged to a Tory family, and several of the Jones brothers served as officers in the British army against General Washington.

brother was such that she did not wish to see him misunderstood. A pleasing indication of both these traits is seen in the first extant letter of Thoreau to this sister. I have this in an autograph copy made by Mr. Emerson, when he was preparing the letters for partial publication, soon after Henry's death. For some reason he did not insert it in his volume; but it quite deserves to be printed, as indicating the period when it was clear to Thoreau that he must think for himself, whatever those around him might think.

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT TAUNTON).

CONCORD, October 27,1837.

DEAR HELEN, — Please you, let the defendant say a few words in defense of his long silence. You know we have hardly done our own deeds, thought our own thoughts, or lived our own lives hitherto. For a man to act himself, he must be perfectly free; otherwise he is in danger of losing all sense of responsibility or of self-respect. Now when such a state of things exists, that the sacred opinions one advances in argument are apologized for by his friends, before his face, lest his hearers receive a wrong impression of the man, — when such gross injustice is of frequent occurrence, where shall we look, and not look in vain, for men, deeds, thoughts? As well apologize for the grape that it is sour, or the thunder that it is noisy, or the lightning that it tarries not.

Further, letter-writing too often degenerates into a communicating of facts, and not of truths; of other men's deeds and not our thoughts. What are the convulsions of a planet, compared with the emotions of the soul? or the rising of a thousand suns, if that is not enlightened by a ray?

Your affectionate brother,

HENRY.

It is presumed the tender sister did not need a second lesson; and equally that Henry did not see fit always to write such letters as he praised above, — for he was quite ready to give his correspondents facts, no less than thoughts, especially in his family letters.

Next to this epistle, chronologically, comes one in the conventional dialect of the American Indian, as handed down by travelers and romancers, by Jefferson, Chateaubriand, Lewis, Clarke, and Fenimore Cooper. John Thoreau, Henry's brother, was born in 1815 and died January 11, 1842. He was teaching at Taunton in 1837.

TO JOHN THOREAU (AT TAUNTON).

(Written as from one Indian to another.)

Musketaquid, 202 Summers, two Moons, eleven Suns, — since the coming of the Pale Faces.

(November 11, 1837.)

TAHATAWAN, Sachimaussan, to his brother sachem, Hopeful of Hopewell, — hoping that he is well: —

Brother: It is many suns that I have not seen the print of thy moccasins by our council-fire; the Great Spirit has blown more leaves from the trees, and many clouds from the land of snows have visited our lodge; the earth has become hard, like a frozen buffalo-skin, so that the trampling of many herds is like the Great Spirit's thunder; the grass on the great fields is like the old man of many winters, and the small song-sparrow prepares for his flight to the land whence the summer comes.

Brother: I write these things because I know that thou lovest the Great Spirit's creatures, and wast wont to sit at thy lodge-door, when the maize was green, to hear the bluebird's song. So shalt thou, in the land of spirits, not only find good hunting grounds and sharp arrowheads, but much music of birds.

Brother: I have been thinking how the Pale Faces have taken away our lands, — and was a woman. You are fortunate to have pitched your wigwam nearer to the great salt lake, where the Pale Face can never plant corn.

Brother: I need not tell thee how we hunted on the lands of the Dundees, — a great war-chief never forgets the bitter taunts of his enemies. Our young men called for strong water; they painted their faces and dug up the hatchet. But their enemies, the Dundees, were women; they hastened to cover their hatchets with wampum. Our braves are not many; our enemies took a few strings from the heap their fathers left them, and our hatchets are buried. But not Tahatawan's; his heart is of rock when the Dundees sing, — his hatchet cuts deep into the Dundee braves.

Brother: There is dust on my moccasins; I have journeyed to the

White Lake, in the country of the Ninares.1 The Long-knife has been

1 White Pond, in the district called "Nine-Acre Comer," is here meant; the "Lee-vites" were a family then living on Lee's Hill. Naushawtuck is another name for this hill, where the old Tahatawan lived at times, before the English settled in Concord in September, 1635. The real date of this letter is November 11-14, 1837, and between its two dates the Massachusetts state election was held. The "great council-house" was the Boston State House, to which the Concord people were electing deputies; the "Eagle-Beak" named below was doubtless Samuel Hoar, the first citizen of the town, and for a time Member of Congress from Middlesex County. He was the father of Rockwood and Frisbie Hoar, afterwards judge and senator respectively.

there, — like a woman I paddled his war-canoe. But the spirits of my fathers were angered; the waters were ruffled, and the Bad Spirit troubled the air.

The hearts of the Lee-vites are gladdened; the young Peacock has returned to his lodge at Naushawtuck. He is the Medicine of his tribe, but his heart is like the dry leaves when the whirlwind breathes. He has come to help choose new chiefs for the tribe, in the great Council-house, when two suns are past. — There is no seat for Tahatawan in the council-house. He lets the squaws talk, — his voice is heard above the warwhoop of his tribe, piercing the hearts of his foes; his legs are stiff, he cannot sit.

Brother: Art thou waiting for the spring, that the geese may fly low over thy wigwam? Thy arrows are sharp, thy bow is strong. Has Anawan killed all the eagles? The crows fear not the winter. Tahatawan's eyes are sharp — he can track a snake in the grass, he knows a friend from a foe; he welcomes a friend to his lodge though the ravens croak.

Brother: Hast thou studied much in the medicine-books of the Pale-Faces? Dost thou understand the long talk of the Medicine whose words are like the music of the mocking-bird? But our chiefs have not ears to hear him; they listen like squaws to the council of old men, — they understand not his words. But, Brother, he never danced the war-dance, nor heard the warwhoop of his enemies. He was a squaw; he stayed by the wigwam when the braves were out, and tended the tame buffaloes.

Fear not; the Dundees have faint hearts and much wampum. When the grass is green on the great fields, and the small titmouse returns again, we will hunt the buffalo together.

Our old men say they will send the young chief of the Karlisles, who lives in the green wigwam and is a great Medicine, that his word may be heard in the long talk which the wise men are going to hold at Shawmut, by the salt lake. He is a great talk, and will not forget the enemies of his tribe.

14th Sun. The fire has gone out in the council-house. The words of our old men have been like the vaunts of the Dundees. The Eagle-Beak was moved to talk like a silly Pale-Face, and not as becomes a great war-chief in a council of braves. The young Peacock is a woman among braves; he heard not the words of the old men, — like a squaw he looked at his medicine-paper. The young chief of the green wig-wam has hung up his moccasins; he will not leave his tribe till after the buffalo have come down on to the plains.

Brother: This is a long talk, but there is much meaning to my words; they are not like the thunder of canes when the lightning smites them. Brother, I have just heard *thy talk* and am well pleased; thou art getting to be a great Medicine. The Great Spirit confound the enemies of thy tribe.

TAHATAWAN.
His mark (a bow and arrow).

This singular letter was addressed to John Thoreau at Taunton, and was so carefully preserved in the family that it must have had value in their eyes, as recalling traits of the two Thoreau brothers, and also events in the village life of Concord, more interesting to the young people of 1837 than to the present generation. Some of its parables are easy to read, others quite obscure. The annual state election was an important event to Henry Thoreau then, — more so than it afterwards appeared; and he mocking-bird" is hard to explain; it may mean Edward Everett, then governor of Massachusetts, or, possibly, Emerson, whose lectures began to attract notice in Boston and Cambridge. It can hardly mean Wendell Phillips, though his melodious eloquence had lately been heard in attacks upon slavery. was certainly on the Whig side in politics, like most of the educated youths of Concord. His "young chief of the Karlisles" was Albert Nelson, son of a Carlisle physician, who began to practice law in

Concord in 1836, and was afterwards chief justice of the Superior Court. He was defeated at the election of 1837, as candidate of the Whigs for representative in the state legislature, by a Democrat. Henry Yose, above named, writing from "Butternuts," in New York, three hundred miles west of Concord, October 22, 1837, said to Thoreau: "You envy my happy situation, and mourn over your fate, which condemns you to loiter about Concord and grub among clamshells [for Indian relics]. If this were your only source of enjoyment while in Concord, — but I know that it is not. I well remember that ' antique and fish-like' office of *Major* Nelson (to whom, and to Mr. Dennis, and Bemis, and John Thoreau, I wish to be remembered); and still more vividly do I remember the fairer portion of the community in C." This indicates a social habit in Henry and John Thoreau, which the Indian "talk" also implies. Taliatawan, whom Henry here impersonated, was the mythical Sachem of Musketaquid (the Algonquin name for Concord River and region), whose fishing and hunting lodge was on the hill Naushawtuck, between the two rivers so much navigated by the Thoreaus. In 1837 the two brothers were sportsmen, and went shooting over the Concord meadows and moors, but of course the "buffalo" was a figure of speech; they never shot anything larger than a raccoon. A few years later they gave up killing the game.

TO JOHN THOREAU (AT TAUNTON).

CONCORD, February 10, 1838.

DEAR JOHN, — Dost expect to elicit a spark from so dull a steel as myself, by that flinty subject of thine? Truly, one of your copper percussion caps would have fitted this nail-head better.

Unfortunately, the "Americana"1 has hardly two words on the subject. The process is very simple. The stone is struck with a mallet so as to produce pieces sharp at one end, and blunt at the other. These are laid upon a steel line (probably a chisel's edge), and again struck with the mallet, and flints of the required size

1 *Americana*, in this note, is the old *Encyclopedia Americana*, which had been edited from the German *Conversations-Lexicon*, and other sources, by Dr. Francis Lieber, T. G. Bradford, and other Boston scholars, ten years earlier, and was the only convenient book of reference at Thoreau's hand. The inquiry of John Thoreau is another evidence of the interest he took, like his brother, in the Indians and their flint arrow-heads. The relics mentioned in the next letter were doubtless Indian weapons and utensils, very common about Taunton in the region formerly controlled by King Philip, are broken off. A skillful workman may make a thousand in a day.

So much for the "Americana." Dr. Jacob Bigelow in his "Technology" says, "Gunflints are formed by a skillful workman, who breaks them out with a hammer, a roller, and steel chisel, with small, repeated strokes."

Your ornithological commission shall be executed. When are you coming home?

Your affectionate brother,
HENRY D. THOREAU.

TO JOHN THOREAU (AT TAUNTON).

Concord, March 17, 1838.

DEAR JOHN, — Your box of relics came safe to hand, but was speedily deposited on the carpet, I assure you. What could it be? Some declared it must be Taunton herrings: "Just nose it, sir!" So down we went onto our knees, and commenced smelling in good earnest, — now horizontally from this corner to that, now perpendicularly from the carpet up, now diagonally, — and finally with a sweeping movement describing the circumference. But it availed not. Taunton herring would not be smelled.

So — we e'en proceeded to open it *vi et chisel.* What an array of nails! Four nails make a quarter, four quarters a yard, — i' faith, this isn't cloth measure! Blaze away, old boy!

Clap in another wedge, then! There, softly! she begins to gape. Just give that old stickler, with a black hat on, another hoist. Aye, we'll pare his nails for him! Well done, old fellow, there 's a breathing-hole for you. "Drive it in!" cries one; "Nip it off!" cries another. Be easy, I say. What's done may be undone. Your richest veins don't lie nearest the surface. Suppose we sit down and enjoy the prospect, for who knows but we may be disappointed? When they opened Pandora's box, all the contents escaped except Hope, but in this case hope is uppermost, and will be the first to escape when the box is opened. However, the general voice was for kicking the coverlid off.

The relics have been arranged numerically on a table. When shall we set up housekeeping? Miss Ward thanks you for her share of the spoils; also accept many thanks from your humble servant "for yourself."

I have a proposal to make. Suppose by the time you are released we should start in company for the West, and there either establish a school jointly, or procure ourselves separate situations. Suppose, moreover, you should get ready to start previous to leaving Taunton, to save time. Go *I* must, at all events. Dr. Jarvis enumerates nearly a dozen schools which I could have, — all such as would suit you

equally well.1 I wish you would write soon about this. It is high season to start. The canals are now open, and traveling comparatively cheap. I think I can borrow the cash in this town. There's nothing like trying.

Brigham wrote you a few words on the 8th, which father took the liberty to read, with the advice and consent of the family. He wishes you to send him those (numbers) of the " Library of Health" received since 1838, if you are in Concord; otherwise, he says you need not trouble yourself about it at present. He is in C., and enjoying better health than usual. But one number, and that you have, has been received.

The bluebirds made their appearance the 14th day of March; robins and pigeons have also been seen. Mr. Emerson has put up the bluebird box in due form. All send their love.

From your aff br.

H. D. THOREAU.

[Postscript by Helen Thoreau.]

1 Dr. Edward Jarvis, born in Concord (1803), had gone to Louisville, Ky., in April, 1837, and was thriving there as a physician. He knew the Thoreaus well, and gave them good hopes of success in Ohio or Kentucky as teachers. The plan was soon abandoned, and Henry went to Maine to find a school, but without success. See Sanborn's *Thoreau,* p. 57.

DEAR JOHN, — Will you have the kindness to inquire at Mr. Marston's for an old singing-book I left there, — the "Handel and Haydn Collection," without a cover? Have you ever got those red handkerchiefs? Much love to the Marstons, Crockers, and Muenschers. Mr. Josiah Davis has failed. Mr and Mrs. Howe have both written again, urging my going to Roxbury; which I suppose I shall do. What day of the month shall you return?

HELEN.

One remark in this letter calls for attention, —— that concerning the "bluebird box" for Mr. Emerson. In 1853 Emerson wrote in his

journal: “Long ago I wrote of Gifts, and neglected a capital example. John Thoreau, Jr., one day put a bluebird’s box on my barn, — fifteen years ago it must be, — and there it still is, with every summer a melodious family in it, adorning the place and singing his praises. There’s a gift for you, — which cost the giver no money, but nothing which he bought could have been so good. I think of another, quite inestimable. John Thoreau knew how much I should value a head of little Waldo, then five years old. He came to me and offered to take him to a daguerreotypist who was then in town, and he (Thoreau) would see it well done. He did it, and brought me the daguerre, which I thankfully paid for. A few months after, my boy died; and I have since to thank John Thoreau for that wise and gentle piece of friendship.”

Little Waldo Emerson died January 27, 1842, and John Thoreau the same month; so that this taking of the portrait must have been but a few months before his own death, January 11. Henry Thoreau was then living in the Emerson family.

TO JOHN THOREAU (AT WEST ROXBURY).

CONCORD, July 8, 1838.

DEAR JOHN, — We heard from Helen to-day, and she informs us that you are coming home by the first of August. Now I wish you to write and let me know exactly when your vacation takes place, that I may take one at the same time. I am in school from 8 to 12 in the morning, and from 2 to 4 in the afternoon. After that I read a little Greek or English, or, for variety, take a stroll in the fields. We have not had such a year for berries this long time, — the earth is actually blue with them. High blueberries, three kinds of low, thimble and raspberries constitute my diet at present. (Take notice, — I only diet between meals.) Among my deeds of charity, I may reckon the picking of a cherry-tree for two helpless single ladies, who live under the hill; but i' faith, it was robbing Peter to pay Paul, — for while I was exalted in charity towards them, I had no mercy on my own stomach. Be advised, my love for currants continues.

The only addition that I have made to my stock of ornithological information is in the shape not of a *Firing, Melod.*, — but surely a melodious Fringilla, — the *F. Juncorum*, or rush-sparrow. I had long known him by note, but never by name.

Report says that Elijah Stearns is going to take the town school. I have four scholars, and one more engaged. Mr. Fenner left town yesterday. Among occurrences of ill omen may be mentioned the falling out and cracking of the inscription stone of Concord Monument.1 Mrs. Lowell and children are at Aunts'. Peabody (a college classmate) walked up last Wednesday, spent the night, and took a stroll in the woods.

Sophia says I must leave off and pen a few lines for her to Helen: so good-by. Love from all, and among them your aff brother,

H. D. T.

The school above mentioned as begun by Henry Thoreau in this summer of 1838 was 1 This was the old monument of the Fight in 3775, for the dedication of which Emerson wrote his hymn, "By the

rude bridge." This was sung by Thoreau, among others, to the tune of Old Hundred. joined in by John, after finishing his teaching at West Roxbury, and was continued for several years. It was in this school that Louisa Alcott and her sister received some instruction, after their father removed from Boston to Concord, in the spring of 1840. It was opened in the Parkman house, where the family then lived, and soon after was transferred to the building of the Concord Academy,1 not far off. John Thoreau taught the English branches and mathematics; Henry taught Latin and Greek and the higher mathematics, — and it was the custom of both brothers to go walking with their pupils one afternoon each week. It is as a professional schoolmaster that Henry thus writes to his sister Helen, then teaching at Roxbury, after a like experience in Taunton.

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT ROXBURY).

Concord, October 6, 1838.

DEAR HELEN, — I dropped Sophia's letter into the box immediately on taking yours out, else the tone of the former had been changed.

I have no acquaintance with "Cleaveland's First Lessons," though I have peeped into his abridged grammar, which I should think very well calculated for beginners, — at least for such

1 For twenty-five years (1800-01) the house of Ellery Channing-, and now of Charles Emerson, nephew of Waldo Emerson. as would be likely to wear out one book before they would be prepared for the abstruser parts of grammar. Ahem!

As no one can tell what was the Roman pronunciation, each nation makes the Latin conform, for the most part, to the rules of its own language; so that with us of the vowels only A has a peculiar sound. In the end of a word of more than one syllable it is sounded like "ah," as *pennah*, *Lydiah*, *Hannah,* etc., without regard to case; but "*da"* is never sounded "*dah,"* because it is a monosyllable. All terminations in es, and plural cases in *os,* as you know, are pronounced long, — as *homines* (hominese), *dominos* (dominose), or, in English, *Johnny Vose.* For information, see Adams' "Latin Grammar," before the Rudiments.

This is all law and gospel in the eyes of the world; but remember I am speaking, as it were, in the third person, and should sing quite a different tune if it were I that made the quire. However, one must occasionally hang his harp on the willows, and play on the Jew's harp, in such a strange country as this.

One of your young ladies wishes to study mental philosophy, hey? Well, tell her that she has the very best text-book that I know of in her possession already. If she do not believe it, then she should have bespoken another better in another world, and not have expected to find one at "Little & Wilkins." But if she wishes to know how poor an apology for a mental philosophy men have tacked together, synthetically or analytically, in these latter days, — how they have

squeezed the infinite mind into a compass that would not nonplus a surveyor of Eastern Lands — making Imagination and Memory to lie still in their respective apartments like ink-stand and wafers in a lady's escritoire, —— why let her read Locke, or Stewart, or Brown. The fact is, mental philosophy is very like Poverty, which, you know, begins at home; and indeed, when it goes abroad, it is poverty itself.

Chorus. I should think an abridgment of one of the above authors, or of Abercrombie, would answer her purpose. It may set her a-thinking. Probably there are many systems in the market of which I am ignorant.

As for themes, say first "Miscellaneous Thoughts." Set one up to a window, to note what passes in the street, and make her comments thereon; or let her gaze in the fire, or into a corner where there is a spider's web, and philosophize, moralize, theorize, or what not. What their hands find to putter about, or their minds to think about, that let them write about. To say nothing of advantage or disadvantage of this, that, or the other, let them set down their ideas at any given season, preserving the chain of thought as complete as may be.

This is the style pedagogical. I am much obliged to you for your piece of information. Knowing your dislike to a sentimental letter, I remain

Your affectionate brother,

H. D. T.

The next letter to Helen carries this pedagogical style a little farther, for it is in Latin, addressed " Ad Helenam L. Thoreau, Roxbury, Mass.," and postmarked "Concord, Jan. 25" (1840).

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT ROXBURY).

Concordiae, Dec. Kal. Feb a. d mdcccxl.

CARA SOROR, — Est magnus acervus nivis ad limina, et frigus intolerabile intus. Coelum ipsum ruit, credo, et terrain operit. Sero stratum linquo et mature repeto; in fenestris multa pruina prospectum absumit; et hic miser scribo, non currente calamo, nam digiti mentesque torpescunt. Canerem cum Horatio, si vox non faucibus haeserit, —

Vides ut alta stet nive candidum
Nawshawtuct, nec jam sustineant onus
Silvae laborantes, geluque Flumina constiterint acuto?

Dissolve frigus, ligna super foco
Large reponens, etc.

Sed olim, Musa mutata, et laetiore plectro,
Neque jam stabulis gaudet pecus, aut arator igne,
Nee prata canis albicant pruinis;
Jam Cytherea choros ducit Venus imminente luna.

Quam turdus ferrugineus ver reduxerit, tu, spero, linques curas scliolasticas, et, negotio religato, desipere in loco audebis; aut mecum inter sylvas, aut super scopulos Pulcliri-Portus, aut in cymba super lacum Waldensem, mulcens fluctus manu, aut speciem miratus sub undas.

Bulwerius est milii nomen incognitum, — unus ex ignobile vulgo, nec refutandus nec laudandus. Certe alicui nonnullam lionorem habeo qui insanabili cacoethe scribendi teneatur.

Specie flagrantis Lexingtonis non somnia deturbat? At non Yulcanum Neptunumque culpeinus, cum superstitioso grege. Natura curat animalculis aeque ac hominibus; cum serena, turn procellosa, arnica est.

Si amas liistoriam et fortia facta heroum, non depone Rollin, precor; ne Clio offendas nunc, nec ilia det veniam olim. Quos libros

Latinos legis? legis, inquam, non studes. Beatus qui potest suos libellos tractare, et saepe perlegere, sine metu domini urgentis! ab otio injurioso procul est: suos amicos et vocare et dimittere quandocunque velit, potest. Bonus liber opus nobilissimum liominis. Hinc ratio non modo cur legeres, sed cur tu quoque scriberes; nec lectores carent; ego sum. Si non librum meditaris, libellum certe. Nihil posteris proderit te spirasse, et vitam nunc leniter niinc aspere egisse; sed cogitasse praecipue et scripsisse. Yereor ne tibi pertaesum liujus epistolae sit; necnon alma lux caret,

Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.

Quamobrem vale, — imo valete, et requiescatis placide, Sorores.

H. D. THOKEAUS.

Memento scribere!

CARA SOPHIA, — Samuel Niger crebris aegrotationibus, quae agilitatem et aequum animum abstulere, obnoxius est; iis temporibus ad cellam descendit, et multas horas (ibi) manet.

Flores, ali crudelis pruina! parvo leti discrimine sunt. Cactus frigore ustus est, gerania vero adhuc vigent.

Conventus sociabiles hac liieme reinstituti fuere. Conveniiuit (?) ad meum domum mense quarto vel quinto, ut tu hie esse possis. Matertera Sophia cum nobis remanet; quando urbem revertet non scio. Gravedine etiamnum, sed non tam aegre, laboramus.

Adolescentula E. White apud pagum paulisper moratur. Memento scribere intra duas hebdomedas.

Te valere desiderium est
Tui Matris,
C. Thoreaus.

P. S. Epistolam die solis proxima expectamus. (Amanuense, H. D. T.)

Barring a few slips, tliis is a good and lively piece of Latin, and noticeable for its thought as well as its learning and humor. The poets were evidently his favorites among Latin authors. Shall we

attempt a free translation, such as Thoreau would give?

VERNACULAR VERSION.

Concord, January 23, 1840.

Dear Sister, — There is a huge snowdrift at the door, and the cold inside is intolerable. The very sky is coming down, I guess, and covering up the ground. I turn out late in the morning, and go to bed early; there is thick frost on the windows, shutting out the view; and here I write in pain, for fingers and brains are numb. I would chant with Horace, if my voice did not stick in my throat, —

See how Nashawtuck, deep in snow, Stands glittering, while the bending woods Scarce bear their burden, and the floods
Feel arctic winter stay their flow.

Pile on the firewood, melt the cold,
Spare nothing-, etc.

But soon, changing my tune, and with a cheerfuller note, I'll say, —

No longer the flock huddles up in the stall, the plowman bends over the fire, No longer frost whitens the meadow; But the goddess of love, while the moon shines above, Sets us dancing in light and in shadow.

When Robin Redbreast brings back the springtime, I trust that you will lay your school-duties aside, cast off care, and venture to be gay now and then; roaming with me in the woods, or climbing the Fairhaven cliffs, — or else, in my boat on Walden, let the water kiss your hand, or gaze at your image in the wave.

Bulwer is to me a name unknown, — one of the unnoticed crowd, attracting neither blame nor praise. To be sure, I hold any one in some esteem who is helpless in the grasp of the writing demon.

Does not the image of the Lexington afire trouble your dreams?1 But we may not, like the superstitious mob, blame Vulcan or Neptune,

—— neither fire nor water was in fault. Nature

1 The steamer Lexington lately burnt on Long Island Sound, with Dr. Follen on board. takes as much care for midgets as for mankind; she is our friend in storm and in calm.

If you like history, and the exploits of the brave, don't give up Rollin, I beg; thus would you displease Clio, who might not forgive you hereafter. What Latin are you reading? I mean *reading,* not studying. Blessed is the man who can have his library at hand, and oft peruse the books, without the fear of a taskmaster! he is far enough from harmful idleness, who can call in and dismiss these friends when he pleases. An honest book's the noblest work of Man. There's a reason, now, not only for your reading, but for writing something, too. You will not lack readers, — here am I, for one. If you cannot compose a volume, then try a tract. It will do the world no good, hereafter, if you merely exist, and pass life smoothly or roughly; but to have thoughts, and write them down, that helps greatly.

I fear you will tire of this epistle; the light of day is dwindling, too, —

And longer fall the shadows of the hills.

Therefore, good-by; fare ye well, and sleep in quiet, both my sisters! Don't forget to write.

H. D. Thoreau.

POSTSCRIPT. (BY MRS. THOREAU.)

Dear Sophia, — Sam Black (the cat) is liable to frequent attacks that impair his agility and good-nature; at such times he goes down cellar, and stays many hours. Your flowers — O, the cruel frost! are all but dead; the cactus is withered by cold, but the geraniums yet flourish. The Sewing Circle has been revived this winter; they meet at our house in April or May, so that you may then be here. Your Aunt Sophia remains with us, — when she will return to the city I don't know. We still suffer from heavy colds, but not so much. Young Miss E. White is staying in the village a little while (is making a little visit in town). Don't forget to write within two weeks. We expect a letter next Sunday.

That you may enjoy good health is the prayer of —

Your mother,
C. Thoreau.

(H. D. T. was the scribe).

Cats were always an important branch of the Thoreaus' domestic economy, and Henry was more tolerant of them than men are wont to be. Flowers were the specialty of Sophia, who, when I knew her, from 1855 to 1876, usually had a small conservatory in a recess of the diningroom. At this time (1840) she seems to have been aiding Helen in her school. The next letter, to Helen, is of a graver tone: —

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT ROXBURY).

Concord, June 13, 1840.

Dear Helen, — That letter to John, for which you had an opportunity doubtless to substitute a more perfect communication, fell, as was natural, into the hands of his "transcendental brother," who is his proxy in such cases, having been commissioned to acknowledge and receipt all bills that may be presented. But what's in a name? Perhaps it does not matter whether it be John or Henry. Nor will those same six months have to be altered, I fear, to suit his case as well. But methinks they have not passed entirely without intercourse, provided we have been sincere though humble worshipers of the same virtue in the mean time. Certainly it is better that we should make ourselves quite sure of such a communion as this by the only course which is completely free from suspicion, — the coincidence of two earnest and aspiring lives, — than run the risk of a disappointment by relying wholly or chiefly on so meagre and uncertain a means as speech, whether written or spoken, affords. How often, when we have been nearest each other bodily, have we really been farthest off! Our tongues were the witty foils with which we fenced each other off. Not that we have not met heartily and with profit as members of one family, but it was a small one surely, and not that other human family. We have met frankly and without concealment ever, as befits those who have an instinctive trust in one another, and the scenery of whose outward lives has been the same, but never as prompted by an earnest and affectionate desire to probe deeper our mutual natures. Such intercourse, at least, if it has ever been, has not condescended to the vulgarities of oral communication, for the ears are provided with no lid as the eye is, and would not have been deaf to it in sleep. And now glad am I, if I am not mistaken in imagining that some such transcendental inquisitiveness has traveled post *thither*, — for, as I observed before, where the bolt hits, thither was it aimed, — any arbitrary direction notwithstanding.

Thus much, at least, our *kindred* temperament of mind and body — and long *family-mvity* —— have done for us, that we already find

ourselves standing on a solid and natural footing with respect to one another, and shall not have to waste time in the so often unavailing endeavor to arrive fairly at this simple ground.

Let us leave trifles, then, to accident; and politics, and finance, and such gossip, to the moments when diet and exercise are cared for, and speak to each other deliberately as out of one infinity into another, — you there in time and space, and I here. For beside this relation, all books and doctrines are no better than gossip or the turning of a spit.

Equally to you and Sophia, from
Your affectionate brother,
H. D. Thoreau.

We come now to the period when Thoreau entered on more intimate relations with Emerson. There was a difference of fourteen years in their ages, which had hitherto separated them intellectually; but now the young scholar, thinker, and naturalist had so fast advanced that he could meet his senior on more equal terms, and each became essential to the other. With all his prudence and common sense, in which he surpassed most men, Emerson was yet lacking in some practical faculties; while Thoreau was the most practical and handy person in all matters of every-day life, — a good mechanic and gardener, methodical in his habits, observant and kindly in the domestic world, and attractive to children, who now were important members of the Emerson household. He was therefore invited by Emerson to make his house a home, — looking after the garden, the business affairs, and performing the office of a younger brother, or a grown-up son. The invitation was accepted in April, 1841, and Thoreau remained in the family, with frequent absences, until he went in May, 1843, to reside with Mr. William Emerson, near New York, as the tutor of his sons. During these two years much occurred of deep moment to the two friends. Young Waldo Emerson, the beautiful boy, died, and just before, John Thoreau, the sunny and hopeful brother, whom Henry seems to have loved more than any human being. These tragedies brought the bereaved nearer together, and gave to Mrs. Emerson in particular an affection for Thoreau, and a trust in him which made the intimate life

of the household move harmoniously, notwithstanding the independent and eccentric genius of Thoreau.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN 1 (AT PLYMOUTH).

Concord, July 21, 1841.

Dear Friend, — Don't think I need any prompting to write to you; but what tough

1 Mrs. Brown was the elder sister of Mrs. R. W. Emerson and of the eminent chemist and geologist, Dr. Charles T. Jackson, of Plymouth and Boston. She lived for a time in Mrs. Thoreau's family, and Thoreau's early verses, *Sic Vita*, were thrown into her window there by the young poet, wrapped round a cluster of violets.

earthenware shall I put into my packet to travel over so many hills, and thrid so many woods, as lie between Concord and Plymouth? Thank fortune it is all the way down hill, so they will get safely carried; and yet it seems as if it were writing against time and the sun to send a letter east, for no natural force forwards it. You should go dwell in the West, and then I would deluge you with letters, as boys throw feathers into the air to see the wind take them. I should rather fancy you at evening dwelling far away behind the serene curtain of the West, — the home of fair weather, — than over by the chilly sources of the east wind.

What quiet thoughts have you nowadays which will float on that east wind to west, for so we may make our worst servants our carriers, — what progress made from *can't* to *can*, in practice and theory? Under this category, you remember, we used to place all our philosophy. Do you have any still, startling, well moments, in which you think grandly, and speak with emphasis? Don't take this for sarcasm, for not in a year of the gods, I fear, will such a golden approach to plain speaking revolve again. But away with such fears; by a few miles of travel we have not distanced each other's sincerity.

I grow savager and savager every day, as if fed on raw meat, and my tameness is' only the repose of untamableness. I dream of looking abroad summer and winter, with free gaze, from some mountain-side, while my eyes revolve in an Egyptian slime of health, — I to be nature looking into nature with such easy sympathy as the blue-eyed grass in the meadow looks in the face of the sky. From

some such recess I would put forth sublime thoughts daily, as the plant puts forth leaves. Now-a-nights I go on to the hill to see the sun set, as one would go home at evening; the bustle of the village has run on all day, and left me quite in the rear; but I see the sunset, and find that it can wait for my slow virtue.

But I forget that you think more of this human nature than of this nature I praise. Why won't you believe that mine is more human than any single man or woman can be? that in it, in the sunset there, are all the qualities that can adorn a household, and that sometimes, in a fluttering leaf, one may hear all your Christianity preached.

You see how unskillful a letter-writer I am, thus to have come to the end of my sheet when hardly arrived at the beginning of my story. I was going to be soberer, I assure you, but now have only room to add, that if the fates allot you a serene hour, don't fail to communicate some of its serenity to your friend, HENRY D. THOREAU.

No, no. Improve so rare a gift for yourself, and send me of your leisure.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, Wednesday evening1,
September 8, [1841.]

Dear Friend, — Your note came wafted to my hand like the first leaf of the Fall on the September wind, and I put only another interpretation upon its lines than upon the veins of those which are soon to be strewed around me. It is nothing but Indian Summer here at present. I mean that any weather seems reserved expressly for our late purposes whenever we happen to be fulfilling them. I do not know what right I have to so much happiness, but rather hold it in reserve till the time of my desert.

What with the crickets and the crowing of cocks, and the lowing of kine, our Concord life is sonorous enough. Sometimes I hear the cock bestir himself on his perch under my feet, and crow shrilly before dawn; and I think I might have been born any year for all the phenomena I know. We count sixteen eggs daily now, when arithmetic will only fetch the hens up to thirteen; but the world is young, and we wait to see this eccentricity complete its period.

My verses on Friendship are already printed in the "Dial;" not expanded, but reduced to completeness by leaving out the long lines, which always have, or should have, a longer or at least another sense than short ones.

Just now I am in the mid-sea of verses, and they actually rustle around me as the leaves would round the head of Autumnus himself should he thrust it up through some vales which I know; but, alas! many of them are but crisped and yellow leaves like his, I fear, and will deserve no better fate than to make mould for new harvests. I see the stanzas rise around me, verse upon verse, far and near, like the mountains from Agiocochook, not all having a terrestrial existence as yet, even as some of them may be clouds; but I fancy I see the gleam of some Sebago Lake and Silver Cascade, at whose well I may drink one day. I am as unfit for any practical purpose — I mean for the furtherance of the world's ends — as gossamer for ship-timber; and

I, who am going to be a pencil-maker to-morrow,1 can sympathize with God Apollo, who served King Admetus for a while on earth. But I believe he found it for his ad-

1 This business of pencil-making had become the family bread-winner, and Henry Thoreau worked at it and kindred arts by intervals for the next twenty years.

vantage at last, — as I am sure I shall, though I shall hold the nobler part at least out of the service.

Don't attach any undue seriousness to this threnody, for I love my fate to the very core and rind, and could swallow it without paring it, I think. You ask if I have written any more poems? Excepting those which Vulcan is now forging, I have only discharged a few more bolts into the horizon, — in all, three hundred verses, —— and sent them, as I may say, over the mountains to Miss Fuller, who may have occasion to remember the old rhyme: —

''Three scipen gode Comen mid than flode
Three hundred cnihten."

But these are far more Vandalic than they. In this narrow sheet there is not room even for one thought to root itself. But you must consider this an odd leaf of a volume, and that volume Your friend,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, October 5, 1841.

Dear Friend, — I send you Williams's 1 letter as the last remembrancer to one of those "whose acquaintance he had the pleasure to form while in Concord." It came quite unexpectedly to me, but I was very glad to receive it, though I hardly know whether my utmost sincerity and interest can inspire a sufficient answer to it. I should like to have you send it back by some convenient opportunity.

1. T. Williams, who had lived in Concord, but now wrote from Buffalo, N. Y.

Pray let me know what you are thinking about any day, — what most nearly concerns you. Last winter, you know, you did more than your share of the talking, and I did not complain for want of an opportunity. Imagine your stove-door out of order, at least, and then while I am fixing it you will think of enough things to say.

What makes the value of your life at present? what dreams have you, and what realizations? You know there is a high table-land which not even the east wind reaches. Now can't we walk and chat upon its plane still, as if there were no lower latitudes? Surely our two destinies are topics interesting and grand enough for any occasion.

I hope you have many gleams of serenity and health, or, if your body will grant you no positive respite, that you may, at any rate, enjoy your sickness occasionally, as much as I used to tell of. But here is the bundle going to be done up, so accept a "good-night" from

Henry D. Thoreau.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN (AT PLYMOUTH).

Concord, March 2, 1842.

Dear Friend, — I believe I have nothing new to tell you, for what was news you have learned from other sources. I am much the same person that I was, who should be so much better; yet when I realize what has transpired, and the greatness of the part I am unconsciously acting, I am thrilled, and it seems as if there were none in history to match it.

Soon after John's death I listened to a music-box, and if, at any time, that event had seemed inconsistent with the beauty and harmony of the universe, it was then gently constrained into the placid course of nature by those steady notes, in mild and unoffended tone echoing far and wide under the heavens. But I find these things more strange than sad to me. What right have I to grieve, who have not ceased to wonder? We feel at first as if some opportunities of kindness and sympathy were lost, but learn afterward that any *pure grief* is ample recompense for all. That is, if we are faithful; for a great grief is but sympathy with the soul that disposes events, and is as natural as the resin on Arabian trees. Only Nature has a right to grieve perpetually, for she only is innocent. Soon the ice will melt, and the blackbirds sing along the river which he frequented, as pleasantly as ever. The same everlasting serenity will appear in this face of God, and we will not be sorrowful if he is not.

We are made happy when reason can discover no occasion for it. The memory of some past moments is more persuasive than the experience of present ones. There have been visions of such breadth and brightness that these motes were invisible in their light.

I do not wish to see John ever again, — I mean him who is dead, — but that other, whom only he would have wished to see, or to be, of whom he was the imperfect representative. For we are not what we are, nor do we treat or esteem each other for such, but for what we are capable of being.

As for Waldo, he died as the mist rises from the brook, which the sun will soon dart his rays through. Do not the flowers die every

autumn? He had not even taken root here. I was not startled to hear that he was dead; it seemed the most natural event that could happen. His fine organization demanded it, and nature gently yielded its request. It would have been strange if he had lived. Neither will nature manifest any sorrow at his death, but soon the note of the lark will be heard down in the meadow, and fresh dandelions will spring from the old stocks where lie plucked them last summer.

I have been living ill of late, but am now doing better. How do you live in that Plymouth world, nowadays? 1 Please remember me to Mary Russell. You must not blame me if I do *talk to the clouds*, for I remain Your friend,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN (AT PLYMOUTH).

Concord, January 24, 1843.

Dear Friend, — The other day I wrote you a letter to go in Mrs. Emerson's bundle, but, as 1 Mrs. Brown, to whom this letter and several others of the years 1841-43 were written, lived by turns in Plymouth, her native place, and in Concord, where she often visited Mrs. Emerson at the time when Thoreau was an inmate of the Emerson household. In the early part of 1843 she was in Plymouth, and her sister was sending her newspapers and other things, from time to time. The incident of the music-box, mentioned above, occurred at the Old Manse, where Hawthorne was living from the summer of 1842 until the spring of 1845, and was often visited by Thoreau and Ellery Channing. In the letter following, this incident is recalled, and with it the agreeable gift by Richard Fuller (a younger brother of Margaret Fuller and of Ellen, the wife of Ellery Channing, who came to reside in Concord about these years, and soon became Thoreau's most intimate friend), which was a music-box for the Thoreaus. They were all fond of music, and enjoyed it even in this mechanical form, — one evidence of the simple conditions of life in Concord then. The note of thanks to young Fuller, who had been, perhaps, a pupil of Thoreau, follows this letter to Mrs. Brown, though earlier in date. Mary Russell afterwards became Mrs. Marston Watson. it seemed unworthy, I did not send it, and now, to atone for that, I am going to send this, whether it be worthy or not. I will not venture upon news, for, as all the household are gone to bed, I cannot learn what has been told you. Do you read any noble verses nowadays? or do not verses still seem noble? For my own part, they have been the only things I remembered, or that which occasioned them, when all things else were blurred and defaced. All things have put on mourning but they; for the elegy itself is some victorious melody or joy escaping from the wreck.

It is a relief to read some true book, wherein all are equally dead, — equally alive. I think the best parts of Shakespeare would only be enhanced by the most thrilling and affecting events. I have found it

so. And so much the more, as they are not intended for consolation.

Do you think of coming to Concord again? I shall be glad to see you. I should be glad to know that I could see you when I would.

We always seem to be living just on the brink of a pure and lofty intercourse, which would make the ills and trivialness of life ridiculous. After each little interval, though it be but for the night, we are prepared to meet each other as gods and goddesses.

I seem to have dodged all my days with one or two persons, and lived upon expectation, — as if the bud would surely blossom; and so I am content to live.

What means the fact, — which is so common, so universal, — that some soul that has lost all hope for itself can inspire in another listening soul an infinite confidence in it, even while it is expressing its despair?

I am very happy in my present environment, though actually mean enough myself, and so, of course, all around me; yet, I am sure, we for the most part are transfigured to one another, and are that to the other which we aspire to be ourselves. The longest course of mean and trivial intercourse may not prevent my practicing this divine courtesy to my companion. Notwithstanding all I hear about brooms, and scouring, and taxes, and housekeeping, I am constrained to live a strangely mixed life, — as if even Valhalla might have its kitchen. We are all of us Apollos serving some Admetus.

I think I must have some Muses in my pay that I know not of, for certain musical wishes of mine are answered as soon as entertained. Last summer I went to Hawthorne's suddenly for the express purpose of borrowing his music-box, and almost immediately Mrs. Hawthorne proposed to lend it to me. The other day I said I must go to Mrs. Barrett's to hear hers, and, lo! straightway Richard Fuller sent me one for a present from Cambridge. It is a very good one. I should like to have you hear it. I shall not have to employ you to borrow for me now. Good-night.

From your affectionate friend,

H. D. T.

TO RICHARD F. FULLER (AT CAMBRIDGE).

CONCORD, January 16, 1843.

Dear Richard, — I need not thank you for your present, for I hear its music, which seems to be playing just for us two pilgrims marching over hill and dale of a summer afternoon, up those long Bolton hills and by those bright Harvard lakes, such as I see in the placid Lucerne on the lid; and whenever I hear it, it will recall happy hours passed with its donor.

When did mankind make that foray into nature and bring off this booty? For certainly it is but history that some rare virtue in remote times plundered these strains from above and communicated them to men. Whatever we may think of it, it is a part of the harmony of the spheres you have sent me; which has condescended to serve us Admetuses, and I hope I may so behave that this may always be the tenor of your thought for me.

If you have any strains, the conquest of your own spear or quill, to accompany these, let the winds waft them also to me.

I write this with one of the "primaries" of my osprey's wings, which I have preserved over my glass for some state occasion, and now it offers.

Mrs. Emerson sends her love.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, Friday evening,
January 25, 1843.

Dear Friend, — Mrs. Emerson asks me to write you a letter, which she will put into her bundle to-morrow along with the "Tribunes" and "Standards," and miscellanies, and what not, to make an assortment. But what shall I write? You live a good way off, and I don't know that I have anything which will bear sending so far. But I am mistaken, or rather impatient when I say this, — for we all have a gift to send, not only when the year begins, but as long as interest and memory last. I don't know whether you have got the many I have sent you, or rather whether you were quite sure where they came from. I mean the letters I have sometimes launched off eastward in my thought; but if you have been happier at one time than another, think that then you received them. But this that I now send you is of another sort. It will go slowly, drawn by horses over muddy roads, and lose much of its little value by the way. You may have to pay for it, and it may not make you happy after all. But what shall be my new-year's gift, then? Why, I will send you my still fresh remembrance of the hours I have passed with you here, for I find in the remembrance of them the best gift you have left to me. We are poor and sick creatures at best; but we can have well memories, and sound and healthy thoughts of one another still, and an intercourse may be remembered which was without blur, and above us both.

Perhaps you may like to know of my estate nowadays. As usual, I find it harder to account for the happiness I enjoy, than for the sadness which instructs me occasionally. If the little of this last which visits me would only be sadder, it would be happier. One while I am vexed by a sense of meanness; one while I simply wonder at the mystery of life; and at another, and at another, seem to rest on my oars, as if propelled by propitious breezes from I know not what quarter. But for the most part I am an idle, inefficient, lingering (one term will do as well as another, where all are true and none true enough) member of the great commonwealth, who have most need of

my own charity, — if I could not be charitable and indulgent to myself, perhaps as good a subject for my own satire as any. You see how, when I come to talk of myself, I soon run dry, for I would fain make that a subject which can be no subject for me, at least not till I have the grace to rule myself.

I do not venture to say anything about your griefs, for it would be unnatural for me to speak as if I grieved with you, when I think I do not. If I were to see you, it might be otherwise. But I know you will pardon the trivialness of this letter; and I only hope — as I know that you have reason to be so — that you are still happier than you are sad, and that you remember that the smallest seed of faith is of more worth than the largest fruit of happiness. I have no doubt that out of S— 's death you sometimes draw sweet consolation, not only for that, but for long-standing griefs, and may find some things made smooth by it, which before were rough.

I wish you would communicate with me, and not think me unworthy to know any of your thoughts. Don't think me unkind because I have not written to you. I confess it was for so poor a reason as that you almost made a principle of not answering. I could not speak truly with this ugly fact in the way; and perhaps I wished to be assured, by such evidence as you could not voluntarily give, that it was a kindness. For every glance at the moon, does she not send me an answering ray? Noah would hardly have done himself the pleasure to release his dove, if she had not been about to come back to him with tidings of green islands amid the waste.

But these are far-fetched reasons. I am not speaking directly enough to yourself now; so let me say *directly*

From your friend,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

Exactly when correspondence began between Emerson and Thoreau is not now to be ascertained, since all the letters do not seem to have been preserved. Their acquaintance opened while Thoreau was in college, although Emerson may have seen the studious boy at the town school in Concord, or at the "Academy" there, while fitting for college. But they only came to know each other as sharers of the same thoughts and aspirations in the autumn of 1837, when, on

hearing a new lecture of Emerson's, Helen Thoreau said to Mrs. Brown, then living or visiting in the Thoreau family, "Henry has a thought very like that in his journal" (which he had newly begun to keep). Mrs. Brown desired to see the passage, and soon bore it to her sister, Mrs. Emerson, whose husband saw it, and asked Mrs. Brown to bring her young friend to see him. By 1838 their new relation of respect was established, and Emerson wrote to a correspondent, "I delight much in my young friend, who seems to have as free and erect a mind as any I have ever met." A year later (Aug. 9, 1839), he wrote to Carlyle, "I have a young poet in this village, named Thoreau, who writes the truest verses." Indeed, it was in the years 1839-40 that he seems to have written the poems by which he is best remembered. Thoreau told me in his last illness that he had written many verses and destroyed many, — this fact he then regretted, although he had done it at the instance of Emerson, who did not praise them. But, said he, "they may have been better than we thought them, twenty years ago."

The earliest note which I find from Emerson to Thoreau bears no date, but must have been written before 1842, for at no later time could the persons named in it have visited Concord together. Most likely it was in the summer of 1840, and to the same date do I assign a note asking Henry to join the Emersons in a party to the Cliffs (*scopuli Pulchiri-Portus*), and to bring his flute, — for on that pastoral reed Thoreau played sweetly. The first series of letters from Thoreau to Emerson begins early in 1843, about the time the letters just given were written to Mrs. Brown. In the first he gives thanks to Emerson for the hospitality of his house in the two preceding years; a theme to which he returned a few months later, — for I doubt not the lovely sad poem called "The Departure" was written at Staten Island soon after his leaving the Emerson house in Concord for the more stately but less congenial residence of William Emerson at Staten Island, whither he betook himself in May, 1843. This first letter, however, was sent from the Concord home to Waldo Emerson at Staten Island, or perhaps in New York, where he was that winter giving a course of lectures.

In explanation of the passages concerning Bronson Alcott, in this letter, it should be said that he was then living at the Hosmer

Cottage, in Concord, with his English friends, Charles Lane and Henry Wright, and that he had refused to pay a tax in support of what he considered an unjust government, and was arrested by the constable, Sam Staples, in consequence.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, January 24, 1843.

Dear Friend, — The best way to correct a mistake is to make it right. I had not spoken of writing to you, but as you say you are about to write to me when you get my letter, I make haste on my part in order to get yours the sooner.

I don't well know what to say to earn the forthcoming epistle, unless that Edith takes rapid strides in the arts and sciences — or music and natural history — as well as over the carpet; that she says "papa" less and less abstractedly every day, looking in *my* face, — which may sound like a *Ranz des Vaches* to yourself. And Ellen declares every morning that "papa *may* come home to-night;" and by and by it will have changed to such positive statement as that "papa came home *larks* night."

Elizabeth Hoar still flits about these clearings, and I meet her here and there, and in all houses but her own, but as if I were not the less of her family for all that. I have made slight acquaintance also with one Mrs. Lidian Emerson, who almost persuades me to be a Christian, but I fear I as often lapse into heathenism. Mr. O'Sullivan1 was here three days. I met him at the Atheneum [Concord], and went to Hawthorne's [at the Old Manse] to tea with him. He expressed a great deal of interest in your poems, and wished me to give him a list of them, which I did; he saying he did not know but he should notice them. He is a rather puny-looking man, and did not strike me. We had nothing to say to one another, and therefore we

1 Editor of the *Democratic Review*, for which Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, and Whittier all wrote, more or less.

said a great deal! He, however, made a point of asking me to write for his Review, which I shall be glad to do. He is, at any rate, one of the not-bad, but does not by any means take you by storm, — no, nor by calm, which is the best way. He expects to see you in New

York. After tea I carried him and Hawthorne to the Lyceum.

Mr. Alcott has not altered much since you left. I think you will find him much the same sort of person. With Mr. Lane I have had one regular chat *a la* George Minott, which of course was greatly to our mutual grati-and edification; and, as two or three as regular conversations have taken place since, I fear there may have been a precession of the equinoxes. Mr. Wright, according to the last accounts, is in Lynn, with uncertain aims and prospects, — maturing slowly, perhaps, as indeed are all of us. I suppose they have told you how near Mr. Alcott went to the jail, but I can add a good anecdote to the rest. When Staples came to collect Mrs. Ward's taxes, my sister Helen asked him what he thought Mr. Alcott meant, — what his idea was, — and he answered, "I vum, I believe it was nothing but principle, for I never heerd a man talk honester."

There was a lecture on Peace by a Mr. Spear (ought he not to be beaten into a ploughshare?), the same evening, and, as the gentlemen, Lane and Alcott, dined at our house while the matter was in suspense, — that is, while the constable was waiting for his receipt from the jailer, — we there settled it that we, that is, Lane and myself, perhaps, should agitate the State while Winkelried lay in durance. But when, over the audience, I saw our hero's head moving in the free air of the Universalist church, my fire all went out, and the State was safe as far as I was concerned. But Lane, it seems, had cogitated and even written on the matter, in the afternoon, and so, out of courtesy, taking his point of departure from the Spear-man's lecture, he drove gracefully *in médias res*, and gave the affair a very good setting out; but, to spoil all, our martyr very characteristically, but, as artists would say, in bad taste, brought up the rear with a "My Prisons," which made us forget Silvio Pellico himself.

Mr. Lane wishes me to ask you to see if there is anything for him in the New York office, and pay the charges. Will you tell me what to do with Mr. [Theodore] Parker, who was to lecture February 15th? Mrs. Emerson says my letter is written instead of one from her.

At the end of this strange letter I will not write — what alone I had to say — to thank you and Mrs. Emerson for your long kindness to me. It would be more ungrateful than my constant thought. I have been your pensioner for nearly two years, and still left free as under

the sky. It has been as free a gift as the sun or the summer, though I have sometimes molested you with my mean acceptance of it, — I who have failed to render even those slight services of the *hand* which would have been for a sign at least; and, by the fault of my nature, have failed of many better and higher services. But I will not trouble you with this, but for once thank you as well as Heaven.

Your friend,
— H. D. T.

Mrs. Lidian Emerson, the wife of R. W. Emerson, and her two daughters, Ellen and Edith, are named in this first letter, and will be frequently mentioned in the correspondence. At this date, Edith, now Mrs. W. H. Forbes, was fourteen months old. Mr. Emerson's mother, Madam Ruth Emerson, was also one of the household, which had for a little more than seven years occupied the well-known house under the trees, east of the village.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, February 10, 1843.

Dear Friend, — I have stolen one of your own sheets to write you a letter upon, and I hope, with two layers of ink, to turn it into a comforter. If you like to receive a letter from me, too, I am glad, for it gives me pleasure to write. But don't let it come amiss; it must fall as harmlessly as leaves settle on the landscape. I will tell you what we are doing this now. Supper is done, and Edith — the dessert, perhaps more than the dessert — is brought in, or even comes in *per se;* and round she goes, now to this altar, and then to that, with her monosyllabic invocation of "oc," "oc." It makes me think of "Langue d'oc." She must belong to that province. And like the gypsies she talks a language of her own while she understands ours. While she jabbers Sanscrit, Parsee, Pehlvi, say "Edith go bah!" and "bah" it is. No intelligence passes between us. She knows. It is a capital joke, — that is the reason she smiles so. How well the secret is kept! she never descends to explanation. It is not buried like a common secret, bolstered up on two sides, but by an eternal silence on the one side, at least. It has been long kept, and comes in from the unexplored horizon, like a blue mountain range, to end abruptly at our door one day. (Don't stumble at this steep simile.) And now she studies the heights and depths of nature

> On shoulders whirled in some eccentric orbit
> Just by old Pæstum's temples and the perch
> Where Time doth plume his wings.

And now she runs the race over the carpet, while all Olympia applauds, — mamma, grandma, and uncle, good Grecians all, — and that dark-hued barbarian, Partheanna Parker, whose shafts go through and through, not backward! Grandmamma smiles over all, and mamma is wondering what papa would say, should she descend on Carlton House some day. "Larks night" 's abed, dreaming of

"pleased faces" far away. But now the trumpet sounds, the games are over; some Hebe comes, and Edith is translated. I don't know where; it must be to some cloud, for I never was there.

Query: what becomes of the answers Edith thinks, but cannot express? She really gives you glances which are before this world was. You can't feel any difference of age, except that you have longer legs and arms.

Mrs. Emerson said I must tell you about domestic affairs, when I mentioned that I was going to write. Perhaps it will inform you of the state of all if I only say that I am well and happy in your house here in Concord.

Your friend,
— Henry.

Don't forget to tell us what to do with Mr. Parker when you write next. I lectured this week. It was as bright a night as you could wish. I hope there were no stars thrown away on the occasion.

[A part of the same letter, though bearing a date two days later, and written in a wholly different style, as from one sage to another, is this postscript.]

February 12, 1843.

Dear Friend, — As the packet still tarries, I will send you some thoughts, which I have lately relearned, as the latest public and private news.

How mean are our relations to one another! Let us pause till they are nobler. A little silence, a little rest, is good. It would be sufficient employment only to cultivate true ones.

The richest gifts we can bestow are the least marketable. We hate the kindness which we understand. A noble person confers no such gift as his whole confidence: none so exalts the giver and the receiver; it produces the truest gratitude. Perhaps it is only essential to friendship that some vital trust should have been reposed by the one in the other. I feel addressed and probed even to the remote parts of my being when one nobly shows, even in trivial things, an implicit

faith in me. When such divine commodities are so near and cheap, how strange that it should have to be each day's discovery! A threat or a curse may be forgotten, but this mild trust translates me. I am no more of this earth; it acts dynamically; it changes my very substance. I cannot do what before I did. I cannot be what before I was. Other chains may be broken, but in the darkest night, in the remotest place, I trail this thread. Then things cannot *happen.* What if God were to confide in us for a moment! Should we not then be gods?

How subtle a thing is this confidence! Nothing sensible passes between; never any consequences are to be apprehended should it be misplaced. Yet something has transpired. A new behavior springs; the ship carries new ballast in her hold. A sufficiently great and generous trust could never be abused. It should be cause to lay down one's life, — which would not be to lose it. Can there be any mistake up there? Don't the gods know where to invest their wealth? Such confidence, too, would be reciprocal. When one confides greatly in you, he will feel the roots of an equal trust fastening themselves in him. When such trust has been received or reposed, we dare not speak, hardly to see each other; our voices sound harsh and untrustworthy. We are as instruments which the Powers have dealt with. Through what straits would we not carry this little burden of a magnanimous trust! Yet no harm could possibly come, but simply faithlessness. Not a feather, not a straw, is intrusted; that packet is empty. It is only *committed* to us, and, as it were, all things are committed to us.

The kindness I have longest remembered has been of this sort, — the sort unsaid; so far behind the speaker's lips that almost it already lay in my heart. It did not have far to go to be communicated. The gods cannot misunderstand, man cannot explain. We communicate like the burrows of foxes, in silence and darkness, under ground. We are undermined by faith and love. How much more full is Nature where we think the empty space is than where we place the solids! — full of fluid influences. Should we ever communicate but by these? The spirit abhors a vacuum more than Nature. There is a tide which pierces the pores of the air. These aerial rivers, let us not pollute their currents. What meadows do they course through? How many fine mails there are which traverse their routes! He is privileged who gets

his letter franked by them.

I believe these things.

Henry D. Thoreau.

Emerson replied to these letters in two epistles of dates from February 4 to 12, 1843, — in the latter asking Thoreau to aid him in editing the April number of the "Dial," of which he had taken charge. Among other things, Emerson desired a manuscript of Charles Lane, Alcott's English friend, to be sent to him in New York, where he was detained several weeks by his lectures. He added: "Have we no news from Wheeler? Has Bartlett none?" Of these persons, the first, Charles Stearns Wheeler, a college classmate of Thoreau, and later Greek tutor in the college, had gone to Germany, — where he died the next summer, — and was contributing to the quarterly "Dial." Robert Bartlett, of Plymouth, a townsman of Mrs. Emerson, was Wheeler's intimate friend, with whom he corresponded.1 To this editorial

1 An interesting fact in connection with Thoreau and Wheeler (whose home was in Lincoln, four miles southeast of Concord) is related by Ellery Channing in a note to me. It seems that Wheeler had built for himself, or hired from a farmer, a rough woodland study near Flint's Pond, half way from Lincoln to Concord, which he occupied for a short time in 1841-42, and where Thoreau and Channing visited him. Mr. Channing wrote me in 1883: "Stearns Wheeler built a 'shanty' on Flint's Pond for the purpose of economy, for purchasing Greek books and going abroad to study. Whether Mr. Thoreau assisted him to build this shanty I cannot say, but I think he may have; also that he spent six weeks with him there. As Mr. Thoreau was not too original and inventive to follow the example of others, if good to him, it is very probable this undertaking of Stearns Wheeler, whom he regarded (as I think I have heard him say) a heroic character, suggested his own experiment on Walden. I believe I visited this shanty with Mr. Thoreau. It was very plain, with bunks of straw, and built in the Irish manner. I think Mr. Wheeler was as good a mechanic as Mr. Thoreau, and built this shanty for his own use. The object of these two experiments was quite unlike, except in the common purpose of economy. It seems to me highly probable that Mr. Wheeler's experiment suggested Mr. Thoreau's, as he was a man he almost worshiped. But I could not understand what relation Mr. Lowell had to this fact, if it be one. Students, in all parts of the earth, have pursued a similar course from motives of economy, and to carry out some special study. Mr. Thoreau wished to study birds, flowers, and the stone age, just as Mr. Wheeler wished to study Greek. And Mr. Hotham came next from just the same motive of economy (necessity) and to study the Bible. The prudential sides of all three were the same." Mr. Hotham was the young theological student who dwelt in a cabin by Walden in 1809-70.

request Thoreau, who was punctuality itself, replied at once.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, February 15, 1843.

My DEAR FRIEND, — I got your letters, one yesterday and the other to-day, and they have made me quite happy. As a packet is to go in the morning, I will give you a hasty account of the "Dial." I called on Mr. Lane this afternoon, and brought away, together with an abundance of good-will, first, a bulky catalogue of books without commentary, — some eight hundred, I think he told me, with an introduction filling one sheet, — ten or a dozen pages, say, though I have only glanced at them; second, a review — twenty-five or thirty printed pages —— of Conversations on the Gospels, Record of a School, and Spiritual Culture, with rather copious extracts. However, it is a good subject, and Lane says it gives him satisfaction. I will give it a faithful reading directly. [These were Alcott's publications, reviewed by Lane.] And now I come to the little end of the horn; for myself, I have brought along the Minor Greek Poets, and will mine there for a scrap or two, at least. As for Etzler, I don't remember any "rude and snappish speech" that you made, and if you did it must have been longer than anything I had written; however, here is the book still, and I will try. Perhaps I have some few scraps in my Journal which you may choose to print. The translation of the Æschylus I should like very well to continue anon, if it should be worth the while. As for poetry, I have not remembered to write any for some time; it has quite slipped my mind; but sometimes I think I hear the mutterings of the thunder. Don't you remember that last summer we heard a low, tremulous sound in the woods and over the hills, and thought it was partridges or rocks, and it proved to be thunder gone down the river? But sometimes it was over Wayland way, and at last burst over our heads. So we'll not despair by reason of the drought. You see it takes a good many words to supply the place of one deed; a hundred lines to a cobweb, and but one cable to a man-of-war. The "Dial" case needs to be reformed in many particulars. There is no news from Wheeler, none from Bartlett.

They all look well and happy in this house, where it gives me much pleasure to dwell.

Yours in haste, — HENRY.

P. S.

Wednesday evening, February 16.

DEAR FRIEND, — I have time to write a few words about the "Dial." I have just received the three first signatures, which do not yet complete Lane's piece. He will place five hundred copies for sale at Munroe's bookstore. Wheeler has sent you two full sheets — more about the German universities — and proper names, which will have to be printed in alphabetical order for convenience; what this one has done, that one is doing, and the other intends to do. Hammer-Purgstall (Yon Hammer) may be one, for aught I know. However, there are two or three *things* in it, as well as names. One of the books of Herodotus is discovered to be out of place. He says something about having sent to Lowell, by the last steamer, a budget of literary news, which he will have communicated to you ere this. Mr. Alcott has a letter from Heraud,1 and a book written by him, — the Life of Savonarola, — which he wishes to have republished here. Mr. Lane will write a notice of it. (The latter says that what is in the New York post-office *may* be directed to Mr. Alcott.) Miss [Elizabeth] Peabody has sent a "Notice to the readers of the ' Dial,'" which is not good.

Mr. Chapin lectured this evening, and so rhetorically that I forgot my duty and heard very little. I find myself better than I have been, and am meditating some other method of paying debts than by lectures and writing, — which will only do to talk about. If anything of that "other" sort should come to your ears in New York, will you remember it for me?

Excuse this scrawl, which I have written over the embers in the dining-room. I hope that you live on good terms with yourself and the gods.

Yours in haste, —

HENRY.

Mr. Lane and his lucubrations proved to be tough subjects, and the next letter has more to say about them and the "Dial." Lane had undertaken to do justice to Mr. Alcott and his books, as may still be read in the pages of that

1 An English critic and poetaster. See *Memoir of Bronson Alcott,* pp. 292-318.

April number of the Transcendentalist quarterly.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, February 20, 1843.

My dear Friend, — I have read Mr. Lane's review, and *can* say, speaking for this world and for fallen man, that "it is good for us." As they say in geology, time never fails, there is always enough of it, so I may say, criticism never fails; but if I go and read elsewhere, I say it is good, — far better than any notice Mr. Alcott has received, or is likely to receive from another quarter. It is at any rate "the other side," which Boston needs to hear. I do not send it to you, because time is precious, and because I think you would accept it, after all. After speaking briefly of the fate of Goethe and Carlyle in their own countries, he says, "To Emerson in his own circle is but slowly accorded a worthy response; and Alcott, almost utterly neglected," etc. I will strike out what relates to yourself, and correcting some verbal faults, send the rest to the printer with Lane's initials.

The catalogue needs amendment, I think. It wants completeness now. It should consist of such books only as they would tell Mr. [F. H.] Hedge and [Theodore] Parker they had got; omitting the Bible, the classics, and much besides, — for there the incompleteness begins. But you will be here in season for this.

It is frequently easy to make Mr. Lane more universal and attractive; to write, for instance, "universal ends" instead of "the universal end," just as we pull open the petals of a flower with our fingers where they are confined by its own sweets. Also he had better not say "books designed for the nucleus of a *Home,* University," until he makes that word "home" ring solid and universal too. This is that abominable dialect. He had just given me a notice of George Bradford's Fénelon for the Record of the Months, and speaks of extras of the Review and Catalogue, if they are printed, — even a hundred, or thereabouts. How shall this be arranged? Also he wishes to use some manuscripts of his which are in your possession, if you do not. Can I get them?

I think of no news to tell you. It is a serene summer day here, all above the snow. The hens steal their nests, and I steal their eggs still,

as formerly. This is what I do with the hands. Ah, labor, — it is a divine institution, and conversation with many men and hens.

Do not think that my letters require as many special answers. I get one as often as you write to Concord. Concord inquires for you daily, as do all the members of this house. You must make haste home before we have settled all the great questions, for they are fast being disposed of. But I must leave room for Mrs. Emerson.

Mrs. Emerson's letter, after speaking of other matters, gave a lively sketch of Thoreau at one of Alcott's Conversations in her house, which may be quoted as illustrating the young Nature-worshiper's position at the time, and the more humane and socialistic spirit of Alcott and Lane, who were soon to leave Concord for their experiment of communistic life at "Fruitlands," in the rural town of Harvard.

"Last evening we had the c Conversation,' though, owing to the bad weather, but few attended. The subjects were: What is Prophecy? Who is a Prophet? and The Love of Nature. Mr. Lane decided, as for all time and the race, that this same love of nature — of which Henry [Thoreau] was the champion, and Elizabeth Hoar and Lidian (though L. disclaimed possessing it herself) his faithful squiresses — that this love was the most subtle and dangerous of sins; a refined idolatry, much more to be dreaded than gross wickednesses, because the gross sinner would be alarmed by the depth of his degradation, and come up from it in terror, but the unhappy idolaters of Nature were deceived by the refined quality of their sin, and would be the last to enter the kingdom. Henry frankly affirmed to both the wise men that they were wholly deficient in the faculty in question, and therefore could not judge of it. And Mr. Alcott as frankly answered that it was because they went beyond the mere material objects, and were filled with spiritual love and perception (as Mr. T. was not), that they seemed to Mr. Thoreau not to appreciate outward nature. I am very heavy, and have spoiled a most excellent story. I have given you no idea of the scene, which was ineffably comic, though it made no laugh at the time; I scarcely laughed at it myself, — too deeply amused to give the usual sign. Henry was brave and noble; well as I have always liked him, he still grows upon me."

Before going to Staten Island in May, 1843, Thoreau answered a letter from the same Richard Fuller who had made him the musical gift in the previous winter. He was at Harvard College, and desired to know something of Thoreau's pursuits there, — concerning which Channing says in his Life1:

1 *Thoreau*, *the Poet-Naturalist.* With Memorial Verses. By William Ellery Channing (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1873). This volume, in some respects the best biography of Thoreau, is now quite rare. Among the Memorial Verses are those written by Channing for his friend's funeral; at which, also, Mr. Alcott read Thoreau's poem of Sympathy.

"He was a respectable student, having done there a bold reading in English poetry, — even to some portions or the whole of Davenant's ' Gondibert.'" This, Thoreau does not mention in his letter, but it was one of the things that attracted Emerson's notice, since he also had the same taste for the Elizabethan and Jacobean English poets. An English youth, Henry Headley, pupil of Dr. Parr, and graduate of Oxford in 1786, had preceded Thoreau in this study of poets that had become obsolete; and it was perhaps Headley's volume, "Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry, with Remarks by the late Henry Headley," published long after his death,1 that served Thoreau as a guide to Quarles and the Fletchers, Daniel, Drummond, Drayton, Habington, and Raleigh, — poets that few Americans had heard of in 1833.

TO RICHARD F. FULLER (AT CAMBRIDGE).

Concord, April 2, 1843.

Dear Richard, — I was glad to receive a letter from you so bright and cheery. You speak of not having made any conquests with your own spear or quill as yet; but if you are tempering your spear-head during these days,

1 Headley died at the age of twenty-three, in 1788. His posthumous book was edited in 1810 by Rev. Henry Kett, and published in London by John Sharp.

and fitting a straight and tough shaft thereto, will not that suffice? We are more pleased to consider the hero in the forest cutting cornel or ash for his spear, than marching in triumph with his trophies. The present hour is always wealthiest when it is poorer than the future ones, as that is the pleasantest site which affords the pleasantest prospects.

What you say about your studies furnishing you with a "mimic idiom" only, reminds me that we shall all do well if we learn so much as to talk, — to speak truth. The only fruit which even much living yields seems to be often only some trivial success, — the ability to do some slight thing better. We make conquest only of husks and shells for the most part, — at least apparently, — but sometimes these are cinnamon and spices, you know. Even the grown hunter you speak of slays a thousand buffaloes, and brings off only their hides and tongues. What immense sacrifices, what hecatombs and holocausts, the gods exact for very slight favors! How much sincere life before we can even utter one sincere word.

What I was learning in college was chiefly, I think, to express myself, and I see now, that as the old orator prescribed, 1st, action; 2d, action; 3d, action; my teachers should have prescribed to me, 1st, sincerity; 2d, sincerity; 3d, sincerity. The old mythology is incomplete without a god or goddess of sincerity, on whose altars we might offer up all the products of our farms, our workshops, and our studies. It should be our Lar when we sit on the hearth, and our

Tutelar Genius when we walk abroad. This is the only panacea. I mean sincerity in our dealings with ourselves mainly; any other is comparatively easy. But I must stop before I get to 17thly. I believe I have but one text and one sermon.

Your rural adventures beyond the West Cambridge hills have probably lost nothing by distance of time or space. I used to hear only the sough of the wind in the woods of Concord, when I was striving to give my attention to a page of Calculus. But, depend upon it, you will love your native hills the better for being separated from them.

I expect to leave Concord, which is my Rome, and its people, who are my Romans, in May, and go to New York, to be a tutor in Mr. William Emerson's family. So I will bid you good by till I see you or hear from you again.

Going to Staten Island, early in May, 1843, Thoreau's first care was to write to his "Romans, countrymen, and lovers by the banks of the Musketàquid," — beginning with his mother, his sisters, and Mrs. Emerson. To Sophia and Mrs. E. he wrote May 22, — to Helen, with a few touching verses on his brother John, the next day; and then he resumed the correspondence with Emerson. It seems that one of his errands near New York was to make the acquaintance of literary men and journalists in the city, in order to find a vehicle for publication, such as his neighbor Hawthorne had finally found in the pages of the "Democratic Review." For this purpose Thoreau made himself known to Henry James, and other friends of Emerson, and to Horace Greeley, then in the first freshness of his success with the "Tribune," — a newspaper hardly more than two years old then, but destined to a great career, in which several of the early Transcendentalists took some part.

TO HIS FATHER AND MOTHER (AT CONCORD).

Castleton, Staten Island, May 11, 1843.

Dear Mother and Friends at Home, — We arrived here safely at ten o'clock on Sunday morning, having had as good a passage as usual, though we ran aground and were detained a couple of hours in the Thames River, till the tide came to our relief. At length we curtseyed up to a wharf just the other side of their Castle Garden, — very incurious about them and their city. I believe my vacant looks, absolutely inaccessible to questions, did at length satisfy an army of starving cabmen that I did not want a hack, cab, or anything of that sort as yet. It was the only demand the city made on us; as if a wheeled vehicle of some sort were the sum and summit of a reasonable man's wants. " Having tried the water," they seemed to say, " will you not return to the pleasant securities of land carriage? Else why your boat's prow turned toward the shore at last?" They are a sad-looking set of fellows, not permitted to come on board, and I pitied them. They had been expecting me, it would seem, and did really wish that I should take a cab; though they did not seem rich enough to supply me with one.

It was a confused jumble of heads and soiled coats, dangling from flesh-colored faces, — all swaying to and fro, as by a sort of undertow, while each whipstick, true as the needle to the pole, still preserved that level and direction in which its proprietor had dismissed his forlorn interrogatory. They took sight from them, — the lash being wound up thereon, to prevent your attention from wandering, or to make it concentre upon its object by the spiral line. They began at first, perhaps, with the modest, but rather confident inquiry, " Want a cab, sir?" but as their despair increased, it took the affirmative tone, as the disheartened and irresolute are apt to do: "You want a cab, sir," or even, "You want a nice cab, sir, to take you to Fourth Street." The question which one had bravely and hopefully begun to put, another had the tact to take up and conclude with fresh

emphasis, — twirling it from his particular whipstick as if it had emanated from his lips — as the sentiment did from his heart. Each one could truly say, "Them 's my sentiments." But it was a sad sight.

I am seven and a half miles from New York, and, as it would take half a day at least, have not been there yet. I have already run over no small part of the island, to the highest hill, and some way along the shore. From the hill directly behind the house I can see New York, Brooklyn, Long Island, the Narrows, through which vessels bound to and from all parts of the world chiefly pass, — Sandy Hook and the Highlands of Neversink (part of the coast of New Jersey) — and, by going still farther up the hill, the Kill van Kull, and Newark Bay. From the pinnacle of one Madame Grimes' house, the other night at sunset, I could see almost round the island. Far in the horizon there was a fleet of sloops bound up the Hudson, which seemed to be going over the edge of the earth; and in view of these trading ships, commerce seems quite imposing.

But it is rather derogatory that your dwelling-place should be only a neighborhood to a great city, — to live on an inclined plane. I do not like their cities and forts, with their morning and evening guns, and sails flapping in one's eye. I want a whole continent to breathe in, and a good deal of solitude and silence, such as all Wall Street cannot buy, — nor Broadway with its wooden pavement. I must live along the beach, on the southern shore, which looks directly out to sea, — and see what that great parade of water means, that dashes and roars, and has not yet wet me, as long as I have lived.

I must not know anything about my condition and relations here till what is not permanent is worn off. I have not yet subsided. Give me time enough, and I may like it. All my inner man heretofore has been a Concord impression; and here come these Sandy Hook and Coney Island breakers to meet and modify the former; but it will be long before I can make nature look as innocently grand and inspiring as in Concord. —

Your affectionate son,

Henry D. Thoreau.

TO SOPHIA THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

Castleton, Staten Island, May 22, 1843.

Dear Sophia, — I have had a severe cold ever since I came here, and have been confined to the house for the last week with bronchitis, though I am now getting out, so I have not seen much in the botanical way. The cedar seems to be one of the most common trees here, and the fields are very fragrant with it. There are also the gum and tulip trees. The latter is not very common, but is very large and beautiful, having flowers as large as tulips, and as handsome. It is not time for it yet.

The woods are now full of a large honeysuckle in full bloom, which differs from ours in being red instead of white, so that at first I did not know its genus. The painted cup is very common in the meadows here. Peaches, and especially cherries, seem to grow by all the fences. Things are very forward here compared with Concord. The apricots growing out of doors are already as large as plums. The apple, pear, peach, cherry, and plum trees have shed their blossoms. The whole island is like a garden, and affords very fine scenery.

In front of the house is a very extensive wood, beyond which is the sea, whose roar I can hear all night long, when there is a wind; if easterly winds have prevailed on the Atlantic. There are always some vessels in sight — ten, twenty, or thirty miles off — and Sunday before last there were hundreds in long procession, stretching from New York to Sandy Hook, and far beyond, for Sunday is a lucky day.

I went to New York Saturday before last. A walk of half an hour, by half a dozen houses along the Richmond Road, — that is the road that leads to Richmond, on which we live, — brings me to the village of Stapleton, in Southfield, where is the lower dock; but if I prefer I can walk along the shore three quarters of a mile farther toward New York to the quarantine village of Castleton, to the upper dock, which the boat leaves five or six times every day, a quarter of an hour later than the former place. Farther on is the village of New Brighton, and farther still Port Richmond, which villages another steamboat visits.

In New York I saw George Ward, and also Giles Waldo and William Tappan, whom I can describe better when I have seen them more. They are young friends of Mr. Emerson. Waldo came down to the island to see me the next day. I also saw the Great Western, the Croton water works, and the picture gallery of the National Academy of Design. But I have not had time to see or do much yet.

Tell Miss Ward I shall try to put my microscope to a good use, and if I find any new and preservable flower, will throw it into my commonplace book. Garlic, the original of the common onion, grows here all over the fields, and during its season spoils the cream and butter for the market, as the cows like it very much.

Tell Helen there are two schools of late established in the neighborhood, with large prospects, or rather designs, one for boys and another for girls. The latter by a Miss Errington, and though it is only small as yet, I will keep my ears open for her in such directions. The encouragement is very slight.

I hope you will not be washed away by the Irish sea.

Tell Mother I think my cold was not wholly owing to imprudence. Perhaps I was being acclimated.

Tell Father that Mr. Tappan, whose son I know, — and whose clerks young Tappan and Waldo are, — has invented and established a new and very important business, which Waldo thinks would allow them to burn ninety-nine out of one hundred of the stores in New York, which now only offset and cancel one another. It is a kind of intelligence office for the whole country, with branches in the principal cities, giving information with regard to the credit and affairs of every man of business of the country. Of course it is not popular at the South and West. It is an extensive business and will employ a great many clerks.

Love to all — not forgetting aunt and aunts — and Miss and Mrs. Ward.

On the 23d of May he wrote from Castleton to his sister Helen thus: —

Dear Helen, — In place of something fresher, I send you the following verses from my Journal, written some time ago: —

Brother, where dost thou dwell?
What sun shines for thee now?
Dost thou indeed fare well As we wished here below?

What season didst thou find?
‘T was winter here.
Are not the Fates more kind Than they appear?

Is thy brow clear again,
As in thy youthful years?
And was that ugly pain The summit of thy fears?

Yet thou wast cheery still; —
They could not quench thy fire; Thou didst abide their will,
And then retire.

Where chiefly shall I look To feel thy presence near?
Along the neighboring brook May I thy voice still hear?

Dost thou still haunt the brink Of yonder river’s tide?
And may I ever think
That thou art by my side?

What bird wilt thou employ To bring me word of thee?
For it would give them joy, —
‘T would give them liberty,
To serve their former lord With wing and minstrelsy.

A sadder strain mixed with their song, They’ve slowlier built their nests; Since thou art gone
Their lively labor rests.

Where is the finch, the thrush I used to hear?
Ah, they could well abide The dying year.

Now they no more return, I hear them not; They have remained to

mourn; Or else forgot.

As the first letter of Thoreau to Emerson was to thank him for his lofty friendship, so now the first letter to Mrs. Emerson, after leaving her house, was to say similar things, with a passing allusion to her love of flowers and of gardening, in which she surpassed all his acquaintance in Concord, then and afterward. A letter to Emerson followed, touching on the "Dial" and on several of his new and old acquaintance. "Rockwood Hoar" is the person since known as judge and cabinet officer, — the brother of Senator Hoar, and of Thoreau's special friends, Elizabeth and Edward Hoar. Channing is the poet, who had lately printed his first volume, without finding many readers.

TO MRS. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

CASTLETON, Staten Island, May 22, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I believe a good many conversations with you were left in an unfinished state, and now indeed I don't know where to take them up. But I will resume some of the unfinished silence. I shall not hesitate to know you. I think of you as some elder sister of mine, whom I could not have avoided, — a sort of lunar influence, — only of such age as the moon, whose time is measured by her light. You must know that you represent to me woman, for I have not traveled very far or wide, — and what if I had? I like to deal with you, for I believe you do not lie or steal, and these are very rare virtues. I thank you for your influence for two years. I was fortunate to be subjected to it, and am now to remember it. It is the noblest gift we can make; what signify all others that can be bestowed? You have helped to keep my life " on loft," as Chaucer says of Griselda, and in a better sense. You always seemed to look down at me as from some elevation — some of your high humilities — and I was the better for having to look up. I felt taxed not to disappoint your expectation; for could there be any accident so sad as to be respected for something better than we are? It was a pleasure even to go away from you, as it is not to meet some, as it apprised me of my high relations; and such a departure is a sort of further introduction and meeting. Nothing makes the earth seem so spacious as to have friends at a distance; they make the latitudes and longitudes.

You must not think that fate is so dark there, for even here I can see a faint reflected light over Concord, and I think that at this distance I can better weigh the value of a doubt there. Your moonlight, as I have told you, though it is a reflection of the sun, allows of bats and owls and other twilight birds to flit therein. But I am very glad that you can elevate your life with a doubt, for I am sure that it is nothing but an insatiable faith after all that deepens and darkens its current. And your doubt and my confidence are only a difference of expression.

I have hardly begun to live on Staten Island yet; but, like the man who, when forbidden to tread on English ground, carried Scottish ground in his boots, I carry Concord ground in my boots and in my hat, — and am I not made of Concord dust? I cannot realize that it is the roar of the sea I hear now, and not the wind in Walden woods. I find more of Concord, after all, in the prospect of the sea, beyond Sandy Hook, than in the fields and woods.

If you were to have this Hugh the gardener for your man, you would think a new dispensation had commenced. He might put a fairer aspect on the natural world for you, or at any rate a screen between you and the almshouse. There is a beautiful red honeysuckle now in blossom in the woods here, which should be transplanted to Concord; and if what they tell me about the tulip-tree be true, you should have that also. I have not seen Mrs. Black yet, but I intend to call on her soon. Have you established those simpler modes of living yet?— "In the full tide of successful operation?"

Tell Mrs. Brown that I hope she is anchored in a secure haven and derives much pleasure still from reading the poets, and that her constellation is not quite set from my sight, though it is sunk so low in that northern horizon. Tell Elizabeth Hoar that her bright present did " carry ink safely to Staten Island," and was a conspicuous object in Master Haven's inventory of my effects. Give my respects to Madam Emerson, whose Concord face I should be glad to see here this summer; and remember me to the rest of the household who have had vision of me. Shake a day-day to Edith, and say good night to Ellen for me. Farewell.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

CASTLETON, STATEN ISLAND, May 23.

MY dear Friend, — I was just going to write to you when I received your letter. I was waiting till I had got away from Concord. I should have sent you something for the "Dial" before, but I have been sick ever since I came here, rather unaccountably, — what with a cold, bronchitis, acclimation, etc., still unaccountably. I send you some verses from my journal which will help make a packet. I have not time to correct them, if this goes by Rockwood Hoar. If I can finish an account of a winter's walk in Concord, in the midst of a Staten Island summer, — not so wise as true, I trust, — I will send it to you soon. —

I have had no later experiences yet. You must not count much upon what I can do or learn in New York. I feel a good way off here; and it is not to be visited, but seen and dwelt in. I have been there but once, and have been confined to the house since. Everything there disappoints me but the crowd; rather, I was disappointed with the rest before I came. I have no eyes for their churches, and what else they find to brag of. Though I know but little about Boston, yet what attracts me, in a quiet way, seems much meaner and more pretending than there, — libraries, pictures, and faces in the street. You don't know where any respectability inhabits. It is in the crowd in Chatham Street. The crowd is something new, and to be attended to. It is worth a thousand Trinity Churches and Exchanges while it is looking at them, and will run over them and trample them under foot one day. There are two things I hear and am aware I live in the neighborhood of, — the roar of the sea and the hum of the city. I have just come from the beach (to find your letter), and I like it much. Everything there is on a grand and generous scale, — seaweed, water, and sand; and even the dead fishes, horses, and hogs have a rank, luxuriant odor; great shad-nets spread to dry; crabs and horseshoes crawling over the sand; clumsy boats, only for service, dancing like sea-fowl over the surf, and ships afar off going about their business.

Waldo and Tappan carried me to their English alehouse the first

Saturday, and Waldo spent two hours here the next day. But Tappan I have only seen. I like his looks and the sound of his silence. They are confined every day but Sunday, and then Tappan is obliged to observe the demeanor of a church-goer to prevent open war with his father.

I am glad that Channing has got settled, and that, too, before the inroad of the Irish. I have read his poems two or three times over, and partially through and under, with new and increased interest and appreciation. Tell him I saw a man buy a copy at Little & Brown's. He may have been a virtuoso, but we will give him the credit. What with Alcott and Lane and Hawthorne, too, you look strong enough to take New York by storm. Will you tell L, if he asks, that I have been able to do nothing about the books yet?

Believe that I have something better to write you than this. It would be unkind to thank you for particular deeds.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, June 8, 1843.

Dear Friend, — I have been to see Henry James, and like him very much. It was a great pleasure to meet him. It makes humanity seem more erect and respectable. I never was more kindly and faithfully catechised. It made me respect myself more to be thought worthy of such wise questions. He is a man, and takes his own way, or stands still in his own place. I know of no one so patient and determined to have the good of you. It is almost friendship, such plain and human dealing. I think that he will not write or speak inspiringly; but lie is a refreshing, forward-looking and forward-moving man, and he has naturalized and humanized New York for me. He actually reproaches you by his respect for your poor words. I had three hours' solid talk with him, and he asks me to make free use of his house. He wants an expression of your faith, or to be sure that it is faith, and confesses that his own treads fast upon the neck of his understanding. He exclaimed, at some careless answer of mine, "Well, you Transcendentalists are wonderfully consistent. I must get hold of this somehow!" He likes Carlyle's book,1 but says that it leaves him in an

1 *Past and Present.*

excited and unprofitable state, and that Carlyle is so ready to obey his humor that he makes the least vestige of truth the foundation of any superstructure, not keeping faith with his better genius nor truest readers.

I met Wright on the stairs of the Society Library, and W. H. Channing and Brisbane on the steps. The former (Channing) is a concave man, and you see by his attitude and the lines of his face that he is retreating from himself and from yourself, with sad doubts. It is like a fair mask swaying from the drooping boughs of some tree

whose stem is not seen. He would break with a conchoidal fracture. You feel as if you would like to see him when he has made up his mind to run all the risks. To be sure, he doubts because he has a great hope to be disappointed, but he makes the possible disappointment of too much consequence. Brisbane, with whom I did not converse, did not impress me favorably. He looks like a man who has lived in a cellar, far gone in consumption. I barely saw him, but he did not look as if he could let Fourier go, in any case, and throw up his hat. But I need not have come to New York to write this.

I have seen Tappan for two or three hours, and like both him and Waldo; but I always see those of whom I have heard well with a slight disappointment. They are so much better than the great herd, and yet the heavens are not shivered into diamonds over their heads. Persons and things flit so rapidly through my brain nowadays that I can hardly remember them. They seem to be lying in the stream, stemming the tide, ready to go to sea, as steamboats when they leave the dock go off in the opposite direction first, until they are headed right, and then begins the steady revolution of the paddle-wheels; and *they* are not quite cheerily headed anywhither yet, nor singing amid the shrouds as they bound over the billows. There is a certain youthfulness and generosity about them, very attractive; and Tappan's more reserved and solitary thought commands respect.

After some ado, I discovered the residence of Mrs. Black, but there was palmed off on me, in her stead, a Mrs. Grey (quite an inferior color), who told me at last that she was not Mrs. Black, but her mother, and was just as glad to see me as Mrs. Black would have been, and so, forsooth, would answer just as well. Mrs. Black had gone with Edward Palmer to New Jersey, and would return on the morrow.

I don't like the city better, the more I see it, but worse. I am ashamed of my eyes that behold it. It is a thousand times meaner than I could have imagined. It will be something to hate, — that's the advantage it will be to me; and even the best people in it are a part of it, and talk coolly about it. The pigs in the street are the most respectable part of the population. When will the world learn that a million men are of no importance compared with *one* man? But I must wait for a shower of shillings, or at least a slight dew or

mizzling of sixpences, before I explore New York very far.

The sea-beach is the best thing I have seen. It is very solitary and remote, and you only remember New York occasionally. The distances, too, along the shore, and inland in sight of it, are unaccountably great and startling. The sea seems very near from the hills, but it proves a long way over the plain, and yet you may be wet with the spray before you can believe that you are there. The far seems near, and the near far. Many rods from the beach, I step aside for the Atlantic, and I see men drag up their boats on to the sand, with oxen, stepping about amid the surf, as if it were possible they might draw up Sandy Hook.

I do not feel myself especially serviceable to the good people with whom I live, except as inflictions are sanctified to the righteous. And so, too, must I serve the boy. I can look to the Latin and mathematics sharply, and for the rest behave myself. But I cannot be in his neighborhood hereafter as his Educator, of course, but as the hawks fly over my own head. I am not attracted toward him but as to youth generally. He shall frequent me, however, as much as he can, and I'll be I.

Bradbury1 told me, when I passed through Boston, that he was coming to New York the following Saturday, and would then settle with me, but he has not made his appearance yet. Will you, the next time you go to Boston, present that order for me which I left with you?

If I say less about Waldo and Tappan now, it is, perhaps, because I may have more to say by and by. Remember me to your mother and Mrs. Emerson, who, I hope, is quite well. I shall be very glad to hear from her, as well as from you. I have very hastily written out something for the "Dial," and send it only because you are expecting something, — though something better. It seems idle and Howittish, but it may be of more worth in Concord, where it belongs. In great haste. Farewell.

1 Of the publishing house of Bradbury & Soden, in Boston, which had taken Nathan Hale's *Boston Miscellany* off his hands, and had published in it, with promise of payment, Thoreau's *Walk to Wachusett.* But much time had passed, and the debt was not paid; hence the lack of a "shower of shillings " which the letter laments. Emerson's reply gives the first news of the actual beginning of Alcott's short-lived paradise at Fruitlands, and dwells with

interest on the affairs of the rural and lettered circle at Concord.

TO HIS FATHER AND MOTHER (AT CONCORD).

Castleton, June 8, 1843.

Dear Parents, — I have got quite well now, and like the lay of the land and the look of the sea very much, — only the country is so fair that it seems rather too much as if it were made to be looked at. I have been to New York four or five times, and have run about the island a good deal.

George Ward, when I last saw him, which was at his house in Brooklyn, was studying the Daguerreotype process, preparing to set up in that line. The boats run now almost every hour from 8 a. M. to 7 P. m., back and forth, so that I can get to the city much more easily than before. I have seen there one Henry James, a lame man, of whom I had heard before, whom I like very much; and he asks me to make free use of his house, which is situated in a pleasant part of the city, adjoining the University, I have met several people whom I knew before, and among the rest Mr. Wright, who was on his way to Niagara.

I feel already about as well acquainted with New York as with Boston, — that is, about as little, perhaps. It is large enough now, and they intend it shall be larger still. Fifteenth Street, where some of my new acquaintance live, is two or three miles from the Battery, where the boat touches, — clear brick and stone, and no "give" to the foot; and they have laid out, though not built, up to the 149th street above. I had rather see a brick for a specimen, for my part, such as they exhibited in old times. You see it is "quite a day's training" to make a few calls in different parts of the city (to say nothing of twelve miles by water and land, — *i* e., not brick and stone), especially if it does not rain shillings, which might interest omnibuses in your behalf. Some omnibuses are marked "Broadway — Fourth Street," and they go no farther; others "Eighth Street," and so on, — and so of the other principal streets. (This letter will be circumstantial enough for Helen.)

This is in all respects a very pleasant residence, — much more rural than you would expect of the vicinity of New York. There are woods all around. We breakfast at half past six, lunch, if we will, at twelve, and dine or sup at five; thus is the day partitioned off. From nine to two, or thereabouts, I am the schoolmaster, and at other times as much the pupil as I can be. Mr. and Mrs. Emerson are not indeed of my kith or kin in any sense; but they are irreproachable and kind. I have met no one yet *on the island* whose acquaintance I shall cultivate — or hoe round — unless it be our neighbor, Captain Smith, an old fisherman, who catches the fish called "moss-bonkers" — so it sounds — and invites me to come to the beach, where he spends the week, and see him and his fish.

Farms are for sale all around here, and so, I suppose men are for purchase. North of us live Peter Wandell, Mr. Mell, and Mr. Disosway (don't mind the spelling), as far as the Clove road; and south, John Britton, Van Pelt, and Captain Smith, as far as the Fingerboard road. Behind is the hill, some 250 feet high, on the side of which we live; and in front the forest and the sea, — the latter at the distance of a mile and a half..

Tell Helen that Miss Errington is provided with assistance. This were a good place as any to establish a school, if one could wait a little. Families come down here to board in the summer, and three or four have been already established this season.

As for money matters, I have not set my traps yet, but I am getting my bait ready. Pray, how does the garden thrive, and what improvements in the pencil line? I miss you all very much. Write soon, and send a Concord paper to

Your affectionate son,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

The traps of this sportsman were magazine articles, — but the magazines that would pay much for papers were very few in 1843. One such had existed in Boston for a short time, — the "Miscellany," — and it printed a good paper of Thoreau's, but the pay was not forthcoming. His efforts to find publishers more liberal in New York were not successful. But he continued to write for fame in the "Dial," and helped to edit that.

TO MRS. EMERSON.

STATEN ISLAND, June 20,1843.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, — I have only read a page of your letter, and have come out to the top of the hill at sunset, where I can see the ocean, to prepare to read the rest. It is fitter that it should hear it than the walls of my chamber. The very crickets here seem to chirp around me as they did not before. I feel as if it were a great daring to go on and read the rest, and then to live accordingly. There are more than thirty vessels in sight going to sea. I am almost afraid to look at your letter. I see that it will make my life very steep, but it may lead to fairer prospects than this.

You seem to me to speak out of a very clear and high heaven, where any one may be who stands so high. Your voice seems not a voice, but comes as much from the blue heavens as from the paper.

My dear friend, it was very noble in you to write me so trustful an answer. It will do as well for another world as for this; such a voice is for no particular time nor person, but it makes him who may hear it stand for all that is lofty and true in humanity. The thought of you will constantly elevate my life; it will be something always above the horizon to behold, as when I look up at the evening star. I think I know your thoughts without seeing you, and as well here as in Concord. You are not at all strange to me.

I could hardly believe, after the lapse of one night, that I had such a noble letter still at hand to read, — that it was not some fine dream. I looked at midnight to be sure that it was real. I feel that I am unworthy to know you, and yet they will not permit it wrongfully.

I, perhaps, am more willing to deceive by appearances than you say you are; it would not be worth the while to tell how willing; but I have the power perhaps too much to forget my meanness as soon as seen, and not be incited by permanent sorrow. My actual life is unspeakably mean compared with what I know and see that it might be. Yet the ground from which I see and say this is some part of it. It ranges from heaven to earth, and is all things in an hour. The experience of every past moment but belies the faith of each present.

We never conceive the greatness of our fates. Are not these faint flashes of light which sometimes obscure the sun their certain dawn?

My friend, I have read your letter as if I was not reading it. After each pause I could defer the rest forever. The thought of you will be a new motive for every right action. You are another human being whom I know, and might not our topic be as broad as the universe? What have we to do with petty rumbling news? We have our own great affairs. Sometimes in Concord I found my actions dictated, as it were, by your influence, and though it led almost to trivial Hindoo observances, yet it was good and elevating. To hear that you have sad hours is not sad to me. I rather rejoice at the richness of your experience. Only think of some sadness away in Pekin, — unseen and unknown there. What a mine it is! Would it not weigh down the Celestial Empire, with all its gay Chinese? Our sadness is not sad, but our cheap joys. Let us be sad about all we see and are, for so we demand and pray for better. It is the constant prayer and whole Christian religion. I could hope that you would get well soon, and have a healthy body for this world, but I know this cannot be; and the Fates, after all, are the accomplishes of our hopes. Yet I do hope that you may find it a worthy struggle, and life seem grand still through the clouds.

What wealth is it to have such friends that we cannot think of them without elevation! And we can think of them any time and anywhere, and it costs nothing but the lofty disposition. I cannot tell you the joy your letter gives me, which will not quite cease till the latest time. Let me accompany your finest thought.

I send my love to my other friend and brother, whose nobleness I slowly recognize.

HENRY.

TO MRS. THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

Staten Island, July 7, 1843.

Dear Mother, — I was very glad to get your letter and papers. Tell father that circumstantial letters make very substantial reading, at any rate. I like to know even how the sun shines and garden grows with you. I did not get my money in Boston, and probably shall not at all. Tell Sophia that I have pressed some blossoms of the tulip-tree for her. They look somewhat like white lilies. The magnolia, too, is in blossom here.

Pray, have you the seventeen-year locust in Concord? The air here is filled with their din.

They come out of the ground at first in an imperfect state, and, crawling up the shrubs and plants, the perfect insect bursts out through the back. They are doing great damage to the fruit and forest trees. The latter are covered with dead twigs, which in the distance look like the blossoms of the chestnut. They bore every twig of last year's growth in order to deposit their eggs in it. In a few weeks the eggs will be hatched, and the worms fall to the ground and enter it, and in 1860 make their appearance again. I conversed about their coming this season before they arrived. They do no injury to the leaves, but, beside boring the twigs, suck their sap for sustenance. Their din is heard by those who sail along the shore from the distant woods, — Phar-r-r-aoh. Phar-r-r-aoh. They are departing now. Dogs, cats, and chickens subsist mainly upon them in some places.

I have not been to New York for more than three weeks. I have had an interesting letter from Mr. Lane,1 describing their new prospects. My pupil and I are getting on apace. He is remarkably well advanced in Latin, and is well advancing.

Your letter has just arrived. I was not aware that it was so long since I wrote home; I only

1 At Fruitlands with the Alcotts. See Sanborn's *Thoreau*, p. 137, for this letter.

knew that I had sent five or six letters to the town. It is very refreshing to hear from you, though it is not all good news. But I trust that Stearns Wheeler is not dead. I should be slow to believe it. He was made to work very well in this world. There need be no tragedy in his death.

The demon which is said to haunt the Jones family, hovering over their eyelids with wings steeped in juice of poppies, has commenced another campaign against me. I am "clear J ones" in this respect at least. But he finds little encouragement in my atmosphere, I assure you, for I do not once fairly lose myself, except in those hours of truce allotted to rest by immemorial custom. However, this skirmishing interferes sadly with my literary projects, and I am apt to think it a good day's work if I maintain a soldier's eye till nightfall. Very well, it does not matter much in what wars we serve, whether in the Highlands or the Lowlands. Everywhere we get soldiers' pay still.

Give my love to Aunt Louisa, whose benignant face I sometimes see right in the wall, as naturally and necessarily shining on my path as some star of unaccountably greater age and higher orbit than myself. Let it be inquired by her of George Minott, as from me, — for she sees him, — if he has seen any pigeons yet, and tell him there are plenty of jack-snipes here. As for William P., the "worthy young man," — as I live, my eyes have not fallen on him yet.

I have not had the influenza, though here are its headquarters, — unless my first week's cold was it. Tell Helen I shall write to her soon. I have heard Lucretia Mott. This is badly written; but the worse the writing the sooner you get it this time from

Your affectionate son,

H. D. T.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

Staten Island, July 8, 1843.

Dear Friends, — I was very glad to hear your voices from so far. I do not believe there are eight hundred human beings on the globe. It is all a fable, and I cannot but think that you speak with a slight outrage and disrespect of Concord when you talk of fifty of them. There are not so many. Yet think not that I have left all behind, for already I begin to track my way over the earth, and find the cope of heaven extending beyond its horizon, — forsooth, like the roofs of these Dutch houses. My thoughts revert to those dear hills and that *river* which so fills up the world to its brim, — worthy to be named with Mincius and Alpheus, — still drinking its meadows while I am far away. How can it run heedless to the sea, as if I were there to countenance it? George Minott, too, looms up considerably, — and many another old familiar face. These things all look sober and respectable. They are better than the environs of New York, I assure you.

I am pleased to think of Channing as an inhabitant of the gray town. Seven cities contended for Homer dead. Tell him to remain at least long enough to establish Concord's right and interest in him. I was beginning to know the man. In imagination I sec you pilgrims taking your way by the red lodge and the cabin of the brave farmer man, so youthful and hale, to the still cheerful woods. And Hawthorne, too, I remember as one with whom I sauntered, in old heroic times, along the banks of the' Scamander, amid the ruins of chariots and heroes. Tell him not to desert, even after the tenth year. Others may say, "Are there not the cities of Asia?" But what are they? Staying at home is the heavenly way.

And Elizabeth Hoar, my brave townswoman, to be sung of poets, — if I may speak of her whom I do not know. Tell Mrs. Brown that I do not forget her, going her way under the stars through this chilly world, — I did *not* think of the wind, — and that I went a little way with her. Tell her not to despair. Concord's little arch does not span all our fate, nor is what transpires under it law for the universe.

And least of all are forgotten those walks in the woods in ancient days, — too sacred to be idly remembered, — when their aisles were pervaded as by a fragrant atmosphere. They still seem youthful and cheery to my imagination as Sherwood and Barnsdale, — and of far purer fame. Those afternoons when we wandered o'er Olympus, — and those hills, from which the sun was seen to set, while still our day held on its way.

"At last he rose and twitched his mantle blue; To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new."

I remember these things at midnight, at rare intervals. But know, my friends, that I a good deal hate you all in my most private thoughts, as the substratum of the little love I bear you. Though you are a rare band, and do not make half use enough of one another.

I think this is a noble number of the "Dial." 1 It perspires thought and feeling. I can speak of it now a little like a foreigner. Be assured that it is not written in vain, — it is not for me. I hear its prose and its verse. They provoke

1 Emerson also was satisfied with it for once, and wrote to Thoreau: "Our *Dial* thrives well enough in these weeks. I print W. E. Chanmng's ' Letters,' or the first ones, but he does not care to have them named as his for a while. They are very agreeable reading."

and inspire me, and they have my sympathy. I hear the sober and the earnest, the sad and the cheery voices of my friends, and to me it is a long letter of encouragement and reproof; and no doubt so it is to many another in the land. So don't give up the ship. Methinks the verse is hardly enough better than the prose. I give my vote for the Notes from the Journal of a Scholar, and wonder you don't print them faster. I want, too, to read the rest of the "Poet and the Painter." Miss Fuller's is a noble piece, — rich, extempore writing, talking with pen in hand. It is too good not to be better, even. In writing, conversation should be folded many times thick. It is the height of art that, on the first perusal, plain common sense should appear; on the second, severe truth; and on a third, beauty; and, having these

warrants for its depth and reality, we may then enjoy the beauty for evermore. The sea-piece is of the best that is going, if not of the best that is staying. You have spoken a good word for Carlyle. As for the "Winter's Walk," I should be glad to have it printed in the "Dial" if you think it good enough, and will criticise it; otherwise send it to me, and I will dispose of it.

I have not been to New York for a month, and so have not seen Waldo and Tappan. James has been at Albany meanwhile. You will know that I only describe my personal adventures with people; but I hope to see more of them, and *judge* them too. I am sorry to learn that Mrs. Emerson is no better. But let her know that the Fates pay a compliment to those whom they make sick, and they have not to ask, " What have I done?"

Remember me to your mother, and remember me yourself as you are remembered by H. D. T.

I had a friendly and cheery letter from Lane a month ago.

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT ROXBURY).

STATEN ISLAND, July 21, 1843.

Dear Helen, — I am not in such haste to write home when I remember that I make my readers pay the postage. But I believe I have not taxed you before.

I have pretty much explored this island, inland, and along the shore, finding my health inclined me to the peripatetic philosophy. I have visited telegraph stations, Sailors' Snug Harbors, Seaman's Retreats, Old Elm-Trees, where the Huguenots landed, Britton's Mills, and all the villages on the island. Last Sunday I walked over to Lake Island Farm, eight or nine miles from here, where Moses Prichard lived, and found the present occupant, one Mr. Davenport, formerly from Massachusetts, with three or four men to help him, raising sweet potatoes and tomatoes by the acre. It seemed a cool and pleasant retreat, but a hungry soil. As I was coming away, I took my toll out of the soil in the shape of arrow-heads, which may after all be the surest crop, certainly not affected by drought.

I am well enough situated here to observe one aspect of the modern world at least. I mean the migratory, — the Western movement. Sixteen hundred immigrants arrived at quarantine ground on the 4th of July, and more or less every day since I have been here. I see them occasionally washing their persons and clothes: on men, women, and children gathered on an isolated quay near the shore, stretching their limbs and taking the air; the children running races and swinging on this artificial piece of the land of liberty, while their vessels are undergoing purification. They are detained but a day or two, and then go up to the city, for the most part without having *landed* here.

In the city, I have seen, since I wrote last, W. H. Channing, at whose home, in Fifteenth Street, I spent a few pleasant hours, discussing the all-absorbing question "what to do for the race." (He is sadly in earnest about going up the river to rusticate for six weeks, and issues a new periodical called "The Present" in September.) Also Horace Greeley, editor of the "Tribune," who is cheerfully in earnest,

at his office of all work, a hearty New Hampshire boy as one would wish to meet, and says, "Now be neighborly," and believes only, or mainly, first, in the Sylvania Association, somewhere in Pennsylvania; and, secondly, and most of all, in a new association to go into operation soon in New Jersey, with which he is connected. Edward Palmer came down to see me Sunday before last. As for Waldo and Tappan, we have strangely dodged one another, and have not met for some weeks.

I believe I have not told you anything about Lucretia Mott. It was a good while ago that I heard her at the Quaker Church in Hester Street. She is a preacher, and it was advertised that she would be present on that day. I liked all the proceedings very well, their plainly greater harmony and sincerity than elsewhere. They do nothing in a hurry. Every one that walks up the aisle in his square coat and expansive hat has a history, and comes from a house to a house. The women come in one after another in their Quaker bonnets and handkerchiefs, looking all like sisters or so many chickadees. At length, after a long silence — waiting for the Spirit — Mrs. Mott rose, took off her bonnet, and began to utter very deliberately what the Spirit suggested. Her self-possession was something to see, if all else failed; but it did not. Her subject was, "The Abuse of the Bible," and thence she straightway digressed to slavery and the degradation of woman. It was a good speech, — transcendentalism in its mildest form. She sat down at length, and, after a long and decorous silence, in which some seemed to be really digesting her words, the elders shook hands, and the meeting dispersed. On the whole, I liked their ways and the plainness of their meeting-house. It looked as if it was indeed made for service.

I think that Stearns Wheeler has left a gap in the community not easy to be filled. Though he did not exhibit the highest qualities of the scholar, he promised, in a remarkable degree, many of the essential and rarer ones; and his patient industry and energy, his reverent love of letters, and his proverbial accuracy, will cause him to be associated in my memory even with many venerable names of former days. It was not wholly unfit that so pure a lover of books should have ended his pilgrimage at the great book-mart of the world. I think of him as healthy and brave, and am confident that if

he had lived, he would have proved useful in more ways than I can describe. He would have been authority on all matters of fact, and a sort of connecting link between men and scholars of different walks and tastes. The literary enterprises he was planning for himself and friends remind me of an older and more studious time. So much, then, remains for us to do who survive. Love to all. Tell all my friends in Concord that I do not send my love, but retain it still.

Your affectionate brother.

TO MRS. THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

Staten Island, August 6, 1843.

DEAR MOTHER, — As Mr. William Emerson is going to Concord on Tuesday, I must not omit sending a line by him, — though I wish I had something more weighty for so direct a post. I believe I directed my last letter to you by mistake; but it must have appeared that it was addressed to Helen. At any rate, this is to you without mistake.

I am chiefly indebted to your letters for what I have learned of Concord and family news, and am very glad when I get one. I should have liked to be in Walden woods with you, but not with the railroad. I think of you all very often, and wonder if you are still separated from me only by so many miles of earth, or so many miles of memory. This life we live is a strange dream, and I don't believe at all any account men give of it. Methinks I should be content to sit at the back-door in Concord, under the poplar-tree, henceforth forever. Not that I am homesick at all, — for places are strangely indifferent to me, — but Concord is still a cynosure to my eyes, and I find it hard to attach it, even in imagination, to the rest of the globe, and tell where the seam is.

I fancy that this Sunday evening you are poring over some select book, almost transcendental perchance, or else "Burgh's Dignity," or Massillon, or the "Christian Examiner." Father has just taken one more look at the garden, and is now absorbed in Chaptelle, or reading the newspaper quite abstractedly, only looking up occasionally over his spectacles to see how the rest are engaged, and not to miss any newer news that may not be in the paper. Helen has slipped in for the fourth time to learn the very latest item. Sophia, I suppose, is at Bangor; but Aunt Louisa, without doubt, is just flitting away to some good meeting, to save the credit of you all.

It is still a cardinal virtue with me to keep awake. I find it impossible to write or read except at rare intervals, but am, generally speaking, tougher than formerly. I could make a pedestrian tour round the world, and sometimes think it would perhaps be better to

do at once the things I *can*, rather than be trying to do what at present I cannot do well. However, I shall awake sooner or later.

I have been translating some Greek, and reading English poetry, and a month ago sent a paper to the "Democratic Review," which, at length, they were sorry they could not accept; but they could not adopt the sentiments. However, they were very polite, and earnest that I should send them something else, or reform that.

I go moping about the fields and woods here as I did in Concord, and, it seems, am thought to be a surveyor, — an Eastern man inquiring narrowly into the condition and value of land, etc., here, preparatory to an extensive speculation. One neighbor observed to me, in a mysterious and half inquisitive way, that he supposed I must be pretty well acquainted with the state of things; that I kept pretty close; he didn't see any surveying instruments, but perhaps I had them in my pocket.

I have received Helen's note, but have not heard of Frisbie Hoar yet.1 She is a fainthearted writer, who could not take the response

1 At present Senator Hoar of Massachusetts, hut then in Harvard College.

responsibility of blotting one sheet alone. However, I like very well the blottings I get. Tell her I have not seen Mrs. Child nor Mrs. Sedgwick.

Love to all from your affectionate son.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

Staten Island, August 7, 1843.

MY dear Friend, — I fear I have nothing to send you worthy of so good an opportunity. Of New York I still know but little, though out of so many thousands there are no doubt many units whom it would be worth my while to know. Mr. James 1 talks of going to Germany soon with his wife to learn the language. He says he must know it; can never learn it here; there he may absorb it; and is very anxious to learn beforehand where he had best locate himself to enjoy the advantage of the highest culture, learn the language in its purity, and not exceed his limited means. I referred him to Longfellow. Perhaps you can help him.

I have had a pleasant talk with Channing; and Greeley, too, it was refreshing to meet. They were both much pleased with your criticism on Carlyle, but thought that you had overlooked what chiefly concerned them in the book, —— its practical aim and merits.

I have also spent some pleasant hours with

1 Henry James, Senior.

Waldo and Tappan at their counting-room, or rather intelligence office.

I must still reckon myself with the innumerable army of invalids, — undoubtedly in a fair field they would rout the well, — though I am tougher than formerly. Methinks I could paint the sleepy god more truly than the poets have done, from more intimate experience. Indeed, I have not kept my eyes very steadily open to the things of this world of late, and hence have little to report concerning them. However, I trust the awakening will come before the last trump, — and then perhaps I may remember some of my dreams.

I study the aspects of commerce at its Narrows here, where it passes in review before me, and this seems to be beginning at the

right end to understand this Babylon. I have made a very rude translation of the Seven against Thebes, and Pindar too I have looked at, and wish he was better worth translating. I believe even the best things are not equal to their fame. Perhaps it would be better to translate fame itself, — or is not that what the poets themselves do? However, I have not done with Pindar yet. I sent a long article on Etzler's book to the "Democratic Review" six weeks ago, which at length they have determined not to accept, as they could not subscribe to all the opinions, but asked for other matter, — purely literary, I suppose. O'Sullivan wrote me that articles of this kind have to be referred to the circle who, it seems, are represented by this journal, and said something about "collective we" and "homogeneity."

Pray don't think of Bradbury & Soden 1 any more, —

"For good deed done through praiere
Is sold and bought too dear, I wis,
To herte that of great valor is."

I see that they have given up their shop here.

Say to Mrs. Emerson that I am glad to remember how she too dwells there in Concord, and shall send her anon some of the thoughts that belong to her. As for Edith, I seem to see a star in the east over where the young child is. Remember me to Mrs. Brown.

These letters for the most part explain them-

1 Emerson had written, July 20, "I am sorry to say that when I called on Bradbury & Soden, nearly a month ago, their partner, in their absence, informed me that they could not pay you, at present, any part of their debt on account of the *Boston Miscellany.* After much talking, all the promise he could offer was ' that within a year it would probably be paid,' — a probability which certainly looks very slender. The very worst thing he said was the proposition that you should take your payment in the form of *Boston Miscellanies!* I shall not fail to refresh their memory at intervals."

selves, with the aid of several to Thoreau's family, which the purpose of Emerson, in 1865, to present his friend in a stoical

character, had excluded from the collection then printed. Mention of C. S. Wheeler and his sad death in Germany had come to him from Emerson, as well as from his own family at Concord, — of whose occupations Thoreau gives so genial a picture in the letter of August 6, to his mother. Emerson wrote: "You will have read and heard the sad news to the little village of Lincoln, of Stearns Wheeler's death. Such an overthrow to the hopes of his parents made me think more of them than of the loss the community will suffer in his kindness, diligence, and ingenuous mind." He died at Leipsic, in the midst of Greek studies which have since been taken up and carried farther by a child of Concord, Professor Goodwin of the same university. Henry James, several times mentioned in the correspondence, was the moral and theological essayist (father of the novelist Henry James, and the distinguished Professor James of Harvard), who was so striking a personality, in the Concord and Cambridge circle for many years. W. H. Channing was a Christian Socialist fifty years ago, —— cousin of Ellery Channing, and nephew and biographer of Dr. Channing. Both he and Horace Greeley were then deeply interested in the Fourierist scheme of association, one development of which was going on at Brook Farm, under direction of George Ripley, and another, differing in design, at Fruitlands, under Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane. The jocose allusions of Thoreau to his Jones ancestors (the descendants of the Tory Colonel Jones of Weston) had this foundation in fact, — that his uncle, Charles Dunbar, soon to be named in connection with Daniel Webster, suffered from a sort of lethargy, which would put him to sleep in the midst of conversation. Webster had been retained in the once famous "Wyman case," of a bank officer charged with fraud, and had exerted his great forensic talent for a few days in the Concord court-house. Emerson wrote Thoreau, "You will have heard of the Wyman trial, and the stir it made in the village. But the Cliff and Walden knew nothing of that."

TO MRS. THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

Castleton, Tuesday, August 29, 1843.

Dear Mother, — Mr. Emerson has just given me warning that he is about to send to Concord, which I will endeavor to improve. I am a great deal more wakeful than I was, and growing stout in other respects, — so that I may yet accomplish something in the literary way; indeed, I should have done so before now but for the slowness and poverty of the "Reviews" themselves I have tried sundry methods of earning money in the city, of late, but without success: have rambled into every bookseller's or publisher's house, and discussed their affairs with them. Some propose to me to do what an honest man cannot. Among others I conversed with the Harpers — to see if they might not find me useful to them; but they say that they are making $50,000 annually, and their motto is to let well alone. I find that I talk with these poor men as if I were over head and ears in business, and a few thousands were no consideration with me. I almost reproach myself for bothering them so to no purpose; but it is a very valuable experience, and the best introduction I could have.

We have had a tremendous rain here last Monday night and Tuesday morning. I was in the city at Giles Waldo's, and the streets at daybreak were absolutely impassable for the water. Yet the accounts of the storm that you may have seen are exaggerated, as indeed are all such things, to my imagination. On Sunday I heard Mr. Bellows preach here on the island; but the fine prospect over the Bay and Narrows, from where I sat, preached louder than he, — though he did far better than the average, if I remember aright. I should have liked to see Daniel Webster walking about Concord; I suppose the town shook, every step he took. But I trust there were some sturdy Concordians who were not tumbled down by the jar, but represented still the upright town. Where was George Minott? he would not have gone far to see him. Uncle Charles should have been there, —— he might as well have been catching cat naps in Concord as anywhere.

And then, what a whetter-up of his memory this event would have been! You'd have had all the classmates again in alphabetical order

reversed,— “and Seth Hunt and Bob Smith — and he was a student of my father’s, — and where’s Put now? and I wonder — you — if Henry’s been to see George Jones yet! A little account with Stow, — Balcom, — Bigelow, poor miserable t-o-a-d, — (sound asleep.) I vow, you, — what noise was that? — saving grace — and few there be — That’s clear as preaching, —— Easter Brooks, — morally depraved, — How charming is divine philosophy, — some wise and ‘some otherwise, — Heighho! (sound asleep again) Webster’s a smart fellow — bears his age well, — how old should you think he was? you — does he look as if he were ten years younger than I?”

I met, or rather, was overtaken by Fuller, who tended for Mr. How, the other day, in Broadway. He dislikes New York very much. The Mercantile Library, — that is, its Librarian, presented me with a stranger’s ticket, for a month, and I was glad to read the “Reviews” there, and Carlyle’s last article. I have bought some pantaloons; stockings show no holes yet. These pantaloons cost $2.25 ready made.

In haste.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, September 14, 1843.

Dear Friend, — Miss Fuller will tell you the news from these parts, so I will only devote these few moments to what she doesn't know as well. I was absent only one day and night from the island, the family expecting me back immediately. I was to earn a certain sum before winter, and thought it worth the while to try various experiments. I carried "The Agriculturist" about the city, and up as far as Manhattanville, and called at the Croton Reservoir, where, indeed, they did not want any "Agriculturists," but paid well enough in their way.

Literature comes to a poor market here; and even the little that I write is more than will sell. I have tried "The Dem. Review,"

"The New Mirror," and "Brother Jonathan." 1 The last

1 It may need to be said that these were New York weeklies — the *Mirror,* edited in part by N. P. Willis, and the *New*

two, as well as the "New World," are overwhelmed with contributions which cost nothing, and are worth no more. " The Knickerbocker" is too poor, and only "The Ladies' Companion" pays. O'Sullivan is printing the manuscript I sent him some time ago, having objected only to my want of sympathy with the Committee.

I doubt if you have made more corrections in my manuscript than I should have done ere this, though they may be better; but I am glad you have taken any pains with it. I have not prepared any translations for the "Dial," supposing there would be no room, though it is the only place for them.

I have been seeing men during these days, and trying experiments upon trees; have inserted three or four hundred buds (quite a Buddhist, one might say). Books I have access to through your brother and Mr. McKean, and have read a good deal. Quarles's "Divine Poems" as well as "Emblems" are quite a discovery.

I am very sorry Mrs. Emerson is so sick. Remember me to her and to your mother. I like to think of your living on the banks of the Mill-

World by Park Benjamin, formerly of Boston, whose distinction it is to have first named Hawthorne as a writer of genius. “Miss Fuller” was Margaret, — not yet resident in New York, whither she went to live in 1844.

brook, in the midst of the garden with all its weeds; for what are botanical distinctions at this distance?

TO HIS MOTHER (AT CONCORD).

Staten Island, October 1, 1843.

DEAR MOTHER, — I hold together remarkably well as yet, — speaking of my outward linen and woolen man; no holes more than I brought away, and no stitches needed yet. It is marvelous. I think the Fates must be on my side, for there is less than a plank between me and — Time, to say the least. As for Eldorado, that is far off yet. My bait will not tempt the rats, —— they are too well fed. The "Democratic Review" is poor, and can only afford half or quarter pay, which it *will* do; and they say there is a "Lady's Companion" that pays, — but I could not write anything companionable. However, speculate as we will, it is quite gratuitous; for life, nevertheless and never the more, goes steadily on, well or ill-fed, and clothed somehow, and "honor bright" withal. It is very gratifying to live in the prospect of great successes always; and for that purpose we must leave a sufficient foreground to see them through. All the painters prefer distant prospects for the greater breadth of view, and delicacy of tint. But this is no news, and describes no new conditions.

Meanwhile I am somnambulic at least, — stirring in my sleep; indeed, quite awake. I read a good deal, and am pretty well known in the libraries of New York. Am in with the librarian (one Dr. Forbes) of the Society Library, who has lately been to Cambridge to learn liberality, and has come back to let me take out some un-take-out-able books, which I was threatening to read on the spot. And Mr. McKean, of the Mercantile Library, is a true gentleman (a former tutor of mine), and offers me every privilege there. I have from him a perpetual stranger's ticket, and a citizen's rights besides, —— all which privileges I pay handsomely for by improving.

A canoe race "came off" on the Hudson the other day, between Chippeways and New Yorkers, which must have been as moving a sight as the buffalo hunt which I witnessed. But canoes and buffaloes are all lost, as is everything here, in the mob. It is only the people have come to see one another. Let them advertise that there will be a

gathering at Hoboken, — having bargained with the ferryboats, — and there will be, and they need not throw in the buffaloes.

I have crossed the bay twenty or thirty times, and have seen a great many immigrants going up to the city for the first time: Norwegians, who carry their old-fashioned farming-tools to the West with them, and will buy nothing here for fear of being cheated; English operatives, known by their pale faces and stained hands, who will recover their birthright in a little cheap sun and wind; English travelers on their way to the Astor House, to whom I have done the honors of the city; whole families of emigrants cooking their dinner upon the pavement, — all sunburnt, so that you are in doubt where the foreigner's face of flesh begins; their tidy clothes laid on, and then tied to their swathed bodies, which move about like a bandaged finger, — caps set on the head as if woven of the hair, which is still growing at the roots, — each and all busily cooking, stooping from time to time over the pot, and having something to drop in it, that so they may be entitled to take something out, forsooth. They look like respectable but straitened people, who may turn out to be Counts when they get to Wisconsin, and will have this experience to relate to their children.

Seeing so many people from day to day, one comes to have less respect for flesh and bones, and thinks they must be more loosely joined, of less firm fibre, than the few he had known. It must have a very bad influence on children to see so many human beings at once, — mere herds of men.

I came across Henry Bigelow a week ago, sitting in front of a hotel in Broadway, very much as if he were under his father's stoop. He is seeking to be admitted into the bar in New York, but as yet had not succeeded. I directed him to Fuller's store, which he had not found, and invited him to come and see me if he came to the island. Tell Mrs and Miss Ward that I have not forgotten them, and was glad to hear from George — with whom I spent last night — that they had returned to C. Tell Mrs. Brown that it gives me as much pleasure to know that she thinks of me and my writing as if I had been the author of the piece in question, — but I did not even read over the papers I sent. The "Mirror" is really the most readable journal here. I see that they have printed a short piece that I wrote to sell, in the "Dem.

Review," and still keep the review of "Paradise," that I may include in it a notice of another book by the same author, which they have found, and are going to send me.

I don't know when I shall come home; I like to keep that feast in store. Tell Helen that I do not see any advertisement for her, and I am looking for myself. If I could find a rare opening, I might be tempted to try with her for a year, till I had paid my debts, but for such I am sure it is not well to go out of New England. Teachers are but poorly recompensed, even here. Tell her and Sophia (if she is not gone) to write to me. Father will know that this letter is to him as well as to you. I send him a paper which usually contains the news, — if not all that is stirring, all that has stirred, —— and even draws a little on the future. I wish he would send me, by and by, the paper which contains the results of the Cattle Show. You must get Helen's eyes to read this, though she is a scoffer at honest penmanship.

TO MRS. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

Staten Island, October 16, 1843.

MY dear Friend, — I promised you some thoughts long ago, but it would be hard to tell whether these are the ones. I suppose that the great questions of "Fate, Freewill, Foreknowledge absolute," which used to be discussed at Concord, are still unsettled. And here comes [W. H.] Channing, with his "Present," to vex the world again, — a rather galvanic movement, I think. However, I like the man all the better, though his schemes the less. I am sorry for his confessions. Faith never makes a confession.

Have you had the annual berrying party, or sat on the Cliffs a whole day 'this summer? I suppose the flowers have fared quite as well since I was not there to scoff at them; and the hens, without doubt, keep up their reputation.

I have been reading lately what of Quarles's poetry I could get. He was a contemporary of Herbert, and a kindred spirit. I think you would like him. It is rare to find one who was so much of a poet and so little of an artist. He wrote long poems, almost epics for length, about Jonah, Esther, Job, Samson, and Solomon, interspersed with meditations after a quite original plan, — Shepherd's Oracles, Comedies, Romances, Fancies, and Meditations, — the quintessence of meditation, — and Enchiridions of Meditation all divine, — and what he calls his Morning Muse; besides prose works as curious as the rest. He was an unwearied Christian, and a reformer of some old school withal. Hopelessly quaint, as if he lived all alone and knew nobody but his wife, who appears to have reverenced him. He never doubts his genius; it is only he and his God in all the world. He uses language sometimes as greatly as Shakespeare; and though there is not much straight grain in him, there is plenty of tough, crooked timber. In an age when Herbert is revived, Quarles surely ought not to be forgotten.

I will copy a few such sentences, as I should read to you if there. Mrs. Brown, too, may find some nutriment in them.

How does the Saxon Edith do? Can you tell yet to which school of

philosophy she belongs, — whether she will be a fair saint of some Christian order, or a follower of Plato and the heathen? Bid Ellen a good-night or a good-morning from me, and see if she will remember where it comes from; and remember me to Mrs. Brown, and your mother, and Elizabeth Hoar.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

Staten Island, October 17, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I went with my pupil to the Fair of the American Institute, and so lost a visit from Tappan, whom I met returning from the Island. I should have liked to hear more news from his lips, though he had left me a letter and the "Dial," which is a sort of circular letter itself. I find Channing's1 letters full of life, and I enjoy their wit highly. Lane writes straight and solid, like a guideboard, but I find that I put off the "social tendencies" to a future day, which may never come. He is always Shaker fare, quite as luxurious as his principles will allow. I feel as if I were ready to be appointed a committee on poetry, I have

1 The allusion here is to Ellery Channing's "Youth of the Poet and Painter," in the *Dial* — an unfinished autobiography. The *Present* of W. H. Channing, his cousin, named above, was a short-lived periodical, begun September 15, 1843, and ended in April, 1844. "McKean" was Henry Swasey McKean, who was a classmate of Charles Emerson at Harvard in 1828, a tutor there in 1830-35, and who died in 1857.

got my eyes so whetted and proved of late, like the knife-sharpener I saw at the Fair, certified to have been "in constant use in a gentleman's family for more than two years." Yes, I ride along the ranks of the English poets, casting terrible glances, and some I blot out, and some I spare. McKean has imported, within the year, several new editions and collections of old poetry, of which I have the reading, but there is a good deal of chaff to a little meal, — hardly worth bolting. I have just opened Bacon's "Advancement of Learning" for the first time, which I read with great delight. It is more like what Scott's novels w*ere* than anything.

I see that I was very blind to send you my manuscript in such a state; but I have a good *second* sight, at least. I could still shake it in the wind to some advantage, if it would hold together. There are some sad mistakes in the printing. It is a little unfortunate that the "Ethnical Scriptures" should hold out so well, though it does really

hold out. The Bible ought not to be very large. Is it not singular that, while the religious world is gradually picking to pieces its old testaments, here are some coming slowly after, on the seashore, picking up the durable relics of perhaps older books, and putting them together again?

Your Letter to Contributors is excellent, and hits the nail on the head. It will taste sour to their palates at first, no doubt, but it will bear a sweet fruit at last. I like the poetry, especially the Autumn verses. They ring true. Though I am quite weather-beaten with poetry, having weathered so many epics of late. The "Sweep Ho!" sounds well this way. But I have a good deal of fault to find with your "Ode to Beauty." The tune is altogether unworthy of the thoughts. You slope too quickly to the rhyme, as if that trick had better be performed as soon as possible, or as if you stood over the line with a hatchet, and chopped off the verses as they came out, some short and some long. But give us a long reel, and we'll cut it up to suit ourselves. It sounds like parody. "Thee knew I of old,"

"Remediless thirst," are some of those stereotyped lines. I am frequently reminded, I believe, of Jane Taylor's "Philosopher's Scales," and how the world "Flew out with a bounce," which

"Yerked the philosopher out of his cell;"

or else of

"From the climes of the sun all war-worn and weary."

I had rather have the thought come ushered with a flourish of oaths and curses. Yet I love your poetry as I do little else that is near and recent, especially when you get fairly round the end of the line, and are not thrown back upon the rocks. To read the lecture on "The Comic" is as good as to be in our town meeting or Lyceum once more.

I am glad that the Concord farmers ploughed well this year; it promises that something will be done these summers. But I am suspicious of that *Brittonner*, who advertises so many cords of *good* oak, chestnut, and maple wood for sale. *Good!* ay, good for what? And there shall not be left a stone upon a stone. But no matter, — let them hack away. The sturdy Irish arms that do the work are of more worth than oak or maple. Methinks I could look with equanimity

upon a long street of Irish cabins, and pigs and children reveling in the genial Concord dirt; and I should still find my Walden wood and Fair Haven in their tanned and happy faces.

I write this in the cornfield — it being washing-day — with the inkstand Elizabeth Hoar gave me;1 though it is not redolent of corn-

1 This inkstand was presented by Miss Hoar, with a note dated "Boston, May 2, 1843," which deserves to be copied: —

Dear Henry, — The rain prevented me from seeing you the night before I came away, to leave with you a parting assurance of good will and good hope. We have become better acquainted within the two past years than in our whole life as schoolmates and neighbors before; and I am unwilling to let you go away without telling you that I, among your other friends, shall miss yon much, and follow you with remembrance and all best wishes and confidence. Will you take this little inkstand and try if it will carry ink safely from Concord to Staten Island? and the pen, which, if you can write with steel, may be made sometimes the interpreter of friendly thoughts to those whom you leave beyond the reach of your voice, — or record the inspirations of Nature, who, I doubt not, will be as faithful to you who trust her in the sea-girt Staten Island as in Concord woods and meadows. Good-by, and *eu prattein,* which, a wise man says, is the only salutation fit for the wise.

Truly your friend, —
E. HOAR.

stalks, I fear. Let me not be forgotten by Channing and Hawthorne, nor our gray-suited neighbor under the hill [Edmund Hosmer].

This letter will be best explained by a reference to the "Dial" for October, 1843. The "Ethnical Scriptures" were selections from the Brahminical books, from Confucius, etc., such as we have since seen in great abundance. The Autumn verses are by Channing; "Sweep Ho!" by Ellen Sturgis, afterwards Mrs. Hooper; the "Youth of the Poet and Painter" also by Channing. The Letter to Contributors, which is headed simply "A Letter," is by Emerson, and has been much overlooked by his later readers; his "Ode to Beauty" is very well known, and does not deserve the slashing censure of Thoreau, though, as it now stands, it is better than first printed. Instead of "Love drinks at thy banquet *Remediless thirst,"*

we now have the perfect phrase,

"Love drinks at thy fountain
False waters of thirst

"The Comic" is also Emerson's. There is a poem, "The Sail," by

William Tappan, so often named in these letters, and a sonnet by Charles A. Dana, now of the “New York Sun.”

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, October 18, 1843.

Dear Helen, — What do you mean by saying that "*we* have written eight times by private opportunity"? Isn't it the more the better? And am I not glad of it? But people have a habit of not letting me know it when they go to Concord from New York. I endeavored to get you "The Present" when I was last in the city, but they were all sold; and now another is out, which I will send, if I get it. I did not send the "Democratic Review," because I had no copy, and my piece was not worth fifty cents. You think that Channing's words would apply to me too, as living more in the natural than the moral world; but I think that you mean the world of men and women rather, and reformers generally. My objection to Channing and all that fraternity is, that they need and deserve sympathy themselves rather than are able to render it to others. They want faith, and mistake their private ail for an infected atmosphere; but let any one of them recover hope for a moment, and right his *particular* grievance, and he will no longer train in that company. To speak or do anything that shall concern mankind, one must speak and act as if well, or from that grain of health which he has left. This "Present" book indeed is blue, but the hue of its thoughts is yellow. I say these things with the less hesitation, because I have the jaundice myself; but I also know what it is to be well. But do not think that one can escape from mankind who is one of them, and is so constantly dealing with them.

I could not undertake to form a nucleus of an institution for the development of infant minds, where none already existed. It would be too cruel. And then, as if looking all this while one way with benevolence, to walk off another about one's own affairs suddenly! Something of this kind is an unavoidable objection to that.

I am very sorry to hear such bad news about Aunt Maria; but I think that the worst is always the least to be apprehended, for nature is averse to it as well as we. I trust to hear that she is quite well soon. I send love to her and Aunt Jane. For three months I have not known whether to think of Sophia as in Bangor or Concord, and now yon

say that she is going directly. Tell her to write to me, and establish her whereabouts, and also to get well directly. And see that she has something worthy to do when she gets down there, for that's the best remedy for disease.

Your affectionate brother,
H. D. THOREAU.

II. GOLDEN AGE OF ACHIEVEMENT.

THIS was the golden age of hope and achievement for the Concord poets and philosophers. Their ranks were not yet broken by death (for Stearns Wheeler was hardly one of them), their spirits were high, and their faith in each other unbounded. Emerson wrote thus from Concord, while Thoreau was perambulating Staten Island and calling on "the false booksellers:"

"Ellery Channing is excellent company, and we walk in all directions. He remembers you with great faith and hope; thinks you ought not to see Concord again these ten years — that you ought to grind up fifty Concords in your mill — and much other opinion and counsel he holds in store on this topic. Hawthorne walked with me yesterday afternoon, and not until after our return did I read his c Celestial Railroad,' which has a serene strength which we cannot afford not to praise, in this low life."

The Transcendentalists had their "Quarterly," and even their daily organ, for Mr. Greeley put the "Tribune" at their service, and gave places on its staff to Margaret Fuller and her brother-in-law Channing, and would gladly have made room for Emerson in its columns, if the swift utterance of a morning paper had suited his habit of publication. While in the "Tribune" office, Ellery Channing thus wrote to Thoreau, after he had returned home, disappointed with New York, to make lead pencils in his father's shop at Concord.

ELLERY CHANNING TO THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

March 5, 1845.

My dear Thoreau, — The handwriting of your letter is so miserable that I am not sure I have made it out. If I have, it seems to me you are the same old sixpence you used to be, rather rusty, but a genuine piece. I see nothing for you in this earth but that field which I once christened "Briars;" go out upon that, build yourself a hut, and there begin the grand process of devouring yourself alive. I see no alternative, no other hope for you. Eat yourself up; you will eat nobody else, nor anything else. Concord is just as good a place as any other; there are, indeed, more people in the streets of that village than in the streets of this. This is a singularly muddy town; muddy, solitary, and silent.

In your line, I have not done a great deal since I arrived here; I do not mean the Pencil line, but the Staten Island line, having been there once, to walk on a beach by the telegraph, but did not visit the scene of your dominical duties. Staten Island is very distant from No. 30 Ann Street. I saw polite William Emerson in November last, but have not caught any glimpse of him since then. I am as usual suffering the various alternations from agony to despair, from hope to fear, from pain to pleasure. Such wretched one-sided productions as you know nothing of the universal man; you may think yourself well off.

That baker, Hecker, who used to live on two crackers a day, I have not seen; nor Black, nor Vethake, nor Danesaz, nor Rynders, nor any of Emerson's old cronies, excepting James, a little fat, rosy Swedenborgian amateur, with the look of a broker, and the brains and heart of a Pascal. William Channing, I see nothing of him; he is the dupe of good feelings, and I have all-too-many of these now. I have seen something of your friends, Waldo and Tappan, and have also seen our good man McKean, the keeper of that stupid place, the Mercantile Library.

Acting on Channing's hint, and an old fancy of his own, Thoreau, in the summer of 1845, built his cabin at Walden and retired there; while Hawthorne entered the Salem Customhouse, and Alcott, returning defeated from his Fruitlands paradise, was struggling with poverty and discouragement at Concord. Charles Lane, his English comrade, withdrew to New York or its vicinity, and in 1846 to London, whence he had come in 1842, full of hope and enthusiasm. A few notes of his, or about him, may here find place. They were sent to Thoreau at Concord, and show that Lane continued to value his candid friend. The first, written after leaving Fruitlands, introduces the late Father Heeker, who had been one of the family there, to Thoreau. The second and third relate to the sale of the Alcott-Lane library, and other matters.

CHARLES LANE TO THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

Boston, December 3, 1843.

Dear Friend, — As well as my wounded hands permit, I have scribbled something for friend Hecker, which if agreeable may be the opportunity for entering into closer relations with him; a course I think likely to be mutually encouraging, as well as beneficial to all men. But let it reach him in the manner most conformable to your own feelings. That from all perils of a false position you may shortly be relieved, and landed in the position where you feel "at home," is the sincere wish of yours most friendly,

CHARLES LANE.

MR. HENRY THOREAU,
Earl House, Coach Office.

New York, February 17, 1846.

DEAR FRIEND, — The books you were so kind as to deposit about two years and a half ago with Messrs. Wiley & Putnam have all been sold, but as they were left in your name it is needful, in strict business, that you should send an order to them to pay to me the amount due. I will therefore thank you to inclose me such an order at your earliest convenience in a letter addressed to your admiring friend,

CHARLES LANE,
Post Office, New York City.

Boonton, N. J., March 30, 1846.

DEAR FRIEND, — If the human nature participates of the elemental I am no longer in danger of becoming suburban, or super-urban, that is to say, too urbane. I am now more likely to be

converted into a petrifaction, for slabs of rock and foaming waters never so abounded in my neighborhood. A very Peter I shall become: on this rock *He* has built *his church*. You would find much joy in these eminences and in the views therefrom.

My pen has been necessarily unproductive in the continued motion of the sphere in which I have lately been moved. You, I suppose, have not passed the winter to the world's unprofit.

You never have seen, as I have, the book with a preface of 450 pages and a text of 60. My letter is like unto it.

I have only to add that your letter of the 26th February did its work, and that I submit to you cordial thanks for the same.

Yours truly,

CHAS. LANE.

I hope to hear occasionally of your doings and those of your compeers in your classic ploughings and diggings.

To HENRY D. THOBEAU,

Concord Woods.

Thoreau's letters to Lane have not come into any editor's hands. In England, before Lane's discovery by Alcott, in 1842, he had been the editor of the " Mark-Lane Gazette" (or something similar), which gave the price-current of wheat, etc., in the English markets. Emerson found him in Hampstead, London, in February, 1848, and wrote to Thoreau: "I went last Sunday, for the first time, to see Lane at Hampstead, and dined with him. He was full of friendliness and hospitality; has a school of sixteen children, one lady as matron, then Oldham. That is all the household. They looked just comfortable."

"Lane instructed me to ask you to forward his 'Dials' to him, which must be done, if you can find them. Three bound volumes are among his books in my library. The fourth volume is in unbound numbers at J. Munroe & Co.'s shop, received there in a parcel to my address, a day or two before I sailed, and which I forgot to carry to Concord. It must be claimed without delay. It is certainly there, — was opened by me and left; and they can inclose all four volumes to Chapman for me."

This would indicate that he had not lost interest in the days and events of his American sojourn, — unpleasant as some of these must have been to the methodical, prosaic Englishman.

While at Walden, Thoreau wrote but few letters; there is, however, a brief correspondence with Mr. J. E. Cabot, then an active naturalist, cooperating with Agassiz in his work on the American fishes, who had requested Thoreau to procure certain species from Concord. The letters were written from the cabin at Walden, and it is this same structure that figures in the letters from Thoreau to Emerson in England, as the proposed nucleus of the cottage of poor Hugh the gardener, before he ran away from Concord, as there narrated, on a subsequent page. The first sending of river-fish was in the end of April, 1847. Then followed this letter: —

TO ELLIOT CABOT (AT BOSTON).

Concord, May 8, 1847.

DEAR SIR, — I believe that I have not yet acknowledged the receipt of your notes, and a five dollar bill. I am very glad that the fishes afforded Mr. Agassiz so much pleasure. I could easily have obtained more specimens of the *Sternothaerus odoratus;* they are quite numerous here. I will send more of them erelong. Snapping turtles are perhaps as frequently met with in our muddy river as anything, but they are not always to be had when wanted. It is now rather late in the season for them. As no one makes a business of seeking them, and they are valued for soups, science may be forestalled by appetite in this market, and it will be necessary to bid pretty high to induce persons to obtain or preserve them. I think that from seventy-five cents to a dollar apiece would secure all that are in any case to be had, and will set this price upon their heads, if the treasury of science is full enough to warrant it.

You will excuse me for taking toll in the shape of some, it may be, impertinent and unscientific inquiries. There are found in the waters of the Concord, so far as I know, the following kinds of fishes: —

Pickerel. Besides the common, fishermen distinguish the Brook, or Grass Pickerel, which bites differently, and has a shorter snout. Those caught in Walden, hard by my house, are easily distinguished from those caught in the river, being much heavier in proportion to their size, stouter, firmer fleshed, and lighter colored. The little pickerel which I sent last, jumped into the boat in its fright.

Pouts. Those in the pond are of different appearance from those that I have sent.

Breams. Some more green, others more brown.

Suckers. The horned, which I sent first, and the black. I am not sure whether the *Common* or *Boston sucker* is found here. Are the three which I sent last, which were speared in the river, identical with the three *black suckers*, taken by hand in the brook, which I sent before? I have never examined them minutely.

Perch. The river perch, of which I sent five specimens in the box, are darker colored than those found in the pond. There are myriads of small ones in the latter place, and but few large ones. I have counted ten transverse bands on some of the smaller.

Lampreys. Very scarce since the dams at Lowell and Billerica were built.

Shiners. Leuciscus chrysoleucas, silver and golden.

What is the difference?

Roach or *Chiverin*, *Leuciscus pulchellus, argenteus*, or what not. The *white* and the *red.* The former described by Storer, but the latter, which deserves distinct notice, not described, to my knowledge. Are the minnows (called here *dace),* of which I sent three live specimens, I believe, one larger and two smaller, the young of this species?

Trout. Of different appearance in different brooks in this neighborhood.

Eels.

Red-finned Minnows, of which I sent you a dozen alive. I have never recognized them in any books. Have they any scientific name?

If convenient, will you let Dr. Storer see these brook minnows? There is also a kind of dace or fresh-water smelt in the pond, which is, perhaps, distinct from any of the above. What of the above does M. Agassiz particularly wish to see? Does he want more specimens of kinds which I have already sent? There are also minks, muskrats, frogs, lizards, tortoise, snakes, caddice-worms, leeches, muscles, etc., or rather, *here they are*. The funds which you sent me are nearly exhausted. Most fishes can now be taken with the hook, and it will cost but little trouble or money to obtain them. The snapping turtles will be the main expense. I should think that five dollars more, at least, might be profitably expended.

TO ELLIOT CABOT (AT BOSTON).

CONCORD, June 1, 1847.

DEAR SIR, — I send you 15 pouts, 17 perch, 13 shiners, 1 larger land tortoise, and 5 muddy tortoises, all from the pond by my house. Also 7 perch, 5 shiners, 8 breams, 4 dace? 2 muddy tortoises, 5 painted do., and 3 land do., all from the river. One black snake, alive, and one dormouse? caught last night in my cellar. The tortoises were all put in alive; the fishes were alive yesterday, i e Monday, and some this morning. Observe the difference between those from the pond, which is pure water, and those from the river.

I will send the light-colored trout and the pickerel with the longer snout, which is our large one, when I meet with them. I have set a price upon the heads of snapping turtles, though it is late in the season to get them.

If I wrote red-finned eel, it was a slip of the pen; I meant red-finned minnow. This is their name here; though smaller specimens have but a slight reddish tinge at the base of the pectorals.

Will you, at your leisure, answer these queries?

Do you mean to say that the twelve banded minnows which I sent are undescribed, or only one? What are the scientific names of those minnows which have any? Are the four dace I send to-day identical with one of the former, and what are they called? Is there such a fish as the black sucker described, — distinct from the common?

AGASSIZ TO THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

In October, 1849, Agassiz, in reply to a request from Thoreau that he would lecture in Bangor, sent this characteristic letter: —

"I remember with much pleasure the time when you used to send me specimens from your vicinity, and also our short interview in the Marlborough Chapel.1 I am under too many obligations of your kindness to forget it. I am very sorry that I missed your visit in Boston; but for eighteen months I have now been settled in Cambridge. It would give me great pleasure to engage for the lectures you ask from me for the Bangor Lyceum; but I find it has been last

1 Where Agassiz was giving a course of Lowell lectures.

winter such a heavy tax upon my health, that I wish for the present to make no engagements; as I have some hope of making my living this year by other efforts, — and beyond the necessity of my wants, both domestic and scientific, I am determined not to exert myself; as all the time I can thus secure to myself must be exclusively devoted to science. My only business is my intercourse with nature; and could I do without draughtsmen, lithographers, etc., I would live still more retired. This will satisfy you that whenever you come this way, I shall be delighted to see you, — since I have also heard something of your mode of living."

Agassiz had reason indeed to remember the collections made by Thoreau, since (from the letters of Mr. Cabot) they aided him much in his comparison of the American with the European fishes. When the first firkin of Concord fish arrived in Boston, where Agassiz was then working, "he was highly delighted, and began immediately to spread them out and arrange them for his draughtsman. Some of the species he had seen before, but never in so fresh condition; others, as the breams and the pout, he had seen only in spirits, and the little tortoise he knew only from the books. I am sure you would have felt fully repaid for your trouble," adds Mr. Cabot, "if you could have

seen the eager satisfaction with which he surveyed each fin and scale." Agassiz himself wrote the same day: "I have been highly pleased to find that the small mud turtle was really the *Sternotlicterus odoratus*, as I suspected, — a very rare species, quite distinct from the snapping turtle. The suckers were all of one and the same species (*Catastomus tuberculatus)*; the female has the tubercles. As I am very anxious to send some snapping turtles home with my first boxes, I would thank Mr. T. very much if he could have some taken for me."

Mr. Cabot goes on: "Of the perch Agassiz remarked that it was almost identical with that of Europe, but distinguishable, on close examination, by the tubercles on the sub-operculum.... More of the painted tortoises would be acceptable. The snapping turtles are very interesting to him as forming a transition from the turtles proper to the alligator and crocodile.... *We* have received three boxes from you since the first." (May 27.) "Agassiz was much surprised and pleased at the extent of the collections you sent during his absence in New York. Among the fishes there is one, and probably two, new species. The fresh-water smelt he does not know. He is very anxious to see the pickerel with the long snout, which he suspects may be the *Esox estor*, or Maskalongé; he has seen this at Albany.... As to the minks, etc., I know they would all be very acceptable to him. When I asked him about these, and more specimens of what you have sent, he said, 'I dare not make any request, for I do not know how much trouble I may be giving to Mr. Thoreau; but my method of examination requires many more specimens than most naturalists would care for." (June 1.) "Agassiz is delighted to find one, and he thinks two, more new species; one is a Pomotis, — the bream without the red spot in the operculum, and with a red belly and fins. The other is the shallower and lighter colored shiner. The four dace you sent last are *Leuciscus argenteus.* They are different from that you sent before under this name, but which was a new species. Of the four kinds of minnow, two are new. There is a black sucker (*Catastomus nigricans*), but there has been no specimen among those you have sent, and A. has never seen a specimen. He seemed to know your mouse, and called it the white-bellied mouse. It was the first specimen he had seen. I am in hopes to bring or send him to

Concord, to look after new *Leucisci*, etc." Agassiz did afterwards come, more than once, and examined turtles with Thoreau.

Soon after this scientific correspondence, Thoreau left his retreat by Walden to take the place of Emerson in his household, while his friend went to visit Carlyle and give lectures in England. The letters that follow are among the longest Thoreau ever composed, and will give a new conception of the writer to those who may have figured him as a cold, stoical, or selfish person, withdrawn from society and its duties. The first describes the setting out of Emerson for Europe.

TO SOPHIA THOREAU (AT BANGOR).

Concord, October 24, 1847.

DEAR SOPHIA, — I thank you for those letters about Ktaadn, and hope you will save and send me the rest, and anything else you may meet with relating to the Maine woods. That Dr. Young is both young and green too at traveling in the woods. However, I hope he got "yarbs" enough to satisfy him. I went to Boston the 5th of this month to see Mr. Emerson off to Europe. He sailed in the Washington Irving packet ship; the same in which Mr. [F. II.] Hedge went before him. Up to this trip the first mate aboard this ship was, as I hear, one Stephens, a Concord boy, son of Stephens the carpenter, who used to live above Mr. Dennis's. Mr. Emerson's stateroom was like a carpeted dark closet, about six feet square, with a large keyhole for a window. The window was about as big as a saucer, and the glass two inches thick, not to mention another skylight overhead in the deck, the size of an oblong doughnut, and about as opaque. Of course it would be in vain to look up, if any contemplative promenader put his foot upon it. Such will be his lodgings for two or three weeks; and instead of a walk in Walden woods he will take a promenade on deck, where the few trees, you know, are stripped of their bark. The steam-tug carried the ship to sea against a head wind without a rag of sail being raised.

I don't remember whether you have heard of the new telescope at Cambridge or not. They think it is the best one in the world, and have already seen more than Lord Rosse or Herschel. I went to see Perez Blood's, some time ago, with Mr. Emerson. He had not gone to bed, but was sitting in the woodshed, in the dark, alone, in his astronomical chair, which is all legs and rounds, with a seat which can be inserted at any height. We saw Saturn's rings, and the mountains in the moon, and the shadows in their craters, and the sunlight on the spurs of the mountains in the dark portion, etc., etc. When I asked him the power of his glass, he said it was 85. But what is the power of the Cambridge glass? 2000!!! The last is about twenty-three feet long.

I think you may have a grand time this winter pursuing some study, — keeping a journal, or the like, — while the snow lies deep without. Winter is the time for study, you know, and the colder it is the more studious we are. Give my respects to the whole Penobscot tribe, and tell them that I trust we are good brothers still, and endeavor to keep the chain of friendship bright, though I do dig up a hatchet now and then. I trust you will not stir from your comfortable winter quarters, Miss Bruin, or even put your head out of your hollow tree, till the sun has melted the snow in the spring, and "the green buds, they are a-swellin'."'

From your

— BROTHER HENRY.

This letter will explain some of the allusions in the first letter to Emerson in England. Perez Blood was a rural astronomer living in the extreme north quarter of Concord, next to Carlisle, with his two maiden sisters, in the midst of a fine oak wood; their cottage being one of the points in view when Thoreau and his friends took their afternoon rambles. Sophia Thoreau, the younger and soon the only surviving sister, was visiting her cousins in Maine, the "Penobscot tribe" of whom the letter makes mention, with an allusion to the Indians of that name near Bangor. His letter to her and those which follow were written from Emerson's house, where Thoreau lived during the master's absence across the ocean. It was in the orchard of this house that Alcott was building that summer-house at which Thoreau, with his geometrical eye, makes merry in the next letter.

TO R. W. EMERSON (IN ENGLAND).

CONCORD, November 14, 1847.

DEAR FRIEND, — I am but a poor neighbor to you here, — a very poor companion am I. I understand that very well, but that need not prevent my *writing* to you now. I have almost never written letters in my life, yet I think I can write as good ones as I frequently see, so I shall not hesitate to write this, such as it may be, knowing that you will welcome anything that reminds you of Concord.

I have banked up the young trees against the winter and the mice, and I will look out, in my careless way, to see when a pale is loose or a nail drops out of its place. The broad gaps, at least, I will occupy. I heartily wish I could be of good service to this household. But I, who have only used these ten digits so long to solve the problem of a living, how can I? The world is a cow that is hard to milk, — life does not come so easy, — and oh, how thinly it is watered ere we get it! But the young bunting calf, he will get at it. There is no way so direct. This is to earn one's living by the sweat of his brow. It is a little like joining a community, this life, to such a hermit as I am; and as I don't keep the accounts, I don't know whether the experiment will succeed or fail finally. At any rate, it is good for society, so I do not regret my transient nor my permanent share in it.

Lidian [Mrs. Emerson] and I make very good housekeepers. She is a very dear sister to me. Ellen and Edith and Eddy and Aunty Brown keep up the tragedy and comedy and tragic-comedy of life as usual. The two former have not forgotten their old acquaintance; even Edith carries a young memory in her head, I find. Eddy can teach us all how to pronounce. If you should discover any rare hoard of wooden or pewter horses, I have no doubt he will know how to appreciate it. He occasionally surveys mankind from my shoulders as wisely as ever Johnson did. I respect him not a little, though it is I that lift him up so unceremoniously. And sometimes I have to set him down again in a hurry, according to his "mere will and good pleasure." He very seriously asked me, the other day, "Mr. Thoreau, will you be my father?" I am occasionally Mr. Rough-and-tumble with him that I may not miss him, and lest he should miss *you* too

much. So you must come back soon, or you will be superseded.

Alcott has heard that I laughed, and so set the people laughing, at his arbor, though I never laughed louder than when I was on the ridgepole. But now I have not laughed for a long time, it is so serious. He is very grave to look at. But, not knowing all this, I strove innocently enough, the other day, to engage his attention to my mathematics. "Did you ever study geometry, the relation of straight lines to curves, the transition from the finite to the infinite? Fine things about it in Newton and Leibnitz." But he would hear none of it, — men of taste preferred the natural curve. Ah, he is a crooked stick himself. He is getting on now so many *knots* an hour. There is one knot at present occupying the point of highest elevation, — the present highest point; and as many knots as are not handsome, I presume, are thrown down and cast into the pines. Pray show him this if you meet him anywhere in London, for I cannot make him hear much plainer words here. He forgets that I am neither old nor young, nor anything in particular, and behaves as if I had still some of the animal heat in me. As for the building, I feel a little oppressed when I come near it. It has no great disposition to be beautiful; it is certainly a wonderful structure, on the whole, and the fame of the architect will endure as long as it shall stand. I should not show you this side alone, if I did not suspect that Lidian had done complete justice to the other.

Mr. [Edmund] Hosmer has been working at a tannery in Stow for a fortnight, though he has just now come home sick. It seems that he was a tanner in his youth, and so he has made up his mind a little at last. This conies of reading the New Testament. Wasn't one of the Apostles a tanner? Mrs. Hosmer remains here, and John looks stout enough to fill his own shoes and his father's too.

Mr. Blood and his company have at length seen the stars through the great telescope, and he told me that he thought it was worth the while. Mr. Peirce made him wait till the crowd had dispersed (it was a Saturday evening), and then was quite polite, — conversed with him, and showed him the micrometer, etc.; and he said Mr. Blood's glass was large enough for all ordinary astronomical work. [Rev.] Mr. Frost and Dr. [Josiali] Bartlett seemed disappointed that there was no greater difference between the Cambridge glass and the

Concord one. They used only a power of 400. Mr. Blood tells me that he is too old to study the calculus or higher mathematics. At Cambridge they think that they have discovered traces of another satellite to Neptune. They have been obliged to exclude the public altogether, at last. The very dust which they raised, " which is filled with minute crystals," etc., as professors declare, having to be wiped off the glasses, would erelong wear them away. It is true enough, Cambridge college is really beginning to wake up and redeem its character and overtake the age. I see by the catalogue that they are about establishing a scientific school in connection with the university, at which any one above eighteen, on paying one hundred dollars annually (Mr. Lawrence's fifty thousand dollars will probably diminish this sum), may be instructed in the highest branches of science, — in astronomy, "theoretical and practical, with the use of the instruments" (so the great Yankee astronomer may be born without delay), in mechanics and engineering to the last degree. Agassiz will erelong commence his lectures in the zoological department. A chemistry class has already been formed under the direction of Professor Horsford. A new and adequate building for the purpose is already being erected. They have been foolish enough to put at the end of all this earnest the old joke of a diploma. Let every sheep keep but his own skin, I say.

I have had a tragic correspondence, for the most part all on one side, with Miss — . She did really wish to — I hesitate to write — marry me. That is the way they spell it. Of course I did not write a deliberate answer. How could I deliberate upon it? I sent back as distinct a *no* as I have learned to pronounce after considerable practice, and I trust that this *no* has succeeded. Indeed, I wished that it might burst, like hollow shot, after it had struck and buried itself and made itself felt there. *There was no other way.* I really had anticipated no such foe as this in my career.

I suppose you will like to hear of my book, though I have nothing worth writing about it. Indeed, for the last month or two I have forgotten it, but shall certainly remember it again. Wiley & Putnam, Munroe, the Harpers, and Crosby & Nichols have all declined printing it with the least risk to themselves; but Wiley & Putnam will print it in their series, and any of them, anywhere, at *my* risk. If I

liked the book well enough, I should not delay; but for the present I am indifferent. I believe this is, after all, the course you advised, — to let it lie.

I do not know what to say of myself. I sit before my green desk, in the chamber at the head of the stairs, and attend to my thinking, sometimes more, sometimes less distinctly. I am not unwilling to think great thoughts if there are any in the wind, but what they are I am not sure. They suffice to keep me awake while the day lasts, at any rate. Perhaps they will redeem some portion of the night erelong.

I can imagine you astonishing, bewildering, confounding, and sometimes delighting John Bull with your Yankee notions, and that he begins to take a pride in the relationship at last; introduced to all the stars of England in succession, after the lecture, until you pine to thrust your head once more into a genuine and unquestionable nebula, if there be any left. I trust a common man will be the most uncommon to you before you return to these parts. I have thought there was some advantage even in death, by which we "mingle with the herd of common men."

Hugh [the gardener] still has his eye on the Walden *agellum*, and orchards are waving there in the windy future for him. That's the where-I'll-go-next, thinks he; but no important steps are yet taken. He reminds me occasionally of this open secret of his, with which the very season seems to labor, and affirms seriously that as to his wants — wood, stone, or timber — I know better than he. That is a clincher which I shall have to avoid to some extent; but I fear that it is a wrought nail and will not break. Unfortunately, the day after cattle show — the day after small beer — he was among the missing, but not long this time. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin nor the leopard his spots, nor indeed Hugh — his Hugh.

As I walked over Conantum, the other afternoon, I saw a fair column of smoke rising from the woods directly over my house that was (as I judged), and already began to conjecture if my deed of sale would not be made invalid by this. But it turned out to be John Richardson's young wood, on the southeast of your field. It was burnt nearly all over, and up to the rails and the road. It was set on fire, no doubt, by the same Lucifer that lighted Brooks's lot before. So you see that your small lot is comparatively safe for this season,

the back fire having been already set for you.

They have been choosing between John Keyes and Sam Staples, if the world wants to know it, as representative of this town, and Staples is chosen. The candidates for governor — think of my writing this to you! — were Governor Briggs and General Cushing, and Briggs is elected, though the Democrats have gained. Ain't I a brave boy to know so much of politics for the nonce? But I shouldn't have known it if Coombs hadn't told me. They have had a peace meeting here, — I shouldn't think of telling you if I didn't know anything would do for the English market, — and some men, Deacon Brown at the head, have signed a long pledge, swearing that they will "treat all mankind as brothers henceforth." I think I shall wait and see how they treat me first. I think that Nature meant kindly when she made our brothers few. However, my voice is still for peace. So good-by, and a truce to all joking, my dear friend, from

H. D. T.

Upon this letter some annotations are to be made. "Eddy" was Emerson's youngest child, Edward Waldo, then three years old and upward, — of late years his father's biographer. Hugh, the gardener, of whom more anon, bargained for the house of Thoreau on Emerson's land at Walden, and for a field to go with it; but the bargain came to naught, and the cabin was removed three or four miles to the northwest, where it became a granary for Farmer Clark and his squirrels, near the entrance to the park known as Estabrook's. Edmund Hosmer was the farming friend and neighbor with whom, at one time, G. W. Curtis and his brother took lodgings, and at another time the Alcott family. The book in question was "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers."

To these letters Emerson replied from England: —

DEAR HENRY, — Yery welcome in the parcel was your letter, very precious your thoughts and tidings. It is one of the best things connected with my coming hither that you could and would keep the homestead; that fireplace shines all the brighter, and has a certain permanent glimmer therefor. Thanks, ever more thanks for the kindness which I well discern to the youth of the house: to my darling little horseman of pewter, wooden, rocking, and what other

breeds, 3 — destined, I hope, to ride Pegasus yet, and, I hope, not destined to be thrown; to Edith, who long ago drew from you verses which I carefully preserve; and to Ellen, whom by speech, and now by letter, I find old enough to be companionable, and to choose and reward her own friends in her own fashions. She sends me a poem to-day, which I have read three times!

TO R. W. EMERSON (IN ENGLAND).

CONCORD, December 15, 1847.

DEAR FRIEND, — You are not so far off but the affairs of *this* world still attract you. Perhaps it will be so when we are dead. Then look out. Joshua R. Holman, of Harvard, who says he lived a month with [Charles] Lane at Fruitlands, wishes to HIRE said Lane's farm for one or more years, and will pay $125 rent, taking out of the same a half, if necessary, for repairs, — as for a new bank-wall to the barn cellar, which he says is indispensable. Palmer is gone, Mrs. Palmer is going. This is all that is known or that is worth knowing. Yes or no? What to do?

Hugh's plot begins to thicken. He starts thus: eighty dollars on one side; Walden, field and house, on the other. How to bring these together so as to make a garden and a palace?

House $80 —— —— Field — [house 1st, let $10 go over to unite the two lots.

$70

$6 for Wetherbee's rocks to found your. — . palace on. —

$64

$64 — so far, indeed, we have already got.

$4 to bring the rocks to the field.

$60

Save $20 by all means, to measure the field, and you have left $40 to complete the palace, build cellar, and dig well. Build the cellar yourself, and let *well* alone, — and now how does it stand?

$40 to complete the palace somewhat like this. —

For when one asks, "Why do you want twice as much room more?" the reply is, "Parlor, kitchen, and bedroom, — these make the palace."

"Well, Hugh, what will you do? Here are forty dollars to buy a new house, twelve feet by twenty-five, and add it to the old."

"Well, Mr. Thoreau, as I tell you, I know no more than a child about it. It shall be just as you say."

"Then build it yourself, get it roofed, and get in.

"Commence at one end and leave it half done,
And let time finish what money's begun."

So you see we have forty dollars for a nest egg; sitting on which, Hugh and I alternately and simultaneously, there may in course of time be hatched a house that will long stand, and perchance even lay fresh eggs one day for its owner; that is, if, when he returns, he gives the young chick twenty dollars or more in addition, by way of "swichin," to give it a start in the world.

The "Massachusetts Quarterly Review" came out the 1st of December, but it does not seem to be making a sensation, at least not hereabouts. I know of none in Concord who take or have seen it yet.

We wish to get by all possible means some notion of your success or failure in England, — more than your two letters have furnished. Can't you send a fair sample both of young and of old England's criticism, if there is any printed? Alcott and [Ellery] Channing are equally greedy with myself.

HENRY THOREAU.

C. T. Jackson takes the Quarterly (new one), and will lend it to us. Are you not going to send your wife some news of your good or ill success by the newspapers?

TO R. W. EMERSON (IN ENGLAND).

CONCORD, December 29, 1847.

My dear Friend, — I thank you for your letter. I was very glad to get it; and I am glad again to write to you. However slow the steamer, no time intervenes between the writing and the reading of thoughts, but they come freshly to the most distant port. I am here still, and very glad to be here, and shall not trouble you with any complaints because I do not fill my place better. I have had many good hours in the chamber at the head of the stairs, — a solid time, it seems to me. Next week I am going to give an account to the Lyceum of my expedition to Maine. Theodore Parker lectures to-night. We have had Whipple on Genius, — too weighty a subject for him, with his antithetical definitions new-vamped, — what it *is*, what it is *not*, but altogether what it is *not;* cuffing it this way and cuffing it that, as if it were an India-rubber ball. Really, it is a subject which should expand, expand, accumulate itself before the speaker's eyes as he goes on, like the snowballs which the boys roll in the street; and when it stops, it should be so large that he cannot start it, but must leave it there. [H. N.] Hudson, too, has been here, with a dark shadow in the core of him, and his desperate wit, so much indebted to the surface of him, — wringing out his words and snapping them off like a dish-cloth; very remarkable, but not memorable. Singular that these two best lecturers should have so much "wave" in their timber, — their solid parts to be made and kept solid by shrinkage and contraction of the whole, with consequent checks and fissures.

Ellen and I have a good understanding. I appreciate her genuineness. Edith tells me after her fashion: "By and by I shall grow up and be a woman, and then I shall remember how you exercised me." Eddy has been to Boston to Christmas, but can remember nothing but the coaches, all Kendall's coaches. There is no variety of that vehicle that he is not familiar with. He *did* try twice to tell us something else, but, after thinking and stuttering a long time, said, "I don't know what the word is," — the *one* word, forsooth, that would have disposed of all that Boston phenomenon. If you did

not know him better than I, I could tell you more. He is a good companion for me, and I am glad that we are all natives of Concord. It is *young Concord.* Look out, World!

Mr. Alcott seems to have sat down for the winter. He has got Plato and other books to read. He is as large-featured and hospitable to traveling thoughts and thinkers as ever; but with the same Connecticut philosophy as ever, mingled with what is better. If he would only stand upright and toe the line! — though he were to put off several degrees of largeness, and put on a considerable degree of littleness. After all, I think we must call him particularly *your* man.

I have pleasant walks and talks with Channing. James Clark — the Swedenborgian that was — is at the poorhouse, insane with too large views, so that he cannot support himself. I see him working with Fred and the rest. Better than be there and not insane. It is strange that they will make ado when a man's body is buried, but not when he thus really and tragically dies, or seems to die. Away with your funeral processions, — into the ballroom with them! I hear the bell toll hourly over there.1

Lidian and I have a standing quarrel as to what is a suitable state of preparedness for a traveling professor's visit, or for whomsoever else; but further than this we are not at war. We have made up a dinner, we have made up a bed, we have made up a party, and our own minds and mouths, three several times for your professor, and he came not. Three several turkeys have died the death, which I myself carved, just as if he had been there; and the company, too, convened and demeaned themselves accordingly. Everything was done up in good style, I assure you, with only the part of the professor omitted. To have seen the preparation (though Lidian says it was nothing extraordinary) I should certainly have said he was a-coming, but he did not. He must have found out some shorter way to Turkey, — some overland route, I think. By the way, he was complimented, at the conclusion of his course in Boston, by the mayor moving the appointment of a committee to draw up resolutions expressive, etc., which was done.

I have made a few verses lately. Here are some, though perhaps not the best, — at any rate

1 The town almshouse was across the field from the Emerson house.

they are the shortest, — on that universal theme, yours as well as mine, and several other people's: —

The good how can we trust!
Only the wise are just.
The *good,* we use,
The wise we cannot choose; These there are none above.
The good, they know and love,
But are not known again By those of lesser ken.
They do not choose us with their eyes,
But they transfix with their advice;
No partial sympathy they feel With private woe or private weal,
But with the universe joy and sigh,
Whose knowledge is their sympathy.

Good-night. — HENRY THOREAU.

P. S. — I am sorry to send such a medley as this to you. I have forwarded Lane's "Dial" to Munroe, and he tells the expressman that all is right.

TO R. W. EMERSON (IN ENGLAND).

CONCORD, January 12, 1848.

It is hard to believe that England is so near as from your letters it appears; and that this identical piece of paper has lately come all the way from there hither, begrimed with the English dust which made you hesitate to use it; from England, which is only historical fairyland to me, to America, which I have put my spade into, and about which there is no doubt.

I thought that you needed to be informed of Hugh's progress. He has moved his house, as I told you, and dug his cellar, and purchased stone of Sol Wetherbee for the last, though he has not hauled it; all which has cost sixteen dollars, which I have paid. He has also, as next in order, run away from Concord without a penny in his pocket, "crying" by the way, — having had another long difference with strong beer, and a first one, I suppose, with his wife, who seems to have complained that he sought other society; the one difference leading to the other, perhaps, but I don't know which was the leader. He writes back to his wife from Sterling, near Worcester, where he is chopping wood, his distantly kind reproaches to her, which I read straight through to her (not to his bottle, which he has with him, and no doubt addresses orally). He says that he will go on to the South in the spring, and will never return to Concord. Perhaps he will not. Life is not tragic enough for him, and he must try to cook up a more highly seasoned dish for himself. Towns which keep a barroom and a gun-house and a reading-room, should also keep a steep precipice whereoff impatient soldiers may jump. His sun went down, *to* me, bright and steady enough in the west, but it never came up in the east. Night intervened. He departed, as when a man dies suddenly; and perhaps wisely, if he was to go, without settling his affairs. They knew that that was a thin soil and not well calculated for pears. Nature is rare and sensitive on the score of nurseries. You may cut down orchards and grow forests at your pleasure. Sand watered with strong beer, though stirred with industry, will not produce grapes. He dug his cellar for the new part too near the old house, Irish like,

though I warned him, and it has caved and let one end of the house down. Such is the state of his domestic affairs. I laugh with the Parcæ only. He had got the upland and the orchard and a part of the meadow ploughed by Warren, at an expense of eight dollars, still unpaid, which of course is no affair of yours.

I think that if an honest and small-familied man, who has no affinity for moisture in him, but who has an affinity for sand, can be found, it would be safe to rent him the shanty as it is, and the land; or you can very easily and simply let nature keep them still, without great loss. It may be so managed, perhaps, as to be a home for somebody, who shall in return serve you as fencing stuff, and to fix and locate your lot, as we plant a tree in the sand or on the edge of a stream; without expense to you in the mean while, and without disturbing its possible future value.

I read a part of the story of my excursion to Ktaadn to quite a large audience of men and boys, the other night, whom it interested. It contains many facts and some poetry. I have also written what will do for a lecture on "Friendship."

I think that the article on you in Blackwood's is a good deal to get from the reviewers, — the first purely literary notice, as I remember. The writer is far enough off, in every sense, to speak with a certain authority. It is a better judgment of posterity than the public had. It is singular how sure he is to be mystified by any uncommon sense. But it was generous to put Plato into the list of mystics. His confessions on this subject suggest several thoughts, which I have not room to express here. The old word *seer*, — I wonder what the reviewer thinks that means; whether that *he* was a man who could *see more than himself.*

I was struck by Ellen's asking me, yesterday, while I was talking with Mrs. Brown, if I did not use "*colored* words." She said that she could tell the color of a great many words, and amused the children at school by so doing. Eddy climbed up the sofa, the other day, *of his own accord*, and kissed the picture of his father, 4— "right on his shirt, I did."

I had a good talk with Alcott this afternoon. He is certainly the youngest man of his age we have seen, — just on the threshold of life. When I looked at his gray hairs, his conversation sounded

pathetic; but I looked again, and they reminded me of the gray dawn. He is getting better acquainted with Channing, though he says that, if they were to live in the same house, they would soon sit with their backs to each other.

You must excuse me if I do not write with sufficient directness to yourself, who are a far-off traveler. It is a little like shooting on the wing, I confess.

Farewell. — HENRY THOREAU.

TO R. W. EMERSON (IN ENGLAND).

CONCORD, February 23, 1848.

DEAR WALDO, — For I think I have heard that that is your name, — my letter which was put last into the leathern bag arrived first. Whatever I may *call* you, I know you better than I know your name, and what becomes of the fittest name if in any sense you are here with him who *calls*, and not there simply to be called?

I believe I never thanked you for your lectures, one and all, which I heard formerly read here in Concord. I *know* I never have. There was some excellent reason each time why I did not; but it will never be too late. I have that advantage, at least, over you in my education.

Lidian is too unwell to write to you; so I must tell you what I can about the children and herself. I am afraid she has not told you how unwell she is, — or to-day perhaps we may say has been. She has been confined to her chamber four or five weeks, and three or four weeks, at least, to her bed, with the jaundice. The doctor, who comes once a day, does not let her read (nor can she now) nor *hear* much reading. She has written her letters to you, till recently, sitting up in bed, but he said he would not come again if she did so. She has Abby and Almira to take care of her, and Mrs. Brown to read to her; and I also, occasionally, have something to read or to say. The doctor says she must not expect to "take any comfort of her life" for a week or two yet. She wishes me to say that she has written two long and full letters to you about the household economies, etc., which she hopes have not been delayed. The children are quite well and full of spirits, and are going through a regular course of picture-seeing, with commentary by me, every evening, for Eddy's behoof. All the Annuals and "Diadems" are in requisition, and Eddy is forward to exclaim, when the hour arrives, "Now for the demdems!" I overheard this dialogue when Frank [Brown] came down to breakfast the other morning.

Eddy. "Why, Frank, I am astonished that you should leave your boots in the dining-room." *Frank.* "I guess you mean *surprised,* don't you?"

Eddy. “No, boots!”

“If Waldo were here,” said he, the other night, at bedtime, “we’d be four going upstairs.” Would he like to tell papa anything? No, not anything; but finally, yes, he would, 5 — that one of the white horses in his new barouche is broken! Ellen and Edith will perhaps speak for themselves, as I hear something about letters to be written by them.

Mr. Alcott seems to be reading well this winter: Plato, Montaigne, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Sir Thomas Browne, etc., etc. “I believe I have read them all now, or nearly all,” — those English authors. He is rallying for another foray with his pen, in his latter years, not discouraged by the past, into that crowd of unexpressed ideas of his, that undisciplined Parthian army, which, as soon as a Roman soldier would face, retreats on all hands, occasionally firing backwards; easily routed, not easily subdued, hovering on the skirts of society. Another summer shall not be devoted to the raising of vegetables (Arbors?) which rot in the cellar for want of consumers; but perchance to the arrangement of the material, the brain-crop which the winter has furnished. I have good talks with him. His respect for Carlyle has been steadily increasing for some time. He has read him with new sympathy and appreciation.

I see Channing often. He also goes often to Alcott’s, and confesses that he has made a discovery in him, and gives vent to his admiration or his confusion in characteristic exaggeration; but between this extreme and that you may get a fair report, and draw an inference if you can. Sometimes he will ride a broomstick still, though there is nothing to keep him, or it, up but a certain centrifugal force of whim, which is soon spent, and there lies your stick, not worth picking up to sweep an oven with now. His accustomed path is strewn with them. But then again, and perhaps for the most part, he sits on the Cliffs amid the lichens, or flits past on noiseless pinion, like the barred owl in the daytime, as wise and unobserved. He brought me a poem the other day, for me, on Walden Hermitage: not remarkable.

Lectures begin to multiply on my desk. I have one on Friendship which is new, and the materials of some others. I read one last week to the Lyceum, on The Rights and Duties of the Individual in

Relation to Government, — much to Mr. Alcott's satisfaction.

Joel Britton has failed and gone into chancery, but the woods continue to fall before the axes of other men. Neighbor Coombs was lately found dead in the woods near Goose Pond, with his half-empty jug, after he had been rioting a week. Hugh, by the last accounts, was still in Worcester County. Mr. Hosmer, who is himself again, and living in Concord, has just hauled the rest of your wood, amounting to about ten and a half cords.

The newspapers say that they have printed a pirated edition of your Essays in England. Is it as bad as they say, and undisguised and unmitigated piracy? I thought that the printed scrap would entertain Carlyle, notwithstanding its history. If this generation will see out of its hind-head, why then you may turn your back on its forehead. Will you forward it to him for me?

This stands written in your day-book: "September 3d. Received of Boston Savings Bank, on account of Charles Lane, his deposit with interest, $131.38. 16th. Received of Joseph Palmer, on account of Charles Lane, three hundred twenty-three 36/100 dollars, being the balance of a note on demand for four hundred dollars, with interest, $323.36."

If you have any directions to give about the trees, you must not forget that spring will soon be upon us.

Farewell. From your friend,

HENRY THOREAU.

Before a reply came to this letter, Thoreau had occasion to write to Mr. Elliot Cabot again. The allusions to the "Week" and to the Walden house are interesting.

TO ELLIOT CABOT.

CONCORD, March 8, 1848.

Dear Sir, — Mr. Emerson's address is as yet, "R. W. Emerson, care of Alexander Ireland, Esq., Examiner Office, Manchester, England." We had a letter from him on Monday, dated at Manchester, February 10, and he was then preparing to go to Edinburgh the next day, where he was to lecture. He thought that he should get through his northern journeying by the 25th of February, and go to London to spend March and April, and if he did not go to Paris in May, then come home. He has been eminently successful, though the papers this side of the water have been so silent about his adventures.

My book, fortunately, did not find a publisher ready to undertake it, and you can imagine the effect of delay on an author's estimate of his own work. However, I like it well enough to mend it, and shall look at it again directly when I have dispatched some other things.

I have been writing lectures for our own Lyceum this winter, mainly for my own pleasure and advantage. I esteem it a rare happiness to be able to *write* anything, but there (if I ever get there) my concern for it is apt to end. Time & Co are, after all, the only quite honest and trustworthy publishers that we know. I can sympathize, perhaps, with the barberry bush, whose business it is solely to *ripen* its fruit (though that may not be to sweeten it) and to protect it with thorns, so that it holds on all winter, even, unless some hungry crows come to pluck it. But I see that I must get a few dollars together presently to manure my roots. Is your journal able to pay anything, provided it likes an article well enough? I do not promise one. At any rate, I mean always to spend only words enough to purchase silence with; and I have found that this, which is so valuable, though many writers do not prize it, does not cost much, after all.

I have not obtained any more of the mice which I told you were so numerous in my cellar, as my house was removed immediately after I saw you, and I have been living in the village since.

However, if I should happen to meet with anything rare, I will

forward it to you. I thank you for your kind offers, and will avail myself of them so far as to ask if you can anywhere borrow for me for a short time the copy of the "Revue des Deux Mondes," containing a notice of Mr. Emerson. I should like well to read it, and to read it to Mrs. Emerson and others. If this book is not easy to be obtained, do not by any means trouble yourself about it.

TO R. W. EMERSON.1

CONCORD, March 23, 1848.

DEAR FRIEND, — Lidian says I must write a sentence about the children. Eddy says he cannot sing,— "not till mother is a-going to be well." We shall hear his voice very soon, in that case, I trust. Ellen is already thinking what will be done when you come home; but then she thinks it will be some loss that I shall go away. Edith says that I shall come and see them, and always at tea-time, so that I can play with her. Ellen thinks she likes father best because he jumps her sometimes. This is the latest news from

Yours, etc., — HENRY.

P. S. — I have received three newspapers from you duly which I have not acknowledged. There is an anti-Sabbath convention held in Boston to-day, to which Alcott has gone.

That friend to whom Thoreau wrote most constantly and fully, on all topics, was Mr. Harrison Blake of Worcester, a graduate of Harvard two years earlier than Thoreau, in the same

1 This letter was addressed, "R. Waldo Emerson, care of Alexander Ireland, Esq., Manchester, England, *via* New York and Steamer Cambria, March 25." It was mailed in Boston, March 24, and received in Manchester, April 19.

class with two other young men from Concord, 6 — E. R. Hoar and H. B. Dennis. This circumstance may have led to Mr. Blake's visiting the town occasionally, before his intimacy with its poet-naturalist began, in the year 1848. At that time, as Thoreau wrote to Horace Greeley, he had been supporting himself for five years wholly by the labor of his hands; his Walden hermit-life was over, yet neither its record nor the first book had been published, and Thoreau was known in literature chiefly by his papers in the "Dial," which had then ceased for four years. In March, 1848, Mr. Blake read Thoreau's chapter on Persius in the "Dial" for July, 1840, — and though he had read it before, without being much impressed by

it, he now found in it “pure depth and solidity of thought.”

“It has revived in me,” he wrote to Thoreau, “a haunting impression of you, which I carried away from some spoken words of yours.... When I was last in Concord, you spoke of retiring farther from our civilization. I asked you if you would feel no longings for the society of your friends. Your reply was in substance, ‘No, I am nothing.’ That reply was memorable to me. It indicated a depth of resources, a completeness of renunciation, a poise and repose in the universe, which to me is almost inconceivable; which in you seemed domesticated, and to which I look up with veneration. I would know of that soul which can say ‘ am nothing.’ I would be roused by its words to a truer and purer life. Upon me seems to be dawning with new significance the idea that God is here; that we have but to bow before Him in profound submission at every moment, and He will fill our souls with his presence. In this opening of the soul to God, all duties seem to centre; what else have we to do?... If I understand rightly the significance of your life, this is it: You would sunder yourself from society, from the spell of institutions, customs, conventionalities, that you may lead a fresh, simple life with God. Instead of breathing a new life into the old forms, you would have a new life without and within. There is something sublime to me in this attitude, — far as I may be from it myself.... Speak to me in this hour as you are prompted.... I honor you because you abstain from action, and open your soul that you may *be* somewhat. Amid a world of noisy, shallow actors it is noble to stand aside and say, ‘I will simply *be.’* Could I plant myself at once upon the truth, reducing my wants to their minimum,... I should at once be brought nearer to nature, nearer to my fellow-men, — and life would be infinitely richer. But, alas! I shiver on the brink.”

Thus appealed to by one who had so well attained the true Transcendental shibboleth,— “God working in us, both to will and to do,” — Thoreau could not fail to make answer, as he did at once, and thus: —

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

[The first of many letters.]

CONCORD, March 27, 1848.

I am glad to hear that any words of mine, though spoken so long ago that I can hardly claim identity with their author, have reached you. It gives me pleasure, because I have therefore reason to suppose that I have uttered what concerns men, and that it is not in vain that man speaks to man. This is the value of literature. Yet those days are so distant, in every sense, that I have had to look at that page again, to learn what was the tenor of my thoughts then. I should value that article, however, if only because it was the occasion of your letter.

I do believe that the outward and the inward life correspond; that if any should succeed to live a higher life, others would not know of it; that difference and distance are one. To set about living a true life is to go a journey to a distant country, gradually to find ourselves surrounded by new scenes and men; and as long as the old are around me, I know that I am not in any true sense living a new or a better life. The outward is only the outside of that which is within. Men are not concealed under habits, but are revealed by them; they are their true clothes. I care not how curious a reason they may give for their abiding by them. Circumstances are not rigid and unyielding, but our habits are rigid. We are apt to speak vaguely sometimes, as if a divine life were to be grafted on to or built over this present as a suitable foundation. This might do if we could so build over our old life as to exclude from it all the warmth of our affection, and addle it, as the thrush builds over the cuckoo's egg, and lays her own atop, and hatches that only; but the fact is, we — so there is the partition — hatch them both, and the cuckoo's always by a day first, and that young bird crowds the young thrushes out of the nest. No. Destroy the cuckoo's egg, or build a new nest.

Change is change. No new life occupies the old bodies; — they decay. *It* is born, and grows, and flourishes. Men very pathetically inform the old, accept and wear it. Why put up with the almshouse

when you may go to heaven? It is embalming, — no more. Let alone your ointments and your linen swathes, and go into an infant's body. You see in the catacombs of Egypt the result of that experiment, — that is the end of it.

I do believe in simplicity. It is astonishing as well as sad, how many trivial affairs even the wisest man thinks he must attend to in a day; how singular an affair he thinks he must omit. When the mathematician would solve a difficult problem, he first frees the equation of all incumbrances, and reduces it to its simplest terms. So simplify the problem of life, distinguish the necessary and the real. Probe the earth to see where your main roots run. I would stand upon facts. Why not see, — use our eyes? Do men know nothing? I know many men who, in common things, are not to be deceived; who trust no moonshine; who count their money correctly, and know how to invest it; who are said to be prudent and knowing, who yet will stand at a desk the greater part of their lives, as cashiers in banks, and glimmer and rust and finally go out there. If they *know* anything, what under the sun do they do that for? Do they know what *bread* is? or what it is for? Do they know what life is? If they *knew* something, the places which know them now would know them no more forever.

This, our respectable daily life, in which the man of common sense, the Englishman of the world, stands so squarely, and on which our institutions are founded, is in fact the veriest illusion, and will vanish like the baseless fabric of a vision; but that faint glimmer of reality which sometimes illuminates the darkness of daylight for all men, reveals something more solid and enduring than adamant, which is in fact the corner-stone of the world.

Men cannot conceive of a state of things so fair that it cannot be realized. Can any man honestly consult his experience and say that it is so? Have we any facts to appeal to when we say that our dreams are premature? Did you ever hear of a man who had striven all his life faithfully and singly toward an object and in no measure obtained it? If a man constantly aspires, is he not elevated? Did ever a man try heroism, magnanimity, truth, sincerity, and find that there was no advantage in them? that it was a vain endeavor? Of course we do not expect that our paradise will be a garden. We know not what we ask. To look at literature; 7 — how many fine thoughts has every

man had! how few fine thoughts are expressed! Yet we never have a fantasy so subtile and ethereal, but that *talent merely*, with more resolution and faithful persistency, after a thousand failures, might fix and engrave it in distinct and enduring words, and we should see that our dreams are the solidest facts that we know. But I speak not of dreams.

What can be expressed in words can be expressed in life.

My actual life is a fact, in view of which I have no occasion to congratulate myself; but for my faith and aspiration I have respect. It is from these that I speak. Every man's position is in fact too simple to be described. I have sworn no oath. I have no designs on society, or nature, or God. I am simply what I am, or I begin to be that. I *live* in the *present.* I only remember the past, and anticipate the future. I love to live. I love reform better than its modes. There is no history of how bad became better. I believe something, and there is nothing else but that. I know that I am. I know that another is who knows more than I, who takes interest in me, whose creature, and yet whose kindred, in one sense, am I. I know that the enterprise is worthy. I know that things work well. I have heard no bad news.

As for positions, combinations, and details, — what are they? In clear weather, when we look into the heavens, what do we see but the sky and the sun?

If you would convince a man that he does wrong, do right. But do not care to convince him. Men will believe what they see. Let them see.

Pursue, keep up with, circle round and round your life, as a dog does his master's chaise. Do what you love. Know your own bone; gnaw at it, bury it, unearth it, and gnaw it still. Do not be too moral. You may cheat yourself out of much life so. Aim above morality. Be not simply good; be good for something. All fables, indeed, have their morals; but the innocent enjoy the story. Let nothing come between you and the light. Respect men and brothers only. When you travel to the Celestial City, carry no letter of introduction. When you knock, ask to see God, — none of the servants. In what concerns you much, do not think that you have companions: know that you are alone in the world.

Thus I write at random. I need to see you, and I trust I shall, to

correct my mistakes. Perhaps you have some oracles for me.

HENRY THOREAU.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, May 2, 1848.

"We must have our bread." But what is our bread? Is it baker's bread? Methinks it should be very *home-made* bread. What is our meat? Is it butcher's meat? What is that which we *must* have? Is that bread which we are now earning sweet? Is it not bread which has been suffered to sour, and then been sweetened with an alkali, which has undergone the vinous, acetous, and sometimes the putrid fermentation, and then been whitened with vitriol? Is this the bread which we must have? Man must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, truly, but also by the sweat of his brain within his brow. The body can feed the body only. I have tasted but little bread in my life. It has been mere grub and provender for the most part. Of bread that nourished the brain and the heart, scarcely any. There is absolutely none even on the tables of the rich.

There is not one kind of food for all men. You must and you will feed those faculties which you exercise. The laborer whose body is weary does not require the same food with the scholar whose brain is weary. Men should not labor foolishly like brutes, but the brain and the body should always, or as much as possible, work and rest together, and then the work will be of such a kind that when the body is hungry the brain will be hungry also, and the same food will suffice for both; otherwise the food which repairs the waste energy of the over-wrought body will oppress the sedentary brain, and the degenerate scholar will come to esteem all food vulgar, and all getting a living drudgery.

How shall we earn our bread is a grave question; yet it is a sweet and inviting question. Let us not shirk it, as is usually done. It is the most important and practical question which is put to man. Let us not answer it hastily. Let us not be content to get our bread in some gross, careless, and hasty manner. Some men go a-hunting, some a-fishing, some a-gaming, some to war; but none have so pleasant a time as they who in earnest seek to earn their bread. It is true actually as it is true really; it is true materially as it is true spiritually, that they who seek honestly and sincerely, with all their hearts and lives

and strength, to earn their bread, do earn it, and it is sure to be very sweet to them. A very little bread, — a very few crumbs are enough, if it be of the right quality, for it is infinitely nutritious. Let each man, then, earn at least a crumb of bread for his body before he dies, and know the taste of it, — that it is identical with the bread of life, and that they both go down at one swallow.

Our bread need not ever be sour or hard to digest. What Nature is to the mind she is also to the body. As she feeds my imagination, she will feed my body; for what she says she means, and is ready to do. She is not simply beautiful to the poet's eye. Not only the rainbow and sunset are beautiful, but to be fed and clothed, sheltered and warmed aright, are equally beautiful and inspiring. There is not necessarily any gross and ugly fact which may not be eradicated from the life of man. We should endeavor practically in our lives to correct all the defects which our imagination detects. The heavens are as deep as our aspirations are high. So high as a tree aspires to grow, so high it will find an atmosphere suited to it. Every man should stand for a force which is perfectly irresistible. How can any man be weak who dares *to be* at all? Even the tenderest plants force their way up through the hardest earth, and the crevices of rocks; but a man no material power can resist. What a wedge, what a beetle, what a catapult, is an *earnest* man! What can resist him?

It is a momentous fact that a man may be *good*, or he may be *bad;* his life may be *true*, or it may be *false;* it may be either a shame or a glory to him. The good man builds himself up; the bad man destroys himself.

But whatever we do we must do confidently (if we are timid, let us, then, act timidly), not expecting more light, but having light enough. If we confidently expect more, then let us wait for it. But what is this which we have? Have we not already waited? Is this the beginning of time? Is there a man who does not see clearly beyond, though only a hair's breadth beyond where he at any time stands?

If one hesitates in his path, let him not proceed. Let him respect his doubts, for doubts, too, may have some divinity in them. That we have but little faith is not sad, but that we have but little faithfulness. By faithfulness faith is earned. When, in the progress of a life, a man

swerves, though only by an angle infinitely small, from his proper and allotted path (and this is never done quite unconsciously even at first; in fact, that was his broad and scarlet sin, — ah, he knew of it more than he can tell), then the drama of his life turns to tragedy, and makes haste to its fifth act. When once we thus fall behind ourselves, there is no accounting for the obstacles which rise up in our path, and no one is so wise as to advise, and no one so powerful as to aid us while we abide on that ground. Such are cursed with *duties,* and the *neglect of their duties.* For such the decalogue was made, and other far more voluminous and terrible codes.

These departures, — who have not made them?

8 — for they are as faint as the parallax of a fixed star, and at the commencement we say they are nothing, — that is, they originate in a kind of sleep and forgetfulness of the soul when it is naught. A man cannot be too circumspect in order to keep in the straight road, and be sure that he sees all that he may at any time see, that so he may distinguish his true path.

You ask if there is no doctrine of sorrow in my philosophy. Of acute sorrow I suppose that I know comparatively little. My saddest and most genuine sorrows are apt to be but transient regrets. The place of sorrow is supplied, perchance, by a certain hard and proportionably barren indifference. I am of kin to the sod, and partake largely of its dull patience, — in winter expecting the sun of spring. In my cheapest moments I am apt to think that it is not my business to be "seeking the spirit," but as much its business to be seeking me. I know very well what Goethe meant when he said that he never had a chagrin but he made a poem out of it. I have altogether too much patience of this kind. I am too easily contented with a slight and almost animal happiness. My happiness is a good deal like that of the woodchucks.

Methinks I am never quite committed, never wholly the creature of my moods, being always to some extent their critic. My only integral experience is in my vision. I see, perchance, with more integrity than I feel.

But I need not tell you what manner of man I am, — my virtues or my vices. You can guess if it is worth the while; and I do not discriminate them well.

I do not write this time at my hut in the woods. I am at present living with Mrs. Emerson, whose house is an old home of mine, for company during Mr. Emerson's absence.

You will perceive that I am as often talking to myself, perhaps, as speaking to you.

Here is a confession of faith, and a bit of selfportraiture worth having; for there is little except faithful statement of the fact. Its sentences are based on the questions and experiences of his correspondent; yet they diverge into that atmosphere of humor and hyperbole so native to Thoreau; in whom was the oddest mixture of the serious and the comic, the literal and the romantic. He addressed himself also, so far as his unbending personality would allow, to the mood or the need of his correspondent; and he had great skill in fathoming character and describing in a few touches the persons he encountered; as may be seen in his letters to Emerson, especially, who also had, and in still greater measure, this "fatal gift of penetration," as he once termed it. This will be seen in the contrast of Thoreau's correspondence with Mr. Blake, and that he was holding at the same time with Horace Greeley, — persons radically unlike.

In August, 1846, Thoreau sent to Greeley his essay on Carlyle, asking him to find a place for it in some magazine. Greeley sent it to R. W. Griswold, then editing " Graham's Magazine" in Philadelphia, who accepted it and promised to pay for it, but did not publish it till March and April, 1847; even then the promised payment was not forthcoming. On the 31st of March, 1848, a year and a half after it had been put in Griswold's possession, Thoreau wrote again to Greeley, saying that no money had come to hand. At once, and at the very time when Mr. Blake was opening his spiritual state to Thoreau (April 3, 1848), the busy editor of the " Tribune" replied: "It saddens and surprises me to know that your article was not paid for by Graham; and, since my honor is involved, I will see that you are paid, and that at no distant day." Accordingly, on May 17th, he adds: "To-day I have been able to lay my hand on the money due you. I made out a regular bill for the contribution, drew a draft on G. R. Graham for the amount, gave it to his brother in New York for collection, and received the money. I have made Graham pay you seventy-five dollars, but I only send you fifty dollars," having

deducted twenty-five dollars for the advance of that sum he had made a month before to Thoreau for his “Ktaadn and the Maine Woods,” which finally came out in “Sartain’s Union Magazine” of Philadelphia, late in 1848. To this letter and remittance of fifty dollars Thoreau replied, May 19, 1848, substantially thus: —

TO HORACE GREELEY (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, May 19, 1848.

My Friend Greeley, — I have to-day received from you fifty dollars. It is five years that I have been maintaining myself entirely by manual labor, — not getting a cent from any other quarter or employment. Now this toil has occupied so few days, — perhaps a single month, spring and fall each, — that I must have had more leisure than any of my brethren for study and literature. I have done rude work of all kinds. From July, 1845, to September, 1847, I lived by myself in the forest, in a fairly good cabin, plastered and warmly covered, which I built myself. There I earned all I needed and kept to my own affairs. During that time my weekly outlay was but seven-and-twenty cents; and I had an abundance of all sorts. Unless the human race perspire more than I do, there is no occasion to live by the sweat of their brow. If men cannot get on without money (the smallest amount will suffice), the truest method of earning it is by working as a laborer at one dollar per day. You are least dependent so; I speak as an expert, having used several kinds of labor.

Why should the scholar make a constant complaint that his fate is specially hard? We are too often told of "the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties," — how poets depend on patrons and starve in garrets, or at last go mad and die. Let us hear the other side of the story. Why should not the scholar, if he is really wiser than the multitude, do coarse work now and then? Why not let his greater wisdom enable him to do without things? If you say the wise man is unlucky, how could you distinguish him from the foolishly unfortunate?

My friend, how can I thank you for your kindness? Perhaps there is a better way, — I will convince you that it is felt and appreciated. Here have I been sitting idle, as it were, while you have been busy in my cause, and have done so much for me. I wish you had had a better subject; but good deeds are no less good because their object is unworthy.

Yours was the best way to collect money, — but I should never

have thought of it; I might have waylaid the debtor perchance. Even a business man might not have thought of it, — and I cannot be called that, as business is understood usually, — not being familiar with the routine. But your way has this to commend it also, 9 — if you make the draft, you decide how much to draw. You drew just the sum suitable.

The Ktaadn paper can be put in the guise of letters, if it runs best so; dating each part on the day it describes. Twenty-five dollars more for it will satisfy me; I expected no more, and do not hold you to pay that, — for you asked for something else, and there was delay in sending. So, if you use it, send me twenty-five dollars now or after you sell it, as is most convenient; but take out the expenses that I see you must have had. In such cases carriers generally get the most; but you, as carrier here, get no money, but risk losing some, besides much of your time; while I go away, as I must, giving you unprofitable thanks. Yet trust me, my pleasure in your letter is not wholly a selfish one. May my good genius still watch over me and my added wealth!

P. S. — My book grows in bulk as I work on it; but soon I shall get leisure for those shorter articles you want, — then look out.

The "book," of course, was the "Week," then about to go through the press; the shorter articles were some that Greeley suggested for the Philadelphia magazines. Nothing came of this, but the correspondence was kept up until 1854, and led to the partial publication of "Cape Cod," and "The Yankee in Canada," in the newly-launched "Putnam's Magazine," of which G. W. Curtis was editor. But he differed with Thoreau on a matter of style or opinion (the articles appearing as anonymous, or editorial), and the author withdrew his MS. The letters of Greeley in this entertaining series are all preserved; but Greeley seems to have given Thoreau's away for autographs; and the only one accessible as yet is that just paraphrased.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT MILTON).

CONCORD, August 10, 1849.

Mr. Blake, — I write now chiefly to say, before it is too late, that I shall be glad to see you in Concord, and will give you a chamber, etc., in my father's house, and as much of my poor company as you can bear.

I am in too great haste this time to speak to your, or out of my, condition. I might say, — you might say, — comparatively speaking, be not anxious to avoid poverty. In this way the wealth of the universe may be securely invested. What a pity if we do not live this short time according to the laws of the long time, — the eternal laws! Let us see that we stand erect here, and do not lie along by our *whole length* in the dirt. Let our meanness be our footstool, not our cushion. In the midst of this labyrinth let us live a *thread* of life. We must act with so rapid and resistless a purpose in *one* direction, that our vices will necessarily trail behind.

The nucleus of a comet is almost a star. Was there ever a genuine dilemma? The laws of earth are for the feet, or inferior man; the laws of heaven are for the head, or superior man; the latter are the former sublimed and expanded, even as radii from the earth's centre go on diverging into space. Happy the man who observes the heavenly and the terrestrial law in just proportion; whose every faculty, from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head, obeys the law of its level; who neither stoops nor goes on tiptoe, but lives a balanced life, acceptable to nature and to God.

These things I say; other things I do.

I am sorry to hear that you did not receive my book earlier. I addressed it and left it in Munroe's shop to be sent to you immediately, on the twenty-sixth of May, before a copy had been sold.

Will you remember me to Mr. Brown, when you see him next: he is well remembered by

HENRY THOREAU.

I still owe you a worthy answer.

TO HARRISON BLAKE.

CONCORD, November 20, 1849.

MR. BLAKE, — I have not forgotten that I am your debtor. When I read over your letters, as I have just done, I feel that I am unworthy to have received or to answer them, though they are addressed, as I would have them, to the ideal of me. It behoves me, if I would reply, to speak out of the rarest part of myself.

At present I am subsisting on certain wild flavors which nature wafts to me, which unaccountably sustain me, and make my apparently poor life rich. Within a year my walks have extended themselves, and almost every afternoon (I read, or write, or make pencils in the forenoon, and by the last means get a living for my body) I visit some new hill, or pond, or wood, many miles distant. I am astonished at the wonderful retirement through which I move, rarely meeting a man in these excursions, never seeing one similarly engaged, unless it be my companion, when I have one. I cannot help feeling that of all the human inhabitants of nature hereabouts, only we two have leisure to admire and enjoy our inheritance.

"Free in this world as the birds in the air, disengaged from every kind of chains, those who have practiced the *yoga* gather in Brahma the certain fruit of their works."

Depend upon it, that, rude and careless as I am, I would fain practice the *yoga* faithfully.

"The yogi, absorbed in contemplation, contributes in his degree to creation: he breathes a divine perfume, he hears wonderful things. Divine forms traverse him without tearing him, and, united to the nature which is proper to him, he goes, he acts as animating original matter."

To some extent, and at rare intervals, even I am a yogi.

I know little about the affairs of Turkey, but I am sure that I know something about barberries and chestnuts, of which I have collected a store this fall. When I go to see my neighbor, he will formally communicate to me the latest news from Turkey, which he read in yesterday's mail,— "Now Turkey by this time looks determined, and

Lord Palmerston" — Why, I would rather talk of the bran, which, unfortunately, was sifted out of my bread this morning, and thrown away. It is a fact which lies nearer to me. The newspaper gossip with which our hosts abuse our ears is as far from a true hospitality as the viands which they set before us. We did not need them to feed our bodies, and the news can be bought for a penny. We want the inevitable news, be it sad or cheering, wherefore and by what means they are extant this *new* day. If they are well, let them whistle and dance; if they are dyspeptic, it is their duty to complain, that so they may in any case be *entertaining.* If words were invented to conceal thought, I think that newspapers are a great improvement on a bad invention. Do not suffer your life to be taken by newspapers.

I thank you for your hearty appreciation of my book. I am glad to have had such a long talk with you, and that you had patience to listen to me to the end. I think that I had the advantage of you, for I chose my own mood, and in one sense your mood too, — that is, a quiet and attentive reading mood. Such advantage has the writer over the talker. I am sorry that you did not come to Concord in your vacation. Is it not time for another vacation? I am here yet, and Concord is here.

You will have found out by this time who it is that writes this, and will be glad to have you write to him, without his subscribing himself HENRY D. THOREAU.

P. S. — It is so long since I have seen you, that, as you will perceive, I have to speak, as it were, *in vacuo,* as if I were sounding hollowly for an echo, and it did not make much odds what kind of a sound I made. But the gods do not hear any rude or discordant sound, as we learn from the echo; and I know that the nature toward which I launch these sounds is so rich that it will modulate anew and wonderfully improve my rudest strain.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT MILTON).

CONCORD, April 3, 1850.

Mr. Blake, — I thank you for your letter, and I will endeavor to record some of the thoughts which it suggests, whether pertinent or not. You speak of poverty and dependence. Who are poor and dependent? Who are rich and independent? When was it that men agreed to respect the appearance and not the reality? Why should the appearance *appear?* Are we well acquainted, then, with the reality? There is none who does not lie hourly in the respect he pays to false appearance. How sweet it would be to treat men and things, for an hour, for just what they are! We wonder that the sinner does not confess his sin. When we are weary with travel, we lay down our load and rest by the wayside. So, when we are weary with the burden of life, why do we not lay down this load of falsehoods which we have volunteered to sustain, and be refreshed as never mortal was? Let the beautiful laws prevail. Let us not weary ourselves by resisting them. When we would rest our bodies we cease to support them; we recline on the lap of earth. So, when we would rest our spirits, we must recline on the Great Spirit. Let things alone; let them weigh what they will; let them soar or fall. To succeed in letting only one thing alone in a winter morning, if it be only one poor frozen-thawed apple that hangs on a tree, what a glorious achievement! Methinks it lightens through the dusky universe. What an infinite wealth we have discovered! God reigns, *i* e., when we take a liberal view, — when a liberal view is presented us.

Let God alone if need be. Methinks, if I loved him more, I should keep him, — I should keep myself rather, — at a more respectful distance. It is not when I am going to meet him, but when I am just turning away and leaving him alone, that I discover that God is. I say, God. I am not sure that that is the name. You will know whom I mean.

If for a moment we make way with our petty selves, wish no ill to anything, apprehend no ill, cease to be but as the crystal which reflects a ray, — what shall we not reflect! What a universe will

appear crystallized and radiant around us!

I should say, let the Muse lead the Muse, — let the understanding lead the understanding, though in any case it is the farthest forward which leads them both. If the Muse accompany, she is no muse, but an amusement. The Muse should lead like a star which is very far off; but that does not imply that we are to follow foolishly, falling into sloughs and over precipices, for it is not foolishness, but understanding, which is to follow, which the Muse is appointed to lead, as a fit guide of a fit follower.

Will you live? or will you be embalmed? Will you live, though it be astride of a sunbeam; or will you repose safely in the catacombs for a thousand years? In the former case, the worst accident that can happen is that you may break your neck. Will you break your heart, your soul, to save your neck? Necks and pipe-stems are fated to be broken. Men make a great ado about the folly of demanding too much of life (or of eternity?), and of endeavoring to live according to that demand. It is much ado about nothing. No harm ever came from that quarter. I am not afraid that I shall exaggerate the value and significance of life, but that I shall not be up to the occasion which it is. I shall be sorry to remember that I was there, but noticed nothing remarkable, — not so much as a prince in disguise; lived in the golden age a hired man; visited Olympus even, but fell asleep after dinner, and did not hear the conversation of the gods. I lived in Judaea eighteen hundred years ago, but I never knew that there was such a one as Christ among my contemporaries! If there is anything more glorious than a congress of men a-framing or amending of a constitution going on, which I suspect there is, I desire to see the morning papers. I am greedy of the faintest rumor, though it were got by listening at the key-hole. I will dissipate myself in that direction.

I am glad to know that you find what I have said on Friendship worthy of attention. I wish I could have the benefit of your criticism; it would be a rare help to me. Will you not communicate it?

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT MILTON).

CONCORD, May 28, 1850.

MR. BLAKE,— "I never found any contentment in the life which the newspapers record,"

10 — anything of more value than the cent which they cost. Contentment in being covered with dust an inch deep! We who walk the streets, and hold time together, are but the refuse of ourselves, and that life is for the shells of us, — of our body and our mind, — for our scurf, — a thoroughly *scurvy* life. It is coffee made of coffee-grounds the twentieth time, which was only coffee the first time, — while the living water leaps and sparkles by our doors. I know some who, in their charity, give their coffee-grounds to the poor! We, demanding news, and putting up with *such* news! Is it a new convenience, or a new accident, or, rather, a new perception of the truth that we want!

You say that "the serene hours in which friendship, books, nature, thought, seem alone primary considerations, visit you but faintly." Is not the attitude of expectation somewhat divine? — a sort of home-made divineness? Does it not compel a kind of sphere-music to attend on it? And do not its satisfactions merge at length, by insensible degrees, in the enjoyment of the thing expected?

What if I should forget to write about my not writing? It is not worth the while to make that a theme. It is as if I had written every day. It is as if I had never written before. I wonder that you think so much about it, for not writing is the most like writing, in my case, of anything I know.

Why will you not relate to me your dream? That would be to realize it somewhat. You tell me that you dream, but not what you dream. I can *guess* what comes to pass. So do the frogs dream. Would that I knew what. I have never found out whether they are awake or asleep, — whether it is day or night with them.

I am preaching, mind you, to bare walls, that is, to myself; and if you have chanced to come in and occupy a pew, do not think that my remarks are directed at you particularly, and so slam the seat in disgust. This discourse was written long before these exciting times.

Some absorbing employment on your higher ground, — your upland farm, — whither no cart-path leads, but where you mount

alone with your hoe, — where the life everlasting grows; there you raise a crop which needs not to be brought down into the valley to a market; which you barter for heavenly products.

Do you separate distinctly enough the support of your body, from that of your essence? By how distinct a course commonly are these two ends attained! Not that they should not be attained by one and the same means, — that, indeed, is the rarest success, — but there is no half and half about it.

I shall be glad to read my lecture to a small audience in Worcester such as you describe, and will only require that my expenses be paid. If only the parlor be large enough for an echo, and the audience will embarrass themselves with hearing as much as the lecturer would otherwise embarrass himself with reading. But I warn you that this is no better calculated for a promiscuous audience than the last two which I read to you. It requires, in every sense, a concordant audience.

I will come on next Saturday and spend Sunday with you if you wish it. Say so if you do.

"Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

Be not deterred by melancholy on the path which leads to immortal health and joy. When they tasted of the water of the river over which they were to go, they thought it tasted a little bitterish to the palate, but it proved sweeter when it was down.

H. D. T.

NOTE. — The "companion" of his walks, mentioned by Thoreau in November, 1849, was Ellery Channing; the neighbor who insisted on talking of Turkey was perhaps Emerson, who, after his visit to Europe in 1848, was more interested in its politics than before. Pencil-making was Thoreau's manual work for many years; and it must have been about this time (1849-50) that he "had occasion to go to New York to peddle some pencils," as he says in his journal for November 20, 1853. He adds, "I was obliged to manufacture one thousand dollars' worth of pencils, and slowly dispose of, and finally sacrifice them, in order to pay an assumed debt of one hundred dollars." This debt was perhaps for the printing of the *Week*,

published in 1849, and paid for in 1853. Thoreau's pencils have sold (in 1893) for 25 cents each. For other facts concerning his debt to James Munroe, see Sanborn's *Thoreau,* pp. 230, 235.

III. FRIENDS AND FOLLOWERS.

TO R. W. EMERSON1 (AT CONCORD).

FIRE ISLAND BEACH, Thursday morning, July 25, 1850.

Dear Friend, — I am writing this at the house of Smith Oakes, within one mile of the wreck. He is the one who rendered most assistance. William H. Channing came down with me, but I have not seen Arthur Fuller, nor Greeley, nor Marcus Spring. Spring and Charles Sumner were here yesterday, but left soon. Mr. Oakes and wife tell me (all the survivors came, or were brought, directly to their house) that the ship struck at ten minutes after four A. M., and all hands, being mostly in their nightclothes, made haste to the forecastle, the water coming in at once. There they remained; the passengers *in* the forecastle, the crew above it, doing what

1 It will readily be seen that this letter relates to the shipwreck on Fire Island, near New York, in which Margaret Fuller, Countess Ossoli, with her husband and child, was lost. A letter with no date of the year, but probably written February 15, 1840, from Emerson to Thoreau, represents them both as taking much trouble about a house in Concord for Mrs. Fuller, the mother of Margaret, who had just sold her Groton house, and wished to live with her daughter near Emerson.

they could. Every wave lifted the forecastle roof and washed over those within. The first man got ashore at nine; many from nine to noon. At flood tide, about half past three o'clock, when the ship broke up entirely, they came out of the forecastle, and Margaret sat with her back to the foremast, with her hands on her knees, her husband and child already drowned. A great wave came and washed her aft. The steward (?) had just before taken her child and started for shore. Both were drowned.

The broken desk, in a bag, containing no very valuable papers; a large black leather trunk, with an upper and under compartment, the upper holding books and papers; a carpet-bag, probably Ossoli's, and one of his shoes (?) are all the Ossoli effects known to have been found. Four bodies remain to be found: the two Ossolis, Horace Sumner, and a sailor. I have visited the child's grave. Its body will probably be taken away to-day. The wreck is to be sold at auction,

excepting the hull, to-day.

The mortar would not go off. Mrs. Hasty, the captain's wife, told Mrs. Oakes that she and Margaret divided their money, and tied up the halves in handkerchiefs around their persons; that Margaret took sixty or seventy dollars. Mrs. Hasty, who can tell all about Margaret up to eleven o'clock on Friday, is said to be going to Portland, New England, to-day. She and Mrs. Fuller must, and probably will, come together. The cook, the last to leave, and the steward (?) will know the rest. I shall try to see them. In the mean while I shall do what I can to recover property and obtain particulars hereabouts. William H. Channing — did I write it? — has come with me. Arthur Fuller has this moment reached the house. He reached the beach last night. We got here yesterday noon. A good part of the wreck still holds together where she struck, and something may come ashore with her fragments. The last body was found on Tuesday, three miles west. Mrs. Oakes dried the papers which were in the trunk, and she says they appeared to be of various kinds. "Would they cover that table?" (a small round one). "They would if spread out. Some were tied up. There were twenty or thirty books "in the same half of the trunk. Another smaller trunk, empty, came ashore, but there was no mark on it." She speaks of Paulina as if she might have been a sort of nurse to the child. I expect to go to Patchogue, whence the pilferers must have chiefly come, and advertise, etc.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (IN MILTON).

CONCORD, August 9, 1850.

Mr. Blake, — I received your letter just as I was rushing to Fire Island beach to recover what remained of Margaret Fuller, and read it on the way. That event and its train, as much as anything, have prevented my answering it before. It is wisest to speak when you are spoken to. I will now endeavor to reply, at the risk of having nothing to say.

I find that actual events, notwithstanding the singular prominence which we all allow them, are far less real than the creations of my imagination. They are truly visionary and insignificant, 11 all that we commonly call life and death, — and affect me less than my dreams. This petty stream which from time to time swells and carries away the mills and bridges of our habitual life, and that mightier stream or ocean on which we securely float, — what makes the difference between them? I have in my pocket a button which I ripped off the coat of the Marquis of Ossoli, on the seashore, the other day. Held up, it intercepts the light, — an actual button, 12 and yet all the life it is connected with is less substantial to me, and interests me less, than my faintest dream. Our thoughts are the epochs in our lives: all else is but as a journal of the winds that blew while we were here.

I say to myself, Do a little more of that work which you have confessed to be good. You are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with yourself, without reason. Have you not a thinking faculty of inestimable value? If there is an experiment which you would like to try, try it. Do not entertain doubts if they are not agreeable to you. Remember that you need not eat unless you are hungry. Do not read the newspapers. Improve every opportunity to be melancholy. As for health, consider yourself well. Do not engage to find things as you think they are. Do what nobody else can do for you. Omit to do anything else. It is not easy to make our lives respectable by any course of activity. We must repeatedly withdraw into our shells of thought, like the tortoise, somewhat helplessly; yet there is more than philosophy in that.

Do not waste any reverence on my attitude. I merely manage to sit up where I have dropped. I am sure that my acquaintances mistake me. They ask my advice on high matters, but they do not know even how poorly on't I am for hats and shoes. I have hardly a shift. Just as shabby as I am in my outward apparel, ay, and more lamentably shabby, am I in my inward substance. If I should turn myself inside out, my rags and meanness would indeed appear. I am something to him that made me, undoubtedly, but not much to any other that he has made.

Would it not be worth while to discover nature in Milton? be native to the universe? I, too, love Concord best, but I am glad when I discover, in oceans and wildernesses far away, the material of a million Concords: indeed, I am lost, unless I discover them. I see less difference between a city and a swamp than formerly. It is a swamp, however, too dismal and dreary even for me, and I should be glad if there were fewer owls, and frogs, and mosquitoes in it. I prefer ever a more cultivated place, free from miasma and crocodiles. I am so sophisticated, and I will take my choice.

As for missing friends, — what if we do miss one another? have we not agreed on a rendezvous? While each wanders his own way through the wood, without anxiety, ay, with serene joy, though it be on his hands and knees, over rocks and fallen trees, he cannot but be in the right way. There is no wrong way to him. How can he be said to miss his friend, whom the fruits still nourish and the elements sustain? A man who missed his friend at a turn, went on buoyantly, dividing the friendly air, and humming a tune to himself, ever and anon kneeling with delight to study each little lichen in his path, and scarcely made three miles a day for friendship. As for conforming outwardly, and living your own life inwardly, I do not think much of that. Let not your right hand know what your left hand does in that line of business. It will prove a failure. Just as successfully can you walk against a sharp steel edge which divides you cleanly right and left. Do you wish to try your ability to resist distension? It is a greater strain than any soul can long endure. When you get God to pulling one way, and the devil the other, each having his feet well braced, — to say nothing of the conscience sawing transversely, — almost any timber will give way.

I do not dare invite you earnestly to come to Concord, because I know too well that the berries are not thick in my fields, and we should have to take it out in viewing the landscape. But come, on every account, and we will see — one another.

No letters of the year 1851 have been found by me. On the 27th of December, 1850, Mr. Cabot wrote to say that the Boston Society of Natural History, of which he was secretary, had elected Thoreau a corresponding member, "with all the *honores, privilegia, etc., ad gradum tuum pertinentia*, without the formality of paying any entrance fee, or annual subscription. Your duties in return are to advance the interests of the Society by communications or otherwise, as shall seem good." This is believed to be the only learned body which honored itself by electing Thoreau. The immediate occasion of this election was the present, by Thoreau, to the Society, of a fine specimen of the American goshawk, caught or shot by Jacob Farmer, which Mr. Cabot acknowledged, December 18, 1849, saying: "It was first described by Wilson; lately Audubon has identified it with the European goshawk, thereby committing a very flagrant blunder. It is usually a very rare species with us. The European bird is used in hawking; and doubtless ours would be equally *game.* If Mr. Farmer skins him now, he will have to take second cut; for his skin is already off and stuffed, 1841 his remains dissected, measured, and deposited in alcohol."

TO T. W. HIGGINSON (AT BOSTON).

CONCORD, April 2-3,1852.

Dear Sir, — I do not see that I can refuse to read another lecture, but what makes me hesitate is the fear that I have not another available which will *entertain* a large audience, though I have thoughts to offer which I think will be quite as worthy of their attention. However, I will try; for the prospect of earning a few dollars is alluring. As far as I can foresee, my subject would be "Reality" rather transcendentally treated. It lies still in "Walden, or Life in the Woods." Since you are kind enough to undertake the arrangements, I will leave it to you to name an evening of next week, decide on the most suitable room, and advertise, — if this is not taking you too literally at your word.

If you still think it worth the while to attend to this, will you let me know as soon as may be what evening will be most convenient? I certainly do not feel prepared to offer myself as a lecturer to the Boston *public*, and hardly know whether more to dread a small audience or a large one. Nevertheless, I will repress this squeamishness, and propose no alteration in your arrangements. I shall be glad to accept your invitation to tea.

This lecture was given, says Colonel Higginson, "at the Mechanics' Apprentices Library in Boston, with the snow outside, and the young boys rustling their newspapers among the Alcotts and Blakes." Or, possibly, this remark may apply to a former lecture in the same year, which was that in which Thoreau first lectured habitually away from Concord. He commenced by accepting an invitation to speak at Leyden Hall, in Plymouth, where his friends the Watsons had organized Sunday services, that the Transcendentalists and Abolitionists might have a chance to be heard at a time when they were generally excluded from the popular "Lyceum courses" throughout New England. Mr. B. M. Watson says: —

"I have found two letters from Thoreau in answer to my invitation

in 1852 to address our congregation at Leyden Hall on Sunday mornings, — an enterprise I undertook about that time. I find among the distinguished men who addressed us the names of Thoreau, Emerson, Ellery Channing, Alcott, Higginson, Remond, S. Johnson, F. J. Appleton, Edmund Quincy, Garrison, Phillips, J. P. Lesley, Shackford, W. F. Channing, N. H. Whiting, Adin Ballou, Abby K. Foster and her husband, J. T. Sargent, T. T. Stone, Jones Very, Wasson, Hurlbut, F. W. Holland, and Scherb; so you may depend we had some fun."

These letters were mere notes. The first, dated February 17,1852, says: "I have not yet seen Mr. Channing, though I believe he is in town, — having decided to come to Plymouth myself, — but I will let him know that he is expected. Mr. Daniel Foster wishes me to say that he accepts your invitation, and that he would like to come Sunday after next. I will take the Saturday afternoon train. I shall be glad to get a winter view of Plymouth Harbor, and see where your garden lies under the snow."

The second letter follows: —

TO MARSTON WATSON (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, December 31, 1852.

Mr. Watson, — I would be glad to visit Plymouth again, but at present I have nothing to read which is not severely heathenish, or at least secular, — which the dictionary defines as "relating to affairs of the present world, not holy,"

1842 though not necessarily unholy; nor have I any leisure to prepare it. My writing at present is profane, yet in a good sense, and, as it were, sacredly, I may say; for, finding the air of the temple too close, I sat outside. Don't think I say this to get off; no, no! It will not do to read such things to hungry ears. "If they ask for bread, will you give them a stone?" When I have something of the right kind, depend upon it I will let you know.

Up to 1848, when he was invited to lecture before the Salem Lyceum by Nathaniel Hawthorne, then its secretary, Thoreau seems to have spoken publicly very little except in Concord; nor did he extend the circuit of his lectures much until his two books had made him known as a thinker. There was little to attract a popular audience in his manner or his matter; but it was the era of lectures, and if one could once gain admission to the circle of "lyceum lecturers," it did not so much matter what he said; a lecture was a lecture, as a sermon was a sermon, good, bad, or indifferent. But it was common to exclude the anti-slavery speakers from the lyceums, even those of more eloquence than Thoreau; this led to invitations from the small band of reformers scattered about New England and New York, so that the most unlikely of platform speakers (Ellery Channing, for example) sometimes gave lectures at Plymouth, Greenfield, Newburyport, or elsewhere. The present fashion of parlor lectures had not come in; yet at Worcester Thoreau's friends early organized for him something of that kind, as his letters to Mr. Blake show. In default of an audience of numbers, Thoreau fell into the habit of lecturing in his letters to this friend; the most marked instance being the thoughtful essay on Love and Chastity which makes the bulk of his epistle dated September, 1852. Like most of his serious writing,

this was made up from his daily journal, and hardly comes under the head of “familiar letters;” the didactic purpose is rather too apparent. Yet it cannot be spared from any collection of his epistles, — none of which flowed more directly from the quickened moral nature of the man.

TO SOPHIA THOREAU (AT BANGOR).

CONCORD, July 13, 1852.

Dear Sophia, — I am a miserable letter-writer, but perhaps if I should say this at length and with sufficient emphasis and regret it would make a letter. I am sorry that nothing transpires here of much moment; or, I should rather say, that I am so slackened and rusty, like the telegraph wire this season, that no wind that blows can extract music from me.

I am not on the trail of any elephants or mastodons, but have succeeded in trapping only a few ridiculous mice, which cannot feed my imagination. I have become sadly scientific. I would rather come upon the vast valley-like " spoor" only of some celestial beast which this world's woods can no longer sustain, than spring my net over a bushel of moles. You must do better in those woods where you are. You must have some adventures to relate and repeat for years to come, which will eclipse even mother's voyage to Goldsborough and Sissiboo.

They say that Mr. Pierce, the presidential candidate, was in town last 5th of July, visiting Hawthorne, whose college chum he was; and that Hawthorne is writing a life of him, for electioneering purposes.

Concord is just as idiotic as ever in relation to the spirits and their knockings. Most people here believe in a spiritual world which no respectable junk bottle, which had not met with a slip, would condescend to contain even a portion of for a moment, — whose atmosphere would extinguish a candle let down into it, like a well that wants airing; in spirits which the very bullfrogs in our meadows would blackball. Their evil genius is seeing how low it can degrade them. The hooting of owls, the croaking of frogs, is celestial wisdom in comparison. If I could be brought to believe in the things which they believe, I should make haste to get rid of my certificate of stock in this and the next world's enterprises, and buy a share in the first Immediate Annihilation Company that offered. I would exchange my immortality for a glass of small beer this hot weather. Where *are* the heathen? Was there ever any superstition before? And yet I suppose

there may be a vessel this very moment setting sail from the coast of North America to that of Africa with a missionary on board! Consider the dawn and the sunrise, — the rainbow and the evening, — the words of Christ and the aspiration of all the saints! Hear music Î see, smell, taste, feel, hear, — anything, — and then hear these idiots, inspired by the cracking of a restless board, humbly asking, " Please, Spirit, if you cannot answer by knocks, answer by tips of the table."!!!!!!!

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, July 21, 1852.

Me. Blake, — I am too stupidly well these days to write to you. My life is almost altogether outward, — all shell and no tender kernel; so that I fear the report of it would be only a nut for you to crack, with no meat in it for you to eat. Moreover, you have not cornered me up, and I enjoy such large liberty in writing to you, that I feel as vague as the air. However, I rejoice to hear that you have attended so patiently to anything which I have said heretofore, and have detected any truth in it. It encourages me to say more, 1843 — not in this letter, I fear, but in some book which I may write one day. I am glad to know that I am as much to any mortal as a persistent and consistent scarecrow is to a farmer, — such a bundle of straw in a man's clothing as I am, with a few bits of tin to sparkle in the sun dangling about me, as if I were hard at work there in the field. However, if this kind of life saves any man's corn, — why, he is the gainer. I am not afraid that you will flatter me as long as you know what I am, as well as what I think, or aim to be, and distinguish between these two, for then it will commonly happen that if you praise the last you will condemn the first.

I remember that walk to Asnebumskit very well, — a fit place to go to on a Sunday; one of the true temples of the earth. A temple, you know, was anciently "an open place without a roof," whose walls served merely to shut out the world and direct the mind toward heaven; but a modern *meeting-house* shuts out the heavens, while it crowds the world into still closer quarters. Best of all is it when, as on a mountain-top, you have for all walls your own elevation and deeps of surrounding ether. The partridge-berries, watered with mountain dews which are gathered there, are more memorable to me than the words which I last heard from the pulpit at least; and for my part, I would rather look toward Rutland than Jerusalem. Rutland, — modern town, — land of ruts, — trivial and worn, — not too sacred, — with no holy sepulchre, but profane green fields and dusty roads, and opportunity to live as holy a life as you can, — where the

sacredness, if there is any, is all in yourself and not in the place.

I fear that your Worcester people do not often enough go to the hilltops, though, as I am told, the springs lie nearer to the surface on your hills than in your valleys. They have the reputation of being Free-Soilers.1 Do they insist on a free atmosphere, too, that is, on freedom for

1 The name of a political party, afterwards called "Republicans."

the head or brain as well as the feet? If I were consciously to join any party, it would be that which is the most free to entertain thought.

All the world complain nowadays of a press of trivial duties and engagements, which prevents their employing themselves on some higher ground they know of; but, undoubtedly, if they were made of the right stuff to work on that higher ground, provided they were released from all those engagements, they would now at once fulfill the superior engagement, and neglect all the rest, as naturally as they breathe. They would never be caught saying that they had no time for this, when the dullest man knows that this is all that he has time for. No man who acts from a sense of duty ever puts the lesser duty above the greater. No man has the desire and the ability to work on high things, but he has also the ability to build himself a high staging.

As for passing *through* any great and glorious experience, and rising *above* it, as an eagle might fly athwart the evening sky to rise into still brighter and fairer regions of the heavens, I cannot say that I ever sailed so creditably; but my bark ever seemed thwarted by some side wind, and went off over the edge, and now only occasionally tacks back toward the centre of that sea again. I have outgrown nothing good, but, I do not fear to say, fallen behind by whole continents of virtue, which should have been passed as islands in my course; but I trust — what else can I trust? that, with a stiff wind, some Friday, when I have thrown some of my cargo overboard, I may make up for all that distance lost.

Perchance the time will come when we shall not be content to go back and forth upon a raft to some huge Homeric or Shakespearean India-man that lies upon the reef, but build a bark out of that wreck and others that are buried in the sands of this desolate island, and such new timber as may be required, in which to sail away to whole new worlds of light and life, where our friends are.

Write again. There is one respect in which you did not finish your letter: you did not write it with ink, and it is not so good, therefore, against or for you in the eye of the law, nor in the eye of — H. D. T.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

September, 1852.

MR. BLAKE, — Here come the sentences which I promised you. You may keep them, if you will regard and use them as the disconnected fragments of what I may find to be a completer essay, on looking over my journal, at last, and may claim again.

I send you the thoughts on Chastity and Sensuality with diffidence and shame, not knowing how far I speak to the condition of men generally, or how far I betray my peculiar defects.

Pray enlighten me on this point if you can.

LOVE.

What the essential difference between man and woman is, that they should be thus attracted to one another, no one has satisfactorily answered. Perhaps we must acknowledge the justness of the distinction which assigns to man the sphere of wisdom, and to woman that of love, though neither belongs exclusively to either. Man is continually saying to woman, Why will you not be more wise? Woman is continually saying to man, Why will you not be more loving? It is not in their wills to be wise or to be loving; but, unless each is both wise and loving, there can be neither wisdom nor love.

All transcendent goodness is one, though appreciated in different ways, or by different senses. In beauty we see it, in music we hear it, in fragrance we scent it, in the palatable the pure palate tastes it, and in rare health the whole body feels it. The variety is in the surface or manifestation; but the radical identity we fail to express. The lover sees in the glance of his beloved the same beauty that in the sunset paints the western skies. It is the same daimon, here lurking under a human eyelid, and there under the closing eyelids of the day. Here, in small compass, is the ancient and natural beauty of evening and morning. What loving astronomer has ever fathomed the ethereal depths of the eye?

The maiden conceals a fairer flower and sweeter fruit than any calyx in the field; and, if she goes with averted face, confiding in her purity and high resolves, she will make the heavens retrospective, and all nature humbly confess its queen.

Under the influence of this sentiment, man is a string of an Æolian harp, which vibrates with the zephyrs of the eternal morning.

There is at first thought something trivial in the commonness of love. So many Indian youths and maidens along these banks have in ages past yielded to the influence of this great civilizer. Nevertheless, this generation is not disgusted nor discouraged, for love is no individual's experience; and though we are imperfect mediums, it does not partake of our imperfection; though we are finite, it is infinite and eternal; and the same divine influence broods over these

banks, whatever race may inhabit them, and perchance still would, even if the human race did not dwell here.

Perhaps an instinct survives through the intensest actual love, which prevents entire abandonment and devotion, and makes the most ardent lover a little reserved. It is the anticipation of change. For the most ardent lover is not the less practically wise, and seeks a love which will last forever.

Considering how few poetical friendships there are, it is remarkable that so many are married. It would seem as if men yielded too easy an obedience to nature without consulting their genius. One may be drunk with love without being any nearer to finding his mate. There is more of good nature than of good sense at the bottom of most marriages. But the good nature must have the counsel of the good spirit or Intelligence. If common sense had been consulted, how many marriages would never have taken place; if uncommon or divine sense, how few marriages such as we witness would ever have taken place!

Our love may be ascending or descending. What is its character, if it may be said of it, —

"We must *respect* the souls above
But only *those below* we *love.*"

Love is a severe critic. Hate can pardon more than love. They who aspire to love worthily, subject themselves to an ordeal more rigid than any other.

Is your friend such a one that an increase of worth on your part will rarely make her more your friend? Is she retained — is she attracted by more nobleness in you, — by more of that virtue which is peculiarly yours; or is she indifferent and blind to that? Is she to be flattered and won by your meeting her on any other than the ascending path? Then duty requires that you separate from her.

Love must be as much a light as a flame.

Where there is not discernment, the behavior even of the purest soul may in effect amount to coarseness.

A man of fine perceptions is more truly feminine than a merely

sentimental woman. The heart is blind; but love is not blind. None of the gods is so discriminating.

In love and friendship the imagination is as much exercised as the heart; and if either is outraged the other will be estranged. It is commonly the imagination which is wounded first, rather than the heart, — it is so much the more sensitive.

Comparatively, we can excuse any offense against the heart, but not against the imagination. The imagination knows — nothing escapes its glance from out its eyry — and it controls the breast. My heart may still yearn toward the valley, but my imagination will not permit me to jump off the precipice that debars me from it, for it is wounded, its wings are dipt, and it cannot fly, even descendingly. Our "blundering hearts!" some poet says. The imagination never forgets; it is a re-membering. It is not foundationless, but most reasonable, and it alone uses all the knowledge of the intellect.

Love is the profoundest of secrets. Divulged, even to the beloved, it is no longer Love. As if it were merely I that loved you. When love ceases, then it is divulged.

In our intercourse with one we love, we wish to have answered those questions at the end of which we do not raise our voice; against which we put no interrogation-mark, — answered with the same unfailing, universal aim toward every point of the compass.

I require that thou knowest everything without being told anything. I parted from my beloved because there was one thing which I had to tell her. She *questioned* me. She should have known all by sympathy. That I had to tell it her was the difference between us, — the misunderstan ding.

A lover never hears anything that is *told*, for that is commonly either false or stale; but he hears things taking place, as the sentinels heard Trenck1 mining in the ground, and thought it was moles.

1 Baron Trenck, the famous prisoner.

The relation may be profaned in many ways. The parties may not regard it with equal sacredness. What if the lover should learn that his beloved dealt in incantations and philters! What if he should hear that she consulted a clairvoyant! The spell would be instantly broken.

If to chaffer and higgle are bad in trade, they are much worse in Love. It demands directness as of an arrow.

There is danger that we lose sight of what our friend is absolutely, while considering what she is to us alone.

The lover wants no partiality. He says, Be so kind as to be just.

Canst thou love with thy mind,
And reason with thy heart?
Canst thou be kind,
And from thy darling part?

Can’st thou range earth, sea, and air,
And so meet me everywhere?
Through all events I will pursue thee,
Through all persons I will woo thee.

I need thy hate as much as thy love. Thou wilt not repel me entirely when thou repellest what is evil in me.

Indeed, indeed, I cannot tell,
Though I ponder on it well,
Which were easier to state,
All my love or all my hate.
Surely, surely, thou wilt trust me
When I say thou doth disgust me.
0, I hate thee with a hate
That would fain annihilate;
Yet, sometimes, against my will,
My dear Friend, I love thee still.
It were treason to our love,
And a sin to God above,
One iota to abate
Of a pure, impartial hate.

It is not enough that we are truthful; we must cherish and carry out high purposes to be truthful about.

It must be rare, indeed, that we meet with one to whom we are prepared to be quite ideally related, as she to us. We should have no reserve; we should give the whole of ourselves to that society; we should have no duty aside from that. One who could bear to be so wonderfully and beautifully exaggerated every day. I would take my friend out of her low self and set her higher, infinitely higher, and *there* know her. But, commonly, men are as much afraid of love as of hate. They have lower engagements. They have near ends to serve. They have not imagination enough to be thus employed about a human being, but must be coopering a barrel, forsooth.

What a difference, whether, in all your walks, you meet only strangers, or in one house is one who knows you, and whom you know. To have a brother or a sister! To have a gold mine on your farm! To find diamonds in the gravel heaps before your door! How rare these things are! To share the day with you, — to people the earth. Whether to have a god or a goddess for companion in your walks, or to walk alone with hinds and villains and carles. Would not a friend enhance the beauty of the landscape as much as a deer or hare? Everything would acknowledge and serve such a relation; the corn in the field, and the cranberries in the meadow. The flowers would bloom, and the birds sing, with a new impulse. There would be more fair days in the year.

The object of love expands and grows before us to eternity, until it includes all that is lovely, and we become all that can love.

CHASTITY AND SENSUALITY.

The subject of sex is a remarkable one, since, though its phenomena concern us so much, both directly and indirectly, and, sooner or later, it occupies the thoughts of all, yet all mankind, as it were, agree to be silent about it, at least the sexes commonly one to another. One of the most interesting of all human facts is veiled more completely than any mystery. It is treated with such secrecy and awe as surely do not go to any religion. I believe that it is unusual even for the most intimate friends to communicate the pleasures and anxieties connected with this fact, — much as the external affair of love, its comings and goings, are bruited. The Shakers do not exaggerate it so much by their manner of speaking of it, as all mankind by their manner of keeping silence about it. Not that men should speak on this or any subject without having anything worthy to say; but it is plain that the education of man has hardly commenced, — there is so little genuine intercommunication.

In a pure society, the subject of marriage would not be so often avoided, — from shame and not from reverence, winked out of sight, and hinted at only; but treated naturally and simply, — perhaps simply avoided, like the kindred mysteries. If it cannot be spoken of for shame, how can it be acted of? But, doubtless, there is far more purity, as well as more impurity, than is apparent.

Men commonly couple with their idea of marriage a slight degree at least of sensuality; but every lover, the world over, believes in its inconceivable purity.

If it is the result of a pure love, there can be nothing sensual in marriage. Chastity is something positive, not negative. It is the virtue of the married especially. All lusts or base pleasures must give place to loftier delights. They who meet as superior beings cannot perform the deeds of inferior ones. The deeds of love are less questionable than any action of an individual can be, for, it being founded on the rarest mutual respect, the parties incessantly stimulate each other to a loftier and purer life, and the act in which they are associated must be pure and noble indeed, for innocence and purity can have no equal. In this relation we deal with one whom we respect more religiously

even than we respect our better selves, and we shall necessarily conduct as in the presence of God. What presence can be more awful to the lover than the presence of his beloved?

If you seek the warmth even of affection from a similar motive to that from which cats and dogs and slothful persons hug the fire, — because your temperature is low through sloth, — you are on the downward road, and it is but to plunge yet deeper into sloth. Better the cold affection of the sun, reflected from fields of ice and snow, or his warmth in some still, wintry dell. The warmth of celestial love does not relax, but nerves and braces its enjoyer. Warm your body by healthful exercise, not by cowering over a stove. Warm your spirit by performing independently noble deeds, not by ignobly seeking the sympathy of your fellows who are no better than yourself. A man's social and spiritual discipline must answer to his corporeal. He must lean on a friend who has a hard breast, as he would lie on a hard bed. He must drink cold water for his only beverage. So he must not hear sweetened and colored words, but pure and refreshing truths. He must daily bathe in truth cold as spring water, not warmed by the sympathy of friends. —

Can love be in aught allied to dissipation? Let us love by refusing, not accepting one another. Love and lust are far asunder. The one is good, the other bad. When the affectionate sympathize by their higher natures, there is love; but there is danger that they will sympathize by their lower natures, and then there is lust. It is not necessary that this be deliberate, hardly even conscious; but, in the close contact of affection, there is danger that we may stain and pollute one another; for we cannot embrace but with an entire embrace.

We must love our friend so much that she shall be associated with our purest and holiest thoughts alone. When there is impurity, we have "descended to meet," though we knew it not.

The *luxury of* affection, — there's the danger. There must be some nerve and heroism in our love, as of a winter morning. In the religion of all nations a purity is hinted at, which, I fear, men never attain to. We may love and not elevate one another. The love that takes us as it finds us degrades us. What watch we must keep over the fairest and purest of our affections, lest there be some taint about them! May we

so love as never to have occasion to repent of our love!

There is to be attributed to sensuality the loss to language of how many pregnant symbols! Flowers, which, by their infinite hues and fragrance, celebrate the marriage of the plants, are intended for a symbol of the open and unsuspected beauty of all true marriage, when man's flowering season arrives.

Virginity, too, is a budding flower, and by an impure marriage the virgin is deflowered. Whoever loves flowers, loves virgins and chastity. Love and lust are as far asunder as a flower-garden is from a brothel.

J. Biberg, in the "Amœnitates Botanicæ," edited by Linnæus, observes (I translate from the Latin): " The organs of generation, which, in the animal kingdom, are for the most part concealed by nature, as if they were to be ashamed of, in the vegetable kingdom are exposed to the eyes of all; and, when the nuptials of plants are celebrated, it is wonderful what delight they afford to the beholder, refreshing the senses with the most agreeable color and the sweetest odor; and, at the same time, bees and other insects, not to mention the humming-bird, extract honey from their nectaries, and gather wax from their effete pollen." Linnaeus himself calls the calyx the *thalamus*, or bridal chamber; and the corolla the *aulaeum*, or tapestry of it, and proceeds to explain thus every part of the flower.

Who knows but evil spirits might corrupt the flowers themselves, rob them of their fragrance and their fair hues, and turn their marriage into a secret shame and defilement? Already they are of various qualities, and there is one whose nuptials fill the lowlands in June with the odor of carrion.

The intercourse of the sexes, I have dreamed, is incredibly beautiful, too fair to be remembered. I have had thoughts about it, but they are among the most fleeting and irrecoverable in my experience. It is strange that men will talk of miracles, revelation, inspiration, and the like, as things past, while love remains.

A true marriage will differ in no wise from illumination. In all perception of the truth there is a divine ecstasy, an inexpressible delirium of joy, as when a youth embraces his betrothed virgin. The ultimate delights of a true marriage are one with this.

No wonder that, out of such a union, not as end, but as

accompaniment, comes the undying race of man. The womb is a most fertile soil.

Some have asked if the stock of men could not be improved, — if they could not be bred as cattle. Let Love be purified, and all the rest will follow. A pure love is thus, indeed, the panacea for all the ills of the world.

The only excuse for reproduction is improvement. Nature abhors repetition. Beasts merely propagate their kind; but the offspring of noble men and women will be superior to themselves, as their aspirations are. By their fruits ye shall know them.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, February 27, 1853.

Mr. Blake, — I have not answered your letter before, because I have been almost constantly in the fields surveying of late. It is long since I have spent many days so profitably in a pecuniary sense; so unprofitably, it seems to me, in a more important sense. I have earned just a dollar a day for seventy-six days past; for, though I charge at a higher rate for the days which are seen to be spent, yet so many more are spent than appears. This is instead of lecturing, which has not offered, to pay for that book which I printed.1 I have not only cheap

1 The *Week.*

hours, but cheap weeks and months; that is, weeks which are bought at the rate I have named. Not that they are quite lost to me, or make me very melancholy, alas! for I too often take a cheap satisfaction in so spending them, 1844 — weeks of pasturing and browsing, like beeves and deer, — which give me animal health, it may be, but create a tough skin over the soul and intellectual part. Yet, if men should offer my body a maintenance for the work of my head alone, I feel that it would be a dangerous temptation.

As to whether what you speak of as the "world's way" (which for the most part is my way), or that which is shown me, is the better, the former is imposture, the latter is truth. I have the coldest confidence in the last. There is only such hesitation as the appetites feel in following the aspirations. The clod hesitates because it is inert, wants *animation.* The one is the way of death, the other of life everlasting. My hours are not "cheap in such a way that *I* doubt whether the world's way would not have been better," but cheap in such a way that I doubt whether the world's way, which I have adopted for the time, could be worse. The whole enterprise of this nation, which is not an upward, but a westward one, toward Oregon, California,

Japan, etc., is totally devoid of interest to me, whether performed on foot, or by a Pacific railroad. It is not illustrated by a thought; it is not warmed by a sentiment; there is nothing in it which one should lay down his life for, nor even his gloves, — hardly which one should take up a newspaper for. It is perfectly heathenish, — a filibustering *toward* heaven by the great western route. No; they may go their way to their manifest destiny, which I trust is not mine. May my seventy-six dollars, whenever I get them, help to carry me in the other direction! I see them on their winding way, but no music is wafted from their host, — only the rattling of change in their pockets. I would rather be a captive knight, and let them all pass by, than be free only to go whither they are bound. What end do they propose to themselves beyond Japan? What aims more lofty have they than the prairie dogs?

As it respects these things, I have not changed an opinion one iota from the first. As the stars looked to me when I was a shepherd in Assyria, they look to me now, a New-Englander. The higher the mountain on which you stand, the less change in the prospect from year to year, from age to age. Above a certain height there is no change. I am a Switzer on the edge of the glacier, with his advantages and disadvantages, goitre, or what not. (You may suspect it to be some kind of swelling at any rate.) I have had but one *spiritual* birth (excuse the word), and now whether it rains or snows, whether I laugh or cry, fall farther below or approach nearer to my standard; whether Pierce or Scott is elected, 1845 — not a new scintillation of light flashes on me, but ever and anon, though with longer intervals, the same surprising and everlastingly new light dawns to me, with only such variations as in the coming of the natural day, with which, indeed, it is often coincident.

As to how to preserve potatoes from rotting, your opinion may change from year to year; but as to how to preserve your soul from rotting, I have nothing to learn, but something to practice.

Thus I declaim against them; but I in my folly am the world I condemn.

I very rarely, indeed, if ever, “feel any itching to be what is called useful to my fellow-men.” Sometimes — it may be when my thoughts for want of employment fall into a beaten path or humdrum

— I have dreamed idly of stopping a man's horse that was running away; but, perchance, I wished that he might run, in order that I might stop him; — or of putting out a fire; but then, of course, it must have got well argoing. Now, to tell the truth, I do not dream much of acting upon horses before they run, or of preventing fires which are not yet kindled. What a foul subject is this of doing good! instead of minding one's life, which should be his business; doing good as a dead carcass, which is only fit for manure, instead of as a living man, — instead of taking care to flourish, and smell and taste sweet, and refresh all mankind to the extent of our capacity and quality. People will sometimes try to persuade you that you have done something from that motive, as if you did not already know enough about it. If I ever *did* a man any good, in their sense, of course it was something exceptional and insignificant compared with the good or evil which I am constantly doing by being what I am. As if you were to preach to ice to shape itself into burning-glasses, which are sometimes useful, and so the peculiar properties of ice be lost. Ice that merely performs the office of a burning-glass does not do its duty.

The problem of life becomes, one cannot say by how many degrees, more complicated as our material wealth is increased, — whether that needle they tell of was a gateway or not, — since the problem is not merely nor mainly to get life for our bodies, but by this or a similar discipline to get life for our souls; by cultivating the lowland farm on right principles, that is, with this view, to turn it into an upland farm. You have so many more talents to account for. If I accomplish as much more in spiritual work as I am richer in worldly goods, then I am just as worthy, or worth just as much, as I was before, and no more. I see that, in my own case, money *might* be of great service to me, but probably it would not be; for the difficulty now is, that I do not improve my opportunities, and therefore I am not prepared to have my opportunities increased. Now, I warn you, if it be as you say, you have got to put on the pack of an upland farmer in good earnest the coming spring, the lowland farm being cared for; ay, you must be selecting your seeds forthwith, and doing what winter work you can; and, while others are raising potatoes and Baldwin apples for you, you must be raising apples of the Hesperides

for them. (Only hear how he preaches!) No man can suspect that he is the proprietor of an upland farm, — upland in the sense that it will produce nobler crops, and better repay cultivation in the long run, — but he will be perfectly sure that he ought to cultivate it.

Though we are desirous to earn our bread, we need not be anxious to *satisfy* men for it, — though we shall take care to pay them, — but God, who alone gave it to us. Men may in effect put us in the debtors' jail for that matter, simply for paying our whole debt to God, which includes our debt to them, and though we have His receipt for it, — for His paper is dishonored. The cashier will tell you that He has no stock in his bank.

How prompt we are to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our bodies; how slow to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our *souls!* Indeed, we would-be-practical folks cannot use this word without blushing because of our infidelity, having starved this substance almost to a shadow. We feel it to be as absurd as if a man were to break forth into a eulogy on *his dog*, who hasn't any. An ordinary man will work every day for a year at shoveling dirt to support his body, or a family of bodies; but he is an extraordinary man who will work a whole day in a year for the support of his soul. Even the priests, the men of God, so called, for the most part confess that they work for the support of the body. But he alone is the truly enterprising and practical man who succeeds in *maintaining* his soul here. Have not we our everlasting life to get? and is not that the only excuse at last for eating, drinking, sleeping, or even carrying an umbrella when it rains? A man might as well devote himself to raising pork, as to fattening the bodies, or temporal part merely, of the whole human family. If we made the true distinction we should almost all of us be seen to be in the almshouse for souls.

I am much indebted to you because you look so steadily at the better side, or rather the true centre of me (for our true centre may, and perhaps oftenest does, lie entirely aside from us, and we are in fact eccentric), and, as I have elsewhere said, "give me an opportunity to live." You speak as if the image or idea which I see were reflected from me to you; and I see it again reflected from you to me, because we stand at the right angle to one another; and so it goes zigzag to what successive reflecting surfaces, before it is all

dissipated or absorbed by the more unreflecting, or differently reflecting, — who knows? Or, perhaps, what you see directly, you refer to me. What a little shelf is required, by which we may impinge upon another, and build there our eyry in the clouds, and all the heavens we see above us we refer to the crags around and beneath us. Some piece of mica, as it were, in the face or eyes of one, as on the Delectable Mountains, slanted at the right angle, reflects the heavens to us. But, in the slow geological upheavals and depressions, these mutual angles are disturbed, these suns set, and new ones rise to us. That ideal which I worshiped was a greater stranger to the mica than to me. It was not the hero I admired, but the reflection from his epaulet or helmet. It is nothing (for us) permanently inherent in another, but his attitude or relation to what we prize, that we admire. The meanest man may glitter with micacious particles to his fellow's eye. These are the spangles that adorn a man. The highest union, — the only *un*ion (don't laugh), or central oneness, is the coincidence of visual rays. Our club-room was an apartment in a constellation where our visual rays met (and there was no debate about the restaurant). The way between us is over the mount.

Your words make me think of a man of my acquaintance whom I occasionally meet, whom you, too, appear to have met, one Myself, as he is called. Yet, why not call him *Yourself*? If you have met with him and know him, it is all I have done; and surely, where there is a mutual acquaintance, the *my* and *thy* make a distinction without a difference.

I do not wonder that you do not like my Canada story. It concerns me but little, and probably is not worth the time it took to tell it. Yet I had absolutely no design whatever in my mind, but simply to report what I saw. I have inserted all of myself that was implicated, or made the excursion. It has come to an end, at any rate; they will print no more, but return me my MS. when it is but little more than half done, as well as another I had sent them, because the editor1 requires the liberty to omit the heresies without consulting me, — a privilege California is not rich enough to bid for.

I thank you again and again for attending to me; that is to say, I am glad that you hear me and that you also are glad. Hold fast to your

most indefinite, waking dream. The very green dust on the walls is an organized vegetable; the atmosphere has its fauna and flora floating in it; and shall we think that dreams are but dust and ashes, are always disintegrated and crumbling thoughts, and not dust - like thoughts trooping to their standard with music, 1846 — systems beginning to be organized? These expectations, — these are roots, these are nuts, which even the poorest man has in his bin, and roasts or cracks them occasionally in winter evenings, — which even the poor debtor retains with his bed and his pig, *i* e., his idleness and sensuality. Men go to the opera because they hear there a faint expression in sound of this news which is never quite distinctly proclaimed. Suppose a man were to sell the hue, the least amount of coloring matter in the superficies of his thought, for a farm, — were to exchange an absolute and infinite value for a relative and finite one, — to gain the whole world and lose his own soul!

1 *Of Putnam's Magazine.*

Do not wait as long as I have before you write. If you will look at another star, I will try to supply my side of the triangle.

Tell Mr. Brown that I remember him, and trust that he remembers me.

P. S. — Excuse this rather flippant preaching, which does not cost me enough; and do not think that I mean you *always,* though your letter *requested* the subjects.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, April 10, 1853.

Mr. Blake, — Another singular kind of spiritual foot-ball, — really nameless, handle-less, homeless, like myself, — a mere arena for thoughts and feelings; definite enough outwardly, indefinite more than enough inwardly. But I do not know why we should be styled "misters" or "masters:" we come so near to being anything or nothing, and seeing that we are mastered, and not wholly sorry to be mastered, by the least phenomenon. It seems to me that we are the mere creatures of thought, — one of the lowest forms of intellectual life, we men, — as the sunfish is of animal life. As yet our thoughts have acquired no definiteness nor solidity; they are purely molluscous, not vertebrate; and the height of our existence is to float upward in an ocean where the sun shines, — appearing only like a vast soup or chowder to the eyes of the immortal navigators. It is wonderful that I can be here, and you there, and that we can correspond, and do many other things, when, in fact, there is so little of us, either or both, anywhere. In a few minutes, I expect, this slight film or dash of vapor that I am will be what is called asleep, — resting! forsooth from what? Hard work? and thought? The hard work of the dandelion down, which floats over the meadow all day; the hard work of a pismire that labors to raise a hillock all day, and even by moonlight. Suddenly I can come forward into the utmost apparent distinctness, and speak with a sort of emphasis to you; and the next moment I am so faint an entity, and make so slight an impression, that nobody can find the traces of me. I try to hunt myself up, and find the little of me that is discoverable is falling asleep, and then I assist and tuck it up. It is getting late. How can *I* starve or feed? Can *I* be said to sleep? There is not enough of me even for that. If you hear a noise,— 't aint I,— 't aint I, — as the dog says with a tin-kettle tied to his tail. I read of something happening to another the other day: how happens it that nothing ever happens to me? A dandelion down that never alights, — settles, — blown off by a boy to see if his mother wanted him, — some divine boy in the

upper pastures.

Well, if there really is another such a meteor sojourning in these spaces, I would like to ask you if you know whose estate this is that we are on? For my part I enjoy it well enough, what with the wild apples and the scenery; but I shouldn't wonder if the owner set his dog on me next. I could remember something not much to the purpose, probably; but if I stick to what I do know, then —

It is worth the while to live respectably unto ourselves. We can possibly *get along* with a neighbor, even with a bedfellow, whom we respect but very little; but as soon as it comes to this, that we do not respect ourselves, then we do not get along at all, no matter how much money we are paid for halting. There are old heads in the world who cannot help me by their example or advice to live worthily and satisfactorily to myself; but I believe that it is in my power to elevate myself this very hour above the common level of my life. It is better to have your head in the clouds, and know where you are, if indeed you cannot get it above them, than to breathe the clearer atmosphere below them, and think that you are in paradise.

Once you were in Milton 1 doubting what to

1 A town near Boston.

do. To live a better life, — this surely can be done. Dot and carry one. Wait not for a clear sight, for that you are to get. What you see clearly you may omit to do. Milton and Worcester? It is all Blake, Blake. Never mind the rats in the wall; the cat will take care of them. All that men have said or are is a very faint rumor, and it is not worth the while to remember or refer to that. If you are to meet God, will you refer to anybody out of that court? How shall men know how I succeed, unless they are in at the life? I did not see the "Times" reporter there.

Is it not delightful to provide one's self with the necessaries of life, — to collect dry wood for the fire when the weather grows cool, or fruits when we grow hungry? — not till then. And then we have all the time left for thought!

Of what use were it, pray, to get a little wood to burn, to warm

your body this cold weather, if there were not a divine fire kindled at the same time to warm your spirit?

"Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!"

I cuddle up by my stove, and there I get up another fire which warms fire itself. Life is so short that it is not wise to take roundabout ways, nor can we spend much time in waiting. Is it absolutely necessary, then, that we should do as we are doing? Are we chiefly under obligations to the devil, like Tom Walker? Though it is late to leave off this wrong way, it will seem early the moment we begin in the right way; instead of mid-afternoon, it will be early morning with us. We have not got half way to dawn yet.

As for the lectures, I feel that I have something to say, especially on Traveling, Vagueness, and Poverty; but I cannot come now. I will wait till I am fuller, and have fewer engagements. Your suggestions will help me much to write them when I am ready. I am going to Haverhill1 to-morrow, surveying, for a week or more. You met me on my last errand thither.

I trust that you realize what an exaggerater I am, — that I lay myself out to exaggerate whenever I have an opportunity, — pile Pelion upon Ossa, to reach heaven so. Expect no trivial truth from me, unless I am on the witness-stand. I will come as near to lying as you can drive a coach-and-four. If it isn't thus and so with me, it is with something. I am not particular whether I get the shells or meat, in view of the latter's worth.

I see that I have not at all answered your letter, but there is time enough for that.

1 A Massachusetts town, the birthplace of Whittier.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, December 19, 1853.

Mr. Blake, — My debt has accumulated so that I should have answered your last letter at once, if I had not been the subject of what is called a press of engagements, having a lecture to write for last Wednesday, and surveying more than usual besides. It has been a kind of running fight with me, — the enemy not always behind me, I trust.

True, a man cannot lift himself by his own waistbands, because he cannot get out of himself; but he can expand himself (which is better, there being no up nor down in nature), and so split his waistbands, being already within himself.

You speak of doing and being, and the vanity, real or apparent, of much doing. The suckers — I think it is they — make nests in our river in the spring of more than a cart-load of small stones, amid which to deposit their ova. The other day I opened a muskrat's house. It was made of weeds, five feet broad at base, and three feet high, and far and low within it was a little cavity, only a foot in diameter, where the rat dwelt. It may seem trivial, this piling up of weeds, but so the race of muskrats is preserved. We must heap up a great pile of doing, for a small diameter of being. Is it not imperative on us that we *do* something, if we only work in a treadmill? And, indeed, some sort of revolving is necessary to produce a centre and nucleus of being. What exercise is to the body, employment is to the mind and morals. Consider what an amount of drudgery must be performed, — how much humdrum and prosaic labor goes to any work of the least value. There are so many layers of mere white lime in every shell to that thin inner one so beautifully tinted. Let not the shell-fish think to build his house of that alone; and pray, what are its tints to him? Is it not his smooth, close-fitting shirt merely, whose tints *are not* to him, being in the dark, but only when he is gone or dead, and his shell is heaved up to light, a wreck upon the beach, do they appear. With him, too, it is a Song of the Shirt, "Work, — work, — work! And the work is not merely a police in the gross sense, but

in the higher sense a discipline. If it is surely the means to the highest end we know, can any work be humble or disgusting? Will it not rather be elevating as a ladder, the means by which we are translated?

How admirably the artist is made to accomplish his self-culture by devotion to his art! The wood-sawyer, through his effort to do his work well, becomes not merely a better wood-sawyer, but measurably a better *man.* Few are the men that can work on their navels, — only some Brahmins that I have heard of. To the painter is given some paint and canvas instead; to the Irishman a hog, typical of himself. In a thousand apparently humble ways men busy themselves to make some right take the place of some wrong, — if it is only to make a better paste-blacking, — and they are themselves *so much* the better morally for it.

You say that you do not succeed much. Does it concern you enough that you do not? Do you work hard enough at it? Do you get the benefit of discipline out of it? If so, persevere. Is it a more serious thing than to walk a thousand miles in a thousand successive hours? Do you get any corns by it? Do you ever think of hanging yourself on account of failure?

If you are going into that line, — going to besiege the city of God, — you must not only be strong in engines, but prepared with provisions to starve out the garrison. An Irishman came to see me to-day, who is endeavoring to get his family out to this New World. He rises at half past four, milks twenty-eight cows (which has swollen the joints of his fingers), and eats his breakfast, without any milk in his tea or coffee, before six; and so on, day after day, for six and a half dollars a month; and thus he keeps his virtue in him, if he does not add to it; and he regards me as a gentleman able to assist him; but if I ever get to be a gentleman, it will be by working after my fashion harder than he does. If my joints are not swollen, it must be because I deal with the teats of celestial cows before breakfast (and the milker in this case is always allowed some of the milk for his breakfast), to say nothing of the flocks and herds of Admetus afterward.

It is the art of mankind to polish the world, and every one who works is scrubbing in some part.

If the work is high and far, You must not only aim aright, But

draw the bow with all your might.

You must qualify yourself to use a bow which no humbler archer can bend.

"Work, — work, — work!"

Who shall know it for a bow? It is not of yew-tree. It is straighter than a ray of light; flexibility is not known for one of its qualities.

December 22.

So far I had got when I was called off to survey. Pray read the life of Haydon the painter, if you have not. It is a small revelation for these latter days; a great satisfaction to know that he has lived, though he is now dead. Have you met with the letter of a Turkish cadi at the end of Layard's "Ancient Babylon"? that also is refreshing, and a capital comment on the whole book which precedes it, — the Oriental genius speaking through him.

Those Brahmins "put it through." They come off, or rather stand still, conquerors, with some withered arms or legs at least to show; and they are said to have cultivated the faculty of abstraction to a degree unknown to Europeans. If we cannot sing of faith and triumph, we will sing our despair. We will be that kind of bird. There are day owls, and there are night owls, and each is beautiful and even musical while about its business.

Might you not find some positive work to do with your back to Church and State, letting your back do all the rejection of them? Can you not *go* upon your pilgrimage, Peter, along the winding mountain path whither you face? A step more will make those funereal church bells over your shoulder sound far and sweet as a natural sound.

"Work, — work, — work!"

Why not make a *very large* mud-pie and bake it in the sun! Only put no Church nor State into it, nor upset any other pepper-box that way. Dig out a woodchuck, — for that has nothing to do with rotting institutions. Go ahead.

Whether a man spends his day in an ecstasy or despondency, he must do some work to show for it, even as there are flesh and bones to show for him. We are superior to the joy we experience.

Your last two letters, methinks, have more nerve and will in them than usual, as if you had erected yourself more. Why are not they good work, if you only had a hundred correspondents to tax you?

Make your failure tragical by the earnestness and steadfastness of your endeavor, and then it will not differ from success. Prove it to be the inevitable fate of mortals, — of one mortal, — if you can.

You said that you were writing on Immortality. I wish you would communicate to me what you know about that. You are sure to live while that is your theme.

Thus I write on some text which a sentence of your letters may have furnished.

I think of coming to see you as soon as I get a new coat, if I have money enough left. I will write to you again about it.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, January 21, 1854.

Mr. BLAKE, — My coat is at last done, and my mother and sister allow that I am *so far* in a condition to go abroad. I feel as if I had gone abroad the moment I put it on. It is, as usual, a production strange to me, the wearer, — invented by some Count D'Orsay; and the maker of it was not acquainted with any of my real depressions or elevations. He only measured a peg to hang it on, and might have made the loop big enough to go over my head. It requires a not quite innocent indifference, not to say insolence, to wear it. Ah! the process by which we get our coats is not what it should be. Though the Church declares it righteous, and its priest pardons me, my own good genius tells me that it is hasty, and coarse, and false. I expect a time when, or rather an integrity by which, a man will get his coat as honestly and as perfectly fitting as a tree its bark. Now our garments are typical of our conformity to the ways of the world, *i e*., of the devil, and to some extent react on us and poison us, like that shirt which Hercules put on.

I think to come and see you next week, on Monday, if nothing hinders. I have just returned from court at Cambridge, whither I was called as a witness, having surveyed a water-privilege, about which there is a dispute, since you were here.

Ah! what foreign countries there are, greater in extent than the United States or Russia, and with no more souls to a square mile, stretching away on every side from every human being with whom you have no sympathy. Their humanity affects me as simply monstrous. Rocks, earth, brute beasts, comparatively are not so strange to me. When I sit in the parlors and kitchens of some with whom my business brings me — I was going to say in contact — (business, like misery, makes strange bedfellows), I feel a sort of awe, and as forlorn as if I were cast away on a desolate shore. I think of Riley's Narrative1 and his sufferings. You, who soared like a merlin with your mate through the realms of aether, in the presence of the unlike, drop at once to earth, a mere amorphous squab,

divested of your air-inflated pinions. (By the way, excuse this writing, for I am using the stub of the last feather I chance to possess.) You travel on, however, through this dark and desert world; you see in the distance an intelligent and sympathizing lineament; stars come forth in the dark, and oases appear in the desert.

But (to return to the subject of coats), we are wellnigh smothered under yet more fatal coats, which do not fit us, our whole lives long. Consider the cloak that our employment or station is; how rarely men treat each other for

1 An American seaman, wrecked on the coast of Arabia, — once a popular book.

what in their true and naked characters they are; how we use and tolerate pretension; how the judge is clothed with dignity which does not belong to him, and the trembling witness with humility that does not belong to him, and the criminal, perchance, with shame or impudence which no more belong to him. It does not matter so much, then, what is the fashion of the cloak with which we cloak these cloaks. Change the coat; put the judge in the criminal-box, and the criminal on the bench, and you might think that you had changed the men.

No doubt the thinnest of all cloaks is conscious deception or lies; it is sleazy and frays out; it is not close-woven like cloth; but its meshes are a coarse network. A man can afford to lie only at the intersection of the threads; but truth puts in the filling, and makes a consistent stuff.

I mean merely to suggest how much the station affects the demeanor and self-respectability of the parties, and that the difference between the judge's coat of cloth and the criminal's is insignificant compared with, or only partially significant of, the difference between the coats which their respective stations permit them to wear. What airs the judge may put on over his coat which the criminal may not! The judge's opinion (*sententia*) of the criminal *sentences* him, and is read by the clerk of the court, and published to the world, and executed by the sheriff; but the criminal's opinion of the judge has the weight of a sentence, and is published and executed

only in the supreme court of the universe, — a court not of common pleas. How much juster is the one than the other? Men are continually *sentencing* each other; but, whether we be judges or criminals, the sentence is ineffectual unless we continue ourselves.

I am glad to hear that I do not always limit your vision when you look this way; that you sometimes see the light through me; that I am here and there windows, and not all dead wall. Might not the community sometimes petition a man to remove himself as a nuisance, a darkener of the day, a too large mote?

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, August 1854.

Mr. Blake, — Methinks I have spent a rather unprofitable summer thus far. I have been too much with the world, as the poet might say.1 The completest performance of the highest duties it imposes would yield me but little satisfaction. Better the neglect of all such, because your life passed on a level where it was impossible to recognize them. Latterly, I have heard

1 "The world is too much with us." — *Wordsworth.*

the very flies buzz too distinctly, and have accused myself because I did not still this superficial din. We must not be too easily distracted by the crying of children or of dynasties. The Irishman erects his sty, and gets drunk, and jabbers more and more under my eaves, and I am responsible for all that filth and folly. I find it, as ever, very unprofitable to have much to do with men. It is sowing the wind, but not reaping even the whirlwind; only reaping an unprofitable calm and stagnation. Our conversation is a smooth, and civil, and never-ending speculation merely. I take up the thread of it again in the morning, with very much such courage as the invalid takes his prescribed Seidlitz powders. Shall I help you to some of the mackerel? It would be more respectable if men, as has been said before, instead of being such pigmy desperates, were Giant Despairs. Emerson says that his life is so unprofitable and shabby for the most part, that he is driven to all sorts of resources, and, among the rest, to men. I tell him that we differ only in our resources. Mine is to get away from men. They very rarely affect me as grand or beautiful; but I know that there is a sunrise and a sunset every day. In the summer, this world is a mere watering-place, — a Saratoga, — drinking so many tumblers of Congress water; and in the winter, is it any better, with its oratorios? I have seen more men than usual, lately; and, well as I was acquainted with one, I am surprised to find what vulgar fellows they are. They do a little business commonly each day, in

order to pay their board, and then they congregate in sitting-rooms and feebly fabulate and paddle in the social slush; and when I think that they have sufficiently relaxed, and am prepared to see them steal away to their shrines, they go unashamed to their beds, and take on a new layer of sloth. They may be single, or have families in their *faineancy*. I do not meet men who can have nothing to do with me because they have so much to do with themselves. However, I trust that a very few cherish purposes which they never declare. Only think, for a moment, of a man about his affairs! How we should respect him! How glorious he would appear! Not working for any corporation, its agent, or president, but fulfilling the end of his being! A man about *his business* would be the cynosure of all eyes.

The other evening I was determined that I would silence this shallow din; that I would walk in various directions and see if there was not to be found any depth of silence around. As Bonaparte sent out his horsemen in the Red Sea on all sides to find shallow water, so I sent forth my mounted thoughts to find deep water.

I left the village and paddled up the river to Fair Haven Pond. As the sun went down, I saw a solitary boatman disporting on the smooth lake. The falling dews seemed to strain and purify the air, and I was soothed with an infinite stillness. I got the world, as it were, by the nape of the neck, and held it under in the tide of its own events, till it was drowned, and then I let it go down stream like a dead dog. Vast hollow chambers of silence stretched away on every side, and my being expanded in proportion, and filled them. Then first could I appreciate sound, and find it musical.1

But now for your news. Tell us of the year.

1 A lady who made such a night voyage with Thoreau, years before, says: “How wise he was to ask the elderly lady with a younger one for a row on the Concord River one moonlit night! The river that night was as deep as the heavens above; serene stars shone from its depths, as far off as the stars above. Deep answered unto deep in our souls, as the boat glided swiftly along, past low-lying fields, under overhanging trees. A neighbor’s cow waded into the cool water, — she became at once a Behemoth, a river-horse, hippopotamus, or river-god. A dog barked, — he was Diana’s hound, he waked Endymion. Suddenly we were landed on a little isle; our boatman, our boat glided far off in the flood. We were left alone, in the power of the river-god; like two white birds we stood on this bit of ground, the river flowing about us; only the eternal powers of nature around us. Time for a prayer, perchance, — and back came the boat and oarsman; we were ferried to our homes, — no

question asked or answered. We had drank of the cup of the night, — had felt the silence and the stars."

Have you fought the good fight? What is the state of your crops? Will your harvest answer well to the seed-time, and are you cheered by the prospect of stretching cornfields? Is there any blight on your fields, any murrain in your herds? Have you tried the size and quality of your potatoes? It does one good to see their balls dangling in the lowlands. Have you got your meadow hay before the fall rains shall have set in? Is there enough in your barns to keep your cattle over? Are you killing weeds nowadays? or have you earned leisure to go a-fishing? Did you plant any Giant Regrets last spring, such as I saw advertised? It is not a new species, but the result of cultivation and a fertile soil. They are excellent for sauce. How is it with your marrow squashes for winter use? Is there likely to be a sufficiency of fall feed in your neighborhood? What is the state of the springs? I read that in your county there is more water on the hills than in the valleys. Do you find it easy to get all the help you require? Work early and late, and let your men and teams rest at noon. Be careful not to drink too much sweetened water, while at your hoeing, this hot weather. You can bear the heat much better for it.

TO MARSTON WATSON (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, September 19, 1854.

DEAR SIR, — I am glad to hear from you and the Plymouth men again. The world still holds together between Concord and Plymouth, it seems. I should like to be with you while Mr. Alcott is there, but I cannot come next Sunday. I will come Sunday after next, that is, October 1st, if that will do; and look out for you at the depot. I do not like to promise more than one discourse. Is there a good precedent for two?

The first of Thoreau's many lecturing visits to Worcester, the home of his friend, Blake, was in April, 1849, and from that time onward he must have read lectures there at least annually, until his last illness, in 1861-62. By 1854, the lecturing habit, in several places besides Concord, had become established; and there was a constant interchange of visits and excursions with his friends at Worcester, Plymouth, New Bedford, etc. Soon after the publication of "Walden," in the summer of 1854, Thoreau wrote these notes to Mr. Blake, touching on various matters of friendly interest.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, September 21, 1854.

BLAKE, — I have just read your letter, but do not mean now to answer it, solely for want of time to say what I wish. I directed a copy of "Walden" to you at Ticknor's, on the day of its publication, and it should have reached you before. I am encouraged to know that it interests you as it now stands, — a printed book, — for you apply a very severe test to it, — you make the highest demand on me. As for the excursion you speak of, I should like it right well, — indeed I thought of proposing the same thing to you and Brown, some months ago. Perhaps it would have been better if I had done so then; for in that case I should have been able to enter into it with that infinite margin to my views, — spotless of all engagements, — which I think so necessary. As it is, I have agreed to go a-lecturing to Plymouth, Sunday after next (October 1) and to Philadelphia in November, and thereafter to the West, *if they shall want me;* and, as I have prepared nothing in that shape, I feel as if my hours were spoken for. However, I think that, after having been to Plymouth, I may take a day or two — if that date will suit you and Brown. *At any rate* I will write you then.

CONCORD, October 5, 1854.

After I wrote to you, Mr. Watson postponed my going to Plymouth one week, *i* e., till next Sunday; and now he wishes me to carry my instruments and survey his grounds, to which he has been adding. Since I want a little money, though I contemplate but a short excursion, I do not feel at liberty to decline this work. I do not know exactly how long it will detain me, — but there is plenty of time yet, and I will write to you again — perhaps from Plymouth.

There is a Mr. Thomas Cholmondeley (pronounced Chumly) a young English author, staying at our house at present, who asks me to teach him *botany* — *i* e., anything which I know; and also to make an excursion to some mountain with him. He is a well-behaved person, and *possibly* I may propose his taking that run to Wachusett

with us — if it will be agreeable to you. Nay, if I do not hear any objection from you, I will consider myself *at liberty* to invite him.

CONCORD, Saturday p. M., October 14, 1854.

I have just returned from Plymouth, where I have been detained surveying much longer than I expected. What do you say to visiting Wachusett next Thursday? I will start at 7 1/4 A. M. *unless there is a prospect of a stormy day*, go by cars to Westminster, and thence on foot five or six miles to the mountain-top, where I may engage to meet you, at (or before) 12 M. If the weather is unfavorable, I will try again, on Friday, — and again on Monday. If a storm comes on after starting, I will seek you at the tavern in Princeton centre, as soon as circumstances will permit. I shall expect an answer at once, to clinch the bargain.

The year 1854 was a memorable one in Thoreau's life, for it brought out his most successful book, "Walden," and introduced him to the notice of the world, which had paid small attention to his first book, the "Week," published five years earlier. This year also made him acquainted with two friends to whom he wrote much, and who loved to visit and stroll with him around Concord, or in more distant places, — Thomas Cholmondeley, an Englishman from Shropshire, and Daniel Ricketson, a New Bedford Quaker, of liberal mind and cultivated tastes, — an author and poet, and fond of corresponding with poets, — as he did with the Howitts and William Barnes of England, and with Bryant, Emerson, Channing, and Thoreau, in America. Few of the letters to Cholmondeley are yet found, being buried temporarily in the mass of family papers at Condover Hall, an old Elizabethan mansion near Shrewsbury, which Thomas Cholmondeley inherited, and which remains in his family's possession since his own death at Florence in 1864. But the letters of the Englishman, recently printed in the "Atlantic Monthly" (December, 1893), show how sincere was the attachment of this ideal friend to the Concord recluse, and how well he read that character which the rest of England, and a good part of America, have been so slow to recognize for what it really was.

Thomas Cholmondeley was the eldest son of Rev. Charles Cowper Cholmondeley, rector of Overleigh, Cheshire, and of a sister to Reginald Heber, the celebrated bishop of Calcutta. He was born in 1823, and brought up at Hodnet, in Shropshire, where his father, a cousin of Lord Delamere, had succeeded his brother-in-law as rector, on the departure of Bishop Heber for India, in 1823. The son was educated at Oriel College, Oxford, — a friend, and perhaps pupil of Arthur Hugh Clough, who gave him letters to Emerson in 1854. Years before, after leaving Oxford, he had gone with some relatives to New Zealand, and before coming to New England, he had published a book, "Ultima Thule," describing that Australasian colony of England, where he lived for part of a year. He had previously studied in Germany, and traveled on the Continent. He landed in America the first time in August, 1854, and soon after went to Concord, where, at the suggestion of Emerson, he became an inmate of Mrs. Thoreau's family. This made him intimate with Henry Thoreau for a month or two, and also brought him into acquaintance with Ellery Channing, then living across the main street of Concord, in the west end of the village, and furnishing to Thoreau a landing-place for his boat under the willows at the foot of Channing's small garden. Alcott was not then in Concord, but Cholmondeley made his acquaintance in Boston, and admired his character and manners.1

With Channing and Thoreau the young Englishman visited their nearest mountain, Wachusett, and in some of their walks the artist Rowse, who made the first portrait of Thoreau, joined, for he was then in Concord, late in 1854, engraving the fine head of Daniel Webster from a painting by Ames, and this engraving he gave both to Thoreau and to Cholmondeley. In December the Englishman, whose patriotism was

—— See *Memoir of Bronson Alcott*, pp. 485-494. The remark of Emerson quoted on p. 486, that Cholmondeley was "the son of a Shropshire squire," was not strictly correct, his father being a Cheshire clergyman of a younger branch of the ancient race of Cholmondeley. But he was the *grandson* of a Shropshire squire (owner of land), for his mother was daughter and sister of such gentlemen, and it was her brother Richard who presented Reginald

Heber and Charles Cholmondeley to the living of Hodnet, near Market Drayton.

roused by the delays and calamities of England in her Crimean war, resolved to go home and raise a company, as he did, first spending some weeks in lodgings at Boston (Orange Street) in order to hear Theodore Parker preach and visit Harvard College, of which I was then a student, in the senior class. He visited me and my classmate, Edwin Morton, and called on some of the Cambridge friends of Clough. In January, 1855, he sailed for England, and there received the letter of Thoreau printed on pages 295-298.

The acquaintance with Mr. Ricketson began by letter before Cholmondeley reached Concord, but Thoreau did not visit him until December, 1854. Mr. Ricketson says, "In the summer of —— I purchased, in New Bedford, a copy of 'Walden.' I had never heard of its author, but in this admirable and most original book I found so many observations on plants, birds, and natural objects generally in which I was also interested, that I felt at once I had found a congenial spirit. During this season I was rebuilding a house in the country, three miles from New Bedford, and had erected a small building which was called my ' shanty;' and my family being then in my city house, I made this building my temporary home. From it I addressed my first letter to the author of 'Walden.' In reply he wrote, 'I had duly received your very kind and frank letter, but delayed to answer it thus long because I have little skill as a correspondent, and wished to send you something more than my thanks. I was gratified by your prompt and hearty acceptance of my book. Yours is the only word of greeting I am likely to receive from a dweller in the woods like myself, — from where the whippoorwill and cuckoo are heard, and there are better than moral clouds drifting, and real breezes blowing.' From that year until his death in 1862 we exchanged visits annually, and letters more frequently. He was much interested in the botany of our region, finding here many marine plants he had not before seen. When our friendship began, the admirers of his only two published books were few; most prominent among them were Emerson, Alcott, and Channing of Concord, Messrs. Blake and T. Brown of

Worcester, Mr. Marston Watson of Plymouth, and myself. Many accused him of being an imitator of Emerson; others thought him unsocial, impracticable, and ascetic. Now he was none of these; a more original man never lived, nor one more thoroughly personifying civility; no man could hold a finer relationship with his family than he."

In reply to Thoreau's letter just quoted, Mr. Ricketson wrote further of himself and his locality, and Thoreau thus continued: —

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, October 1, 1854.

Dear Sir, — Your account excites in me a desire to see the Middleborough Ponds, of which I had already heard somewhat; as also some very beautiful ponds on the Cape, in Harwich, I think, near which I once passed. I have sometimes also thought of visiting that remnant of *our* Indians still living near you. But then, you know, there is nothing like one's native fields and lakes. The best news you send me is, not that Nature with you is so fair and genial, but that there is one there who likes her so well. That proves all that was asserted.

Homer, of course, you include in your list of lovers of Nature; and, by the way, let me mention here, — for this is " my thunder" lately, — William Gilpin's long series of books on the Picturesque, with their illustrations. If it chances that you have not met with these, I cannot just now frame a better wish than that you may one day derive as much pleasure from the inspection of them as I have.

Much as you have told me of yourself, you have still, I think, a little the advantage of me in this correspondence, for I have told you still more in my book. You have therefore the broadest mark to fire at.

A young Englishman, Mr. Cholmondeley, is just now waiting for me to take a walk with him; therefore excuse this very barren note from yours, hastily at last.

TO HARRISON BLAKE.

CONCORD, December 22, 1854.

Mr. Blake, — I will lecture for your Lyceum on the 4th of January next; and I hope that I shall have time for that good day out of doors. Mr. Cholmondeley is in Boston, yet *perhaps* I may invite him to accompany me. I have engaged to lecture at New Bedford on the 26th inst., stopping with Daniel Ricketson, three miles out of town; and at Nantucket on the 28th, so that I shall be gone all next week. They say there is some danger of being weatherbound at Nantucket; but I see that others run the same risk. You had better acknowledge the receipt of this at any rate, though you should write nothing else; otherwise I shall not know whether you get it; but perhaps you will not wait till you have seen me, to answer my letter (of December 19). I will tell you what I think of lecturing when I see you. Did you see the notice of "Walden" in the last "Anti-Slavery Standard"? You will not be surprised if I tell you that it reminded me of you.

As above mentioned, Thoreau went to lecture at Nantucket, and on his way spent a day or two with Mr. Ricketson, reaching his house on Christmas Day. His host, who then saw him for the first time, says: —

"I had expected him at noon, but as he did not arrive, I had given him up for the day. In the latter part of the afternoon I was clearing off the snow from my front steps, when, looking up, I saw a man walking up the carriage-road, bearing a portmanteau in one hand and an umbrella in the other. He was dressed in a long overcoat of dark color, and wore a dark soft hat. I had no suspicion it was Thoreau, and rather supposed it was a peddler of small wares."

This was a common mistake to make. When Thoreau ran the gauntlet of the Cape Cod villages,— "feeling as strange," he says, "as if he were in a town in China," — one of the old fishermen could not believe that he had not something to sell. Being finally satisfied that it was not a peddler with his pack, the old man said, "Wal, it makes no odds what 'tis you carry, so long as you carry Truth along with ye." Mr. Ricketson soon came to the same conclusion about his

visitor, and in the early September of —— returned the visit.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, December 19, 1854.

Mr. Blake, — I suppose you have heard of my truly providential meeting with Mr. T. Brown; providential because it saved me from the suspicion that my words had fallen altogether on stony ground, when it turned out that there was some Worcester soil there. You will allow me to consider that I correspond with him through you.

I confess that I am a very bad correspondent, so far as promptness of reply is concerned; but then I am sure to answer sooner or later. The longer I have forgotten you, the more I remember you. For the most part I have not been idle since I saw you. How does the world go with you? or rather, how do you get along without it? I have not yet learned to live, that I can see, and I fear that I shall not very soon. I find, however, that in the long run things correspond to my original idea, — that they correspond to nothing else so much; and thus a man may really be a true prophet without any great exertion. The day is never so dark, nor the night even, but that the laws at least of light still prevail, and so may make it light in our minds if they are open to the truth. There is considerable danger that a man will be crazy between dinner and supper; but it will not directly answer any good purpose that I know of, and it is just as easy to be sane. We have got to know what both life and death are, before we can begin to live after our own fashion. Let us be learning our a-b-c's as soon as possible. I never yet knew the sun to be knocked down and rolled through a mud-puddle; he comes out honor-bright from behind every storm. Let us then take sides with the sun, seeing we have so much leisure. Let us not put all we prize into a football to be kicked, when a bladder will do as well.

When an Indian is burned, his body may be broiled, it may be no more than a beefsteak. What of that? They may broil his *heart,* but they do not therefore broil his *courage*, — his principles. Be of good courage! That is the main thing.

If a man were to place himself in an attitude to bear manfully the greatest evil that can be inflicted on him, he would find suddenly that

there was no such evil to bear; his brave back would go a-begging. When Atlas got his back made up, that was all that was required. (In this case *a priv*., not *pleon*., and tlami.) The world rests on principles. The wise gods will never make underpinning of a man. But as long as he crouches, and skulks, and shirks his work, every creature that has weight will be treading on his toes, and crushing him; he will himself tread with one foot on the other foot.

The monster is never just there where we think he is. What is truly monstrous is our cowardice and sloth.

Have no idle disciplines like the Catholic Church and others; have only positive and fruitful ones. Do what you know you ought to do. Why should we ever go abroad, even across the way, to ask a neighbor's advice? There is a nearer neighbor within us incessantly telling us how we should behave. But we wait for the neighbor without to tell us of some false, easier way.

They have a census-table in which they put down the number of the insane. Do you believe that they put them all down there? Why, in every one of these houses there is at least one man fighting or squabbling a good part of his time with a dozen pet demons of his own breeding and cherishing, which are relentlessly gnawing at his vitals; and if perchance he resolve at length that he will courageously combat them, he says, "Ay! ay! I will attend to you after dinner!" And, when that time comes, he concludes that he is good for another stage, and reads a column or two about the *Eastern War!* Pray, to be in earnest, where is Sevastopol?

Who is Menchikoff? and Nicholas behind there? who the Allies? Did not we fight a little (little enough to be sure, but just enough to make it interesting) at Alma, at Balaclava, at Inkermann? We love to fight far from home. Ah! the Minié musket is the king of weapons. Well, let us get one then.

I just put another stick into my stove, — a pretty large mass of white oak. How many men will do enough this cold winter to pay for the fuel that will be required to warm them? I suppose I have burned up a pretty good-sized tree to-night, — and for what? I settled with Mr. Tarbell for it the other day; but that wasn't the final settlement. I got off cheaply from him. At last, one will say, "Let us see, how much wood did you burn, sir?" And I shall shudder to think that the

next question will be, “What did you do while you were warm?” Do we think the ashes will pay for it? that God is an ash-man? It is a fact that we have got to render an account for the deeds done in the body.

Who knows but we shall be better the next year than we have been the past? At any rate, I wish you a really *new* year, — commencing from the instant you read this, — and happy or unhappy, according to your deserts.

The early part of 1855 was spent by Thomas Cholmondeley in a tiresome passage to England, whence he wrote (January 27) to say to Thoreau that he had reached Shropshire, and been commissioned captain in the local militia, in preparation for service at Sevastopol, but reminding his Concord friend of a half promise to visit England some day. To this Thoreau made answer thus: —

TO THOMAS CHOLMONDELEY (AT HODNET).

CONCORD, Mass., February 7, 1855.

Dear Cholmondeley, — I am glad to hear that you have arrived safely at Hodnet, and that there is a solid piece of ground of that name which can support a man better than a floating plank, in that to me as yet purely historical England. But have I not seen you with my own eyes, a piece of England herself, and was not your letter come out to me thence? I have now reason to believe that Salop is as real a place as Concord; with at least as good an underpinning of granite, floating on liquid fire. I congratulate you on having arrived safely at that floating isle, after your disagreeable passage in the steamer America. So are we not all making a passage, agreeable or disagreeable, in the steamer Earth, trusting to arrive at last at some less undulating Salop and brother's house?

I cannot say that I am surprised to hear that you have joined the militia, after what I have heard from your lips; but I am glad to doubt if there will be occasion for your volunteering into the line. Perhaps I am thinking of the saying that it "is always darkest just before day." I believe it is only necessary that England be fully awakened to a sense of her position, in order that she may right herself, especially as the weather will soon cease to be her foe. I wish I could believe that the cause in which you are embarked is the cause of the people of England. However, I have no sympathy with the idleness that would contrast this fighting with the teachings of the pulpit; for, perchance, more true virtue is being practiced at Sevastopol than in many years of peace. It is a pity that we seem to require a war, from time to time, to assure us that there is any manhood still left in man.

I was much pleased with [J. J. G.] Wilkinson's vigorous and telling assault on Allopathy, though he substitutes another and perhaps no stronger *thy* for that. Something as good on the whole conduct of the war would be of service. Cannot Carlyle supply it? We will not require him to provide the remedy. Every man to his

trade. As you know, I am not in any sense a politician. You, who live in that snug and compact isle, may dream of a glorious commonwealth, but I have some doubts whether I and the new king of the Sandwich Islands shall pull together. When I think of the gold-diggers and the Mormons, the slaves and the slaveholders and the flibustiers, I naturally dream of a glorious private life. No, I am not patriotic; I shall not meddle with the Gem of the Antilles. General Quitman cannot count on my aid, alas for him! nor can General Pierce.

I still take my daily walk, or skate over Concord fields or meadows, and on the whole have more to do with nature than with man. We have not had much snow this winter, but have had some remarkably cold weather, the mercury, February 6, not rising above 6° below zero during the day, and the next morning falling to 26°. Some ice is still thirty inches thick about us. A rise in the river has made uncommonly good skating, which I have improved to the extent of some thirty miles a day, fifteen out and fifteen in.

Emerson is off westward, enlightening the Hamiltonians [in Canada] and others, mingling his thunder with that of Niagara. Channing still sits warming his five wits — his sixth, you know, is always limber — over that stove, with the dog down cellar. Lowell has just been appointed Professor of Belles-Lettres in Harvard University, in place of Longfellow, resigned, and will go very soon to spend another year in Europe, before taking his seat.

I am from time to time congratulating myself on my general want of success as a lecturer; apparent want of success, but is it not a real triumph? I do my work clean as I go along, and they will not be likely to want me anywhere again. So there is no danger of my repeating myself, and getting to a barrel of sermons, which you must upset, and begin again with.

My father and mother and sister all desire to be remembered to you, and trust that you will never come within range of Russian bullets. Of course, I would rather think of you as settled down there in Shropshire, in the camp of the English people, making acquaintance with your men, striking at the root of the evil, perhaps assaulting that rampart of cotton bags that you tell of. But it makes no odds where a man goes or stays, if he is only about his business.

Let me hear from you, wherever you are, and believe me yours ever in the good fight, whether before Sevastopol or under the wreken.

While Cholmondeley's first letter from England was on its way to Concord, Thoreau was one clay making his occasional call at the Harvard College Library (where he found and was allowed to take away volumes relating to his manifold studies), when it occurred to him to call at my student-chamber in Holworthy Hall, and there leave a copy of his "Week." I had never met him, and was then out; the occasion of his call was a review of his two books that had come out a few weeks earlier in the "Harvard Magazine," of which I was an editor and might be supposed to have had some share in the criticism. The volume was left with my classmate Lyman, accompanied by a message that it was intended for the critic in the Magazine. Accordingly, I gave it to Edwin Morton, who was the reviewer, and notified Thoreau by letter of that fact, and of my hope to see him soon in Cambridge or Concord. To this he replied in a few days as below: —

TO F. B. SANBORN (AT HAMPTON FALLS, N. H.).

CONCORD, February 2, 1855.

Dear Sir, — I fear that you did not get the note which I left with the Librarian for you, and so will thank you again for your politeness. I was sorry that I was obliged to go into Boston almost immediately. However, I shall be glad to see you whenever you come to Concord, and I will suggest nothing to discourage your coming, so far as I am concerned; trusting that you know what it is to take a partridge on the wing. You tell me that the author of the criticism is Mr. Morton. I had heard as much, — and indeed guessed more. I have latterly found Concord nearer to Cambridge than I believed I should, when I was leaving my Alma Mater; and hence you will not be surprised if even I feel some interest in the success of the "Harvard Magazine."

Believe me yours truly,
HENRY D. THOREAU.

At this time I was under engagement with Mr. Emerson and others in Concord to take charge of a small school there in March; and did so without again seeing the author of "Walden" in Cambridge. Soon after my settlement at Concord, in the house of Mr. Channing, just opposite Thoreau's, he made an evening call on me and my sister (April 11, 1855), but I had already met him more than once at Mr. Emerson's, and was even beginning to take walks with him, as frequently happened in the next six years. In the following summer I began to dine daily at his mother's table, and thus saw him almost every day for three years.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

Concord, *June* 27, 1855.

Mr. Blake, — I have been sick and good for nothing but to lie on my back and wait for something to turn up, for two or three months. This has *compelled me* to postpone several things, among them writing to you, to whom I am so deeply in debt, and inviting you and Brown to Concord, — not having brains adequate to such an exertion. I should feel a little less ashamed if I could give any name to my disorder, — but I cannot, and our doctor cannot help me to it, — and I will not take the name of any disease in vain. However, there is one consolation in being sick; and that is the possibility that you may recover to a better state than you were ever in before. I expected in the winter to be deep in the woods of Maine in my canoe, long before this; but I am so far from this that I can only take a languid walk in Concord streets.

I do not know how the mistake arose about the Cape Cod excursion. The nearest I have come to that with anybody is this: About a month ago Channing proposed to me to go to Truro on Cape Cod with him, and board there a while, — but I declined. For a week past, however, I have been a little inclined to go there and sit on the seashore a week or more; but I do not venture to propose myself as the companion of him or of any peripatetic man. Not that I should not rejoice to have you and Brown or C. sitting there also. I am not sure that C. really wishes to go now; and as I go simply for the medicine of it, I should not think it worth the while to notify him when I am about to take my bitters. Since I began this, or within five minutes, I have begun to think that I will start for Truro next Saturday morning, the 30th. I do not know at what hour the packet leaves Boston, nor exactly what kind of accommodation I shall find at Truro.

I should be singularly favored if you and Brown were there at the same time; and though you speak of the 20th of July, I will be so bold as to suggest your coming to Concord Friday night (when, by the way, Garrison and Phillips hold forth here), and going to the

Cape with me. Though we take short walks together there, we can have *long* talks, and you and Brown will have time enough for your own excursions besides.

I received a letter from Cholmondeley last winter, which I should like to show you, as well as his book.1 He said that he had "accepted the offer of a captaincy in the Salop Militia," and was hoping to take an active part in the war before long.

I thank you again and again for the encouragement your letters are to me. But I must stop this writing, or I shall have to pay for it.

NORTH TRURO, July 8, 1855.

There being no packet, I did not leave Boston till last Thursday, though I came down on Wednesday, and Channing with me. There is no public house here; but we are boarding with Mr. James Small, the keeper, in a little house attached to the Highland Lighthouse. It is true the table is not so clean as could be desired, but I have found it much superior in that respect to the Provincetown hotel. They are what is called "good livers." Our host has another larger and very good house, within a quarter of a mile, unoccupied, where he says he can accommodate several more. He is a very good man to deal with, — has often been the representative of the town, and is perhaps the most intelligent

1 The book was *Ultima Thule*, describing New Zealand.

man in it. I shall probably stay here as much as ten days longer: board $3.50 per week. So you and Brown had better come down forthwith. You will find either the schooner Melrose or another, or both, leaving Commerce Street, or else T Wharf, at 9 A. M. (it commonly means 10), Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, — if not other days. We left about 10 A. M., and reached Provincetown at 5 P. M., — a very good run. A stage runs up the Cape every morning but Sunday, starting at 4 1/2 A. M., and reaches the postoffice in North Truro, seven miles from Provincetown, and one from the lighthouse, about 6 o'clock. If you arrive at P. before night, you can walk over,

and leave your baggage to be sent. You can also come by cars from Boston to Yarmouth, and thence by stage forty miles more, — through every day, but it costs much more, and is not so pleasant. Come by all means, for it is the best place to see the ocean in these States. I *hope* I shall be worth meeting.

July 14.

You say that you hope I will excuse your frequent writing. I trust you will excuse my infrequent and curt writing until I am able to resume my old habits, which for three months I have been compelled to abandon. Methinks I am beginning to be better. I think to leave the Cape next Wednesday, and so shall not see you here; but I shall be glad to meet you in Concord, though I may not be able to go *before the mast*, in a boating excursion. This is an admirable place for coolness and sea-bathing and retirement. You must come prepared for cool weather and fogs.

P. S. — There is no mail up till Monday morning.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, September 26, 1855.

Mr. Blake, — The other day I thought that my health must be better, — that I gave at last a sign of vitality, — because I experienced a slight chagrin. But I do not see how strength is to be got into my legs again. These months of feebleness have yielded few, if any, thoughts, though they have not passed without serenity, such as our sluggish Musketaquid suggests. I hope that the harvest is to come. I trust that you have at least warped up the stream a little daily, holding fast by your anchors at night, since I saw you, and have kept my place for me while I have been absent.

Mr. Ricketson of New Bedford has just made me a visit of a day and a half, and I have had a quite good time with him. He and Channing have got on particularly well together. He is a man of very simple tastes, notwithstanding his wealth; a lover of nature; but, above all, singularly frank and plain-spoken. I think that you might enjoy meeting him.

Sincerity is a great but rare virtue, and we pardon to it much complaining, and the betrayal of many weaknesses. R. says of himself, that he sometimes thinks that he has all the infirmities of genius without the genius; is wretched without a hair-pillow, etc.; expresses a great and awful uncertainty with regard to "God," "Death," his "immortality;" says, "If I only knew," etc. He loves Cowper's "Task" better than anything else; and thereafter, perhaps, Thomson, Gray, and even Howitt. He has evidently suffered for want of sympathizing companions. He says that he sympathizes with much in my books, but much in them is naught to him,— "namby-pamby,"— "stuff,"— "mystical." Why will not I, having common sense, write in plain English always; *teach* men in detail how to live a simpler life, etc.; not go off into — ? But I say that I have no scheme about it, — no designs on men at all; and, if I had, my mode would be to tempt them with the fruit, and not with the manure. To what end do I lead a simple life at all, pray? That I may teach others to simplify their lives? — and so all our lives be *simplified* merely,

like an algebraic formula? Or not, rather, that I may make use of the ground I have cleared, to live more worthily and profitably? I would fain lay the most stress forever on that which is the most important, — imports the most to me, — though it were only (what it is likely to be) a vibration in the air. As a preacher, I should be prompted to tell men, not so much how to get their wheat-bread cheaper, as of the bread of life compared with which *that* is bran. Let a man only taste these loaves, and he becomes a skillful economist at once. He'll not waste much time in earning those. Don't spend your time in drilling soldiers, who may turn out hirelings after all, but give to undrilled peasantry a *country* to fight for. The schools begin with what they call the elements, and where do they end?

I was glad to hear the other day that Higginson and —— — were gone to Ktaadn; it must be so much better to go to than a Woman's Rights or Abolition Convention; better still, to the delectable primitive mounts within you, which you have dreamed of from your youth up, and seen, perhaps, in the horizon, but never climbed.

But how do *you* do? Is the air sweet to you? Do you find anything at which you can work, accomplishing something solid from day to day? Have you put sloth and doubt behind, considerably? — had one redeeming dream this summer?

I dreamed, last night, that I could vault over any height it pleased me. That was *something;* and I contemplated myself with a slight satisfaction in the morning for it.

Methinks I will write to you. Methinks you will be glad to hear. We will stand on solid foundations to one another, — la column planted on this shore, you on that. We meet the same sun in his rising. We were built slowly, and have come to our bearing. We will not mutually fall over that we may meet, but will grandly and eternally guard the straits. Methinks I see an inscription on you, which the architect made, the stucco being worn off to it. The name of that ambitious worldly king is crumbling away. I see it toward sunset in favorable lights. Each must read for the other, as might a sailer-by. Be sure you are star-y-pointing still. How is it on your side? I will not require an answer until you think I have paid my debts to you.

I have just got a letter from Ricketson, urging me to come to New

Bedford, which possibly I may do. He says I can wear my old clothes there.

Let me be remembered in your quiet house.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, September 27,1855.

Friend Ricketson, — I am sorry that you were obliged to leave Concord without seeing more of it, — its river and woods, and various pleasant walks, and its worthies. I assure you that I am none the worse for my walk with you, but on all accounts the better. Methinks I am regaining my health; but I would like to know first what it was that ailed me.

I have not yet conveyed your message to Mr. Hosmer,1 but will not fail to do so. That idea of occupying the old house is a good one, — quite feasible, — and you could bring your hair-pillow with you. It is an *inn* in Concord which I had not thought of, — a philosopher's inn. That large chamber might make a man's idea expand proportionably. It would be well to have an interest in some old chamber in a deserted house in every part of the country which attracted us.

1 This was Edmund Hosmer, a Concord farmer, before mentioned as a friend of Emerson, who was fond of quoting his sagacious and often cynical remarks. He had entertained George Curtis and the Alcotts at his farm on the "Turnpike," southeast of Emerson's; but now was living on a part of the old manor of Governor Winthrop, which soon passed to the ownership of the Hunts; and this house which Mr. Ricketson proposed to lease was the "old Hunt farmhouse," — in truth built for the Winthrops two centuries before. It was soon after torn down.

There would be no such place to receive one's guests as that. If old furniture is fashionable, why not go the whole house at once? I shall endeavor to make Mr. Hosmer believe that the old house is the chief attraction of his farm, and that it is his duty to preserve it by all honest appliances. You might take a lease of it *in perpetuo*, and done with it.

I am so wedded to my way of spending a day, —— require such broad margins of leisure, and such a complete wardrobe of old clothes, — that I am ill-fitted for going abroad. Pleasant is it sometimes to sit at home, on a single egg all day, in your own nest,

though it may prove at last to be an egg of chalk. The old coat that I wear is Concord; it is my morning-robe and study-gown, my working dress and suit of ceremony, and my nightgown after all. Cleave to the simplest ever. Home, — home, — home. *Cars* sound like *cares* to me.

I am accustomed to think very long of going anywhere, — am slow to move. I hope to hear a response of the oracle first. However, I think that I will try the effect of your talisman on the iron horse next Saturday, and dismount at Tarkiln Hill. Perhaps your sea air will be good for me. I conveyed your invitation to Channing, but he apparently will not come.

Excuse my not writing earlier; but I had not decided.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, October 12, 1855.

Mr. Ricketson, — I fear that you had a lonely and disagreeable ride back to New Bedford through the Carver woods and so on, — perhaps in the rain, too, and I am in part answerable for it. I feel very much in debt to you and your family for the pleasant days I spent at Brooklawn. Tell Arthur and Walton1 that the shells which they gave me are spread out, and make quite a show to inland eyes. Methinks I still hear the strains of the piano, the violin, and the flageolet blended together. Excuse *me* for the noise which I believe drove you to take refuge in the shanty. That shanty is indeed a favorable place to expand in, which I fear I did not enough improve.

On my way through Boston I inquired for Gilpin's works at Little, Brown & Co.'s, Monroe's, Ticknor's, and Burirham's. They have not got them. They told me at Little, Brown & Co.'s that his works (not complete), in twelve vols., 8vo, were imported and sold in this country five or six years ago for about fifteen dollars. Their terms for importing are ten per cent on the cost. I copied from the "London Catalogue

1 Sons of Mr. Ricketson; the second, a sculptor, modeled the medallion head of Thoreau engraved for this book.

of Books, 1846-51," at their shop, the following list of Gilpin's Works: —

Gilpin (Wm.), Dialogues on Various Subjects. 8vo. 9s.
Cadell.
— Essays on Picturesque Subjects. 8vo. 15s. Cadell.
— Exposition of the New Testament. 2 vols. 8vo. 16s.
Longman.
— Forest Scenery, by Sir T. D. Lauder. 2 vols. 8vo.
18s. — Smith & E. — Lectures on the Catechism. 12mo. 3s. Qd.

Longman.

— Lives of the Reformers. 2 vols. 12mo. 8s.

Rivington.

— Sermons Illustrative and Practical. 8vo. 12s.

Hatchard.

— Sermons to Country Congregations. 4 vols. 8vo. £1

16s. — Longman.

— Tour in Cambridge, Norfolk, &c. 8vo. 18s. Cadell.

— Tour of the River Wye. 12mo. 4s. With plates.

8vo. 17s. — Cadell.

Gilpin (W. S. (?)), Hints on Landscape Gardening. Royal 8vo. *£1.* — Cadell.

Beside these, I remember to have read one yolnme on "Prints;" his "Southern Tour" (1775); "Lakes of Cumberland," two vols.; "Highlands of Scotland and West of England," two vols. — *N. B.* There *must* be plates in every volume.

I still see an image of those Middleborough Ponds in my mind's eye, — broad shallow lakes, with an iron mine at the bottom, — comparatively unvexed by sails, — only by Tom Smith and his squaw, *Sepits*, "Sharper." I find my map of the State to be the best I have seen of that district. It is a question whether the islands of Long Pond or Great Quitticus offer the greatest attractions to a Lord of the Isles. That plant which I found on the shore of Long Pond chances to be a rare and beautiful flower, — the *Sabattia chloroides,* — referred to Plymouth.

In a Description of Middleborough in the Hist. Coll., vol iii., 1810, signed Nehemiah Bennet, Middleborough, 1793, it is said: "There is on the easterly shore of Assawampsitt Pond, on the shore of Betty's Neck, two rocks which have curious marks thereon (supposed to be done by the Indians), which appear like the steppings of a person with naked feet which settled into the rocks; likewise the prints of a hand on several places, with a number of other marks; also there is a rock on a high hill a little to the eastward of the old stone fishing wear, where there is the print of a person's hand in said rock."

It would be well to look at those rocks again more carefully; also at the rock on the hill.

I should think that you would like to explore Sinpatuct Pond in

Rochester, — it is so large and near. It is an interesting fact that the ale-wives used to ascend to it, — if they do not still, —— both from Mattapoisett and through Great Quitticus.

There will be no trouble about the chamber in the old house, though, as I told you, Mr. Hosmer *may* expect some compensation for it. He says, "Give my respects to Mr. Ricketson, and tell him that I cannot be at a large expense to preserve an antiquity or curiosity. Nature must do its work."

"But," say I, " he asks you only not to assist nature."

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, October 16, 1855.

Friend Ricketson, — I have got both your letters at once. You must not think Concord so barren a place when Channing1 is away. There are the river and fields left yet; and I, though ordinarily a man of business, should have some afternoons and evenings to spend with you, I trust, — that is, if you could stand so much of me. If you can spend your time profitably here, or without *ennui*, having an occasional ramble or *tete-a-tete* with one of the natives, it will give me pleasure to have you in the neighborhood. You see I am preparing you for our awful unsocial ways, — keeping in our dens a good part of the day, — sucking our claws perhaps. But then we make a religion of it, and that you cannot but respect.

1 Mr. Channing had gone, October, 1855, to live in New Bedford, and help edit the *Mercury* there.

If you know the taste of your own heart, and like it, come to Concord, and I'll warrant you enough here to season the dish with, — ay, even though Channing and Emerson and I were all away. We might paddle quietly up the river. Then there are one or two more ponds to be seen, etc.

I should very much enjoy further rambling with you in your vicinity, but must postpone it for the present. To tell the truth, I am planning to get seriously to work after these long months of inefficiency and idleness. I do not know whether you are haunted by any such demon which puts you on the alert to pluck the fruit of each day as it passes, and store it safely in your bin. True, it is well to live abandonedly from time to time; but to our working hours that must be as the spile to the bung. So for a long season I must enjoy only a low slanting gleam in my mind's eye from the Middleborough Ponds

far away.

Methinks I am getting a little more strength into those knees of mine; and, for my part, I believe that God *does* delight in the strength of a man's legs.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, December 9, 1855.

Mr. Blake, — Thank you! thank you for going a-wooding with me, — and enjoying it, — for being warmed by my wood fire. I have indeed enjoyed it much alone. I see how I might enjoy it yet more with company, — how we might help each other to live. And to be admitted to Nature's hearth costs nothing. None is excluded, but excludes himself. You have only to push aside the curtain.

I am glad to hear that you were there too. There are many more such voyages, and longer ones, to be made on that river, for it is the water of life. The Ganges is nothing to it. Observe its reflections, — no idea but is familiar to it. That river, though to dull eyes it seems terrestrial wholly, flows through Elysium. What powers bathe in it invisible to villagers! Talk of its shallowness, — that hay-carts can be driven through it at midsummer; its depth passeth my understanding. If, forgetting the allurements of the world, I could drink deeply enough of it; if, cast adrift from the shore, I could with complete integrity float on it, I should never be seen on the Mill-dam again.1 If there is any depth in

1 The centre of Concord village, where the post-office and shops are, — so called from an old mill-dam where now is a street.

me, there is a corresponding depth in it. It is the cold blood of the gods. I paddle and bathe in their artery.

I do not want a stick of wood for so trivial a use as to burn even, but they get it over night, and carve and gild it that it may please my eye. What persevering lovers they are! What infinite pains to attract and delight us! They will supply us with fagots wrapped in the daintiest packages, and freight paid; sweet-scented woods, and bursting into flower, and resounding as if Orpheus had just left them, — these shall be our fuel, and we still prefer to chaffer with the wood-merchant!

The jug we found still stands draining bottom up on the bank, on the sunny side of the house. That river, — who shall say exactly whence it came, and whither it goes? Does aught that flows come from a higher source? Many things drift downward on its surface which would enrich a man. If you could only be on the alert all day, and every day! And the nights are as long as the days.

Do you not think you could contrive thus to get woody fibre enough to bake your wheaten bread with? Would you not perchance have tasted the sweet crust of another kind of bread in the mean while, which ever hangs ready baked on the bread-fruit trees of the world?

Talk of burning your smoke after the wood has been consumed! There is a far more important and warming heat, commonly lost, which precedes the burning of the wood. It is the smoke of industry, which is incense. I had been so thoroughly warmed in body and spirit, that when at length my fuel was housed, I came near selling it to the ash-man, as if I had extracted all its heat.

You should have been here to help me get in my boat. The last time I used it, November 27th, paddling up the Assabet, I saw a great round pine log sunk deep in the water, and with labor got it aboard. When I was floating this home so gently, it occurred to me why I had found it. It was to make wheels with to roll my boat into winter quarters upon. So I sawed off two thick rollers from one end, pierced them for wheels, and then of a joist which I had found drifting on the river in the summer I made an axletree, and on this I rolled my boat out.

Miss Mary Emerson is here, — the youngest person in Concord, though about eighty, — and the most apprehensive of a genuine thought; earnest to know of your inner life; most stimulating society; and exceedingly witty withal. She says they called her old when she was young, and she has never grown any older. I wish you could see her.

My books did not arrive till November 30th, the cargo of the Asia having been complete when they reached Liverpool. I have arranged them in a case which I made in the mean while, partly of river boards. I have not dipped far into the new ones yet. One is splendidly bound and illuminated. They are in English, French, Latin, Greek,

and Sanscrit. I have not made out the significance of this godsend yet.

Farewell, and bright dreams to you!

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, December 25, 1855.

Friend Ricketson, — Though you have not shown your face here, I trust that you did not interpret my last note to my disadvantage. I remember that, among other things, I wished to break it to you, that, owing to engagements, I should not be able to show you so much attention as I could wish, or as you had shown to me. How we did scour over the country! I hope your horse will live as long as one which I hear just died in the south of France at the age of forty. Yet I had no doubt you would get quite ‘enough of me. Do not give it up so easily. The old house is still empty, and Hosmer is easy to treat with.

Channing was here about ten days ago. I told him of my visit to you, and that he too must go and see you and your country. This may have suggested his writing to you.

That island lodge, especially for some weeks in a summer, and new explorations in your vicinity, are certainly very alluring; but *such are my engagements to myself,* that I dare not promise to wend your way, but will for the present only heartily thank you for your kind and generous offer. When my vacation comes, then look out.

My legs have grown considerably stronger, and that is all that ails me, But I wish now above all to inform you, — though I suppose you will not be particularly interested, — that Cholmondeley has gone to the Crimea, “a complete soldier,” with a design, when he returns, if he ever returns, to buy a cottage in the South of England, and tempt me over; but that, before going, he busied himself in buying, and has caused to be forwarded to me by Chapman, a royal gift, in the shape of twenty-one distinct works (one in nine volumes, — forty-four volumes in all), almost exclusively relating to ancient Hindoo literature, and scarcely one of them to be bought in America.1 I am familiar with many of them, and know how to prize them. I send you information of this as I might of the birth of a child.

Please remember me to all your family.

1 These books were ordered by Cholmondeley in London, and sent to Boston just as he was starting for the Crimean war, in October, 1855, calling them "a nest of Indian books." They included Mill's *History of British India*, several translations of the sacred books of India, and one of them in Sanscrit; the works of Bunsen, so far as then published, and other valuable books. In the note accompanying this gift, Cholmondeley said, "I think I never found so much kindness in all my travels as in your country of New England." In return, Thoreau sent his English friend, in 1857, his own *Week,* Emerson's poems, Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and F. L. Olmsted's book on the Southern States (then preparing for the secession which they attempted four years later). This was perhaps the first copy of Whitman seen in England, and when Cholmondeley began to read it to his stepfather, Rev. Z. Macaulay, at Hodnet, that clergyman declared he would not hear it, and threatened to throw it in the fire. On reading the *Week* (he had received *Walden* from Thoreau when first in America), Cholmondeley wrote me, "Would you tell dear Thoreau that the lines I admire so much in his *Week* begin thus: —

'Low-anchored cloud,
Newfoundland air,' etc.

In my mind the best thing he ever wrote,"

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, March 5, 1856.

Dear Sir, — I have been out of town, else I should have acknowledged your letter before. Though not in the best mood for writing, I will say what I can now. You plainly have a rare, though a cheap, resource in your shanty. Perhaps the time will come when every country-seat will have one, — when every country-seat will *be one*. I would advise you to see that shanty business out, though you go shanty-mad. Work your vein till it is exhausted, or conducts you to a broader one; so that Channing shall stand before your shanty, and say, "That is your house."

This has indeed been a grand winter for me, and for all of us. I am not considering how much I have enjoyed it. What matters it how happy or unhappy we have been, if we have minded our business and advanced our affairs. I have made it a part of my business to wade in the snow and take the measure of the ice. The ice on our pond was just two feet thick on the first of March; and I have to-day been surveying a wood-lot, where I sank about two feet at every step.

It is high time that you, fanned by the warm breezes of the Gulf Stream, had begun to "lay," for even the Concord hens have, though one wonders where they find the raw material of egg-shell here. Beware how you put off your laying to any later spring, else your cackling will not have the inspiring early spring sound.

As for visiting you in April, though I am inclined enough to take some more rambles in your neighborhood, especially by the seaside, I dare not engage myself, nor allow you to expect me. The truth is, I have my enterprises now as ever, at which I tug with ridiculous feebleness, but admirable perseverance, and cannot say when I shall be sufficiently fancy-free for such an excursion.

You have done well to write a lecture on Cowper. In the expectation of getting you to read it here, I applied to the curators of our Lyceum; 1 but, alas, our Lyceum has been a failure this winter for want of

funds. It ceased some weeks since, with a debt, they tell me, to be carried over to the next year's account. Only one more lecture is to be read by a Signor Somebody, an Italian, paid for by private subscription, as a deed of charity to the lecturer. They are not rich enough to offer you your expenses even, though probably a month or two ago they would have been glad of the chance.

1 The Concord Lyceum, founded in 1829, and still extant, though not performing its original function of lectures and debates. See pp. 61, 185, etc.

However, the old house has not failed yet. That offers you lodging for an indefinite time after you get into it; and in the mean while I offer you bed and board in my father's house, — always excepting hair-pillows and new-fangled bedding.

Remember me to your family.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, March 27, 1856.

Friend Ricketson, — I was surprised to hear the other day that Channing was in New Bedford. When he was here last (in December, I think), he said, like himself, in answer to my inquiry where he lived, "that he did not know the name of the place;" so it has remained in a degree of obscurity to me. I am rejoiced to hear that you are getting on so bravely with him and his verses. He and I, as you know, have been old cronies,1 —

"Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill,
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove afield, and both together heared," etc.

"But O, the heavy change," now he is gone.

1 Ellery Channing is mentioned, though not by name, in the *Week* (pp.211,467), and in *Walden* (p. 414). He was the comrade of Thoreau in Berkshire, and on the Hudson, in New Hampshire, Canada, and Cape Cod, and in many rambles nearer Concord. He was also a companion of Hawthorne in his river voyages, as mentioned in the *Mosses.*

The Channing you have seen and described is the real Simon Pure. You have seen him. Many a good ramble may you have together! You will see in him still more of the same kind to attract and to puzzle you. How to serve him most effectually has long been a problem with his friends. Perhaps it is left for you to solve it. I suspect that the most that you or any one can do for him is to appreciate his genius, — to buy and read, and cause others to buy and read his poems. That is the hand which he has put forth to the

world, — take hold of that. Review them if you can, — perhaps take the risk of publishing something more which he may write. Your knowledge of Cowper will help you to know Channing. He will accept sympathy and aid, but he will not bear questioning, unless the aspects of the sky are particularly auspicious. He will ever be "reserved and enigmatic," and you must deal with him at arm's length. I have no secrets to tell you concerning him, and do not wish to call obvious excellences and defects by far-fetched names. Nor need I suggest how witty and poetic he is, and what an inexhaustible fund of good fellowship you will find in him.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

Concord, MARCH 13, 1856.

MR. BLAKE, — It is high time I sent you a word. I have not heard from Harrisburg since offering to go there, and have not been invited to lecture anywhere else the past winter. So you see I am fast growing rich. This is quite right, for such is my relation to the lecture-goers, I should be surprised and alarmed if there were any great call for me. I confess that I am considerably alarmed even when I hear that an individual wishes to meet me, for my experience teaches me that we shall thus only be made certain of a mutual strangeness, which otherwise we might never have been aware of.

I have not yet recovered strength enough for such a walk as you propose, though pretty well again for circumscribed rambles and chamber work. Even now, I am probably the greatest walker in Concord, — to its disgrace be it said. I remember our walks and talks and sailing in the past with great satisfaction, and trust that we shall have more of them erelong, — have more woodings-up, — for even in the spring we must still seek "fuel to maintain our fires."

As you suggest, we would fain value one another for what we are absolutely, rather than relatively. How will this do for a symbol of sympathy?

As for compliments, even the stars praise me, and I praise them. They and I sometimes belong to a mutual admiration society. Is it not so with you? I know you of old. Are you not tough and earnest to be talked at, praised, or blamed? Must *you* go out of the room because you are the subject of conversation? Where will you go to, pray? Shall we look into the "Letter Writer" to see what compliments are admissible? I am not afraid of praise, for I have practiced it on myself. As for my deserts, I never took an account of that stock, and in this connection care not whether I am deserving or not. When I hear praise coming, do I not elevate and arch myself to hear it like the sky, and as impersonally? Think I appropriate any of it to my weak legs? No. Praise away *till all is blue.*

I see by the newspapers that the season for making sugar is at hand. Now is the time, whether you be rock, or white-maple, or hickory. I trust that you have prepared a store of sap-tubs and sumach-spouts, and invested largely in kettles. Early the first frosty morning, tap your maples, — the sap will not run in summer, you know. It matters not how little juice you get, if you get all you can, and boil it down. I made just one crystal of sugar once, one twentieth of an inch cube, out of a pumpkin, and it sufficed. Though the yield be no greater than that, this is not less the season for it, and it will be not the less sweet, nay, it will be infinitely the sweeter.

Shall, then, the maple yield sugar, and not man? Shall the farmer be thus active, and surely have so much sugar to show for it, before this very March is gone, — while I read the newspaper? While he works in his sugar-camp let me work in mine, — for sweetness is in me, and to sugar it shall come, — it shall not all go to leaves and wood. Am I not a *sugar-maple* man, then? Boil down the sweet sap which the spring causes to flow within you. Stop not at syrup, — go on to sugar, though you present the world with but a single crystal, — a crystal not made from trees in your yard, but from the new life that stirs in your pores. Cheerfully skim your kettle, and watch it set and crystallize, making a holiday of it if you will. Heaven will be propitious to you as to him.

Say to the farmer, There is your crop; here is mine. Mine is a sugar to sweeten sugar with. If you will listen to me, I will sweeten your whole load, — your whole life.

Then will the callers ask, Where is Blake? He is in his sugar-camp on the mountain-side. Let the world await him. Then will the little boys bless you, and the great boys too, for such sugar is the origin of many condiments, — Blakians in the shops of Worcester, of new form, with their mottoes wrapped up in them. Shall men taste only the sweetness of the maple and the cane the coming year?

A walk over the crust to Asnybumskit, standing there in its inviting simplicity, is tempting to think of, — making a fire on the snow under some rock! The very poverty of outward nature implies an inward wealth in the walker. What a Golconda is he conversant with, thawing his fingers over such a blaze! But — but —

Have you read the new poem, “The Angel in the House”? Perhaps

you will find it good for you.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, May 21,1856.

Mr. Blake, — I have not for a long time been *putting such thoughts together* as I should like to read to the company you speak of. I have enough of that sort to say, or even read, but not time now to arrange it. Something I have prepared might prove for their entertainment or refreshment perchance; but I would not like to have a hat carried round for it. I have just been reading some papers to see if they would do for your company; but though I thought pretty well of them as long as I read them to myself, when I got an auditor to try them on, I felt that they would not answer. How could I let you drum up a company to hear them? In fine, what I have is either too scattered or loosely arranged, or too light, or else is too scientific and matter of fact (I run a good deal into that of late) for so hungry a company.

I am still a learner, not a teacher, feeding somewhat omnivorously, browsing both stalk and leaves; but I shall perhaps be enabled to speak with the more precision and authority by and by, — if philosophy and sentiment are not buried under a multitude of details.

I do not refuse, but accept your invitation, only changing the time. I consider myself invited to Worcester once for all, and many thanks to the inviter. As for the Harvard excursion,1 will you let me suggest another? Do you and

1 This was the town of Harvard, not the college. Perhaps the excursion was to visit Fruitlands, where Alcott and Lane had established their short-lived community, in a beautiful spot near Still River, an affluent of the Nashua, and half way from Concord to Wachusett. “Asnebumskit,” mentioned in a former letter, is the highest hill near Worcester, as “Nobscot” is the highest near Concord. Both have Indian names.

Brown come to Concord on Saturday, if the weather promises well, and spend the Sunday here on the river or hills, or both. So we

shall save some of our money (which is of next importance to our souls), and lose — I do not know what. You say you *talked* of coming here before; now *do* it. I do not propose this because I think that I am worth your spending time with, but because I hope that we may prove flint and steel to one another. It is at most only an hour's ride farther, and you can at any rate do what you please when you get here.

Then we will see if we have any apology to offer for our existence. So come to Concord, — come to Concord, — come to Concord! or — your suit shall be defaulted.

As for the dispute about solitude and society, any comparison is impertinent. It is an idling down on the plain at the base of a mountain, instead of climbing steadily to its top. Of course you will be glad of all the society you can get to go up with. Will you go to glory with me? is the burden of the song. I love society so much that I swallowed it all at a gulp, — that is, all that came in my way. It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, and when we do soar, the company grows thinner and thinner till there is none at all. It is either the Tribune1 on

1 The New York newspaper.

the plain, a sermon on the mount, or a very private ecstasy still higher up. We are not the less to aim at the summits, though the multitude does not ascend them. Use all the society that will abet you. But perhaps I do not enter into the spirit of your talk.

In the spring of 1856, Mr. Alcott, then living in Walpole, N. H., visited Concord, and while there suggested to Thoreau that the upper valley of the Connecticut, in which Walpole lies, was good walking-ground, and that he would be glad to see him there. When autumn began to hover in the distance, Thoreau recalled this invitation, and sent the letter below.

TO BRONSON ALCOTT (AT WALPOLE, N. H.).

CONCORD, September 1, 1856.

Mr. Alcott, — I remember that, in the spring, you invited me to visit you. I feel inclined to spend a day or two with you and on your hills at this season, returning, perhaps, by way of Brattleboro. What if I should take the cars for Walpole next Friday morning? Are you at home? And will it be convenient and agreeable to you to see me then? I will await an answer.

I am but poor company, and it will not be worth the while to put yourself out on my account; yet from time to time I have some thoughts which would be the better for an airing. I also wish to get some hints from September on the Connecticut to help me understand that season on the Concord; to snuff the musty fragrance of the decaying year in the primitive woods. There is considerable cellar-room in my nature for such stores; a whole row of bins waiting to be filled, before I can celebrate my Thanksgiving. Mould is the richest of soils, yet *I* am not mould. It will always be found that one flourishing institution exists and battens on another mouldering one. The Present itself is parasitic to this extent.

Your fellow-traveler,
HENRY D. THOREAU.

As fortune would have it, Mr. Alcott was then making his arrangements for a conversational tour in the vicinity of New York; but he renewed the invitation for himself, while repeating it in the name of Mrs. Alcott and his daughters. Thoreau made the visit, I believe, and some weeks later, at the suggestion of Mr. Alcott, he was asked by Marcus Spring of New York to read lectures and survey their estate for a community at Perth Amboy, N. J., in which Mr. Spring and his friends, the Birneys, Welds, Grimkés, etc., had united for social and educational purposes. It was a colony of radical

opinions and old-fashioned culture; the Grimkés having been bred in Charleston, S. C., which they left by reason of their opposition to negro slavery, and the elder Birney having held slaves in Alabama until his conscience bade him emancipate them, after which he, too, could have no secure home among slaveholders. He was the first presidential candidate of the voting Abolitionists, as Lincoln was the last; and his friend, Theodore Weld, who married Miss Grimké, had been one of the early apostles of emancipation in Ohio. Their circle at Eagleswood appealed to Thoreau's sense of humor, and is described by him in the next letter.

In October, 1856, Mr. Spring, whom Mr. Alcott was then visiting, wrote to Thoreau inviting him to come to Eagleswood, give lectures, and survey two hundred acres of land belonging to the community, laying out streets and making a map of the proposed village. Thoreau accepted the proposal, and soon after wrote the following letter, which Miss Thoreau submitted to Mr. Emerson for publication, with other letters, in the volume of 1865; but he returned it, inscribed "Not printable at present." The lapse of time has removed this objection.

TO SOPHIA THOREAU.

[Direct] EAGLES WOOD, PERTH AMBOY, N. J.,

Saturday eve, November 1, 1856.

Dear Sophia, — I have hardly had time and repose enough to write to you before. I spent the afternoon of Friday (it seems some months ago) in Worcester, but failed to see [Harrison] Blake, he having "gone to the horse-race" in Boston; to atone for which I have just received a letter from him, asking me to stop at Worcester and lecture on my return. I called on [Theo.] Brown and [T. W.] Higginson; in the evening came by way of Norwich to New York in the steamer Commonwealth, and, though it was so windy inland, had a perfectly smooth passage, and about as good a sleep as usually at home. Reached New York about seven A. M., too late for the John Potter (there wasn't any Jonas), so I spent the forenoon there, called on Greeley (who was not in), met [F. A. T.] Bellew in Broadway and walked into his workshop, read at the Astor Library, etc. I arrived here, about thirty miles from New York, about five p. M. Saturday, in company with Miss E. Peabody, who was returning in the same covered wagon from the Landing to Eagleswood, which last place she has just left for the winter.

This is a queer place. There is one large long stone building, which cost some forty thousand dollars, in which I do not know exactly who or how many work (one or two familiar faces and more familiar names have turned up), a few shops and offices, an old farmhouse, and Mr. Spring's perfectly private residence, within twenty rods of the main building. The city of Perth Amboy is about as big as Concord, and Eagleswood is one and a quarter miles southwest of it, on the Bay side. The central fact here is evidently Mr. [Theodore] Weld's school, recently established, around which various other things revolve. Saturday evening I went to the schoolroom, hall, or what not, to see the children and their teachers and patrons dance. Mr. Weld, a kind-looking man with a long white beard, danced with them, and Mr. [E. J.] Cutler, his assistant (lately from Cambridge, who is acquainted with Sanborn), Mr. Spring, and others. This Saturday evening dance is a regular thing, and it is

thought something strange if you don't attend. They take it for granted that you want society!

Sunday forenoon I attended a sort of Quaker meeting at the same place (the Quaker aspect and spirit prevail here, — Mrs. Spring says, "Does thee not?"), where it was expected that the Spirit would move me (I having been previously spoken to about it); and it, or something else, did, — an inch or so. I said just enough to set them a little by the ears and make it lively. I had excused myself by saying that I could not adapt myself to a particular audience; for all the speaking and lecturing here have reference to the children, who are far the greater part of the audience, and they are not so bright as New England children. Imagine them sitting close to the wall, all around a hall, with old Quaker-looking men and women here and there. There sat Mrs. Weld [Grimke] and her sister, two elderly gray-headed ladies, the former in extreme Bloomer costume, which was what you may call remarkable; Mr. Arnold Buffum, with broad face and a great white beard, looking like a pier-head made of the cork-tree with the bark on, as if he could buffet a considerable wave; James G. Birney, formerly candidate for the presidency, with another particularly white head and beard; Edward Palmer, the anti-money man (for whom communities were made), with his ample beard somewhat grayish. Some of them, I suspect, are very worthy people. Of course you are wondering to what extent all these make one family, and to what extent twenty. Mrs. Kirkland1 (and this a name only to me) I saw. She has just bought a lot here. They all know

1 Mrs. Caroline Kirkland, wife of Prof. William Kirkland, then of New York, — a writer of wit and fame at that time.

more about your neighbors and acquaintances than you suspected.

On Monday evening I read the Moose story to the children, to their satisfaction. Ever since I have been constantly engaged in surveying Eagleswood, — through woods, salt marshes, and along the shore, dodging the tide, through bushes, mud, and beggar ticks,

having no time to look up or think where I am. (It takes ten or fifteen minutes before each meal to pick the beggar ticks out of my clothes; burrs and the rest are left, and rents mended at the first convenient opportunity.) I shall be engaged perhaps as much longer. Mr. Spring wants me to help him about setting out an orchard and vineyard, Mr. Birney asks me to survey a small piece for him, and Mr. Alcott, who has just come down here for the third Sunday, says that Greeley (I left my name for him) invites him and me to go to his home with him next Saturday morning and spend the Sunday.

It seems a twelvemonth since I was not here, but I hope to get settled deep into my den again erelong. The hardest thing to find here is solitude — and Concord. I am at Mr. Spring's house.. Both he and she and their family are quite agreeable.

I want you to write to me immediately (just left off to talk French with the servant man), and let father and mother put in a word. To them and to Aunts, love from — HENRY.

The date of this visit to Eagleswood is worthy of note, because in that November Thoreau made the acquaintance of the late Walt Whitman, in whom he ever after took a deep interest. Accompanied by Mr. Alcott, he called on Whitman, then living at Brooklyn; and I remember the calm enthusiasm with which they both spoke of Whitman upon their return to Concord. " Three men," said Emerson, in his funeral eulogy of Thoreau, "have of late years strongly impressed Mr. Thoreau, — John Brown, his Indian guide in Maine, Joe Polis, and a third person, not known to this audience." This last was Whitman, who has since become well known to a larger audience.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

EAGLESWOOD, N. J., November 19, 1856.

Mr. Blake, — I have been here much longer than I expected, but have deferred answering you, because I could not foresee when I should return. I do not know yet within three or four days. This uncertainty makes it impossible for me to appoint a day to meet you, until it shall be too late to hear from you again. I think, therefore, that I must go straight home. I feel some objection to reading that "What shall it profit" lecture *again* in Worcester; but if you are quite sure that it will be worth the while (it is a grave consideration), I will even make an independent journey from Concord for that purpose. I have read three of my old lectures (that included) to the Eagleswood people, and, unexpectedly, with rare success, — *i e.,* I was aware that what I was saying was silently taken in by their ears.

You must excuse me if I write mainly a business letter now, for I am sold for the time, — am merely Thoreau the surveyor here, — and solitude is scarcely obtainable in these parts.

Alcott has been here three times, and, Saturday before last, I went with him and Greeley, by invitation of the last, to G.'s farm, thirty-six miles north of New York. The next day A. and I heard Beecher preach; and what was more, we visited Whitman the next morning (A. had already seen him), and were much interested and provoked. He is apparently the greatest democrat the world has seen. Kings and aristocracy go by the board at once, as they have long deserved to. A remarkably strong though coarse nature, of a sweet disposition, and much prized by his friends. Though peculiar and rough in his exterior, his skin (all over (?)) red, he is essentially a gentleman. I am still somewhat in a quandary about him, — feel that he is essentially strange to me, at any rate; but I am surprised by the sight of him. He is very broad, but, as I have said, not fine. He said that I misapprehended him. I am not quite sure that I do. He told us that he loved to ride up and down Broadway all day on an omnibus, sitting beside the driver, listening to the roar of the carts, and sometimes gesticulating and declaiming Homer at the top of his voice. He has

long been an editor and writer for the newspapers, — was editor of the "New Orleans Crescent" once; but now has no employment but to read and write in the forenoon, and walk in the afternoon, like all the rest of the scribbling gentry.

I shall probably be in Concord next week; so you can direct to me there.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, December 6, 1856.

Mr. Blake, — I trust that you got a note from me at Eagleswood, about a fortnight ago. I passed through Worcester on the morning of the 25th of November, and spent several hours (from 3.30 to 6.20) in the travelers' room at the depot, as in a dream, it now seems. As the first Harlem train unexpectedly connected with the he is essentially a gentleman. I am still somewhat in a quandary about him, — feel that he is essentially strange to me, at any rate; but I am surprised by the sight of him. He is very broad, but, as I have said, not fine. He said that I misapprehended him. I am not quite sure that I do. He told us that he loved to ride up and down Broadway all day on an omnibus, sitting beside the driver, listening to the roar of the carts, and sometimes gesticulating and declaiming Homer at the top of his voice. He has long been an editor and writer for the newspapers, — was editor of the "New Orleans Crescent" once; but now has no employment but to read and write in the forenoon, and walk in the afternoon, like all the rest of the scribbling gentry.

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I walked up and down the main street, at half past five, in the dark, and paused long in front of Brown's store, trying to distinguish its features; considering whether I might safely leave his "Putnam" in the door-handle, but concluded not to risk it. Meanwhile a watchman (?) seemed to be watching me, and I moved off. Took another turn round there, and had the very earliest offer of the Transcript1 from an urchin behind, whom I actually could not see, it was so dark. So I withdrew, wondering if you and B. would know if I had been there. You little dream who is occupying Worcester when you are all asleep. Several things occurred there that night which I will venture to say were not put into the Transcript. A cat caught a

1 A Worcester newspaper.

mouse at the depot, and gave it to her kitten to play with. So that world-famous tragedy goes on by night as well as by day, and nature is *emphatically* wrong. Also I saw a young Irishman kneel before his mother, as if in prayer, while she wiped a cinder out of his eye with her tongue; and I found that it was never too late (or early?) to learn

something. These things transpired while you and B. were, to all practical purposes, nowhere, and good for nothing, — not even for society, — not for horse-races, — nor the taking back of a "Putnam's Magazine." It is true, I might have recalled you to life, but it would have been a cruel act, considering the kind of life you would have come back to.

However, I would fain write to you now by broad daylight, and report to you some of my life, such as it is, and recall you to your life, which is not always lived by you, even by daylight. Blake! Brown! are you awake? are you aware what an ever-glorious morning this is, — what long-expected, never-to-be-repeated opportunity is now offered to get life and knowledge?

For my part, I am trying to wake up, — to wring slumber out of my pores; for, generally, I take events as unconcernedly as a fence post, 13 — absorb wet and cold like it, and am pleasantly tickled with lichens slowly spreading over me.

Could I not be content, then, to be a cedar post, which lasts twenty-five years? Would I not rather be that than the farmer that set it? or he that preaches to the farmer? and go to the heaven of posts at last? I think I should like that as well as any would like it. But I should not care if I sprouted into a living tree, put forth leaves and flowers, and bore fruit.

I am grateful for what I am and have. My thanksgiving is perpetual. It is surprising how contented one can be with nothing definite, — only a sense of existence. Well, anything for variety. I am ready to try this for the next ten thousand years, and exhaust it. How sweet to think of! my extremities well charred, and my intellectual part too, so that there is no danger of worm or rot for a long while. My breath is sweet to me. O how I laugh when I think of my vague, indefinite riches. No run on my bank can drain it, for my wealth is not possession but enjoyment.

What are all these years made for? and now another winter comes, so much like the last? Can't we satisfy the beggars once for all?

Have you got in your wood for this winter? What else have you got in? Of what use a great fire on the hearth, and a confounded little fire in the heart? Are you prepared to make a decisive campaign, — to pay for your costly tuition, — to pay for the suns of past summers,

— for happiness and unhappiness lavished upon you?

Does not Time go by swifter than the swiftest equine trotter or racker?

Stir up Brown. Remind him of his duties, which outrun the date and span of Worcester's years past and to come. Tell him to be sure that he is on the main street, however narrow it may be, and to have a lit sign, visible by night as well as by day.

Are they not patient waiters, — they who wait for us? But even they shall not be losers.

December 7.

That Walt Whitman, of whom I wrote to you, is the most interesting fact to me at present. I have just read his second edition (which he gave me), and it has done me more good than any reading for a long time. Perhaps I remember best the poem of Walt Whitman, an American, and the Sun-Down Poem. There are two or three pieces in the book which are disagreeable, to say the least; simply sensual. He does not celebrate love at all. It is as if the beasts spoke. I think that men have not been ashamed of themselves without reason. No doubt there have always been dens where such deeds were unblushingly recited, and it is no merit to compete with their inhabitants. But even on this side he has spoken more truth than any American or modern that I know. I have found his poem exhilarating, encouraging. As for its sensuality, — and it may turn out to be less sensual than it appears, — I do not so much wish that those parts were not written, as that men and women were so pure that they could read them without harm, that is, without understanding them. One woman told me that no woman could read it, — as if a man could read what a woman could not. Of course Walt Whitman can communicate to us no experience, and if we are shocked, whose experience is it that we are reminded of?

On the whole, it sounds to me very brave and American, after whatever deductions. I do not believe that all the sermons, so called, that have been preached in this land put together are equal to it for preaching.

We ought to rejoice greatly in him. He occasionally suggests

something a little more than human. You can't confound him with the other inhabitants of Brooklyn or New York. How they must shudder when they read him! He is awfully good.

To be sure I sometimes feel a little imposed on. By his heartiness and broad generalities he puts me into a liberal frame of mind prepared to see wonders, — as it were, sets me upon a hill or in the midst of a plain, — stirs me well up, and then — throws in a thousand of brick. Though rude, and sometimes ineffectual, it is a great primitive poem, — an alarum or trumpet-note ringing through the American camp. Wonderfully like the Orientals, too, considering that when I asked him if he had read them, he answered, " No: tell me about them."

I did not get far in conversation with him, — two more being present, — and among the few things which I chanced to say, I remember that one was, in answer to him as representing America, that I did not think much of America or of politics, and so on, which may have been somewhat of a damper to him.

Since I have seen him, I find that I am not disturbed by any brag or egoism in his book. He may turn out the least of a braggart of all, having a better right to be confident.

He is a great fellow.

There is in Alcott's diary an account of this interview with Whitman, and the Sunday morning in Ward Beecher's Brooklyn church, from which a few passages may be taken. Hardly any person met by either of these Concord friends in their later years made so deep an impression on both as did this then almost unknown poet and thinker, concerning whom Cholmondelev wrote to Thoreau in 1857: "Is there actually such a man as Whitman? Has any one seen or handled him? His is a tongue ' not understanded' of the English people. I find *the gentleman* altogether left out of the book. It is the first book I have ever seen which I should call a ' new book.'"

Mr. Alcott writes under date of November 7, 1847 — in New York: "Henry Thoreau arrives from Eagleswood, and sees Swinton, a wise young Scotchman, and Walt Whitman's friend, at my room (15 Laight Street), — Thoreau declining to accompany me to Mrs. Botta's parlors, as invited by her. He sleeps here. (November 8.) We

find Greeley at the Harlem station, and ride with him to his farm, where we pass the day, and return to sleep in the city, — Greeley coming in with us; Alice Cary, the authoress, accompanying us also. (Sunday, November 9.) We cross the ferry to Brooklyn, and hear Ward Beecher at the Plymouth Church. It was a spectacle, 14 — and himself the Preacher, if preacher there be anywhere now in pulpits. His auditors had to weep, had to laugh, under his potent magnetism, while his doctrine of justice to all men, bond and free, was grand. House, entries, aisles, galleries, all were crowded. Thoreau called it pagan, but I pronounced it good, very good, — the best I had witnessed for many a day, and hopeful for the coming time. At dinner at Mrs. Mannings Miss M. S. was there, curious to see Thoreau. After dinner we called on Walt Whitman (Thoreau and I), but finding him out, we got all we could from his mother, a stately, sensible matron, believing absolutely in Walter, and telling us how good he was, and how wise when a boy; and how his four brothers and two sisters loved him, and still take counsel of the great man he has grown to be. We engaged to call again early in the morning, when she said Walt would be glad to see us. (Monday, 10th.) Mrs. Tyndale of Philadelphia goes with us to see Walt, — Walt the satyr, the Bacchus, the very god Pan. We sat with him for two hours, and much to our delight; he promising to call on us at the International at ten in the morning to-morrow, and there have the rest of it." Whitman failed to call at his hour the next day.

TO B. B. WILEY (AT CHICAGO).

Concord, December 12, 1856.

MR. WILEY,1 — It is refreshing to hear of your earnest purpose with respect to your culture, and I can send you no better wish than that

1 B. B. Wiley, then of Providence, since of Chicago, had written to Thoreau, September 4, for a copy of the *Week*, which the author was then selling1 on his own account, having bought back the unsalable first edition from his publisher, Munroe. In a letter of October 31, to which the above is a reply, he mentions taking a walk with Charles Newcomb, then of Providence, now of London, — one of the *Dial* contributors, and a special friend of Emerson; then inquires about Confucius, the Hindoo philosophers, and Swedenborg.

you may not be thwarted by the cares and temptations of life. Depend on it, *now* is the accepted time, and probably you will never find yourself better disposed or freer to attend to your culture than at this moment. When *They* who inspire us with the idea are ready, shall not we be ready also?

I do not remember anything which Confucius has said directly respecting man's "origin, purpose, and destiny." He was more practical than that. He is full of wisdom applied to human relations, — to the private life, — the family, — government, etc. It is remarkable that, according to his own account, the sum and substance of his teaching is, as you know, to do as you would be done by.

He also said (I translate from the French), " Conduct yourself suitably towards the persons of your family, then you will be able to instruct and to direct a nation of men."

"To nourish one's self with a little rice, to drink water, to have only his bended arm to support his head, is a state which has also its satisfaction. To be rich and honored by iniquitous means is for me as the floating cloud which passes."

"As soon as a child is born he must respect its faculties: the

knowledge which will come to it by and by does not resemble at all its present state. If it arrive at the age of forty or fifty years without having learned anything, it is no more worthy of any respect." This last, I think, will speak to your condition.

But at this rate I might fill many letters.

Our acquaintance with the ancient Hindoos is not at all personal. The full names that can be relied upon are very shadowy. It is, however, tangible works that we know. The best I think of are the Bhagvat Geeta (an episode in an ancient heroic poem called the Mahabarat), the Yedas, the Yishnu Purana, the Institutes of Menu, etc.

I cannot say that Swedenborg has been directly and practically valuable to me, for I have not been a reader of him, except to a slight extent; but I have the highest regard for him, and trust that I shall read his works in some world or other. He had a wonderful knowledge of our interior and spiritual life, though his illuminations are occasionally blurred by trivialities. He comes nearer to answering, or attempting to answer, literally, your questions concerning man's origin, purpose, and destiny, than any of the worthies I have referred to. But I think that that is not *altogether* a recommendation; since such an answer to these questions cannot be discovered any more than perpetual motion, for which no reward is now offered. The noblest man it is, methinks, that knows, and by his life suggests, the most about these things. Crack away at these nuts, however, as long as you can, — the very exercise will ennoble you, and you may get something better than the answer you expect.

TO B. B. WILEY (AT CHICAGO).

Concord, April 20, 1857.

MR. WILEY, — I see that you are turning a broad furrow among the books, but I trust that some very private journal all the while holds its own through their midst. Books can only reveal us to ourselves, and as often as they do us this service we lay them aside. I should say, read Goethe's Autobiography, by all means, also Gibbon's, Haydon the Painter's, and our Franklin's of course; perhaps also Alfieri's, Benvenuto Cellini's, and De Quincey's "Confessions of an Opium-Eater," — since you like autobiography. I think you must read Coleridge again, and further, skipping all his theology, *i* e., if you value precise definitions and a discriminating use of language. By the way, read De Quincey's Reminiscences of Coleridge and Wordsworth.

How shall we account for our pursuits, if they are original? We get the language with which to describe our various lives out of a common mint. If others have their losses which they are busy repairing, so have I *mine,* and their hound and horse may *perhaps* be the symbols of some of them.1 But also I have lost, or am in danger of losing, a far finer and more ethereal treasure, which commonly no loss, of which they are conscious, will symbolize. This I answer hastily and with some hesitation, according as I now understand my words....

Methinks a certain polygamy with its troubles is the fate of almost all men. They are married to two wives: their genius (a celestial muse),

1 When in 1855 or 1856 Thoreau started to wade across from Duxbury to Clark's Island, and was picked up by a fishing-boat in the deep water, and landed on the "backside" of the island (see letter to Mr. Watson of April 25, 1858), Edward Watson ("Uncle Ed"), was "saggin' round" to see that everything was right alongshore, and encountered the unexpected visitor. "How did *you* come here?"

"Oh, from Duxbury," said Thoreau, and they walked to the old Watson house together. "You say in one of your books," said Uncle Ed, "that you once lost a horse and a hound and a dove, — now I

should like to know what you meant by that?"

"Why, everybody has met with losses, haven't they?"

"H'm, — pretty way to answer a fellow!" said Mr. Watson; but it seems this was the usual answer. In the long dining-room of the old house that night he sat by the window and told the story of the Norse voyagers to New England, — perhaps to that very island and the Gurnet near by, — as Morton fancies in his review of Thoreau in the *Harvard Magazine* (January, 1855).

and also to some fair daughter of the earth. Unless these two were fast friends before marriage, and so are afterward, there will be but little peace in the house.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, December 31, 1856.

MR. BLAKE, — I think it will not be worth the while for me to come to Worcester to lecture at all this year. It will be better to wait till I am — perhaps unfortunately — more in that line. My writing has not taken the shape of lectures, and therefore I should be obliged to read one of three or four old lectures, the best of which I have read to some of your auditors before. I carried that one which I call "Walking, or the Wild," to Amherst, N. H., the evening of that cold Thursday,1 and I am to read another at Fitchburg, February 3. I am simply their hired man. This will probably be the extent of my lecturing hereabouts.

I must depend on meeting Mr. Wasson some other time.

Perhaps it always costs me more than it comes to to lecture before a promiscuous audience. It

1 This was when he spoke in the vestry of the Calvinistic church, and said, on his return to Concord, "that he hoped he had done something to upheave and demolish the structure above," — the vestry being beneath the church.

is an irreparable injury done to my modesty even, 15 — I become so indurated.

—— solitude! obscurity! meanness! I never triumph so as when I have the least success in my neighbor's eyes. The lecturer gets fifty dollars a night; but what becomes of his winter? What consolation will it be hereafter to have fifty thousand dollars for living in the world? I should like not to exchange *any* of my life for money.

These, you may think, are reasons for not lecturing, when you have no great opportunity. It is even so, perhaps. I could lecture on dry oak leaves; I could, but who could hear me? If I were to try it on any large audience, I fear it would be no gain to them, and a positive loss to me. I should have behaved rudely toward my rustling friends.

I am surveying, instead of lecturing, at present. Let me have a skimming from your "pan of unwrinkled cream."

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

Concord, April 1, 1857.

DEAR RICKETSON, — I got your note of welcome night before last. I expect, if the weather is favorable, to take the 4.30 train from Boston to-morrow, Thursday, P. M., for I hear of no noon train, and shall be glad to find your wagon at Tarkiln Hill, for I see it will be rather late for going across lots.

I have seen all the spring signs you mention, and a few more, even here. Nay, I heard one frog peep nearly a week ago, — methinks the very first one in all this region. I wish that there were a few more signs of spring in myself; however, I take it that there *are* as many within us as we think we hear *without* us. I am decent for a steady pace, but not yet for a race. I have a little cold at present, and you speak of rheumatism about the head and shoulders. Your frost is not quite out. I suppose that the earth itself has a little cold and rheumatism about these times; but all these things together produce a very fair general result. In a concert, you know, we must sing our parts feebly sometimes, that we may not injure the general effect.

I shouldn't wonder if my two-year-old invalidity had been a positively charming feature to some amateurs favorably located. Why not a blasted man as well as a blasted tree, on your lawn?

If you should happen not to see me by the train named, do not go again, but wait at home for me, or a note from yours, HENRY D. THOREAU.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

Concord, April 17, 1857.

MR. BLAKE, — I returned from New Bedford night before last. I met Alcott there, and learned from him that probably you had gone to Concord. I am very sorry that I missed you. I had expected you earlier, and at last thought that I should get back before you came; but I ought to have notified you of my absence. However, it would have been too late, after I had made up my mind to go. I hope you lost nothing by going a little round.

I took out the celtis seeds at your request, at the time we spoke of them, and left them in the chamber on some shelf or other. If you have found them, very well; if you have not found them, very well; but tell Hale 1 of it, if you see

1 Rev. Edward E. Hale, then pastor at Worcester. Others mentioned in the letter are Rev. David A. Wasson and Dr. Seth Rogers, — the latter a physician with whom Mr. Wasson was living in Worcester.

him. My mother says that you and Brown and Rogers and Wasson (titles left behind) talk of coming down on me some day. Do not fail to come, one and all, and within a week or two, if possible; else I may be gone again. Give me a short notice, and then come and spend a day on Concord River, — or say that you will come if it is fair, unless you are confident of bringing fair weather with you. Come and be Concord, as I have been Worcestered.

Perhaps you came nearer to me for not finding me at home; for trains of thought the more connect when trains of cars do not. If I had actually met you, you would have gone again; but now I have not yet dismissed you. I hear what you say about personal relations with joy. It is as if you had said, “I value the best and finest part of you, and not the worst. I can even endure your very near and real approach, and prefer it to a shake of the hand.” This intercourse is not subject to time or distance.

I have a very long new and faithful letter from Cholmondeley,

which I wish to show you. He speaks of sending me more books!!

If I were with you now, I could tell you much of Ricketson, and my visit to New Bedford; but I do not know how it will be by and by. I should like to have you meet R., who is the frankest man I know. Alcott and he get along very well together. Channing has returned to Concord with me, — probably for a short visit only.

Consider this a business letter, which you know *counts* nothing in the game we play. Remember me particularly to Brown.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, June 6, 1857, 3 p. *M.*

MR. BLAKE, — I have just got your note, but I am sorry to say that this very morning I sent a note to Channing, stating that I would go with him to Cape Cod next week on an excursion which we have been talking of for some time. If there were time to communicate with you, I should ask you to come to Concord on Monday, before I go; but as it is, I must wait till I come back, which I think will be about ten days hence. I do not like this delay, but there seems to be a fate in it. Perhaps Mr. Wasson will be well enough to come by that time. I will notify you of my return, and shall depend on seeing you all.'

June 23d. I returned from Cape Cod last evening, and now take the first opportunity to invite you men of Worcester to this quiet *Mediterranean* shore. Can you come this week on Friday, or next Monday? I mention the earliest days on which I suppose you can be ready.

If more convenient, name some other time *within ten days.* I shall be rejoiced to see you, and to act the part of skipper in the contemplated voyage. I have just got another letter from Cholmondeley, which may interest you somewhat.

TO MARSTON WATSON (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, August 17, 1857.

MR. WATSON, — I am much indebted to you for your glowing communication of July 20th. I had that very day left Concord for the wilds of Maine; but when I returned, August 8th, two out of the six worms remained nearly, if not quite, as bright as at first, I was assured. In their best estate they had excited the admiration of many of the inhabitants of Concord. It was a singular coincidence that I should find these worms awaiting me, for my mind was full of a phosphorescence which I had seen in the woods. I have waited to learn something more about them before acknowledging the receipt of them. I have frequently met with glow-worms in my night walks, but am not sure they were the same kind with these. Dr. Harris once described to me a larger kind than I had found, "nearly as big as your little finger but he does not name them in his report.

The only authorities on Glow-worms which I chance to have (and I am pretty well provided), are Kirby and Spence (the fullest), Knapp ("Journal of a Naturalist"), "The Library of Entertaining Knowledge" (*Rennie),* a French work, etc., etc.; but there is no minute, scientific description in any of these. This is apparently a female of the genus *Lampyris;* but Kirby and Spence say that there are nearly two hundred species of this genus alone. The one commonly referred to by English writers is the *Lampyris noctiluea;* but judging from Kirby and Spence's description, and from the description and plate in the French work, this is not that one, for, besides other differences, both say that the light proceeds from the abdomen. Perhaps the worms exhibited by Durkee (whose statement to the Boston Society of Natural History, second July meeting, in the "Traveller" of August 12, 1857, I send you) were the same with these. I do not see how they could be the *L. noctiluca*, as he states.

I expect to go to Cambridge before long, and if I get any more light on this subject I will inform you. The two worms are still alive.

I shall be glad to receive the *Drosera* at any time, if you chance to come across it. I am looking over Loudon's "Arboretum," which we

have added to our Library, and it occurs to me that it was written expressly for you, and that you cannot avoid placing it on your own shelves. — I should have been glad to see the whale, and might perhaps have done so, if I had not at that time been seeing “the elephant” (or moose) in the Maine woods. I have been associating for about a month with one Joseph Polis, the chief man of the Penobscot tribe of Indians, and have learned a great deal from him, which I should like to tell you sometime.

TO MARSTON WATSON (AT PLYMOUTH).

Concord, April 25,1858.

DEAR SIR, — Your unexpected gift of pear-trees reached me yesterday in good condition, and I spent the afternoon in giving them a good setting out; but I fear that this cold weather may hurt them. However, I am inclined to think they are insured, since you have looked on them. It makes one's mouth water to read their names only. From what I hear of the extent of your bounty, if a reasonable part of the trees succeed, this transplanting will make a new era for Concord to date from.

Mine must be a lucky star, for day before yesterday I received a box of Mayflowers from Brattleboro, and yesterday morning your pear-trees, and at evening a humming-bird's nest from Worcester. This looks like fairy housekeeping.

I discovered two new plants in Concord last winter, the Labrador Tea *(Ledum latifolium*), and Yew *(Taxis baccata),* —

By the way, in January I communicated with Dr. Durkee, whose report on Glow-worms I sent you, and it appeared, as I expected, that he (and by his account, Agassiz, Gould, Jackson, and others to whom he showed them) did not consider them a distinct species, but a variety of the common, or *Lampyris noctiluca*, some of which you got in Lincoln. Durkee, at least, has never seen the last. I told him that I had no doubt about their being a distinct species. His, however, were luminous throughout every part of the body, as those which you sent me were not, while I had them.

Is nature as full of vigor to your eyes as ever, or do you detect some falling off at last? Is the mystery of the hog's bristle cleared up, and with it that of our life? It is the question, to the exclusion of every other interest.

I am sorry to hear of the burning of your woods, but, thank Heaven, your great ponds and your sea cannot be burnt. I love to think of your warm, sandy wood-roads, and your breezy island out in the sea. What a prospect you can get every morning from the hilltop east of your house!1 I think that even the heathen that I am could say,

or sing, or dance, morning prayers there of some kind.

Please remember me to Mrs. Watson, and to the rest of your family who are helping the sun shine yonder.

1 Marston Watson, whose uncle, Edward Watson, with his nephews, owned the "breezy island" where Thoreau had visited his friends (Clark's Island, the only one in Plymouth Bay), had built his own house, "Hillside," on the slope of one of the hills above Plymouth town, and there laid out a fine park and garden, which Thoreau surveyed for him in the autumn of 1854, Alcott and Mr. Watson carrying the chain. For a description of Hillside, see Channing's *Wanderer* (Boston, 1871) and Alcott's *Sonnets and Canzonets* (Boston: Roberts, 1882). It was a villa much visited by Emerson, Alcott, Channing, Thoreau, George Bradford, and the Transcendentalists generally. Mr. Watson graduated at Harvard two years after Thoreau, and in an old diary says: "I remember Thoreau in the college yard (1836) with downcast thoughtful look intent, as if he were searching for something; always in a green coat, — green because the authorities required black, I suppose." In a letter he says: "I have always heard the 'Maiden in the East' was Mrs. Watson, — Mary Russell Watson, — and I suppose there is no doubt of it. I may be prejudiced, but I have always thought it one of his best things, — and I have highly valued his lines. I find in my *Dial,* No. 6, I have written six new stanzas in the margin of Friendship, and they are numbered to show how they should run. I think Mrs. Brown gave them to me."

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, *August* 18, 1857.

Dear Sir, — Your Wilson Flagg 1 seems a serious person, and it is encouraging to hear

1 A writer on scenery and natural history, who outlived Thoreau, and never forgave him for the remark about "stirring up with a pole," which really might have been less graphic.

of a contemporary who recognizes Nature so squarely, and selects such a theme as "Barns." (I would rather "Mount Auburn" were omitted.) But he is not alert enough. He wants stirring up with a pole. He should practice turning a series of somersets rapidly, or jump up and see how many times he can strike his feet together before coming down. Let him make the earth turn round now the other way, and whet his wits on it, whichever way it goes, as on a grindstone; in short, see how many ideas he can entertain at once.

His style, as I remember, is singularly vague (I refer to the book), and, before I got to the end of the sentences, I was off the track. If you indulge in long periods, you must be sure to have a snapper at the end. As for style of writing, if one has anything to say, it drops from him simply and directly, as a stone falls to the ground. There are no two ways about it, but down it comes, and he may stick in the points and stops wherever he can get a chance. New ideas come into this world somewhat like falling meteors, with a flash and an explosion, and perhaps somebody's castle-roof perforated. To try to polish the stone in its descent, to give it a peculiar turn, and make it whistle a tune, perchance, would be of no use, if it were possible. Your polished stuff turns out not to be meteoric, but of this earth. However, there is plenty of time, and Nature is an admirable schoolmistress.

Speaking of correspondence, you ask me if I "cannot turn over a new leaf in that line." I certainly could if I were to receive it; but just

then I looked up and saw that your page was dated “May 10,” though mailed in August, and it occurred to me that I had seen you since that date this year. Looking again, it appeared that your note was written in’56!! However, it was a *new* leaf to me, and I *turned it over* with as much interest as if it had been written the day before. Perhaps you kept it so long in order that the manuscript and subject-matter might be more in keeping with the old-fashioned paper on which it was written.

I traveled the length of Cape Cod on foot, soon after you were here, and, within a few days, have returned from the wilds of Maine, where I have made a journey of three hundred and twenty-five miles with a canoe and an Indian, and a single white companion, — Edward Hoar Esq., of this town, lately from California, — traversing the headwaters of the Kennebec, Penobscot, and St. John’s.

Can’t you extract any advantage out of that depression of spirits you refer to? It suggests to me cider-mills, wine-presses, etc., etc. All kinds of pressure or power should be used and made to turn some kind of machinery.

Channing was just leaving Concord for Plymouth when I arrived, but said he should be here again in two or three days.

Please remember me to your family, and say that I have at length learned to sing Tom Bowlin according to the notes.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, September 9, 1857.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I thank you for your kind invitation to visit you, but I have taken so many vacations this year, — at New Bedford, Cape Cod, and Maine, — that any more relaxation — call it rather dissipation — will cover me with shame and disgrace. I have not earned what I have already enjoyed. As some heads cannot carry much wine, so it would seem that I cannot bear so much society as you can. I have an immense appetite for solitude, like an infant for sleep, and if I don't get enough of it this year, I shall cry all the next.

My mother's house is full at present; but if it were not, I would have no right to invite you hither, while entertaining such designs as I have hinted at, However, if you care to storm the town, I will engage to take some afternoon walks with you, — retiring into profoundest solitude the most sacred part of the day.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

Concord, August 18, 1857.

ME. BLAKE, — Fifteenthly. It seems to me that you need some absorbing pursuit. It does not matter much what it is, so it be honest. Such employment will be favorable to your development in more characteristic and important directions. You know there must be impulse enough for steerage way, though it be not toward your port, to prevent your drifting helplessly on to rocks or shoals. Some sails are set for this purpose only. There is the large fleet of scholars and men of science, for instance, always to be seen standing off and on every coast, and saved thus from running on to reefs, who will at last run into their proper haven, we trust.

It is a pity you were not here with Brown and Wiley. I think that in this case, *for a rarity*, the more the merrier.

You perceived that I did not entertain the idea of our going together to Maine on such an excursion as I had planned. The more I thought of it, the more imprudent it appeared to me. I did think to have written to you before going, though not to propose your going also; but I went at last very suddenly, and could only have written a business letter, if I had tried, when there was no business to be accomplished. I have now returned, and think I have had a quite profitable journey, chiefly from associating with an intelligent Indian. My companion, Edward Hoar, also found his account in it, though he suffered considerably from being obliged to carry unusual loads over wet and rough "carries," — in one instance five miles through a swamp, where the water was frequently up to our knees, and the fallen timber higher than our heads. He went over the ground three times, not being able to carry all his load at once. This prevented his ascending Ktaadn. Our best nights were those when it rained the hardest, on account of the mosquitoes. I speak of these things, which were not unexpected, merely to account for my not inviting you.

Having returned, I flatter myself that the world appears in some respects a little larger, and not, as usual, smaller and shallower, for having extended my range. I have made a short excursion into the

new world which the Indian dwells in, or is. He begins where we leave off. It is worth the while to detect new faculties in man, — he is so much the more divine; and anything that fairly excites our admiration expands us. The Indian, who can find his way so wonderfully in the woods, possesses so much intelligence which the white man does not, — and it increases my own capacity, as well as faith, to observe it. I rejoice to find that intelligence flows in other channels than I knew. It redeems for me portions of what seemed brutish before.

It is a great satisfaction to find that your oldest convictions are permanent. With regard to essentials, I have never had occasion to change my mind. The aspect of the world varies from year to year, as the landscape is differently clothed, but I find that the *truth* is still *true*, and I never regret any emphasis which it may have inspired. Ktaadn is there still, but much more surely my old conviction is there, resting with more than mountain breadth and weight on the world, the source still of fertilizing streams, and affording glorious views from its summit, if I can get up to it again. As the mountains still stand on the plain, and far more unchangeable and permanent, — stand still grouped around, farther or nearer to my maturer eye, the ideas which I have entertained, 16 — the everlasting teats from which we draw our nourishment.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, November 16, 1857.

MR. BLAKE, — You have got the start again. It was I that owed you a letter or two, if I mistake not.

They make a great ado nowadays about hard times;1 but I think that the community generally, ministers and all, take a wrong view of the matter, though some of the ministers preaching according to a formula may pretend to take a right one. This general failure, both private and public, is rather occasion for rejoicing, as reminding us whom we have at the helm, — that justice is always done. If our merchants did not most of them fail, and the banks too, my faith in the old laws of the world would be staggered. The statement that ninety-six in a hundred doing such business surely break down is perhaps the sweetest fact that statistics have revealed, — exhilarating as the fragrance of sallows in spring. Does it not say somewhere, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice"? If thousands are thrown out of employment, it suggests that they were not well employed. Why don't they take the hint? It is not enough to be industrious; so are the ants. What are you industrious about?

The merchants and company have long laughed

1 The panic of 1857, — the worst since 1837.

at transcendentalism, higher laws, etc., crying, "None of your moonshine," as if they were anchored to something not only definite, but sure and permanent. If there was any institution which was presumed to rest on a solid and secure basis, and more than any other represented this boasted common sense, prudence, and practical talent, it was the bank; and now those very banks are found to be mere reeds shaken by the wind. Scarcely one in the land has kept its promise. It would seem as if you only need live forty years in any age of this world, to see its most promising government become the government of Kansas, and banks nowhere. Not merely the Brook

Farm and Fourierite communities, but now the community generally has failed. But there is the moonshine still, serene, beneficent, and unchanged. Hard times, I say, have this value, among others, that they show us what such promises are worth, — where the *sure* banks are. I heard some merchant praised the other day because he had paid some of his debts, though it took nearly all he had (why, I've done as much as that myself many times, and a little more), and then gone to board. What if he has? I hope he's got a good boarding-place, and can " pay for it. It's not everybody that can. However, in my opinion, it is cheaper to keep house, 17 — *i* e., if you don't keep too big a one.

Men will tell you sometimes that "money's hard." That shows it was not made to eat, I say. Only think of a man in this new world, in his log cabin, in the midst of a corn and potato patch, with a sheepfold on one side, talking about money being hard! So are flints hard; there is no alloy in them. What has that to do with his raising his food, cutting his wood (or breaking it), keeping in-doors when it rains, and, if need be, spinning and weaving his clothes? Some of those who sank with the steamer the other day found out that money was *heavy* too. Think of a man's priding himself on this kind of wealth, as if it greatly enriched him. As if one struggling in mid-ocean with a bag of gold on his back should gasp out, "I am worth a hundred thousand dollars." I see them struggling just as ineffectually on dry land, nay, even more hopelessly, for, in the former case, rather than sink, they will finally let the bag go; but in the latter they are pretty sure to hold and go down with it. I see them swimming about in their great-coats, collecting their rents, really *getting their dues*, drinking bitter draughts which only increase their thirst, becoming more and more water-logged, till finally they sink plumb down to the bottom. But enough of this.

Have you ever read Ruskin's books? If not, I would recommend you to try the second and third volumes (not parts) of his "Modern Painters." I am now reading the fourth, and have read most of his other books lately. They are singularly good and encouraging, though not without crudeness and bigotry. The themes in the volumes referred to are Infinity, Beauty, Imagination, Love of Nature, etc., — all treated in a very living manner. I am rather

surprised by them. It is remarkable that these things should be said with reference to painting chiefly, rather than literature. The " Seven Lamps of Architecture," too, is made of good stuff: but, as I remember, there is too much about art in it for me and the Hottentots. We want to know about matters and things in general. Our house is as yet a hut.

You must have been enriched by your solitary walk over the mountains. I suppose that I feel the same awe when on their summits that many do on entering a church. To see what kind of earth that is on which you have a house and garden somewhere, perchance! It is equal to the lapse of many years. You must ascend a mountain to learn your relation to matter, and so to your own body, for *it* is at home there, though *you* are not. It might have been composed there, and will have no farther to go to return to dust there, than in your garden; but your spirit inevitably comes away, and brings your body with it, if it lives. Just as awful really, and as glorious, is your garden. See how I can play with my fingers! They are the funniest companions I have ever found. Where did they come from? What strange control I have over them! *Who* am I? What are they? — those little peaks — call them Madison, Jefferson, Lafayette. What is *the matter? My* fingers ten, I say. Why, erelong, they may form the topmost crystal of Mount Washington. I go up there to see my body's cousins. There are some fingers, toes, bowels, etc., that I take an interest in, and therefore I am interested in all their relations.

Let me suggest a theme for you: to state to yourself precisely and completely what that walk over the mountains amounted to for you, — returning to this essay again and again, until you are satisfied that all that was important in your experience is in it. Give this good reason to yourself for having gone over the mountains, for mankind is ever going over a mountain. Don't suppose that you can tell it precisely the first dozen times you try, but at 'em again, especially when, after a sufficient pause, you suspect that you are touching the heart or summit of the matter, reiterate your blows there, and account for the mountain to yourself. Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short. It did not take very long to get over the mountain, you thought; but have you got over it indeed? If you have been to the top of Mount Washington, let me ask, what did

you find there? That is the way they prove witnesses, you know. Going up there and being blown on is nothing. We never do much climbing while we are there, but we eat our luncheon, etc., very much as at home. It is after we get home that we really go over the mountain, if ever. What did the mountain say? What did the mountain do?

I keep a mountain anchored off eastward a little way, which I ascend in my dreams both awake and asleep. Its broad base spreads over a village or two, which do not know it; neither does it know them, nor do I when I ascend it. I can see its general outline as plainly now in my mind as that of Wachusett. I do not invent in the least, but state exactly what I see. I find that I go up it when I am light-footed and earnest. It ever smokes like an altar with its sacrifice. I am not aware that a single villager frequents it or knows of it. I keep this mountain to ride instead of a horse.

Do you not mistake about seeing Moosehead Lake from Mount Washington? That must be about one hundred and twenty miles distant, or nearly twice as far as the Atlantic, which last some doubt if they can see thence. Was it not Umbagog?

Dr. Solger has been lecturing in the vestry in this town on Geography, to Sanborn's scholars, for several months past, at five P. M. Emerson and Alcott have been to hear him. I was surprised when the former asked me, the other day, if I was not going to hear Dr. Solger. What, to be sitting in a meeting-house cellar at that time of day, when you might possibly be out-doors! I never thought of such a thing. What was the sun made for? If he does not prize daylight, I do. Let him lecture to owls and dormice. He must be a wonderful lecturer indeed who can keep me indoors at such an hour, when the night is coming in which no man can walk.

Are you in want of amusement nowadays? Then play a little at the game of getting a living. There never was anything equal to it. Do it temperately, though, and don't sweat. Don't let this secret out, for I have a design against the Opera. OPERA!! Pass along the exclamations, devil.1

Now is the time to become conversant with your wood-pile (this comes under Work for the Month), and be sure you put some warmth into it by your mode of getting it. Do not consent to be passively

warmed. An intense degree of that is the hotness that is threatened. But a positive warmth within can withstand the fiery furnace, as the vital heat of a living man can withstand the heat that cooks meat.

After returning from the last of his three expeditions to the Maine woods (in 1846, 1853, and 1857), Thoreau was appealed to by his friend Higginson, then living in Worcester, for information concerning a proposed excursion from Worcester into Maine and Canada, then but little visited by tourists, who now go there in droves. He replied in this long letter, with its minute instructions and historical references. The Arnold mentioned is General Benedict Arnold, who in 1775-76 made a toilsome march through the Maine forest with a small New England army for the conquest of Canada, while young John Thoreau, Henry's grandfather, was establishing himself as a merchant in Boston (not yet evacuated by British troops), previous to his marriage with Jane Burns.

1 Exclamation points and printer's devil.

TO T. W. HIGGINSON (AT WORCESTER).

Concord, January 28, 1858.

DEAR SIR, — It would be perfectly practicable to go to the Madawaska the way you propose. As for the route to Quebec, I do not find the Sugar Loaf Mountains on my maps. The most direct and regular way, as you know, is substantially Montresor's and Arnold's and the younger John Smith's — by the Chaudière; but this is less wild. If your object is to see the St. Lawrence River below Quebec, you will probably strike it at the Riviere du Loup. (*Vide* Hodge's account of his excursion thither *via* the Allegash, — I believe it is in the second Report on the Greology of the Public Lands of Maine and Massachusetts in'37.) I think that our Indian last summer, when we talked of going to the St. Lawrence, named another route, near the Madawaska, — perhaps the St. Francis, — which would save the long portage which Hodge made.

I do not know whether you think of ascending the St. Lawrence in a canoe; but if you should, you might be delayed not only by the current, but by the waves, which frequently run too high for a canoe on such a mighty stream. It would be a grand excursion to go to Quebec by the Chaudière, descend the St. Lawrence to the Rivière du Loup, and return by the Madawaska and St. John's to Frederickton, or farther, — almost all the way *down stream* — a very important consideration.

I went to Moosehead in company with a party of four who were going a-hunting down the Allegash and St. John's, and thence by some other stream over into the Restigouche, and down that to the Bay of Chaleur, — to be gone six weeks. Our northern terminus was an island in Heron Lake on the Allegash. (*Vide* Colton's railroad and township map of Maine.)

The Indian proposed that we should return to Bangor by the St. John's and Great Schoodic Lake, which we had thought of ourselves; and he showed us on the map where we should be each night. It was then noon, and the next day night, continuing down the Allegash, we should have been at the Madawaska settlements, having made only

one or two portages; and thereafter, on the St. John's there would be but one or two more falls, with short carries; and if there was not too much wind, we could go down that stream one hundred miles a day. It is settled all the way below Madawaska. He knew the route well. He even said that this was easier, and would take but little more time, though much farther, than the route we decided on, — *i e.,* by Webster Stream, the East Branch, and main Penobscot to Oldtown; but he may have wanted a longer job. We preferred the latter, not only because it was shorter, but because, as he said, it was wilder.

We went about three hundred and twenty-five miles with the canoe (including sixty miles of stage between Bangor and Oldtown); were out twelve nights, and spent about $40 apiece, — which was more than was necessary. We paid the Indian, who was a very good one, $1.50 per day and 50 cents a week for his canoe. This is enough in ordinary seasons. I had formerly paid $2 for an Indian and for white batteaumen.

If you go to Madawaska in a leisurely manner, supposing no delay on account of rain or the violence of the wind, you may reach Mt. Kineo by noon, and have the afternoon to explore it. The next day you may get to the head of the lake before noon, make the portage of two and a half miles over a wooden railroad, and drop down the Penobscot half a dozen miles. The third morning you will perhaps walk half a mile about Pine Stream Falls, while the Indian runs down, — cross the head of Chesuncook, reach the junction of the Caucomgomock and Umbazookskus by noon, and ascend the latter to Umbazookskus Lake that night. If it is low water, you may have to walk and carry a little on the Umbazookskus before entering the lake.

The fourth morning you will make the carry of two miles to Mud Pond (Allegash Water), — and a very wet carry it is, — and reach Chamberlain Lake by noon, and Heron Lake, perhaps, that night, after a couple of very short carries at the outlet of Chamberlain. At the end of two days more you will probably be at Madawaska. Of course the Indian *can* paddle twice as far in a day as he commonly does.

Perhaps you would like a few more details. We used (three of us) exactly twenty-six pounds of hard bread, fourteen pounds of pork, three pounds of coffee, twelve pounds of sugar (and could have used

more), besides a little tea, Indian meal, and rice, — and plenty of berries and moose-meat. This was faring very luxuriously. I had not formerly carried coffee, sugar, or rice. But for solid food, I decide that it is not worth the while to carry anything but hard bread and pork, whatever your tastes and habits may be. These wear best, and you have no time nor dishes in which to cook anything else. Of course you will take a little Indian meal to fry fish in; and half a dozen lemons also, if you have sugar, will be very refreshing, — for the water is warm.

To save time, the sugar, coffee, tea, salt, etc., should be in separate watertight bags, labeled, and tied with a leathern string; and all the provisions and blankets should be put into two large India-rubber bags, if you can find them watertight. Ours were not. A four-quart tin pail makes a good kettle for all purposes, and tin plates are portable and convenient. Don't forget an India-rubber knapsack, with a large flap, — plenty of dish-cloths, old newspapers, strings, and twenty-five feet of strong cord. Of India-rubber clothing, the most you can wear, if any, is a very light coat, — and that you cannot work in. I could be more particular, — but perhaps have been too much so already.

Of his habits in mountain-climbing, Channing says:!" He ascended such hills as Monadnoc by his own path; would lay down his map on the summit and draw a line to the point he proposed to visit below, — perhaps forty miles away on the landscape, and set off bravely to make the ' short-cut.' The lowland people wondered to

—— *Thoreau, the Poet-Naturalist, pp. 36-38.*

see him scaling the heights as if he had lost his way, or at his jumping over their cow-yard fences, — asking if he had fallen from the clouds. In a walk like this he always carried his umbrella; and on this Monadnoc trip, when about a mile from the station (in Troy, N. H.), a torrent of rain came down; without the umbrella his books, blankets, maps, and provisions would all have been spoiled, or the morning lost by delay. On the mountain there being a thick, soaking fog, the first object was to camp and make tea. He spent five nights in camp, having built another hut, to get varied views. Flowers, birds,

lichens, and the rocks were carefully examined, all parts of the mountain were visited, and as accurate a map as could be made by pocket compass was carefully sketched and drawn out, in the five days spent there, — with notes of the striking aerial phenomena, incidents of travel and natural history. The outlook across the valley over to Wachusett, with its thunder-storms and battles in the cloud; the farmers' backyards in Jaffrey, where the family cotton can be seen bleaching on the grass, but no trace of the pigmy family; the dry, soft air all night, the lack of dew in the morning; the want of water, 18 — a pint being a good deal, — these, and similar things make up some part of such an excursion."

The Monadnoc excursion above mentioned began June 3d, and continued three days. It inspired Thoreau to take a longer mountain tour with his neighbor and friend, Edward Hoar, to which these letters relate, giving the ways and means of the journey, — a memorable one to all concerned.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, June 29, 1858, 8 A. M.

MR. BLAKE, — Edward Hoar and I propose to start for the White Mountains in a covered wagon, with one horse, on the morning of Thursday the 1st of July, intending to explore the mountain tops botanically, and camp on them at least several times. Will you take a seat in the wagon with us? Mr. Hoar prefers to hire the horse and wagon himself. Let us hear by express, as soon as you can, whether you will join us here by the earliest train Thursday morning, or Wednesday night. Bring your map of the mountains, and as much *provision* for the road as you can, — hard bread, sugar, tea, meat, etc., — for we intend to live like gipsies; also, a blanket and some thick clothes for the mountain top.

July 1st. Last Monday evening Mr. Edward Hoar said that he thought of going to the White Mountains. I remarked casually that I should like to go well enough if I could afford it. Whereupon he declared that if I would go with him, he would hire a horse and wagon, so that the ride would cost me nothing, and we would explore the mountain tops *botanically*, camping on them many nights. The next morning I suggested you and Brown's accompanying us in another wagon, and we could all camp and cook, gipsy-like, along the way, — or, perhaps, if the horse could draw us, you would like to bear half the expense of the horse and wagon, and take a seat with us. He liked either proposition, but said, that if you would take a seat with us, he would prefer to hire the horse and wagon himself. You could contribute something else if you pleased. Supposing that Brown would be confined, I wrote to you accordingly, by *express* on Tuesday morning, *via* Boston, stating that we should start to-day, suggesting provision, thick clothes, etc., and asking for an answer; but I have not received one. I have just heard that you *may* be at Sterling, and now write to say that we shall still be glad if you will join us at Senter Harbor, where we expect to be next Monday morning. In any case, will you please direct a letter to us there *at*

once?

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, June 30, 1858.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I am on the point of starting for the White Mountains in a wagon with my neighbor Edward Hoar, and I write to you now rather to apologize for not writing, than to answer worthily your three notes. I thank you heartily for them. You will not care for a little delay in acknowledging them, since your date shows that you can afford to wait. Indeed, my head has been so full of company, etc., that I could not reply to you fitly before, nor can I now.

As for preaching to men these days in the Walden strain, is it of any consequence to preach to an audience of men who *can* fail, or who can be *revived?* There are few beside. Is it any success to interest these parties? If a man has *speculated* and *failed*, he will probably do these things again, in spite of you or me. I confess that it is rare that I rise to sentiment in my relations to men, — ordinarily to a mere patient, or may be wholesome, good-will. I can imagine something more, but the truth compels me to regard the ideal and the actual as two things.

Channing has come, and as suddenly gone, and left a short poem, "Near Home," published (?) or printed by Munroe, which I have hardly had time to glance at. As you may guess, I learn nothing of you from him.

You already foresee my answer to your invitation to make you a summer visit: I am bound for the mountains. But I trust that you have vanquished, ere this, those dusky demons that seem to lurk around the Head of the River.1 You know that this warfare is nothing but a kind of nightmare, and it is our thoughts alone which give those unworthies any body or existence.

—— made an excursion with Blake, of Worcester, to Monadnoc, a few weeks since. We took our blankets and food, spent two nights on the mountain, and did not go into a house.

Alcott has been very busy for a long time repairing an old shell of a house, and I have seen very little of him.2 I have looked more at the houses which birds build. Watson made us all very generous presents from his nursery in the spring. Especially did he remember Alcott.

Excuse me for not writing any more at present, and remember me to your family.

—— Near which, at New Bedford, Mr. Ricketson lived.

—— This was the "Orchard House," near Hawthorne's "Wayside." The estate on which it stands, now owned by Dr. W. T. Harris, was surveyed for Mr. Alcott by Thoreau in October, *1857.*

In July, 1858, as mentioned in this letter to Mr. Ricketson, Thoreau journeyed from Concord to the White Mountains, first visited with his brother John in 1839. His later companion was Edward Hoar, a botanist and lover of nature, who had been a magistrate in California, and in boyhood a comrade of Thoreau in shooting excursions on the Concord meadows. They journeyed in a wagon and Thoreau disliked the loss of independence in choice of camping-places involved in the care of a horse. He complained also of the magnificent inns ("mountain houses") that had sprung up in the passes and on the plateaus since his first visit. "Give me," he said, "a spruce house made in the rain," such as he and Channing afterward (1860) made on Monadnoc in his last trip to that mountain. The chief exploit in the White Mountain trip was a visit to Tuckerman's Ravine on Mt. Washington, of which Mr. Hoar, some years before his death (in 1893), gave me an account, containing the true anecdote of Thoreau's finding the arnica plant when he needed it.

On their way to this rather inaccessible chasm, Thoreau and his comrade went first to what was then but a small tavern on the "tip-top" of Mt. Washington. It was a foggy day; and when the landlord was asked if he could furnish a guide to Tuckerman's Ravine, he replied: "Yes, my brother is the guide; but if he went to-day he could never find his way back in this fog."

"Well," said Thoreau, "if we cannot have a guide we will find it ourselves;" and he at once produced a map he had made the day before at a roadside inn, where he had found a wall map of the mountain region, and climbed on a table to copy that portion he needed. With this map and his pocket-compass he "struck a bee-line," said Mr. Hoar, for the ravine, and soon came to it, about a mile away. They went safely down the steep stairs into the chasm, where they found the midsummer iceberg they wished to see. But as they walked down the bed of the Peabody River, flowing from this ravine, over bowlders five or six feet high, the heavy packs on their shoulders weighed them down, and finally, Thoreau's foot slipping, he fell and sprained his ankle. He rose, but had not limped five steps from the place where he fell, when he said, "Here is the arnica, anyhow," — reached out his hand and plucked the *Arnica mollis*, which he had not before found anywhere. Before reaching the mountains they had marked in their botany books forty-six species of plants they hoped to find there, and before they came away they had found forty-two of them.

When they reached their camping-place, farther down, Thoreau was so lame he could not move about, and lay there in the camp several days, eating the pork and other supplies they had in their packs, Mr. Hoar going each day to the inn at the mountain summit. This camp was in a thicket of dwarf firs at the foot of the ravine, where, just before his accident, by carelessness in lighting a fire, some acres of the mountain woodland had been set on fire; but this proved to be the signal for which Thoreau had told his Worcester friends to watch, if they wished to join him on the mountain. "I had told Blake," says Thoreau in his journal, to look out for a smoke and a white tent. We had made a smoke sure enough. We slept five in the tent that night, and found it quite warm." Mr. Hoar added: "In this journey Thoreau insisted on our carrying heavy packs, and rather despised persons who complained of the burden. He was chagrined, in the Maine woods, to find his Indian, Joe Polis (whom, on the whole, he admired), excited and tremulous at sight of a moose, so that he could scarcely load his gun properly. Joe, who was a good Catholic, wanted us to stop traveling on Sunday and hold a meeting; and when we insisted on going forward, the Indian withdrew into the

woods to say his prayers, — then came back and picked up the breakfast things, and we paddled on. As to Thoreau's courage and manliness, nobody who had seen him among the Penobscot rocks and rapids — the Indian trusting his life and his canoe to Henry's skill, promptitude, and nerve — would ever doubt it."

Channing says:1 "In his later journeys, if his companion was footsore or loitered, he steadily pursued his road. Once, when a follower was done up with headache and incapable of motion, hoping his associate would comfort him and perhaps afford him a sip of tea, he said, ' There are people who are sick in that way every morning, and go about their affairs,' and then marched off about his. In such limits, so inevitable, was he compacted.... This tone of mind grew out of no insensibility; or, if he sometimes looked coldly on the suffering of more tender natures, he sympathized with their afflictions, but could do nothing to admire them. He would not injure a plant unnecessarily. At the time of the John Brown tragedy, Thoreau was driven sick. So

1 Channing's THOREAU, pp. 3, 8, 9. Channing himself was, no doubt, the "follower" and "companion" here mentioned; no person so frequently walked with Thoreau in his long excursions. They were together in New Boston, N. H., when the minister mentioned in the WEEK reproved Thoreau for not going to meeting on Sunday. When I first lived in Concord (March, 1855), and asked the innkeeper what Sunday services the village held, he replied: "There 's the Orthodox, an' the Unitarian, an' th' Walden Pond Association," — meaning by the last what Emerson called "the Walkers," — those who rambled in the Walden woods op Sundays.

the country's misfortunes in the Union war acted on his feelings with great force: he used to say he 'could never recover while the war lasted.'" Hawthorne had an experience somewhat similar, though he, too, was of stern stuff when need was, and had much of the old Salem sea-captains in his sensitive nature.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, NOVEMBER 6, 1858.

Friend Ricketson, — I was much pleased with your lively and lifelike account of your voyage. You were more than repaid for your trouble after all. The coast of Nova Scotia, which you sailed along from Windsor westward, is particularly interesting to the historian of this country, having been settled earlier than Plymouth. Your "Isle of Haut" is properly "Isle Haute," or the High Island of Champlain's map. There is another off the coast of Maine. By the way, the American elk, of *American authors* (*Cervus Canadensis),* is a distinct animal from the moose (*Cervus alecs'),* though the latter is called elk by many.

You drew a very vivid portrait of the Australian, — short and stout, with a pipe in his mouth, and his book inspired by beer, Pot First, Pot Second, etc. I suspect that he must be potbellied withal. Methinks I see the smoke going up from him as from a cottage on the moor. If he does not quench his genius with his beer, it may burst into a clear flame at last. However, perhaps he intentionally adopts the low style.

What do you mean by that ado about smoking, and my "purer tastes"? I should like his pipe as well as his beer, at least. Neither of them is so bad as to be "highly connected," which you say he is, unfortunately. No! I expect nothing but pleasure in "smoke from *your* pipe."

You and the Australian must have put your heads together when you concocted those titles, —— with pipes in your mouths over a pot of beer. I suppose that your chapters are, Whiff the First, Whiff the Second, etc. But of course it is a more modest expression for "Fire from my Genius."

You must have been very busy since you came back, or before you sailed, to have brought out your History, of whose publication I had not heard. I suppose that I have read it in the "Mercury." Yet I

am curious to see how it looks in a volume, with your name on the title-page.

I am more curious still about the poems. Pray put some sketches into the book: your shanty for frontispiece; Arthur and Walton's boat (if you can) running for Cuttyhunk in a tremendous gale; not forgetting "Be honest boys," etc., near by; the Middleborough Ponds, with a certain island looming in the distance; the Quaker meeting-house, and the Brady House, if you like; the villagers catching smelts with dip-nets in the twilight, at the Head of the River, etc., etc. Let it be a local and villageous book as much as possible. Let some one make a characteristic selection of mottoes from your shanty walls, and sprinkle them in an irregular manner, at all angles, over the fly-leaves and margins, as a man stamps his name in a hurry; and also canes, pipes, and jackknives, of all your patterns, about the frontispiece. I can think of plenty of devices for tail-pieces. Indeed, I should like to see a hair-pillow, accurately drawn, for one; a cat, with a bell on, for another; the old horse, with his age printed in the hollow of his back; half a cocoanut shell by a spring; a sheet of blotted paper; a settle occupied by a settler at full length, etc., etc., etc. Call all the arts to your aid.

Don't wait for the Indian Summer, but bring it with you.

P. S. — Let me ask a favor. I am trying to write something about the autumnal tints, and I wish to know how much our trees differ from English and European ones in this respect. Will you observe, or learn for me, what English or European trees, if any, still retain their leaves in Mr. Arnold's garden (the gardener will supply the true names); and also if the foliage of any (and what) European or foreign trees there have been brilliant the past month. If you will do this you will greatly oblige me. I return the newspaper with this.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

Concord, November 28, 1858.

Friend Eicketson, — I thank you for your "History."1 Though I have not yet read it again, I have looked far enough to see that I like the homeliness of it; that is, the good, old-fashioned way of writing, as if you actually lived where you wrote. A man's interest in a single bluebird is worth more than a complete but dry list of the fauna and flora of a town. It is also a considerable advantage to be able to say at any time, "If R. is not here, here is his book." Alcott being here, and inquiring after you (whom he has been expecting), I lent the book to him almost immediately. He talks of going West the latter part of this week. Channing is here again, as I am told, but I have not seen him.

I thank you also for the account of the trees.

1 *Of New Bedford, first published in the* Mercury *of that city, while Channing was one of the editors, and afterwards in a volume.*

It was to my purpose, and I hope you got something out of it too. I suppose that the cold weather prevented your coming here. Suppose you try a winter walk on skates. Please remember me to your family.

Late in November, 1858, Cholmondeley, who had not written for a year and six months, suddenly notified Thoreau from Montreal that he was in Canada, and would visit Concord the next week. Accordingly he arrived early in December, and urged his friend to go with him to the West Indies. John Thoreau, the father, was then in his last illness, and for that and other reasons Thoreau could not accept the invitation; but he detained Cholmondeley in Concord some days, and took him to New Bedford, December 8th, having first written this note to Mr. Ricketson: —

"Thomas Cholmondeley, my English acquaintance, is here, on his

way to the West Indies. He wants to see New Bedford, a whaling town. I tell him I would like to introduce him to you there, — thinking more of his seeing you than New Bedford. So we propose to come your way to-morrow. Excuse this short notice, for the time is short. If on any account it is inconvenient to see us, you will treat us accord-

Of this visit and his English visitor, Mr. Ricketson wrote in his journal the next day: —

"We were all much pleased with Mr. Cholmondeley. He is a tall spare man, thirty-five years of age, of fair and fresh complexion, blue eyes, light brown and fine hair, nose small and Roman, beard light and worn full, with a mustache. A man of fine culture and refinement of manners, educated at Oriel College, Oxford, of an old Cheshire family by his father, a clergyman. He wore a black velvet sack coat, and lighter colored trousers, — a sort of genteel traveling suit; perhaps a cap, but by no means a fashionable 'castor.' He reminded me of our dear friend, George William Curtis." Few greater compliments could this diarist give than to compare a visitor to Curtis, the lamented.

Mr. Cholmondeley left Concord for the South, going as far as to Virginia, in December and January; then came back to Concord the 20th of January, 1859, and after a few days returned to Canada, and thence to England by way of Jamaica. He was in London when Theodore Parker reached there from Santa Cruz, in June, and called on him, with offers of service; but does not seem to have heard of Parker's death till I wrote him in May, 1861. At my parting with him in Concord, he gave me money with which to buy grapes for the invalid father of Thoreau, — an instance of his constant consideration for others; the Thoreaus hardly affording such luxuries as hothouse grapes for the sick. Sophia Thoreau, who perhaps was more appreciative of him than her more stoical brother, said after his death, "We have always had the truest regard for him, as a person of rare integrity, great benevolence, and the sincerest friendliness." This well describes the man whose every-day guise was literally set down by Mr. Ricketson.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, *January 1, 1859.*

Mr. Blake, — It may interest you to hear that Cholmondeley has been this way again, *via* Montreal and Lake Huron, going to the West Indies, or rather to Weiss-nicht-wo, whither he urges me to accompany him. He is rather more demonstrative than before, and, on the whole, what would be called "a good fellow," — is a man of principle, and quite reliable, but very peculiar. I have been to New Bedford with him, to show him a whaling town and Ricketson. I was glad to hear that you had called on R. How did you like him? I suspect that you did not see one another fairly.

I have lately got back to that glorious society called Solitude, where we meet our friends continually, and can imagine the outside world also to be peopled. Yet some of my acquaintance would fain hustle me into the almshouse for *the sake of society*, as if I were pining for that diet, when I seem to myself a most befriended man, and find constant employment. However, they do not believe a word I say. They have got a club, the handle of which is in the Parker House at Boston, and with this they beat me from time to time, expecting to make me tender or minced meat, so fit for a club to dine off.

"Hercules with his club The Dragon did drub;
But More of More Hall,
With nothing at all,
He slew the Dragon of Wantley."

Ah! that More of More Hall knew what fair play was. Channing, who wrote to me about it once, brandishing the club vigorously (being set on by another, probably), says *now*, seriously, that he is sorry to find by my letters that I am "absorbed in politics," and adds, begging my pardon for his plainness, "Beware of an extraneous life!" and so he does his duty, and washes his hands of me. I tell him that it

is as if he should say to the sloth, that fellow that creeps so slowly along a tree, and cries *ai* from time to time, "Beware of dancing!"

The doctors are all agreed that I am suffering for want of society. Was never a case like it. First, I did not know that I was suffering at all. Secondly, as an Irishman might say, I had thought it was indigestion of the society I got.

As for the Parker House, I went there once, when the Club was away, but I found it hard to see through the cigar smoke, and men were deposited about in chairs over the marble floor, as thick as legs of bacon in a smoke-house. It was all smoke, and no salt, Attic or other. The only room in Boston which I visit with alacrity is the Gentlemen's Room at the Fitchburg Depot, where I wait for the cars, sometimes for two hours, in order to get out of town. It is a paradise to the Parker House, for no smoking is allowed, and there is far more retirement. A large and respectable club of us hire it (Town and Country Club), and I am pretty sure to find some one there whose face is set the same way as my own.

My last essay, on which I am still engaged, is called Autumnal Tints. I do not know how readable (i *e.,* by me to others) it will be.

I met Mr. James the other night at Emerson's, at an Alcottian conversation, at which, however, Alcott did not talk much, being disturbed by James's opposition. The latter is a hearty man enough, with whom you can differ very satisfactorily, on account of both his doctrines and his good temper. He utters *quasi* philanthropic dogmas in a metaphysic dress; but they are for all practical purposes very crude. He charges society with all the crime committed, and praises the criminal for committing it. But I think that all the remedies he suggests out of his head — for he goes no farther, hearty as he is — would leave us about where we are now. For, of course, it is not by a gift of turkeys on Thanksgiving Day that he proposes to convert the criminal, but by a true sympathy with each one, — with him, among the rest, who lyingly tells the world from the gallows that he has never been treated kindly by a single mortal since he was born. But it is not so easy a thing to sympathize with another, though you may have the best disposition to do it. There is Dobson over the hill. Have not you and I and all the world been trying, ever since he was born, to sympathize with him? (as doubtless he with us), and yet we have

got no farther than to send him to the House of Correction once at least; and he, on the other hand, as I hear, has sent us to another place several times. This is the real state of things, as I understand it, as least so far as James's remedies go. We are now, alas! exercising what charity we actually have, and new laws would not give us any more. But, perchance, we might make some improvements in the House of Correction. You and I are Dobson; what will James do for us?

Have you found at last in your wanderings a place where the solitude is sweet?

What mountain are you camping on nowadays? Though I had a good time at the mountains, I confess that the journey did not bear any fruit that I know of. I did not expect it would. The mode of it was not simple and adventurous enough. You must first have made an infinite demand, and not unreasonably, but after a corresponding outlay, have an all-absorbing purpose, and at the same time that your feet bear you hither and thither, travel much more in imagination. — .

To let the mountains slide, — live at home like a traveler. It should not be in vain that these things are shown us from day to day. Is not each withered leaf that I see in my walks something which I have traveled to find? — traveled, who can tell how far? What a fool he must be who thinks that his El Dorado is anywhere but where he lives!

We are always, methinks, in some kind of ravine, though our bodies may walk the smooth streets of Worcester. Our souls (I use this word for want of a better) are ever perched on its rocky sides, overlooking that lowland. (What a more than Tuckerman's Ravine is the body itself, in which the "soul" is encamped, when you come to look into it! However, eagles always have chosen such places for their eyries.)

Thus is it ever with your fair cities of the plain. Their streets may be paved with silver and gold, and six carriages roll abreast in them, but the real *homes* of the citizens are in the Tuckerman's Ravines which ray out from that centre into the mountains round about, one for each man, woman, and child. The masters of life have so ordered it. That is their *beau-ideal* of a country seat. There is no danger of

being *tuckered* out before you get to it.

So we live in Worcester and in Concord, each man taking his exercise regularly in his ravine, like a lion in his cage, and sometimes spraining his ankle there. We have very few clear days, and a great many small plagues which keep us busy. Sometimes, I suppose, you hear a neighbor halloo (Brown, may be) and think it is a bear. Nevertheless, on the whole, we think it very grand and exhilarating, this ravine life. It is a capital advantage withal, living so high, the excellent drainage of that city of God. Routine is but a shallow and insignificant sort of ravine, such as the ruts are, the conduits of puddles. But these ravines are the source of mighty streams, precipitous, icy, savage, as they are, haunted by bears and loup-cerviers; there are born not only Sacos and Amazons, but prophets who will redeem the world. The at last smooth and fertilizing water at which nations drink and navies supply themselves begins with melted glaciers, and burst thunder-spouts. Let us pray that, if we are not flowing through some Mississippi valley which we fertilize, — and it is not likely we are, — we may know ourselves shut in between grim and mighty mountain walls amid the clouds, falling a thousand feet in a mile, through dwarfed fir and spruce, over the rocky insteps of slides, being exercised in our minds, and so developed.

CONCORD, *January 19, 1859.*

Mr. Blake, — If I could have given a favorable report as to the skating, I should have answered you earlier. About a week before you wrote there was good skating; there is now none. As for the lecture, I shall be glad to come. I cannot now say when, but I will let you know, I think within a week or ten days at most, and will then leave you a week clear to make the arrangements in. I will bring something else than "What shall it profit a Man?" My father is very sick, and has been for a long time, so that there is the more need of me at home. This occurs to me, even when contemplating so short an excursion as to Worcester.

I want very much to see or hear your account of your adventures in the Ravine,1 and I trust I shall do so when I come to Worcester.

Cholmondeley has been here again, returning from Virginia (for he went no farther south) to Canada; and will go thence to Europe, he thinks, in the spring, and never ramble any more. (January 29.) I am expecting daily that my father will die, therefore I cannot leave home at present. I will write you again within ten days.

The death of John Thoreau (who was born October 8, 1787) occurred February 3d, and Thoreau gave his lecture on "Autumnal Tints" at Worcester, February 22, 1859. Mrs. Thoreau survived all her children except Sophia, and died in 1872. In a letter to Mr. Ricketson, Thoreau gave a just sketch of his father's character.

1 *This was Tuckerman's Ravine at the White Mountains, where Thoreau met with his mishap in the preceding July.*

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, *12th February, 1859.*

Friend Ricketson, — I thank you for your kind letter. I sent you the notice of my father's death as much because you knew him as because you knew me. I can hardly realize that he is dead. He had been sick about two years, and at last declined rather rapidly, though steadily. Till within a week or ten days before he died he was hoping to see another spring, but he then discovered that this was a vain expectation, and, thinking that he was dying, he took his leave of us several times within a week before his departure. Once or twice he expressed a slight impatience at the delay. He was quite conscious to the last, and his death was so easy that, though we had all been sitting around the bed for an hour or more expecting that event (as we had sat before), he was gone at last, almost before we were aware of it.

I am glad to read what you say of his social nature. I think I may say that he was wholly unpretending; and there was this peculiarity in his aim, that though he had pecuniary difficulties to contend with the greater part of his life, he always studied how to make a *good* article, pencil or other (for he practiced various arts), and was never satisfied with what he had produced. Nor was he ever disposed in the least to put off a poor one for the sake of pecuniary gain, —— as if he labored for a higher end.

Though he was not very old, and was not a native of Concord, I think that he was, on the whole, more identified with Concord street than any man now alive, having come here when he was about twelve years old, and set up for himself as a merchant here, at the age of twenty-one, fifty years ago. As I sat in a circle the other evening with my mother and sister, my mother's two sisters, and my father's two sisters, it occurred to me that my father, though seventy-one, belonged to the youngest four of the eight who recently composed our family.

How swiftly at last, but unnoticed, a generation passes away! Three years ago I was called with my father to be a witness to the signing of our neighbor Mr. Frost's will. Mr. Samuel Hoar, who was there writing it, also signed it. I was lately required to go to Cambridge to testify to the genuineness of the will, being the only one of the four who could be there, and now I am the only one alive.

My mother and sister thank you heartily for your sympathy. The latter, in particular, agrees with you in thinking that it is communion with still living and healthy nature alone which can restore to sane and cheerful views. I thank you for your invitation to New Bedford, but I feel somewhat confined here for the present.

I did not know but we should see you the day after Alger was here. It is not too late for a winter walk in Concord. It does me good to hear of spring birds, and singing ones too, — for spring seems far away from Concord yet. I am going to Worcester to read a parlor lecture on the 22d, and shall see Blake and Brown. What if you were to meet me there, or go with me from here? You would see them to good advantage. Cholmondeley has been here again, after going as far south as Virginia, and left for Canada about three weeks ago. He is a good soul, and I am afraid I did not sufficiently recognize him.

Please remember me to Mrs. Ricketson, and to the rest of your family.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, September 26, 1859.

MR. BLAKE, — I am not sure that I am in a fit mood to write to you, for I feel and think rather too much like a business man, having some very irksome affairs to attend to these months and years on account of my family.1 This is the way I am serving King Admetus, confound him! If it were not for my relations, I would let the wolves prey on his flocks to their bellies' content. Such fellows you have to deal with! herdsmen of some other king, or of the same, who tell no tale, but in the sense of counting their flocks, and then lie drunk under a hedge. How is your grist ground? Not by some murmuring stream, while you lie dreaming on the bank; but, it seems, you must take hold with your hands, and shove the wheel round. You can't depend on streams, poor feeble things! You can't depend on worlds, left to themselves; but you've got to oil them and goad them along. In short, you've got to carry on two farms at once, — the farm on the earth and the farm in your mind. Those Crimean and Italian battles were mere boys' play, — they are the scrapes into which truants get. But what a battle a man must fight everywhere to maintain his standing army of thoughts, and march with them in orderly array through the always hostile coun-

1 He was looking after the manufacture of fine plumbago for the electrotypers, which was the family business after pencil-making grew unprofitable. The Thoreaus had a grinding mill in Acton, and a packing shop attached to their Concord house. "Parker's society," mentioned at the close of the letter, was the congregation of Theodore Parker, then in Italy, where he died in May, I860.

try! How many enemies there are to sane thinking! Every soldier has succumbed to them before he enlists for those other battles. Men may sit in chambers, seemingly safe and sound, and yet despair, and turn out at last only hollowness and dust within, like a Dead Sea apple. A standing army of numerous, brave, and well-disciplined thoughts, and you at the head of them, marching straight to your

goal, — how to bring this about is the problem, and Scott's Tactics will not help you to it. Think of a poor fellow begirt only with a sword-belt, and no such staff of athletic thoughts! his brains rattling as he walks and *talks!* These are your praetorian guard. It is easy enough to maintain a family, or a state, but it is hard to maintain these children of your brain (or say, rather, these guests that trust to enjoy your hospitality), they make such great demands; and yet, he who does only the former, and loses the power to *think* originally, or as only he ever can, fails miserably. Keep up the fires of thought, and all will go well.

Zouaves? — pish! How you can overrun a country, climb any rampart, and carry any fortress, with an army of *alert* thoughts! — thoughts that send their bullets home to heaven's door, — with which you can *take* the whole world, without paying for it, or robbing anybody. See, the conquering hero comes! You *fail* in your thoughts, or you *prevail* in your thoughts only. Provided you *think* well, the heavens falling, or the earth gaping, will be music for you to march by. No foe can ever see you, or you him; you cannot so much as *think* of him. Swords have no edges, bullets no penetration, for such a contest. In your mind must be a liquor which will dissolve the world whenever it is dropt in it. There is no universal solvent but this, and all things together cannot saturate it. It will hold the universe in solution, and yet be as translucent as ever. The vast machine may indeed roll over our toes, and we not know it, but it would rebound and be staved to pieces like an empty barrel, if it should strike fair and square on the smallest and least angular of a man's thoughts.

You seem not to have taken Cape Cod the right way. I think that you should have persevered in walking on the beach and on the bank, even to the land's end, however soft, and so, by long knocking at Ocean's gate, have gained admittance at last, — better, if separately, and in a storm, not knowing where you would sleep by night, or eat by day. Then you should have given a day to the sand behind Provincetown, and ascended the hills there, and been blown on considerably. I hope that you like to remember the journey better than you did to make it.

1 have been confined at home all this year, but I am not aware that I have grown any rustier than was to be expected. One while I explored the bottom of the river pretty extensively. I have engaged to read a lecture to Parker's society on the 9th of October next.

I am off — a barberrying.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, October 31, 1859.

Mr. Blake, — I spoke to my townsmen last evening on "The Character of Captain Brown, now in the clutches of the slaveholder." I should like to speak to any company at Worcester who may wish to hear me; and will come if only my expenses are paid. I think we should express ourselves at once, while Brown is alive. The sooner the better. Perhaps Higginson may like to have a meeting. Wednesday evening would be a good time. The people here are deeply interested in the matter. Let me have an answer as soon as may be.

P. S. — I may be engaged toward the end of the week.

Henry D. *Thoreau.*

This address on John Brown was one of the first public utterances in favor of that hero; it was made up mainly from the entries in Thoreau's journals, since I had introduced Brown to him, and he to Emerson, in March, 1857; and specially from those pages that Thoreau had written after the news of Brown's capture in Virginia had reached him. It was first given in the vestry of the old parish church in Concord (where, in 1774, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts had met to prepare for armed resistance to British tyranny); was repeated at Worcester the same week, and before a great audience in Boston, the following Sunday, — after which it was published in the newspapers, and had a wide reading. Mr. Alcott in his diary mentions it under date of Sunday, October 30, thus: " Thoreau reads a paper on John Brown, his virtues, spirit, and deeds, this evening, and to the delight of his company, — the best that could be gathered at short notice, — and among them Emerson. (November 4.) Thoreau calls and reports about the reading of his lecture on Brown at Boston and Worcester. He has been the first to speak and celebrate the hero's courage and magnanimity; it is these that he discerns and praises. The men have much in common, — the sturdy

manliness, straightforwardness, and independence. (November 5.) Ricketson from New Bedford arrives; he and Thoreau take supper with us. Thoreau talks freely and enthusiastically about Brown, — denouncing the Union, the President, the States, and Virginia particularly; wishes to publish his late speech, and has seen Boston publishers, but failed to find any to print it for him." It was soon after published, along with Emerson's two speeches in favor of Brown, by a new Boston publishing house (Thayer & Eldridge), in a volume called, "Echoes of Harper's Ferry," edited by the late James Redpath, Brown's first biographer. In the following summer, Thoreau sent a second paper on Brown (written soon after his execution) to be read at a commemoration of the martyr, beside his grave among the Adirondae Mountains. This is mentioned in his letter to Sophia Thoreau, July 8,1860. He took an active part in arranging for the funeral service in honor of Brown, at Concord, the day of his death, December 2, 1859.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, May 20,1860.

Mr. Blake, — I must endeavor to pay some of my debts to you. To begin where we left off, then.

The presumption is that *we* are always the same; our opportunities, and Nature herself, fluctuating. Look at mankind. No great difference between two, apparently; perhaps the same height, and breadth, and weight; and yet, to the man who sits most east, this life is a weariness, routine, dust and ashes, and he drowns his imaginary *cares* (!) (a sort of friction among his vital organs) in a bowl. But to the man who sits most west, his *contemporary* (!), it is a field for all noble endeavors, an elysium, the dwelling-place of heroes and demigods. The former complains that he has a thousand affairs to attend to; but he does not realize that his affairs (though they may be a thousand) and he are one.

Men and boys are learning all kinds of trades but how to make *men* of themselves. They learn to make houses; but they are not so well housed, they are not so contented in their houses, as the woodchucks in their holes. What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on? — if you cannot tolerate the planet it is on? Grade the ground first. If a man believes and expects great things of himself, it makes no odds where you put him, or what you show him (of course *you* cannot put him anywhere, nor show him anything), he will be surrounded by grandeur. He is in the condition of a healthy and hungry man, who says to himself, — How sweet this crust is! If he despairs of himself, then Tophet is his dwelling-place, and he is in the condition of a sick man who is disgusted with the fruits of finest flavor.

Whether he sleeps or wakes, — whether he runs or walks, — whether he uses a microscope or a telescope, or his naked eye, — a man never discovers anything, never overtakes anything, or leaves anything behind, but himself. Whatever he says or does, he merely reports himself. If he is in love, he *loves;* if he is in heaven, he *enjoys;* if he is in hell, he *suffers.* It is his condition that determines

his locality.

The principal, the only thing a man makes, is his condition of fate. Though commonly he does not know it, nor put up a sign to this effect, "My own destiny made and mended here." [Not *yours.]* He is a master-workman in the business. He works twenty-four hours a day at it, and gets it done. Whatever else he neglects or botches, no man was ever known to neglect this work. A great many pretend to make *shoes* chiefly, and would scout the idea that they make the hard times which they experience.

Each reaching and aspiration is an instinct with which all nature consists and cooperates, and therefore it is not in vain. But alas! each relaxing and desperation is an instinct too. To be active, well, happy, implies rare courage. To be ready to fight in a duel or a battle implies desperation, or that you hold your life cheap.

If you take this life to be simply what old religious folks pretend (I mean the effete, gone to seed in a drought, mere human galls stung by the devil once), then all your joy and serenity is reduced to grinning and bearing it. The fact is, you have got to take the world on your shoulders like Atlas, and " put along" with it. You will do this for an idea's sake, and your success will be in proportion to your devotion to ideas. It may make your back ache occasionally, but you will have the satisfaction of hanging it or twirling it to suit yourself. Cowards suffer, heroes enjoy. After a long day's walk with it, pitch it into a hollow place, sit down and eat your luncheon. Unexpectedly, by some immortal thoughts, you will be compensated. The bank whereon you sit will be a fragrant and flowery one, and your world in the hollow a sleek and light gazelle.

Where is the "unexplored land" but in our own untried enterprises? To an adventurous spirit any place — London, New York, Worcester, or his own yard — is "unexplored land," to seek which Fremont and Kane travel so far. To a sluggish and defeated spirit even the Great Basin and the Polaris are trivial places. If they can get there (and, indeed, they are there now), they will want to sleep, and give it up, just as they always do. These are the regions of the Known and of the Unknown. What is the use of going right over the old track again? There is an adder in the path which your own feet have worn. You must make tracks into the Unknown. That is

what you have your board and clothes for. Why do you ever mend your clothes, unless that, wearing them, you may mend your ways? Let us sing.

TO SOPHIA THOREAU (AT CAMPTON, N. H.).

CONCORD, July 8, I860.

Dear Sophia, — Mother reminds me that I must write to you, if only a few lines, though I have sprained my thumb, so that it is questionable whether I can write legibly, if at all. I can't "bear on" much. What is worse, I believe that I have sprained my brain too — that is, it sympathizes with my thumb. But that is no excuse, I suppose, for writing a letter in such a case, is like sending a newspaper, only a hint to let you know that "all is well," — but my thumb.

I hope that you begin to derive some benefit from that more mountainous air which you are breathing. Have you had a distinct view of the Franconia Notch Mountains (blue peaks in the northern horizon)? which I told you you could get from the road in Campton, probably from some other points nearer. Such a view of the mountains is more memorable than any other. Have you been to Squam Lake or overlooked it? I should think that you could make an excursion to some mountain in that direction from which you could see the lake and mountains generally. Is there no friend of N. P. Rogers who can tell you where the " lions" are?

Of course I did not go to North Elba,1 but I sent some reminiscences of last fall. I hear that John Brown, Jr., has now come to Boston for a few days. Mr. Sanborn's case, it is said, will come on after some murder cases have been disposed of here.

I have just been invited formally to be present at the annual picnic of Theodore Parker's society (that was), at Waverley, next Wednesday, and to make some remarks. But that is wholly out of my line. I do not go to picnics, even in Concord, you know.

Mother and Aunt Sophia rode to Acton in time yesterday. I suppose that you have heard that Mr. Hawthorne has come home. I went to meet him the other evening and found that he has not altered, except that he was looking quite

1 He was invited to a gathering of John Brown's friends at the grave in the Adirondac woods. "Mr. Sanborn's case" was an indictment and civil suit against Silas Carleton et als *for an attempt to kidnap F. B. Sanborn, who had refused to accept the invitation of the Senate at Washington to testify in the John Brown investigation.*

brown after his voyage. He is as simple and childlike as ever.

I believe that I have fairly scared the kittens away, at last, by my pretended fierceness, which was. I will consider my thumb — and your eyes.

Henry.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, August 3, 1860.

Mr. Blake, — I some time ago asked Channing if he would not spend a week with me on Monadnoc; but he did not answer decidedly. Lately he has talked of an excursion somewhere, but I said that *now* I must wait till my sister returned from Plymouth, N. H. She has returned, —— and accordingly, on receiving your note this morning, I made known its contents to Channing, in order to see how far I was engaged with him. The result is that he decides to go to Monadnoc to-morrow morning;1 so I must defer

1 This is the excursion described by Thoreau in a subsequent letter, — lasting six days, and the first that Channing had made which involved "camping out." It was also Thoreau's last visit to this favorite mountain; but Channing continued to go there after the death of his friend; and some of these visits are recorded in his poem, "The Wanderer." The last one was in September, 1869, when I accompanied him, and we again spent five nights on the plateau where he had camped with Thoreau. At that time, one of the "two good spruce houses, half a mile apart," mentioned by Thoreau, was still standing-, in ruins, — the place called by Channing "Henry's Camp," and thus described: —

> We built our fortress where you see
> On group of spruce-trees, sidewise on the line
> Where the horizon to the eastward bounds, —
>
> A point selected by sagacious art,
> Where all at once we viewed the Vermont hills,
> And the long outline of the mountain-ridge,
> Ever renewing, changeful every hour.
> See *The Wanderer* (Boston, 1871), p. 61.

making an excursion with you and Brown to another season. Perhaps you will call as you pass the mountain. I send this by the earliest mail.

P. S. — That was a very insufficient visit you made here the last time. My mother is better, though far from well; and if you should chance along here any time after your journey, I trust that we shall all do better.

The mention by Thoreau of John Brown and my "case" recalls to me an incident of those excited days which followed the attack by Brown on slavery in Virginia. The day after Brown's death, but before the execution of his comrades, I received a message from the late Dr. David Thayer of Boston, implying, as I thought, that a son of Brown was at his house, whither I hurried to meet him. Instead, I found young F. J. Merriam of Boston, who had escaped with Owen Brown from Harper's Ferry, and was now in Boston to raise another party against the slaveholders. He was unfit to lead or even join in such a desperate undertaking, and we insisted he should return to safety in Canada, — a large reward being offered for his seizure. He agreed to go back to Canada that night by the Fitchburg Railroad; but in his hotheaded way he took the wrong train, which ran no farther than Concord, — and found himself in the early evening at my house, where my sister received him, but insisted that I should not see him, lest I might be questioned about my guest. While he had supper and went to bed, I posted down to Mr. Emerson's and engaged his horse and covered wagon, to be ready at sunrise, — he asking no questions. In the same way I engaged Mr. Thoreau to drive his friend's horse to South Acton the next morning, and there put on board the first Canadian train a Mr. Lockwood, whom he would find at my house. Thoreau readily consented, asked no questions, walked to the Emerson stable the next morning, found the horse ready, drove him to my door, and took up Merriam, under the name of Lockwood, — neither knowing who the other was. Merriam was so flighty that, though he had agreed to go to Montreal, and knew that his life might depend on getting there early, he declared he must see Mr. Emerson, to lay before him his plan for invading the South, and consult him about some moral questions that troubled his mind. His companion listened gravely, — and hurried the horse towards Acton. Merriam grew more positive and suspicious,— "Perhaps *you* are Mr. Emerson; you look somewhat like him."

"No, I am not," said Thoreau, and drove steadily away from Concord. "Well, then, I am going back," said the youth, and flung himself out of the wagon. How Thoreau got him in again, he never told me; but I suspected some judicious force, accompanying the grave persuasive speech natural to our friend. At any rate, he took his man to Acton, saw him safe on the train, and reported to me that "Mr. Lockwood had taken passage for Canada," where he arrived that night. Nothing more passed between us until, more than two years after, he inquired one day, in his last illness, who my fugitive was. Merriam was then out of danger in that way, and had been for months a soldier in the Union army, where he died. I therefore said that "Lockwood" was the grandson of his mother's old friend, Francis Jackson, and had escaped from Maryland. In return he gave me the odd incidents of their drive, and mentioned that he had spoken of the affair to his mother only since his illness. So reticent and practically useful could he be; as Channing says, "He made no useless professions, never asked one of those questions which destroy all relation; but he was on the spot at the time, he meant friendship, and meant nothing else, and stood by it without the slightest abatement."

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, November 4, 1860.

Friend Ricketson, — I thank you for the verses. They are quite too good to apply to me. However, I know what a poet's license is, and will not get in the way.

But what do you mean by that prose? Why will you waste so many regards on me, and not know what to think of my silence? Infer from it what you might from the silence of a dense pine wood. It is its natural condition, except when the winds blow, and the jays scream, and the chickadee winds up his clock. My silence is just as inhuman as that, and no more. You know that I never promised to correspond with you, and so, when I do, I do more than I promised.

Such are my pursuits and habits, that I rarely go abroad; and it is quite a habit with me to decline invitations to do so. Not that I could not enjoy such visits, if I were not otherwise occupied. I have enjoyed very much my visits to you, and my rides in your neighborhood, and am sorry that I cannot enjoy such things oftener; but life is short, and there are other things also to be done. I admit that you are more social than I am, and far more attentive to "the common courtesies of life;" but this is partly for the reason that you have fewer or less exacting private pursuits.

Not to have written a note for a year is with me a very venial offense. I think that I do not correspond with any one so often as once in six months.

I have a faint recollection of your invitation referred to; but I suppose that I had no new nor particular reason for declining, and so made no new statement. I have felt that you would be glad to see me almost whenever I got ready to come; but I only offer myself as a rare visitor, and a still rarer correspondent.

I am very busy, after my fashion, little as there is to show for it, and feel as if I could not spend many days nor dollars in traveling; for the shortest visit must have a fair margin to it, and the days thus

affect the weeks, you know. Nevertheless, we cannot forego these luxuries altogether. You must not regard me as a regular diet, but at most only as acorns, which, too, are not to be despised, — which, at least, we love to think are edible in a bracing walk. We have got along pretty well together in several directions, though we are such strangers in others.

I hardly know what to say in answer to your letter. Some are accustomed to write many letters, others very few. I am one of the last. At any rate, we are pretty sure, if we write at all, to send those thoughts which we cherish, to that one who, we believe, will most religiously attend to them.

This life is not for complaint, but for satisfaction. I do not feel addressed by this letter of yours. It suggests only misunderstanding. Intercourse may be good; but of what use are complaints and apologies? Any complaint *I* have to make is too serious to be uttered, for the evil cannot be mended.

Turn over a new leaf.

My out-door harvest this fall has been one Canada lynx, a fierce-looking fellow, which, it seems, we have hereabouts; eleven barrels of apples from trees of my own planting; and a large crop of white-oak acorns, which I did not raise.

Please remember me to your family. I have a very pleasant recollection of your fireside, and I trust that I shall revisit it; — also of your shanty and the surrounding regions.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, November 4, 1860.

Mr. Blake, — I am glad to hear any particulars of your excursion. As for myself, I looked out for you somewhat on that Monday, when, it appears, you passed Monadnoc; turned my glass upon several parties that were ascending the mountain half a mile on one side of us. In short, I came as near to seeing you as you to seeing me. I have no doubt that we should have had a good time if you had come, for I had, all ready, two good spruce houses, in which you could stand up, complete in all respects, half a mile apart, and you and B. could have lodged by yourselves in one, if not with us.

We made an excellent beginning of our mountain life. You may remember that the Saturday previous was a stormy day. Well, we went up in the rain, — wet through, — and found ourselves in a cloud there at mid-afternoon, in no situation to look about for the best place for a camp. So I proceeded at once, through the cloud, to that memorable stone, "chunk yard," in which we made our humble camp once, and there, after putting our packs under a rock, having a good hatchet, I proceeded to build a substantial house, which Channing declared the handsomest he ever saw. (He never camped out before, and was, no doubt, prejudiced in its favor.) This was done about dark, and by that time we were nearly as wet as if we had stood in a hogshead of water. We then built a fire before the door, directly on the site of our little camp of two years ago, and it took a long time to burn through its remains to the earth beneath. Standing before this, and turning round slowly, like meat that is roasting, we were as dry, if not drier, than ever, after a few hours, and so at last, we "turned in."

This was a great deal better than going up there in fair weather, and having no adventure (not knowing how to appreciate either fair weather or foul) but dull, commonplace sleep in a useless house, and before a comparatively useless fire, — such as we get every night. Of course we thanked our stars, when we saw them, which was about midnight, that they had seemingly withdrawn for a season. We had

the mountain all to ourselves that afternoon and night. There was nobody going up that day to engrave his name on the summit, nor to gather blueberries. The genius of the mountains saw us starting from Concord, and it said, There come two of our folks. Let us get ready for them.

Get up a serious storm, that will send a-packing these holiday guests. (They may have their say another time.) Let us receive them with true mountain hospitality, — kill the fatted cloud. Let them know the value of a spruce roof, and of a fire of dead spruce stumps. Every bush dripped tears of joy at our advent. Fire did its best, and received our thanks. What could fire have done in fair weather? Spruce roof got its share of our blessings. And then, such a view of the wet rocks, with the wet lichens on them, as we had the next morning, but did not get again!

We and the mountain had a sound season, as the saying is. How glad we were to be wet, in order that we might be dried! How glad we were of the storm which made our house seem like a new home to us! This day's experience was indeed lucky, for we did not have a thundershower during all our stay. Perhaps our host reserved this attention in order to tempt us to come again.

Our next house was more substantial still. One side was rock, good for durability; the floor the same; and the roof which I made would have upheld a horse. I stood on it to do the shingling.

I noticed, when I was at the White Mountains last, several nuisances which render traveling thereabouts unpleasant. The chief of these was the mountain houses. I might have supposed that the main attraction of that region, even to citizens, lay in its wildness and unlikeness to the city, and yet they make it as much like the city as they can afford to. I heard that the Crawford House was lighted with gas, and had a large saloon, with its band of music, for dancing. But give me a spruce house made in the rain.

An old Concord farmer tells me that he ascended Monadnoc once, and danced on the top. How did that happen? Why, he being up there, a party of young men and women came up, bringing boards and a fiddler; and, having laid down the boards, they made a level floor, on which they danced to the music of the fiddle. I suppose the tune was "Excelsior." This reminds me of the fellow who climbed to

the top of a very high spire, stood upright on the ball, and hurrahed for — what? Why, for Harrison and Tyler. That's the kind of sound which most ambitious people emit when they culminate. They are wont to be singularly frivolous in the thin atmosphere; they can't contain themselves, though our comfort and their safety require it; it takes the pressure of many atmospheres to do this; and hence they helplessly evaporate there. It would seem that as they ascend, they breathe shorter and shorter, and, at each *expiration,* some of their wits leave them, till, when they reach the pinnacle, they are so light-headed as to be fit only to show how the wind sits. I suspect that Emerson's criticism called "Monadnoc" was inspired, not by remembering the inhabitants of New Hampshire as they are in the valleys, so much as by meeting some of them on the mountain top.

After several nights' experience, Channing came to the conclusion that he was "lying outdoors," and inquired what was the largest beast that might nibble his legs there. I fear that he did not improve all the night, as he might have done, to sleep. I had asked him to go and spend a week there. We spent five nights, being gone six days, for C. suggested that six working days made a week, and I saw that he was ready to *decamp.* However, he found his account in it as well as I.

We were seen to go up in the rain, grim and silent, like two genii of the storm, by Fassett's men or boys; but we were never identified afterward, though we were the subject of some conversation which we overheard. Five hundred persons at least came on to the mountain while we were there, but not one found our camp. We saw one party of three ladies and two gentlemen spread their blankets and spend the night on the top, and heard them converse; but they did not know that they had neighbors who were comparatively old settlers. We spared them the chagrin which that knowledge would have caused them, and let them print their story in a newspaper accordingly.

Yes, to meet men on an honest and simple footing, meet with rebuffs, suffer from sore feet, as you did, — ay, and from a sore heart, as perhaps you also did, — all that is excellent. What a pity that that young prince1 could not enjoy a little of the legitimate experience of traveling — be dealt with simply and truly, though rudely. He might have been invited to some hospitable house in the country, had his bowl of bread and milk set before him, with a clean

pinafore; been told that there were the punt and the fishing-rod, and he could amuse himself as he chose; might have swung a few birches, dug out a woodchuck, and had a regular good time, and finally been sent to bed with the boys, — and so never have been introduced to Mr. Everett at all. I have no doubt that this would have been a far more memorable and valuable experience than he got.

The snow-clad summit of Mount Washington must have been a very interesting sight from Wachusett. How wholesome winter is, seen far

1 The Prince of Wales, then visiting America with the Duke of Newcastle.

or near; how good, above all mere sentimental, warm-blooded, short-lived, soft-hearted, *moral* goodness, commonly so-called. Give me the goodness which has forgotten its own deeds, — which God has seen to be good, and let be. None of your *just made perfect*, — pickled eels! All that will save them will be their picturesqueness, as with blasted trees. Whatever is, and is not ashamed to be, is good. I value no moral goodness or greatness unless it is good or great, even as that snowy peak is. Pray, how could thirty feet of bowels improve it? Nature is goodness crystallized. You looked into the land of promise. Whatever beauty we behold, the more it is distant, serene, and cold, the purer and more durable it is. It is better to warm ourselves with ice than with fire.

Tell Brown that he sent me more than the price of the book, viz., a word from himself, for which I am greatly his debtor.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, March 22, 1861.

Friend Ricketson, — The bluebird was here the 26th of February, at least, which is one day earlier than you date; but I have not heard of larks nor pigeon-woodpeckers. To tell the truth, I am not on the alert for the signs of spring, not having had any winter yet. I took a severe cold about the 3d of December, which at length resulted in a kind of bronchitis, so that I have been confined to the house ever since, excepting a very few experimental trips as far as the post-office in some particularly fine noons. My health otherwise has not been affected in the least, nor my spirits. I have simply been imprisoned for so long, and it has not prevented my doing a good deal of reading and the like.

Channing has looked after me very faithfully; says he has made a study of my case, and knows me better than I know myself, etc., etc. Of course, if I knew how it began, I should know better how it would end. I trust that when warm weather comes I shall begin to pick up my crumbs. I thank you for your invitation to come to New Bedford, and will bear it in mind; but at present my health will not permit my leaving home.

The day I received your letter, Blake and Brown arrived here, having walked from Worcester in two days, though Alcott, who happened in soon after, could not understand what pleasure they found in walking across the country in this season, when the ways were so unsettled. I had a solid talk with them for a day and a half —— though my pipes were not in good order — and they went their way again.

You may be interested to hear that Alcott is at present, perhaps, the most successful man in the town. He had his second annual exhibition of all the schools in the town, at the Town Hall last Saturday; at which all the masters and misses did themselves great credit, as I hear, and of course reflected some on their teachers and

parents. They were making their little speeches from one till six o'clock P. M., to a large audience, which patiently listened to the end. In the mean while, the children made Mr. Alcott an unexpected present of a fine edition of "Pilgrim's Progress" and "Herbert's Poems," which, of course, overcame all parties. I inclose an Order of Exercises.1

We had, last night, an old-fashioned northeast snow-storm, far worse than anything in the winter; and the drifts are now very high above the fences. The inhabitants are pretty much confined to their houses, as I was already. All houses are one color, white, with the snow plas-

1 *In April, 1859, Mr. Alcott was chosen superintendent of the public schools of Concord, by a school committee of which Mr. Bull, the creator of the Concord grape, and Mr. Sanborn, were members, and for some years he directed the studies of the younger pupils, to their great benefit and delight. At the yearly ''exhibitions," songs were sung composed by Louisa Alcott and others, and the whole town assembled to see and hear. The stress of civil war gradually checked this idyllic movement, and Mr. Alcott returned to his garden and library. It was two years after this that Miss Alcott had her severe experience as hospital nurse at Washington.*

tered over them, and you cannot tell whether they have blinds or not. Our pump has another pump, its ghost, as thick as itself, sticking to one side of it. The town has sent out teams of eight oxen each, to break out the roads; and the train due from Boston at 8 1/2 A. in has not arrived yet (4 p. M.). All the passing has been a train from above at 12 M., which also was due at 8 1/2 A. M. Where are the bluebirds now, think you? I suppose that you have not so much snow at New Bedford, if any.

TO PARKER PILLSBURY (AT CONCORD, N. H.).

Concord, April 10, 1861.

Friend Pillsbury, — I am sorry to say that I have not a copy of "Walden" which I can spare; and know of none, unless possibly Ticknor & Fields may have one. I send, nevertheless, a copy of "The Week," the price of which is one dollar and twenty-five cents, which you can pay at your convenience.

As for your friend, my prospective reader, I hope he ignores Fort Sumter, and "Old Abe," and all that; for that is just the most fatal, and, indeed, the only fatal weapon you can direct against evil, ever; for, as long as you *know of it,* you are *particeps criminis.* What business have you, if you are "an angel of light," to be pondering over the deeds of darkness, reading the "New York Herald," and the like?

I do not so much regret the present condition of things in this country (provided I regret it at all), as I do that I ever heard of it. I know one or two, who have this year, for the first time, read a President's Message; but they do not see that this implies a *fall* in themselves, rather than a *rise* in the President. Blessed were the days before you read a President's Message. Blessed are the young, for they do not read the President's Message. Blessed are they who never read a newspaper, for they shall see Nature, and, through her, God.

But, alas! *I* have heard of Sumter and Pickens, and even of Buchanan (though I did not read his Message). I also read the "New York Tribune;" but then, I am reading Herodotus and Strabo, and Blodget's "Climatology," and "Six Years in the Desert of North America," as hard as I can, to counterbalance it.

By the way, Alcott is at present our most popular and successful man, and has just published a volume in size, in the shape of the Annual School Report, which I presume he has sent to you.

Yours, for remembering all good things,

Parker Pillsbury, to whom this letter went, was an old friend of the Thoreau family, with whom he became intimate in the anti-slavery agitation, wherein they took part, while he was a famous orator, celebrated by Emerson in one of his Essays. Mr. Pillsbury visited Thoreau in his last illness, when he could scarcely speak above a whisper, and, having made to him some remark concerning the future life, Thoreau replied, "My friend, one world at a time." His petulant words in this letter concerning national affairs would hardly have been said a few days later, when, at the call of Abraham Lincoln, the people rose to protect their government, and every President's Message became of thrilling interest, even to Thoreau.

Arrangements were now making for the invalid, about whose health his friends had been anxious for some years, to travel for a better climate than the New England spring affords, and early in May Thoreau set out for the upper Mississippi. He thus missed the last letter sent to him by his English friend Cholmondeley, which I answered, and then forwarded to him at Redwing, in Minnesota. It is of interest enough to be given here.

T. CHOLMONDELEY TO THOREAU (IN MINNESOTA).

Shrewsbury [England], April 23, 1861.

My dear Thoreau, — It is now some time since I wrote to you or heard from you, but do not suppose that I have forgotten you, or shall ever cease to cherish in my mind those days at dear old Concord. The last I heard about you all was from Morton, who was in England about a year ago; and I hope that he has got over his difficulties and is now in his own country again. I think he has seen rather more of English country life than most Yankee tourists; and appeared to find it *curious*, though I fear he was dulled by our ways; for he was too full of ceremony and compliments and bows, which is a mistake here; though very well in Spain. I am afraid he was rather on pins and needles; but he made a splendid speech at a volunteer supper, and indeed the *very best*, some said, ever heard in this part of the country.

We are here in a state of alarm and apprehension, the world being so troubled in East and West and everywhere. Last year the harvest was bad and scanty. This year our trade is beginning to feel the events in America. In reply to the northern tariff, of course we are going to smuggle as much as we can. The supply of cotton being such a necessity to us, we must work up India and South Africa a little better. There is war even in old New Zealand, but not in the same island where my people are! Besides, we are certainly on the eve of a continental blaze, SO WE ARE MAKING MERRY AND LIVING WHILE WE CAN; not being sure where we shall be this time a year.

Give my affectionate regards to your father, mother, and sister, and to Mr. Emerson and his family, and to Channing, Sanborn, Ricketson, Blake, and Morton and Alcott and Parker. A thought arises in my mind whether I may not be enumerating some dead men! Perhaps Parker is!

These rumors of wars make me wish that we had got done with this brutal stupidity of war altogether; and I believe, Thoreau, that

the human race will at last get rid of it, though perhaps not in a creditable way; but such POWERS will be brought to bear that it will become monstrous even to the French. Dundonald declared to the last that he possessed secrets which from their tremendous character would make war impossible. So peace may be begotten from the machinations of evil.

Have you heard of any good books lately? I think "Burnt Njal" good, and believe it to be genuine. "Hast thou not heard" (says Steinrora to Thangbrand) "how Thor challenged Christ to single combat, and how he did not dare to fight with Thor?" When Gunnar brandishes his sword, three swords are seen in air. The account of Ospah and Brodir and Brian's battle is the only historical account of that engagement, which the Irish talk so much of; for I place little trust in O'Halloran's authority, though the outline is the same in both.

Darwin's "Origin of Species" may be fanciful, but it is a move in the right direction. Emerson's "Conduct of Life" has done me good; but it will not go down in England for a generation or so. But THESE are some of them already a year or two old. The book of the season is Du Chaillu's "Central Africa," with accounts of the Gorilla, of which you are aware that you have had a skeleton at Boston for many years. There is also one in the British Museum; but they have now several stuffed specimens at the Geographical Society's rooms in Town. I suppose you will have seen Sir Emerson Tennent's "Ceylon," which is perhaps as complete a book as ever was published; and a better monument to a governor's residence in a great province was never made.

We have been lately astonished by a foreign Hamlet, a supposed impossibility; but Mr. Fechter does real wonders. No doubt he will visit America, and then you may see the best actor in the world. He has carried out Goethe's idea of Hamlet as given in the "Wilhelm Meister," showing him forth as a fair-haired and fat man. I suppose you are not got fat yet?

Yours ever truly, Thos. Cholmondeley.1

1 A word may be said of the after life of this magnanimous Englishman, who did not long-survive his Concord correspondent. In March, *1863,* being then in command of a battalion of Shropshire Volunteers, which he had raised, he inherited Condover Hall and the large

estate adjacent, and took the name of Owen as a condition of the inheritance. A year later he married Miss Victoria Cotes, daughter of John and Lady Louisa Cotes (Co. Salop), a godchild of the Queen, and went to Italy for his wedding-tour. In Florence he was seized with a malignant fever, April *10, 1864,* and died there April *20,* — not quite two years after Thoreau's death. His brother Reginald, who had met him in Florence, carried back his remains to England, and he is buried in Condover churchyard. Writing to an American friend, Mr. R. Cholmondeley said: "The whole county mourned for one who had made himself greatly beloved. During his illness his thoughts went back very much to America and her great sufferings. His large heart felt for your country as if it were his own." It seems that he did not go to New Zealand with the "Canterbury Pilgrims," as suggested in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY (December, *1893),* but in the first of Lord Lyttelton's ships (the Charlotte Jane), having joined in Lord L.'s scheme for colonizing the island, where he remained only six months, near Christchurch.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

Concord, May 3, 1861.

MR. BLAKE, — I am still as much an invalid as when you and Brown were here, if not more of one, and at this rate there is danger that the cold weather may come again, before I get over my bronchitis. The doctor accordingly tells me that I must "clear out" to the West Indies, or elsewhere, — he does not seem to care much where. But I decide against the West Indies, on account of their muggy heat in the summer, and the South of Europe, on account of the expense of time and money, and have at last concluded that it will be most expedient for me to try the air of Minnesota, say somewhere about St. Paul's. I am only waiting to be well enough to start. Hope to get off within a week or ten days.

The inland air may help me at once, or it may not. At any rate, I am so much of an invalid, that I shall have to study my comfort in traveling to a remarkable degree, — stopping to rest, etc., etc., if need be. I think to get a through ticket to Chicago, with liberty to stop frequently on the way, making my first stop of consequence at Niagara Falls, several days or a week, at a private boarding-house; then a night or day at Detroit; and as much at Chicago as my health may require. At Chicago I can decide at what point (Fulton, Dunleith, or another) to strike the Mississippi, and take a boat to St. Paul's.

I trust to find a private boarding-house in one or various agreeable places in that region, and spend my time there. I expect, and shall be prepared, to be gone three months; and I would like to return by a different route, — perhaps Mackinaw and Montreal.

I have thought of finding a companion, of course, yet not seriously, because I had no right to offer myself as a companion to anybody, having such a peculiarly private and all-absorbing but miserable business as *my* health, and not altogether *his*, to attend to, causing me to stop here and go there, etc., etc., unaccountably.

Nevertheless, I have just now decided to let you know of my

intention, thinking it barely possible that you might like to make a part or the whole of this journey at the same time, and that perhaps your own health may be such as to be benefited by it.

Pray let me know if such a statement offers any temptations to you. I write in great haste for the mail, and must omit all the moral.

TO F. B. SANBORN (AT CONCORD).

REDWING, Minnesota, June 26, 1861.

Mr. Sanborn, — I was very glad to find awaiting me, on my arrival here on Sunday afternoon, a letter from you. I have performed this journey in a very dead and alive manner, but nothing has come so near waking me up as the receipt of letters from Concord. I read yours, and one from my sister (and Horace Mann, his four), near the top of a remarkable isolated bluff here, called Barn Bluff, or the Grange, or Redwing Bluff, some four hundred and fifty feet high, and half a mile long, — a bit of the main bluff or bank standing alone. The top, as you know, rises to the general level of the surrounding country, the river having eaten out so much. Yet the valley just above and below this (we are at the head of Lake Pepin) must be three or four miles wide.

I am not even so well informed as to the progress of the war as you suppose. I have seen but one Eastern paper (that, by the way, WAS the "Tribune") for five weeks. I have not taken much pains to get them; but, necessarily, I have not seen any paper at all for more than a week at a time. The people of Minnesota have SEEMED to me more cold, — to feel less implicated in this war than the people of Massachusetts. It is apparent that Massachusetts, for one State at least, is doing much more than her share in carrying it on. However, I have dealt partly with those of Southern birth, and have seen but little way beneath the surface. I was glad to be told yesterday that there was a good deal of weeping here at Redwing the other day, when the volunteers stationed at Fort Snelling followed the regulars to the seat of the war. They do not weep when their children go UP the river to occupy the deserted forts, though they MAY have to fight the Indians there.

I do not even know what the attitude of England is at present.

The grand feature hereabouts is, of course, the Mississippi River. Too much can hardly be said of its grandeur, and of the beauty of this portion of it (from Dunleith, and probably from Rock Island to this place). St. Paul is a dozen miles below the Falls of St. Anthony, or

near the head of uninterrupted navigation on the main stream, about two thousand miles from its mouth. There is not a "rip" below that, and the river is almost as wide in the upper as the lower part of its course. Steamers go up to the Sauk Rapids, above the Falls, near a hundred miles farther, and then you are fairly in the pine-woods and lumbering country. Thus it flows from the pine to the palm.

The lumber, as you know, is sawed chiefly at the Falls of St. Anthony (what is not rafted in the log to ports far below), having given rise to the towns of St. Anthony, Minneapolis, etc., etc. In coming up the river from Dunleith, you meet with great rafts of sawed lumber and of logs, twenty rods or more in length, by five or six wide, floating down, all from the pine region above the Falls. An old Maine lumberer, who has followed the same business here, tells me that the sources of the Mississippi were comparatively free from rocks and rapids, making easy work for them; but he thought that the timber was more knotty here than in Maine.

It has chanced that about half the men whom I have spoken with in Minnesota, whether travelers or settlers, were from Massachusetts.

After spending some three weeks in and about St. Paul, St. Anthony, and Minneapolis, we made an excursion in a steamer, some three hundred or more miles up the Minnesota (St. Peter's) River, to Redwood, or the Lower Sioux Agency, in order to see the plains, and the Sioux, who were to receive their annual payment there. This is eminently *the* river of Minnesota (for she shares the Mississippi with Wisconsin), and it is of incalculable value to her. It flows through a very fertile country, destined to be famous for its wheat; but it is a remarkably winding stream, so that Redwood is only half as far from its mouth by land as by water. There was not a straight reach a mile in length as far as we went, — generally you could not see a quarter of a mile of water, and the boat was steadily turning this way or that. At the greater bends, as the Traverse des Sioux, some of the passengers were landed, and walked across to be taken in on the other side. Two or three times you could have thrown a stone across the neck of the isthmus, while it was from one to three miles around it. It was a very novel kind of navigation to me. The boat was perhaps the largest that had been up so high, and the water was rather low (it had been about fifteen feet higher). In making a short turn, we

repeatedly and designedly ran square into the steep and soft bank, taking in a cart-load of earth, — this being more effectual than the rudder to fetch us about again; or the deeper water was so narrow and close to the shore, that we were obliged to run into and break down at least fifty trees which overhung the water, when we did not cut them off, repeatedly losing a part of our outworks, though the most exposed had been taken in. I could pluck almost any plant on the bank from the boat. We very frequently got aground, and then drew ourselves along with a windlass and a cable fastened to a tree, or we swung round in the current, and completely blocked up and blockaded the river, one end of the boat resting on each shore. And yet we would haul ourselves round again with the windlass and cable in an hour or two, though the boat was about one hundred and sixty feet long, and drew some three feet of water, or, often, water and sand. It was one consolation to know that in such a case we were all the while damming the river, and so raising it. We once ran fairly on to a concealed rock, with a shock that aroused all the passengers, and rested there, and the mate went below with a lamp, expecting to find a hole, but he did not. Snags and sawyers were so common that I forgot to mention them. The sound of the boat rumbling over one was the ordinary music. However, as long as the boiler did not burst, we knew that no serious accident was likely to happen. Yet this was a singularly navigable river, more so than the Mississippi above the Falls, and it is owing to its very crookedness. Ditch it straight, and it would not only be very swift, but soon run out. It was from ten to fifteen rods wide near the mouth, and from eight to ten or twelve at Redwood. Though the current was swift, I did not see a “rip” on it, and only three or four rocks. For three months in the year I am told that it can be navigated by small steamers about twice as far as we went, or to its source in Big Stone Lake; and a former Indian agent told me that at high water it was thought that such a steamer might pass into the Red River.

In short, this river proved so very LONG and navigable, that I was reminded of the last letter or two in the voyage of the Baron la Hontan (written near the end of the seventeenth century,! THINK), in which he states, that, after reaching the Mississippi (by the Illinois or Wisconsin), the limit of previous exploration westward, he voyaged

up it with his Indians, and at length turned up a great river coming in from the west, which he called “La Riviere Longue;” and he relates various improbable things about the country and its inhabitants, so that this letter has been regarded as pure fiction, or, more properly speaking, a lie. But I am somewhat inclined now to reconsider the matter.

The Governor of Minnesota (Ramsay), the superintendent of Indian affairs in this quarter, and the newly-appointed Indian agent were on board; also a German band from St. Paul, a small cannon for salutes, and the money for the Indians (ay, and the gamblers, it was said, who were to bring it back in another boat). There were about one hundred passengers, chiefly from St. Paul, and more or less recently from the northeastern States; also half a dozen young educated Englishmen. Chancing to speak with one who sat next to me, when the voyage was nearly half over, I found that he was the son of the Rev. Samuel May,1 and a classmate of yours, and had been looking for us at St. Anthony.

The last of the little settlements on the river was New Ulm, about one hundred miles this side of Redwood. It consists wholly of Germans. We left them one hundred barrels of salt, which will be worth something more, when the water is lowest, than at present.

1 Rev. Joseph May, a cousin of Louisa Alcott.

Redwood is a mere locality, — scarcely an Indian village, — where there is a store, and some houses have been built for them. We were now fairly on the great plains, and looking south; and, after walking that way three miles, could see no tree in that horizon. The buffalo was said to be feeding within twenty-five or thirty miles.

A regular council was held with the Indians, who had come in on their ponies, and speeches were made on both sides through an interpreter, quite in the described mode, — the Indians, as usual, having the advantage in point of truth and earnestness, and therefore of eloquence. The most prominent chief was named Little Crow. They were quite dissatisfied with the white man’s treatment of them,

and probably have reason to be so. This council was to be continued for two or three days, — the payment to be made the second day; and another payment to other bands a little higher up, on the Yellow Medicine (a tributary of the Minnesota), a few days thereafter.

In the afternoon, the half-naked Indians performed a dance, at the request of the Governor, for our amusement and their own benefit; and then we took leave of them, and of the officials who had come to treat with them.

Excuse these pencil marks, but my inkstand is unscrewable, and I can only direct my letter at the bar. I could tell you more, and perhaps more interesting things, if I had time. I am considerably better than when I left home, but still far from well.

Our faces are already set toward home. Will you please let my sister know that we shall PROBABLY start for Milwaukee and Mackinaw in a day or two (or as soon as we hear from home) VIA PRAIRIE DU CHIEN, and not La Crosse.

I am glad to hear that you have written to Cholmondeley,1 as it relieves me of some RESPONSIBILITY.

The tour described in this long letter was the first and last that Thoreau ever made west of the Mohawk Valley, though his friend Channing had early visited the great prairies, and lived in log cabins of Illinois, or sailed on the chain of great lakes, by which Thoreau made a part of this journey. It was proposed that Channing should accompany him this time, as he had in the tour through Lower Canada, and along Cape Cod, as well as in the journeys through the Berkshire and Catskill mountains, and down the Hudson; but some misunderstanding or temporary inconvenience prevented. The actual comrade was

1 I had answered T. Cholraondeley's last letter, explaining that Thoreau was ill and absent.

young Horace Mann, eldest son of the school-reformer and statesman of that name, — a silent, earnest, devoted naturalist, who died early. The place where his party met the Indians — only a few months before the Minnesota massacre of 1862 — was in the county of Redwood, in the southwest of the State, where now is a thriving village of 1,500 people, and no buffaloes within five hundred miles.

Redwing, whence the letter was written, is below St. Paul, on the Mississippi, and was even then a considerable town, — now a city of 7,000 people. The civil war had lately begun, and the whole North was in the first flush of its uprising in defense of the Union, — for which Thoreau, in spite of his earlier defiance of government (for its alliance with slavery) was as zealous as any soldier. He returned in July, little benefited by the journey, of which he did not take his usual sufficiency of notes, and to which there is little allusion in his books. Nor does it seem that he visited on the way his correspondent since January, 1856, — C. H. Green, of Rochester, Michigan, who had never seen him in Concord. The opinion of Thoreau himself concerning this journey will be found in his next letter to Daniel Ricketson.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, August 15, 1861.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — When your last letter was written I was away in the far Northwest, in search of health. My cold turned to bronchitis, which made me a close prisoner almost up to the moment of my starting on that journey, early in May. As I had an incessant cough, my doctor told me that I must "clear out," — to the West Indies, or elsewhere, — so I selected Minnesota. I returned a few weeks ago, after a good deal of steady traveling, considerably, yet not essentially, better; my cough still continuing. If I don't mend very quickly, I shall be obliged to go to another climate again very soon.

My ordinary pursuits, both indoors and out, have been for the most part omitted, or seriously interrupted, — walking, boating, scribbling, etc. Indeed, I have been sick so long that I have almost forgotten what it is to be well; and yet I feel that it is in all respects only my envelope. Channing and Emerson are as well as usual; but Alcott, I am sorry to say, has for some time been more or less confined by a lameness, perhaps of a neuralgic character, occasioned by carrying too great a weight on his back while gardening.

On returning home, I found various letters awaiting me; among others, one from Cholmondeley, and one from yourself.

Of course I am sufficiently surprised to hear of your conversion;1 yet I scarcely know what to say about it, unless that, judging by your account, it appears to me a change which concerns yourself peculiarly, and will not make you more valuable to mankind. However, perhaps I must see you before I can judge.

Remembering your numerous invitations, I write this short note now, chiefly to say that, if you are to be at home, and it will be quite agreeable to you, I will pay you a visit next week, and take such rides or sauntering walks with you as an invalid may.

The visit was made, and we owe to it the preservation of the latest portraiture of Thoreau, who, at his friend's urgency, sat to a photographer in New Bedford; and thus we have the full-bearded likeness of August, 1861; from which, also, and from personal recollection, Mr. Walter Ricketson made the fine profile medallion engraved for this volume.

1 *A return to religious Quakerism, of which his friend had written enthusiastically.*

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, *October 14,1861.*

Friend Ricketson, — I think that, on the whole, my health is better than when you were here; but my faith in the doctors has not increased. I thank you all for your invitation to come to New Bedford, but I suspect that it must still be warmer here than there; that, indeed, New Bedford is warmer than Concord only in the winter, and so I abide by Concord.

September was pleasanter and much better for me than August, and October has thus far been quite tolerable. Instead of riding on horseback, I ride in a wagon about every other day. My neighbor, Mr. E. R. Hoar, has two horses, and he, being away for the most part this fall, has generously offered me the use of one of them; and, as I notice, the dog throws himself in, and does scouting duty.

I am glad to hear that you no longer chew, but eschew, sugar-plums. One of the worst effects of sickness is, that it may get one into the HABIT of taking a little something — his bitters, or sweets, as if for his bodily good — from time to time, when he does not need it. However, there is no danger of this if you do not dose even when you are sick.

I went with a Mr. Rodman, a young man of your town, here the other day, or week, looking at farms for sale, and rumor says that he is inclined to buy a particular one. Channing says that he received his book, but has not got any of yours.

It is easy to talk, but hard to write.

From the worst of all correspondents, HENRY D. THOREAU.

No later letter than this was written by Thoreau's own hand; for he was occupied all the winter of 1861-62, when he could write, in preparing his manuscripts for the press. Nothing appeared before his death, but in June, 1862, Mr. Fields, then editing the "Atlantic," printed "Walking," — the first of three essays which came out in that magazine the same year. Nothing of Thoreau's had been accepted for

the “Atlantic” since 1858, when he withdrew the rest of “Chesuncook,” then coming out in its pages, because the editor (Mr. Lowell) had made alterations in the manuscript. In April, just before his death, the “Atlantic” printed a short and characteristic sketch of Thoreau by Bronson Alcott, and in August, Emerson’s funeral oration, given in the parish church of Concord. During the last six months of his illness, his sister and his friends wrote letters for him, as will be seen by the two that follow.

SOPHIA THOREAU TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, December 19, 1861.

Mr. Ricketson:

Dear Sir, — Thank you for your friendly interest in my dear brother. I wish that I could report more favorably in regard to his health. Soon after your visit to Concord, Henry commenced riding, and almost every day he introduced me to some of his familiar haunts, far away in the thick woods, or by the ponds; all very new and delightful to me. The air and exercise which he enjoyed during the fine autumn days were a benefit to him; he seemed stronger, had a good appetite, and was able to attend somewhat to his writing; but since the cold weather has come, his cough has increased, and he is able to go out but seldom. Just now he is suffering from an attack of pleurisy, which confines him wholly to the house. His spirits do not fail him; he continues in his usual serene mood, which is very pleasant for his friends as well as himself. I am hoping for a short winter and early spring, that the invalid may again be out of doors.

I am sorry to hear of your indisposition, and trust that you will be well again soon. It would give me pleasure to see some of your newspaper articles, since you possess a hopeful spirit. My patience is nearly exhausted. The times look VERY dark. I think the next soldier who is shot for sleeping on his post should be Gen. McClellan. Why does he not do something in the way of fighting? I despair of ever living under the reign of Sumner or Phillips.

BRONSON ALCOTT TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, *January 10, 1862.*

Dear Friend, — You have not been informed of Henry's condition this winter, and will be sorry to hear that he grows feebler day by day, and is evidently failing and fading from our sight. He gets some sleep, has a pretty good appetite, reads at intervals, takes notes of his readings, and likes to see his friends, conversing, however, with difficulty, as his voice partakes of his general debility. We had thought this oldest inhabitant of our Planet would have chosen to stay and see it fairly dismissed into the Chaos (out of which he has brought such precious jewels, — gifts to friends, to mankind generally, diadems for fame to coming followers, forgetful of his own claims to the honors) before he chose simply to withdraw from the spaces and times he has adorned with the truth of his genius. But the masterly work is nearly done for us here. And our woods and fields are sorrowing, though not in sombre, but in robes of white, so becoming to the piety and probity they have known so long, and soon are to miss. There has been none such since Pliny, and it will be long before there comes his like; the most sagacious and wonderful Worthy of his time, and a marvel to coming ones.

I write at the suggestion of his sister, who thought his friends would like to be informed of his condition to the latest date.

Ever yours and respectfully,

A. BRONSON ALCOTT.

The last letter of Henry Thoreau, written by the hand of his sister, was sent to Myron Benton, a young literary man then living in Dutchess County, New York, who had written a grateful letter to the author of "Walden" (January 6, 1862), though quite unacquainted with him. Mr. Benton said that the news of Thoreau's illness had affected him as if it were that " of a personal friend whom I had known a long time," and added: "The secret of the influence by

which your writings charm me is altogether as intangible, though real, as the attraction of Nature herself. I read and re-read your books with ever fresh delight. Nor is it pleasure alone; there is a singular spiritual healthiness with which they seem imbued, the expression of a soul essentially sound, so free from any morbid tendency." After mentioning that his own home was in a pleasant valley, once the hunting-ground of the Indians, Mr. Benton said: —

"I was in hope to read something more from your pen in Mr. Conway's ' Dial,'1 but only recognized that fine pair of Walden twinlets. Of your two books, I perhaps prefer the ' Week,' — but after all, ' Walden' is but little less a favorite. In the former, I like especially those little snatches of poetry interspersed throughout. I would like to ask what progress you have made in a work some way connected with natural history, — I think it was on Botany, — which Mr. Emerson told me something about in a short interview I had with him two years ago at Poughkeepsie.... If you should feel perfectly able at any time to drop me a few lines, I would like much to know what your state of health is, and if there is, as I cannot but hope, a prospect of your speedy recovery."

Two months and more passed before Thoreau replied; but his habit of performing every duty,

1 This was a short-lived monthly, edited at Cincinnati (186162) by Moncure D. Conway, since distinguished as an author, who had resided for a time in Concord, after leaving his native Virginia. He wrote asking Thoreau and all his Concord friends to contribute to this new DIAL, and several of them did so.

whether of business or courtesy, would not excuse him from an answer, which was this: —

TO MYRON B. BENTON (AT LEEDSVILLE, N. Y.).

CONCORD, March 21,1862.

Dear Sir, — I thank you for your very kind letter, which, ever since I received it, I have intended to answer before I died, however briefly. I am encouraged to know, that, so far as you are concerned, I have not written my books in vain. I was particularly gratified, some years ago, when one of my friends and neighbors said, "I wish you would write another book, — write it for me." He is actually more familiar with what I have written than I am myself.

The verses you refer to in Conway's "Dial," were written by F. B. Sanborn of this town. I never wrote for that journal.

I am pleased when you say that in "The Week" you like especially "those little snatches of poetry interspersed through the book," for these, I suppose, are the least attractive to most readers. I have not been engaged in any particular work, on Botany, or the like, though, if I were to live, I should have much to report on Natural History generally.

You ask particularly after my health. I *suppose* that I have not many months to live; but, of course, I know nothing about it. I may add that I am enjoying existence as much as ever, and regret nothing.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU, by SOPHIA E. THOREAU.

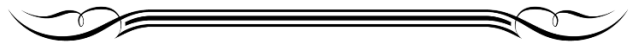
He died May 6, 1862; his mother died March 12, 1872, and his sister Sophia, October, 1876. With the death of his aunt, Maria Thoreau, nearly twenty years after her beloved nephew, the last person of the name in America (or perhaps in England) passed away.

The Journals



255 Main Street in Concord, Massachusetts — Thoreau's last home. The author moved here in 1850 with his family and they stayed here until his death on May 6, 1862. Interestingly, several years later the author Louisa May Alcott purchased the home for her sister Anna Alcott Pratt, though she moved there as well along with her father Amos Bronson Alcott.

THOREAU'S JOURNALS



Thoreau's friend and literary supporter Ralph Waldo Emerson urged him to contribute essays and poems to the quarterly periodical *The Dial* in July 1840, and at the same time he encouraged the younger man to begin keeping a journal. This was to become a life long commitment for Thoreau, who would in time record thousands of pages on hundreds of topics that affected his daily life and happenings until shortly before his death. The first journal entry on October 22, 1837, reads, "'What are you doing now?' he asked. 'Do you keep a journal?' So I make my first entry to-day."

Thoreau was a philosopher of nature and its relation to the human condition. In his early years he followed Transcendentalism, a loose and eclectic idealist philosophy advocated by Emerson, Fuller and Alcott. They believed that an ideal spiritual state transcends the physical and empirical and that one achieves that insight via personal intuition rather than religious doctrine. In their view, Nature is the outward sign of inward spirit, expressing the "radical correspondence of visible things and human thoughts," as Emerson wrote in Nature. Thoreau's early journals particularly expand on these theories in great depth, revealing the influence of Emerson and the other Transcendentalists.

From 1837 to 1861, Thoreau kept his handwritten journals, firstly as a conventional record of ideas, which later grew into a writer's notebook, finally evolving as the principal imaginative work of his literary career. The source of much of his published work found life in the journals, serving as a record of both his interior life and his monumental studies of the natural history in his home in Concord, Massachusetts. At the time of his death, Thoreau's journals filled forty-seven manuscript volumes. The Delphi Classics edition offers over 2,000 pages of the journals, with the first ten years complete (1837-1847), a comprehensive sample of a middle journal (1855-1856) and the last year's entries (1860-1861), as well as providing a generous selection of the years in between.

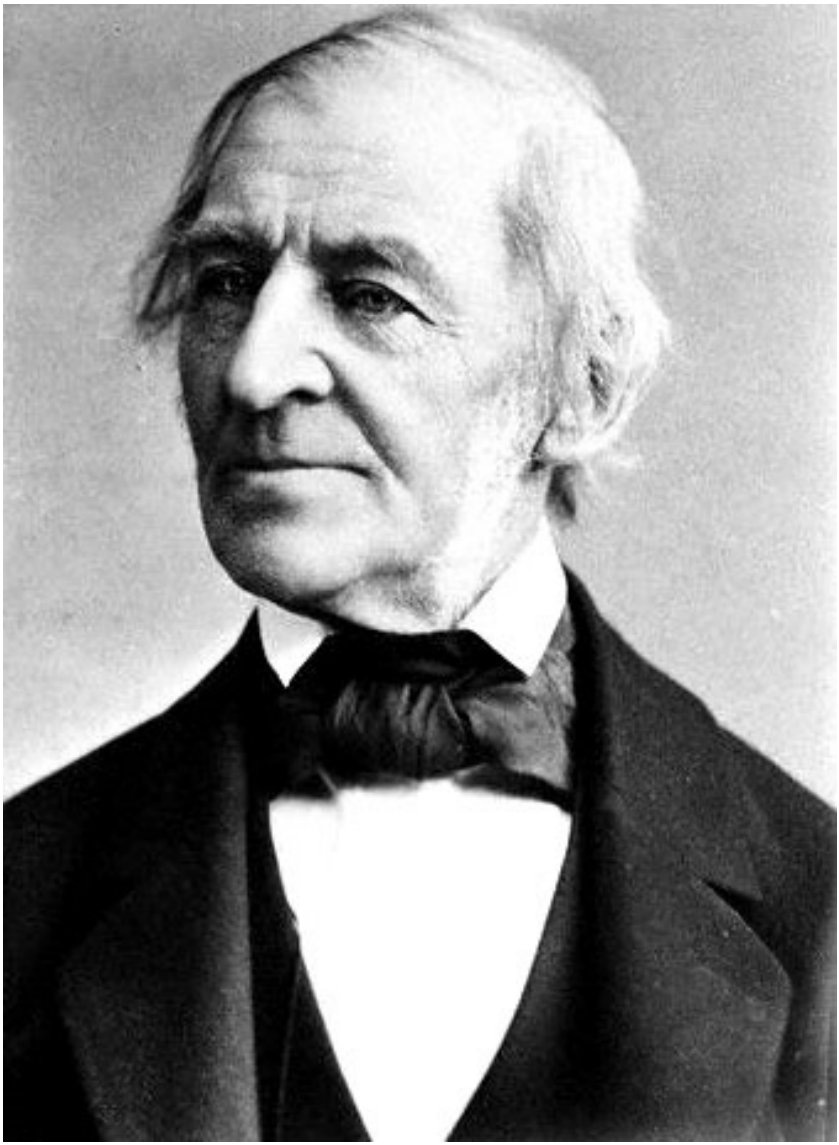


Thoreau, 1861

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Ralph Waldo Emerson, who initially inspired Thoreau to keep a journal

INTRODUCTION by Bradford Torrey

Thoreau was a man of his own kind. Many things may be said of him, favorable and unfavorable, but this must surely be said first, — that, taken for all in all, he was like nobody else. Taken for all in all, be it remarked. Other men have despised common sense; other men have chosen to be poor, and, as between physical comfort and better things, have made light of physical comfort; other men, whether to their credit or discredit, have held and expressed a contemptuous opinion of their neighbors and all their neighbors' doings; others, a smaller number, believing in an absolute goodness and in a wisdom transcending human knowledge, have distrusted the world as evil, accounting its influence degrading, its prudence no better than cowardice, its wisdom a kind of folly, its morality a compromise, its religion a bargain, its possessions a defilement and a hindrance, and so judging of the world, have striven at all cost to live above it and apart. And some, no doubt, have loved Nature as a mistress, fleeing to her from less congenial company, and devoting a lifetime to the observation and enjoyment of her ways. In no one of these particulars was the hermit of Walden without forerunners; but taken for all that he was, poet, idealist, stoic, cynic, naturalist, spiritualist, lover of purity, seeker of perfection, panegyrist of friendship and dweller in a hermitage, freethinker and saint, where shall we look to find his fellow? It seems but the plainest statement of fact to say that, as there was none before him, so there is scanty prospect of any to come after him.

His profession was literature; as to that there is no sign that he was ever in doubt; and he understood from the first that for a writing man nothing could take the place of practice, partly because that is the one means of acquiring ease of expression, and partly because a man often has no suspicion of his own thoughts until his pen discovers them; and almost from the first — a friend (Emerson or another) having given him the hint — he had come to feel that no practice is better or readier than the keeping of a journal, a daily record of things thought, seen, and felt. Such a record he began soon after leaving college, and (being one of a thousand in this respect as

in others) he continued it to the end. By good fortune he left it behind him, and, to complete the good fortune, it is at last printed, no longer in selections, but as a whole; and if a man is curious to know what such an original, plain-spoken, perfection-seeking, convention-despising, dogma-disbelieving, wisdom-loving, sham-hating, Nature-worshipping, poverty-proud genius was in the habit of confiding to so patient a listener at the close of the day, he has only to read the book.

The man himself is there. Something of him, indeed, is to be discovered, one half imagines, in the outward aspect of the thirty-nine manuscript volumes: ordinary "blank-books" of the sort furnished by country shopkeepers fifty or sixty years ago, larger or smaller as might happen, and of varying shapes (a customer seeking such wares must not be too particular; one remembers Thoreau's complaint that the universal preoccupation with questions of money rendered it difficult for him to find a blank-book that was not ruled for dollars and cents), still neatly packed in the strong wooden box which their owner, a workman needing not to be ashamed, made with his own hands on purpose to hold them.

A pretty full result of a short life they seem to be, as one takes up volume after volume (the largest are found to contain about a hundred thousand words) and turns the leaves: the handwriting strong and rapid, leaning well forward in its haste, none too legible, slow reading at the best, with here and there a word that is almost past making out; the orthography that of a naturally good speller setting down his thoughts at full speed and leaving his mistakes behind him; and the punctuation, to call it such, no better than a makeshift, — after the model of Sterne's, if one chooses to say so: a spattering of dashes, and little else.

As for the matter, it is more carefully considered, less strictly improvised, than is customary with diarists. It is evident, in fact, from references here and there, that many of the entries were copied from an earlier pencilled draft, made presumably in the field, "with the eye on the object," while the work as a whole has been more or less carefully revised, with erasures, emendations, and suggested alternative readings.

As we have said, if a man wishes to know Thoreau as he was, let

him read the book. One thing he may be sure of: he will find himself in clean, self-respecting company, with no call to blush, as if he were playing the eavesdropper. Of confessions, indeed, in the spicy sense of the word, Thoreau had none to make. He was no Montaigne, no Rousseau, no Samuel Pepys. How should he be? He was a Puritan of Massachusetts, though he kept no Sabbath, was seen in no church, — being very different from Mr. Pepys in more ways than one, — and esteemed the Hebrew scriptures as a good book like any other. Once, indeed, when he was thirty-four years old, he went to a "party." For anything we know, that (with a little sowing of wild oats in the matter of smoking dried lily-stems when a boy) was as near as he ever came to dissipation. And he did not like it. "It is a bad place to go to," he says,— "thirty or forty persons, mostly young women, in a small room, warm and noisy." One of the young women was reputed to be "pretty-looking;" but he scarcely looked at her, though he was "introduced," and he could not hear what she said, because there was "such a clacking."

"I could imagine better places for conversation," he goes on, "where there should be a certain degree of silence surrounding you, and less than forty talking at once. Why, this afternoon, even, I did better. There was old Mr. Joseph Hosmer and I ate our luncheon of cracker and cheese together in the woods. I heard all he said, though it was not much, to be sure, and he could hear me. And then he talked out of such a glorious repose, taking a leisurely bite at the cracker and cheese between his words; and so some of him was communicated to me, and some of me to him, I trust."

He entertains a shrewd suspicion that assemblies of this kind are got up with a view to matrimonial alliances among the young people! For his part, at all events, he doesn't understand "the use of going to see people whom yet you never see, and who never see you." Some of his friends make a singular blunder. They go out of their way to talk to pretty young women *as such*. Their prettiness may be a reason for looking at them, so much he will concede, — for the sake of the antithesis, if for nothing else, — but why is it any reason for talking to them? For himself, though he may be "lacking a sense in this respect," he derives "no pleasure from talking with a young woman half an hour simply because she has regular features."

How crabbed is divine philosophy! After this we are not surprised when he concludes by saying: “The society of young women is the most unprofitable I have ever tried.” No, no; he was nothing like Mr. Samuel Pepys.

The sect of young women, we may add, need not feel deeply affronted by this ungallant mention. It is perhaps the only one of its kind in the journal (by its nature restricted to matters interesting to the author), while there are multitudes of passages to prove that Thoreau’s aversion to the society of older people taken as they run, men and women alike, was hardly less pronounced. In truth (and it is nothing of necessity against him), he was not made for “parties,” nor for clubs, nor even for general companionship. “I am all without and in sight,” said Montaigne, “born for society and friendship.” So was not Thoreau. He was all within, born for contemplation and solitude. And what we are born for, that let us be, — and so the will of God be done. Such, for good or ill, was Thoreau’s philosophy. “We are constantly invited to be what we are,” he said. It is one of his memorable sentences; an admirable summary of Emerson’s essay on Self-Reliance.

His fellow mortals, as a rule, did not recommend themselves to him. His thoughts were none the better for their company, as they almost always were for the company of the pine tree and the meadow. Inspiration, a refreshing of the spiritual faculties, as indispensable to him as daily bread, that his fellow mortals did not furnish him. For this state of things he sometimes (once or twice at least) mildly reproaches himself. It may be that he is to blame for so commonly skipping humanity and its affairs; he will seek to amend the fault, he promises. But even at such a moment of exceptional humility, his pen, reversing Balaam’s rôle, runs into left-handed compliments that are worse, if anything, than the original offense. Hear him: “I will not avoid to go by where those men are repairing the stone bridge. I will see if I cannot see poetry in that, if that will not yield me a reflection. It is narrow to be confined to woods and fields and grand aspects of nature only.... Why not see men standing in the sun and casting a shadow, even as trees?... I will try to enjoy them as animals, at least.”

This is in 1851. A year afterward we find him concerned with the

same theme, but in a less hesitating mood. Now he is on his high horse, with apologies to nobody. “It appears to me,” he begins, “that to one standing on the heights of philosophy mankind and the works of man will have sunk out of sight altogether.” Man, in his opinion, is “too much insisted upon.”

“The poet says, ‘The proper study of mankind is man.’ I say, Study to forget all that. Take wider views of the universe.... What is the village, city, state, nation, aye, the civilized world, that it should concern a man so much? The thought of them affects me, in my wisest hours, as when I pass a woodchuck’s hole.”

A high horse, indeed! But his comparison is really by no means so disparaging as it sounds; for Thoreau took a deep and lasting interest in woodchucks. At one time and another he wrote many good pages about them; for their reappearance in the spring he watched as for the return of a friend, and once, at least, he devoted an hour to digging out a burrow and recording with painstaking minuteness the course and length of its ramifications. A novelist, describing his heroine’s boudoir, could hardly have been more strict with himself. In fact, to have said that one of Thoreau’s human neighbors was as interesting to him as a woodchuck would have been to pay that neighbor a rather handsome compliment. None of the brute animals, so called, — we have it on his own authority, — ever vexed his ears with pomposity or nonsense.

But we have interrupted his discourse midway. “I do not value any view of the universe into which man and the institutions of man enter very largely,” he continues.... “Man is a past phenomenon to philosophy.” Then he descends a little to particulars. “Some rarely go outdoors, most are always at home at night,” — Concord people being uncommonly well brought up, it would appear,— “very few indeed have stayed out all night once in their lives; fewer still have gone behind the world of humanity and seen its institutions like toadstools by the wayside.”

And then, having, with this good bit of philosophical “tall talk,” brushed aside humanity as a very little thing, he proceeds to chronicle the really essential facts of the day: that he landed that afternoon on Tail’s Island, and to his disappointment found the weather not cold or windy enough for the meadow to make “its most

serious impression;" also, that the staddles from which the hay had been removed were found to stand a foot or two above the water; besides which, he saw cranberries on the bottom (although he forgot to mention them in their proper place), and noticed that the steam of the engine looked very white that morning against the hillside.

All which setting of ordinary valuations topsy-turvy, the lords of creation below the beasts that perish, may lead an innocent reader to exclaim with one of old, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

Nevertheless, we must not treat the matter too lightly, easily as it lends itself to persiflage. Even in this extreme instance it is not to be assumed that Thoreau was talking for the sake of talking, or merely keeping his hand in with his favorite rhetorical weapon, a paradox. That desiderated "serious impression," at all events, was no laughing matter; rather it was to have been the chief event of the day; of more account to Thoreau than dinner and supper both were likely to be to his farmer neighbor. As for the woodchuck, its comparative rank in the scale of animal existence, be it higher or lower, is nothing to the purpose. For Thoreau it was simple truth that, on some days, and in some states of mind, he found the society of such a cave-dweller more acceptable, or less unacceptable, than that of any number of his highly civilized townsmen. Nor is the statement one to be nervously concerned about. Any inveterate stroller, the most matter-of-fact man alive (though matter-of-fact men are not apt to be strollers), might say the same, in all soberness, with no thought of writing himself down a misanthrope, or of setting himself up as a philosopher.

For one thing, the woodchuck is sure to be less intrusive, less distracting, than the ordinary human specimen; he fits in better with solitude and the solitary feeling. He is never in the way. Moreover, you can say to a woodchuck anything that comes into your head, without fear of giving offense; a less important consideration than the other, no doubt, woodchucks as a class not being remarkably conversable, but still worthy of mention. For, naturally enough, an outspoken freethinker like Thoreau found the greater number of men not so very different from "ministers," of whom he said, in a tone of innocent surprise, that they "could not bear all kinds of opinions,"—"as if any sincere thought were not the best sort of truth!"

He walked one afternoon with Alcott, and spent an agreeable hour, though for the most part he preferred having the woods and fields to himself. Alcott was an ineffectual genius, he remarks, "forever feeling about vainly in his speech, and touching nothing" (one thinks of Arnold's characterization of Shelley as a "beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain," which, in its turn, may call to mind Lowell's comparison of Shelley's genius to a St. Elmo's fire, "playing in ineffectual flame about the points of his thought"), but after all, he was good company; not quite so good as none, of course, but on the whole, as men go, rather better than most. At least, lie would listen to what you had to offer. He was open-minded; he wasn't shut up in a creed; an honest man's thought would not shock him. You could talk to him without running up against "some institution." In a word, — though Thoreau doesn't say it, — he was something like a woodchuck.

With all his passion for "that glorious society called solitude," and with all his feeling that mankind, as a "past phenomenon," thought far too highly of itself, it is abundantly in evidence that Thoreau, in his own time and on his own terms, was capable of a really human delight in familiar intercourse with his fellows. Channing, who should have known, speaks, a little vaguely, to be sure, of his "fine social qualities."

"Always a genial and hospitable entertainer," he calls him. And Mr. Ricketson, who also should have known, assures us that "no man could hold a finer relationship with his family than he." But of this aspect of his character, it must be acknowledged, there is comparatively little in the journal. What is very constant and emphatic there — emphatic sometimes to the point of painfulness — is the hermit's hunger and thirst after friendship; a friendship the sweets of which, so far as appears, he was very sparingly to enjoy. For if he was at home in the family group and in huckleberry excursions with children, if he relished to the full a talk with a stray fisherman, a racy-tongued woodchopper, or a good Indian, something very different seems to have been habitual with him when it came to intercourse with equals and friends.

Here, even more than elsewhere, he was an uncompromising idealist. His craving was for a friendship more than human,

friendship such as it was beyond any one about him to furnish, if it was not, as may fairly be suspected, beyond his own capacity to receive. In respect to outward things, his wealth, he truly said, was to want little. In respect to friendship, his poverty was to want the unattainable. It might have been retorted upon him in his own words, that he was like a man who should complain of hard times because he could not afford to buy himself a crown. But the retort would perhaps have been rather smart than fair. He, at least, would never have acquiesced in it. He confided to his journal again and again that he asked nothing of his friends but honesty, sincerity, a grain of real appreciation, "an opportunity once in a year to speak the truth;" but in the end it came always to this, that he insisted upon perfection, and, not finding it, went on his way hungry. Probably it is true — one seems to divine a reason for it — that idealists, claimers of the absolute, have commonly found their fellow men a disappointment.

In Thoreau's case it was his best friends who most severely tried his patience. They invite him to see them, he complains, and then "do not show themselves." He "pines and starves near them." All is useless. They treat him so that he "feels a thousand miles off."

"I leave my friends early. I go away to cherish my idea of friendship." Surely there is no sentence in all Thoreau's books that is more, thoroughly characteristic than that. And how neatly it is turned! Listen also to this, which is equally bitter, and almost equally perfect in the phrasing: "No fields are so barren to me as the men of whom I expect everything, but get nothing. In their neighborhood I experience a painful yearning for society."

It is all a mystery to him. "How happens it," he exclaims, "that I find myself making such an enormous demand on men, and so constantly disappointed? Are my friends aware how disappointed I am? Is it all my fault? Am I incapable of expansion and generosity? I shall accuse myself of anything else sooner." And again he goes away sorrowful, consoling himself, as best he can, with his own paradox, —

"I might have loved him, had I loved him less."

Strange that he should have suffered in this way, many will think,

with Emerson himself for a friend and neighbor! Well, the two men were friends, but neither was in this relation quite impeccable (which is as much as to say that both were human), and to judge by such hints as are gatherable on either side, their case was not entirely unlike that of Bridget Elia and her cousin,— "generally in harmony, with occasional bickerings, as it should be among near relations;" though "bickerings" is no doubt an undignified term for use in this connection. It is interesting, some may deem it amusing, to put side by side the statements of the two men upon this very point; Emerson's communicated to the public shortly after his friend's death, Thoreau's intrusted nine years before to the privacy of his journal.

Emerson's speech is the more guarded, as, for more reasons than one, it might have been expected to be. His friend, he confesses, "was somewhat military in his nature... always manly and able, but rarely tender, as if he did not feel himself except in opposition. He wanted a fallacy to expose, a blunder to pillory, I may say required a little sense of victory, a roll of the drum, to call his powers into full exercise.... It seemed as if his first instinct on hearing a proposition was to controvert it, so impatient was he of the limitations of our daily thought. This habit, of course, is a little chilling to the social affections; and though the companion would in the end acquit him of any malice or untruth, yet it mars conversation. Hence no equal companion stood in affectionate relations with one so pure and guileless." Thoreau's entry is dated May 24, 1853. "Talked, or tried to talk, with R. W. E. Lost my time, nay, almost my identity. He, assuming a false opposition where there was no difference of opinion, talked to the wind, told me what I knew, and I lost my time trying to imagine myself somebody else to oppose him."

It is the very same picture, drawn by another pencil, with a different placing of the shadows; and since the two sketches were made so many years apart and yet seem to be descriptive of the same thing, it is perhaps fair to conclude that this particular interview, which appears to have degenerated into something like a dispute about nothing (a very frequent subject of disputes, by the way), was not exceptional, but rather typical. Without doubt this was one of the occasions when Thoreau felt himself treated as if he were "a

thousand miles off," and went home early to "cherish his idea of friendship." Let us hope that he lost nothing else along with his time and identity.

But here, again, we are in danger of an unseasonable lightness. Friendship, according to Thoreau's apprehension of it, was a thing infinitely sacred. A *friend* might move him to petulance, as the best of friends sometimes will; but *friendship,* the ideal state shown to him in dreams, for speech concerning that there was nowhere in English, nor anywhere else, a word sufficiently noble and unsoiled. And even his friends he loved, although, tongue-tied New-Englander that he was, he could never tell them so. He loved them best (and this, likewise, was no singularity) when they were farthest away. In company, even in their company, he could never utter his truest thought. So it is with us all. It was a greater than Thoreau who said, "We descend to meet;" and a greater still, perhaps (and he also a Concord man), who confessed at fifty odd: "I doubt whether I have ever really talked with half a dozen persons in my life."

As for Thoreau, he knew at times, and owned as much to himself, that his absorption in nature tended to unfit him for human society. But so it was; he loved to be alone. And in this respect he had no thought of change, —— no thought nor wish. Whatever happened, he would still belong to no club but the true "country club," which dined "at the sign of the Shrub Oak." The fields and the woods, the old road, the river, and the pond, these were his real neighbors. Year in and year out, how near they were to him! — a nearness unspeakable; till sometimes it seemed as if their being and his were not two, but one and the same. With them was no frivolity, no vulgarity, no changeableness, no prejudice. With them he had no misunderstandings, no meaningless disputes, no disappointments. They knew him, and were known of him. In their society he felt himself renewed. There he lived, and loved his life. There, if anywhere, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. Hear him, on a cool morning in August, with the wind in the branches and the crickets in the grass, and think of him, if you can, as a being too cold for friendship!

"My heart leaps out of my mouth at the sound of the wind in the woods. I, whose life was but yesterday so desultory and shallow,

suddenly recover my spirits, my spirituality, through my hearing.... Ah! if I could so live that there should be no desultory moments... I would walk, I would sit and sleep, with natural piety. What if I could pray aloud, or to myself, as I went along by the brookside, a cheerful prayer, like the birds! For joy I could embrace the earth. I shall delight to be buried in it. And then, to think of those I love among men, who will know that I love them, though I tell them not.... I thank you, God. I do not deserve anything; I am unworthy of the least regard; and yet the world is gilded for my delight, and holidays are prepared for me, and my path is strewn with flowers.... O keep my senses pure!"

Highly characteristic is that concluding ejaculation. For Thoreau the five senses were not organs or means of sensuous gratification, but the five gateways of the soul. He would have them open and undefiled. Upon that point no man was ever more insistent. Above all, no sense must be pampered; else it would lose its native freshness and delicacy, and so its diviner use. That way lay perdition. When a woman came to Concord to lecture, and Thoreau carried her manuscript to the hall for her, wrapped in its owner's handkerchief, he complained twenty-four hours afterward that his pocket "still exhaled cologne." Faint, elusive outdoor odors were not only a continual delight to him, but a positive means of grace.

So, too, he would rather not see any of the scenic wonders of the world. Only let his sense of beauty remain uncorrupted, and he could trust his Musketaquid meadows, and the low hills round about, to feed and satisfy him forever.

Because of his jealousy in this regard, partly, — and partly from ignorance, it may be, just as some of his respectable village acquaintances would have found the Iliad, of which he talked so much, duller than death in comparison with the works of Mr. Sylvanus Cobb, — he often spoke in slighting terms of operas and all the more elaborate forms of music. The ear, he thought, if it were kept innocent, would find satisfaction in the very simplest of musical sounds. For himself, there was no language extravagant enough to express his rapturous delight in them. Now "all the romance of his youthfulest moment" came flooding back upon him, and anon he was carried away till he "looked under the lids of Time," — all by the

humming of telegraph-wires or, at night especially, by the distant baying of a hound.

To the modern "musical person" certain of his confessions under this head are of a character to excite mirth. He is "much indebted," for instance, to a neighbor "who will now and then, in the intervals of his work, draw forth a few strains from his accordion." The neighbor is only a learner, but, says Thoreau, "I find when his strains cease that I have been elevated." His daily philosophy is all of a piece, one perceives: plain fare, plain clothes, plain company, a hut in the woods, an old book, — and for inspiration the notes of a neighbor's accordion.

More than once, too, he acknowledges his obligation to that famous rural entertainer and civilizer, the hand-organ. "All Vienna" could not do more for him, he ventures to think. "It is perhaps the best instrumental music that we have," he observes; which can hardly have been true, even in Concord, one prefers to believe, while admitting the possibility. If it is heard far enough away, he goes on, so that the creaking of the machinery is lost, "it serves the grandest use for me, — it deepens my existence."

We smile, of course, as in duty bound, at so artless an avowal; but, having smiled, we are bound also to render our opinion that the most *blase* concert-goer, if he be a man of native sensibility, will readily enough discern what Thoreau has in mind, and with equal readiness will concede to it a measure of reasonableness; for he will have the witness in himself that the effect of music upon the soul depends as much upon the temper of the soul as upon the perfection of the instrument. One day a simple air, simply sung or played, will land him in heaven; and another day the best efforts of the full symphony orchestra will leave him in the mire. And after all, it is possibly better, albeit in "poorer taste," to be transported by the wheezing of an accordion than to be bored by finer music. As for Thoreau, he studied to be a master of the art of living; and in the practice of that art, as of any other, it is the glory of the artist to achieve extraordinary results by ordinary means. To have one's existence deepened — there cannot be many things more desirable than that; and as between our unsophisticated recluse and the average "musical person" aforesaid, the case is perhaps not so one-sided as at

first sight it looks; or, if it be, the odds are possibly not always on the side of what seems the greater opportunity.

His life, the quality of his life, that for Thoreau was the paramount concern. To the furthering of that end all things must be held subservient. Nature, man, books, music, all for him had the same use. This one thing he did, — he cultivated himself. If any, because of his so doing, accused him of selfishness, preaching to him of philanthropy, almsgiving, and what not, his answer was already in his mouth. Mankind, he was prepared to maintain, was very well off without such helps, which oftener than not did as much harm as good (though the concrete case at his elbow — half-clad Johnny Riordan, a fugitive slave, an Irishman who wished to bring his family over — appealed to him as quickly as to most, one is glad to notice); and, however that might be, the world needed a thousand times more than any so-called charity the sight of a man here and there living for higher ends than the world itself knows of. His own course, at any rate, was clear before him: "What I am, I am, and say not. Being is the great explainer."

His life, his *own* life, that he must live; and he must be in earnest about it. He was no indifferent, no little-carer, no skeptic, as if truth and a lie were but varying shades of the same color, and virtue, according to the old phrase, "a mean between vices." You would never catch him sighing, "Oh, well!" or "Who knows?" Qualifications, reconciliations, *rapprochements*, the two sides of the shield, and all that, — these were considerations not in his line. Before everything else he was a believer, — an idealist, that is, — the last person in the world to put up with half-truths or half-way measures. If "existing things" were thus and so, that was no reason why, with the sect of the Sadducees, he should make the best of them. What if there *were* no best of them? What if they were all bad? And anyhow, why not begin new? It was conceivable, was it not, that a man should set his own example, and follow his own copy. General opinion, — what was that? Was a thing better established because ten thousand fools believed it? Did folly become wisdom by being raised to a higher power? And antiquity, tradition, — what were they? Could a blind man of fifteen centuries ago see farther than a blind man of the present time? And if the blind led the blind, then or

now, would not both fall into the ditch?

Yes, he was undoubtedly peculiar. As to that there could never be anything but agreement among practical people. In a world where shiftiness and hesitation are the rule, nothing looks so eccentric as a straight course. It must be acknowledged, too, that a man whose goodness has a strong infusion of the bitter, and whose opinions turn out of the way for nobody, is not apt to be the most comfortable kind of neighbor. We were not greatly surprised, lately, to hear an excellent lady remark of Thoreau that, from all she had read about him, she thought he must have been "a very disagreeable gentleman." It could hardly be said of him, as Mr. Birrell says of Matthew Arnold, who was himself a pretty serious person, and, after a way of his own, a preacher of righteousness, that he "conspired and contrived to make things pleasant."

Being a consistent idealist, he was of course an extremist, falling in that respect little behind the man out of Nazareth, whose hard sayings, by all accounts, were sometimes less acceptable than they might have been, and of whom Thoreau asserted, in his emphatic way, that if his words were really read from any pulpit in the land, "there would not be left one stone of that meeting-house upon another." Thoreau worshipped purity, and the every-day ethical standards of the street were to him an abomination. "There are certain current expressions and blasphemous moods of viewing things," he declares, "as when we say 'he is doing a good business,' more profane than cursing and swearing. There is death and sin in such words. Let not the children hear them." That innocent-sounding phrase about "a good business" — as if a business might be taken for granted as good because it brought in money — was as abhorrent to him as the outrageous worldly philosophy of an old castaway like Major Pendennis is to the ordinarily sensitive reader.

He was constitutionally earnest. There are pages of the journal, indeed, which make one feel that perhaps he was in danger of being too much so for his own profit. Possibly it is not quite wholesome, possibly, if one dares to say it, it begets a something like priggishness, for the soul to be keyed up continually to so strenuous a pitch. In Thoreau's case, at all events, one is glad for every sign of a slackening of the tension. "Set the red hen to-day;"

"Got green grapes to stew;"

"Painted the bottom of my boat;" trivialities like these, too far apart (one is tempted to colloquialize, and call them "precious few," finding them so infrequent and so welcome), strike the reader with a sudden sensation of relief, as if he had been wading to the chin, and all at once his feet had touched a shallow.

So, too, one is thankful to come upon a really amusing dissertation about the tying of shoe-strings, or rather about their too easy untying; a matter with which, it appears, Thoreau had for years experienced "a great deal of trouble." His walking companion (Channing, presumably) and himself had often compared notes about it, concluding after experiments that the duration of a shoe-tie might be made to serve as a reasonably accurate unit of measure, as accurate, say, as a stadium or a league. Channing, indeed, would sometimes go without shoe-strings, rather than be plagued so incessantly by their dissolute behavior. Finally Thoreau, being then thirty-six years old, and always exceptionally clever with his hands, set his wits seriously at work upon knots, and by a stroke of good fortune (or a stroke of genius) hit upon one which answered his end; only to be told, on communicating his discovery to a third party, that he had all his life been tying "granny knots," never having learned, at school or elsewhere, the secret of a square one! It might be well, he concludes, if all children were "taught the accomplishment." Verily, as Hosea Biglow did not say, they didn't know everything down in Concord.

More refreshing still are entries describing hours of serene communion with nature, hours in which, as in an instance already cited, the Spirit of the Lord blessed him, and he forgot even to be good. These entries, likewise, are less numerous than could be wished, though perhaps as frequent as could fairly be expected; since ecstasies, like feasts, must in the nature of things be somewhat broadly spaced; and it is interesting, not to say surprising, to see how frankly he looks upon them afterward as subjects on which to try his pen. In these "seasons when our genius reigns we may be powerless for expression," he remarks; but in calmer hours, when talent is again active, "the memory of those rarer moods comes to color our picture, and is the permanent paint-pot, as it were, into which we dip our

brush." But, in truth, the whole journal, some volumes of which are carefully indexed in his own hand, is quite undisguisedly a collection of thoughts, feelings, and observations, out of which copy is to be extracted. In it, he says, "I wish to set down such choice experiences that my own writings may inspire me, and at last I may make wholes of parts.... Each thought that is welcomed and recorded is a nest-egg by the side of which more will be laid."

A born writer, he is "greedy of occasions to express" himself. He counts it "wise to write on many subjects, that so he may find the right and inspiring one."

"There are innumerable avenues to a perception of the truth," he tells himself. "Improve the suggestion of each object, however humble, however slight and transient the provocation. What else is there to be improved?"

The literary diarist, like the husbandman, knows not which shall prosper. Morning and evening, he can only sow the seed. So it was with Thoreau. "A strange and unaccountable thing," he pronounces his journal. "It will allow nothing to be predicated of it; its good is not good, nor its bad bad. If I make a huge effort to expose my innermost and richest wares to light, my counter seems cluttered with the meanest homemade stuffs; but after months or years I may discover the wealth of India, and whatever rarity is brought overland from Cathay, in that confused heap, and what seemed a festoon of dried apple or pumpkin will prove a string of Brazilian diamonds, or pearls from Coromandel."

Well, we make sure that whoever tumbles the heap over now, more than forty years after the last object was laid upon it, will be rewarded with many and many a jewel. Here, for his encouragement, are half a dozen out of the goodly number that one customer has lately turned up, in a hasty rummaging of the counter: —

"When a dog runs at you, whistle for him."

"We must be at the helm at least once a day; we must feel the tiller rope in our hands, and know that if we sail, we steer."

"In composition I miss the hue of the mind."

"After the era of youth is past, the knowledge of ourselves is an alloy that spoils our satisfactions."

"How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to

live."

"Silence is of various depths and fertility, like soil."

"Praise should be spoken as simply and naturally as a flower emits its fragrance."

Here, again, is a mere nothing, a momentary impression caught, in ball-players' language, on the fly; nothing like a pearl from Coromandel, if you will, but at the worst a toothsome bite out of a wild New England apple. It is winter. "I saw a team come out of a path in the woods," says Thoreau, "as though it had never gone in, but belonged there, and only came out like Elisha's bears." There will be few country-bred Yankee boys, we imagine, who will not remember to have experienced something precisely like that, under precisely the same circumstances, though it never occurred to them to put the feeling into words, much less to preserve it in a drop of ink. That is one of the good things that a writer does for us. And our country-bred boy, if we mistake not, is likely to consider this one careless sentence of Thoreau, which adds not a cent's worth to the sum of what is called human knowledge, as of more value than any dozen pages of his painstaking botanical records.

Thoreau the naturalist appears in the journal, not as a master, but as a learner. It could hardly be otherwise, of course, a journal being what it is. There we see him conning by himself his daily lesson, correcting yesterday by to-day, and to-day by to-morrow, progressing, like every scholar, over the stepping-stones of his own mistakes. Of the branches he pursued, as far as the present writer can presume to judge, he was strongest in botany; certainly it was to plants that he most persistently devoted himself; but even there he had as many uncertainties as discoveries to set down; and he set them down with unflagging zeal and unrestrained particularity. The daily account is running over with question-marks. His patience was admirable; the more so as he worked entirely by himself, with few of the helps that in this better-furnished time almost belie the old proverb, and make even the beginner's path a kind of royal road to learning. The day of "How-to-Know "handbooks had not yet dawned.

Of his bird-studies it would be interesting, if there were room, to speak at greater length. Here, even more than in botany, if that were

possible, he suffered for lack of assistance, and even in his later entries leaves the present-day reader wondering how so eager a scholar could have spent so many years in learning so comparatively little. The mystery is partly cleared, however, when it is found that until 1854 — say for more than a dozen years — he studied without a glass. He does not buy things, he explains, with characteristic self-satisfaction, till long after he begins to want them, so that when he does get them he is "prepared to make a perfect use of them." It was wasteful economy. He might as well have botanized without a pocket-lens.

But glass or no glass, how could an ornithological observer, whose power — so Emerson said— "seemed to indicate additional senses," be in the field daily for ten or fifteen years before setting eyes upon his first rosebreasted grosbeak? — which memorable event happened to Thoreau on the 13th of June, 1853! How could a man who had made it his business for at least a dozen years to "name all the birds without a gun," stand for a long time within a few feet of a large bird, so busy that it could not be scared far away, and then go home uncertain whether he had been looking at a woodcock or a snipe? How could he, when thirty-five years old, see a flock of sparrows, and hear them sing, and not be sure whether or not they were chipping sparrows? And how could a man so strong in times and seasons, always marking dates with an almanac's exactness, how could he, so late as'52, inquire concerning the downy woodpecker, one of the more familiar and constant of year-round birds, "Do we see him in the winter?" and again, a year later, be found asking whether he, the same downy woodpecker, is not the first of our woodland birds to arrive in the spring? At thirty-six he is amazed to the extent of double exclamation points by the sight of a flicker so early as March 29.

It fills one with astonishment to hear him (May 4, 1853) describing what he takes to be an indigo-bird after this fashion: "Dark throat and light beneath, and white spot on wings," with hoarse, rapid notes, a kind of *twee*, *twee*, *twee,* not musical. The stranger may have been — most likely it was — a black-throated blue warbler; which is as much like an indigo-bird as a bluebird is like a blue jay, — or a yellow apple like an orange. And the indigo-

bird, it should be said, is a common New-Englander, such as one of our modern schoolboy bird-gazers would have no difficulty in getting into his "list" any summer day in Concord; while the warbler in question, though nothing but a migrant, and somewhat seclusive in its habits, is so regular in its passage and so unmistakably marked (no bird more so), that it seems marvellous how Thoreau, prowling about everywhere with his eyes open, should year after year have missed it.

The truth appears to be that even of the commoner sorts of birds that breed in eastern Massachusetts or migrate through it, Thoreau — during the greater part of his life, at least — knew by sight and name only a small proportion, wonderful as his knowledge seemed to those who, like Emerson, knew practically nothing.

Not that the journal is likely to prove less interesting to bird-loving readers on this account. On the contrary, it may rather be more so, as showing them the means and methods of an ornithological amateur fifty years ago, and, especially, as providing for them a desirable store of ornithological nuts to crack on winter evenings. Some such reader, by a careful collation of the data which the publication of the journal as a whole puts at his disposal, will perhaps succeed in settling the identity of the famous "night-warbler;" a bird which some, we believe, have suspected to be nothing rarer than the almost superabundant oven-bird, but which, so far as we ourselves know, may have been almost any one (or any two or three) of our smaller common birds that are given to occasional ecstatic song-flights. Whatever it was, it was of use to Thoreau for the quickening of his imagination, and for literary purposes; and Emerson was well advised in warning him to beware of booking it, lest life henceforth should have so much the less to show him.

It must be said, however, that Thoreau stood in slight need of such a caution. He cherished for himself a pretty favorable opinion of a certain kind and measure of ignorance. With regard to some of his ornithological mysteries, for example, — the night-warbler, the seringo-bird (which with something like certainty we may conjecture to have been the savanna sparrow), and others, —— he flatters himself that his good genius had withheld their names from him that he might the better learn their character, — whatever such an

expression may be supposed to mean.

He maintained stoutly, from beginning to end, that he was not of the ordinary school of naturalists, but "a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher in one;" though he believed himself, in his own words, "by constitution as good an observer as most." He will not be one of those who seek facts as facts, studying nature as a dead language. He studies her for purposes of his own, in search of the "raw material of tropes and figures."

"I pray for such experience as will make nature significant," he declares; and then, with the same penful of ink, he asks: "Is that the swamp gooseberry of Gray now just beginning to blossom at Saw-Mill Brook? It has a divided style and stamens, etc., as yet not longer than the calyx, though my slip has no thorns nor prickles," and so on, and so on. Pages on pages of the journal are choke-full, literally, of this kind of botanical interrogation, till the unsympathetic reader will be in danger of surmising that the mystical searcher after tropes and symbols is sometimes not so utterly unlike the student of the dead language of fact. But then, it is one of the virtues of a journal that it is not a work of art, that it has no form, no fashion (and so does not go *out* of fashion), and is always at liberty to contradict itself. As Thoreau said, he tumbled his goods upon the counter; no single customer is bound to be pleased with them all; different men, different tastes; let each select from the pile the things that suit his fancy.

For our own part, we acknowledge, — and the shrewd reader may already have remarked the fact, — we have not been disinclined to choose here and there a bit of some less rare and costly stuff. The man is so sternly virtuous, so inexorably in earnest, so heart-set upon perfection, that we almost like him best when for a moment he betrays something that suggests a touch of human frailty. We prick up our ears when he speaks of a woman he once in a while goes to see, who tells him to his face that she thinks him self-conceited. Now, then, we whisper to ourselves, how will this man who despises flattery, and, boasting himself a "commoner," professes that for him "there is something devilish in manners,"

how will this candor-loving, truth-speaking, truth-appreciating man enjoy the rebuke of so unmannered a mentor? And we smile and

say Aha! when he adds that the lady wonders why he does not visit her oftener.

We smile, too, when he brags, in early February, that he has not yet put on his winter clothing, amusing himself the while over the muffs and furs of his less hardy neighbors, his own "simple diet" making him so tough in the fibre that he "flourishes like a tree;" and then, a week later, writes with unbroken equanimity that he is down with bronchitis, contenting himself to spend his days cuddled in a warm corner by the stove.

Trifles of this kind encourage a pleasant feeling of brotherly relationship. He is one of us, after all, with like passions. But of course we really like him best when he is *at* his best, — as in some outpouring of his love for things natural and wild. Let us have one more such quotation: "Now I yearn for one of those old, meandering, dry, uninhabited roads, which lead away from towns, which lead us away from temptation, which conduct us to the outside of earth, over its uppermost crust; where you may forget in what country you are travelling; where your head is more in heaven than your feet are on earth; where you can pace when your breast is full, and cherish your moodiness.... There I can walk and recover the lost child that I am without any ringing of a bell."

For real warmth, when once the fire burns, who can exceed our stoic?

We like, also, his bits of prettiness, things in which he is second to nobody, though prettiness, again, is not supposed to be the stoic's "note;" and they are all the prettier, as well as ten times more welcome, because he has the grace — and the sound literary sense — to drop them here and there, as it were casually, upon a ground of simple, unaffected prose. Here, now, is a sentence that by itself is worth a deal of ornithology: "The song sparrow is heard in fields and pastures, setting the midsummer day to music, — as if it were the music of a mossy rail or fence-post." Of dragon-flies he says: "How lavishly they are painted! How cheap was the paint! How free was the fancy of their Creator!" In early June, when woods are putting forth leaves, "the summer is pitching its tent." He finds the dainty fringed polygala (whose ordinary color is a lovely rose-purple) sporting white blossoms, and remarks: "Thus many flowers have

their nun sisters, dressed in white." Soaring hawks are "kites without strings;" and when he and his companion are travelling across country, keeping out of the sight of houses, yet compelled to traverse here and there a farmer's field, they "shut every window with an apple tree."

Gems like these one need not be a connoisseur to appreciate, and they are common upon his counter. It was a good name that Charming gave him: "The Poet-Naturalist."

But there are better things than flowers and jewels to be found in Thoreau's stock. There are cordials and tonics there, to brace a man when he is weary; eyewashes, to cleanse his vision till he sees the heights above him and repents the lowness of his aims and the vulgarity of his satisfactions; blisters and irritant plasters in large variety and of warranted strength; but little or nothing, so far as the present customer has noticed, in the line of anodynes and sleeping-powders. There we may buy moral wisdom, which is not only the "foundation and source of good writing," as one of the ancients said, but of the arts in general, especially the art of life. If the world is too much with us, if wealth attracts and the "rust of copper" has begun to eat into the soul, if we are in danger of selling our years for things that perish with the using, here we may find correctives, and go away thankful, rejoicing henceforth to be rich in a better coinage than any that bears the world's stamp. The very exaggerations of the master — if we call them such —— may do us good like a medicine; for there are diseased conditions which yield to nothing so quickly as to a shock.

As for Thoreau himself, life might have been smoother for him had he been less exacting in his idealism, more tolerant of imperfection in others and in himself; had he taken his studies, and even his spiritual aspirations, a grain or two less seriously. A bit of boyish play now and then, the bow quite unbent, or a dose of novel-reading of the love-making, humanizing (Trollopean) sort, could one imagine it, with a more temperate cherishing of his moodiness, might have done him no harm. It would have been for his comfort, so much may confidently be said, whether for his happiness is another question, had he been one of those gentler humorists who can sometimes see themselves, as all humorists have the gift of seeing

other people, funny side out. But then, had these things been so, had his natural scope been wider, his genius, so to say, more tropical, richer, freer, more expansive, more various and flexible, more like the spreading banyan and less like the soaring, sky-pointing spruce, — why, then he would no longer have been Thoreau; for better or worse, his speech would have lost its distinctive tang; and in the long run the world, which likes a touch of bitter and a touch of sour, would almost certainly have found the man himself less interesting, and his books less rememberable. And made as he was, "born to his own affairs," what else could he do but stick to himself? "We are constantly invited to be what we are," he said. The words might fittingly have been cut upon his gravestone.

B. T.

HENRY D. THOREAU

GLEANINGS

OR WHAT TIME

HAS NOT REAPED

OF MY

JOURNAL

The small manuscript volume bearing on its first fly-leaf the legend printed on the preceding page is evidently a transcript of unused passages in the early journals, and this is also the case with several succeeding small volumes. The following mottoes occupy the next three pages of the book.

"By all means use sometimes to be alone.
Salute thyself: see what thy soul doth wear.
Dare to look in thy chest; for 't is thine own:
And tumble up and down what thou find'st there.
Who cannot rest till he good fellows find,
He breaks up house, turns out of doors his mind."
HERBERT, *The Church Porch.*

"Friends and companions, get you gone!
'T is my desire to be alone;
Ne'er well, but when my thoughts and I
Do domineer in privacy."
BURTON, *Anatomy of Melancholy.*

"Two Paradises are in one,
To live in Paradise alone." —
MARVELL, *The Garden.*

THE JOURNAL OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU

1837

Oct. 22. "What are you doing now?" he asked. "Do you keep a journal?" So I make my first entry to-day.

SOLITUDE

To be alone I find it necessary to escape the present, — I avoid myself. How could I be alone in the Roman emperor's chamber of mirrors? I seek a garret. The spiders must not be disturbed, nor the floor swept, nor the lumber arranged.

The Germans say, "Es ist ailes wahr wodurch du besser wirst."

THE MOULD OUR DEEDS LEAVE

Oct. 24. Every part of nature teaches that the passing away of one life is the making room for another. The oak dies down to the ground, leaving within its rind a rich virgin mould, which will impart a vigorous life to an infant forest. The pine leaves a sandy and sterile soil, the harder woods a strong and fruitful mould.

So this constant abrasion and decay makes the soil of my future growth. As I live now so shall I reap. If I grow pines and birches, my virgin mould will not sustain the oak; but pines and birches, or, perchance, weeds and brambles, will constitute my second growth.

SPRING

Oct. 25. She appears, and we are once more children; we commence again our course with the new year. Let the maiden no more return, and men will become poets for very grief. No sooner has winter left us time to regret her smiles, than we yield to the advances of poetic frenzy. "The flowers look kindly at us from the beds with their child eyes, and in the horizon the snow of the far mountains dissolves into light vapor."

GOETHE, *Torquato Tasso.*

THE POET

"He seems to avoid — even to flee from us, —
To seek something which we know not, And perhaps he himself after all knows not." — *Ibid.*

Oct. 26.
"His eye hardly rests upon the earth;
His ear hears the one-clang of nature;
What history records, — what life gives, —
Directly and gladly his genius takes it up:
His mind collects the widely dispersed,
And his feeling animates the inanimate.
Often he ennobles what appeared to us common,
And the prized is as nothing to him.
In his own magic circle wanders
The wonderful man, and draws us
With him to wander, and take part in it:
He seems to draw near to us, and remains afar from us:
He seems to be looking at us, and spirits, forsooth,
Appear to him strangely in our places." — *Ibid.*

HOW MAN GROWS

"A noble man has not to thank a private circle for his culture. Fatherland and world must work upon him. Fame and infamy must he learn to endure. He will be constrained to know himself and others. Solitude shall no more lull him with her flattery. The foe *will* not, the friend *dares* not, spare him. Then, striving, the youth puts forth his strength, feels what he is, and feels himself soon a man."

"A talent is builded in solitude,
A character in the stream of the world."

"He only fears man who knows him not, and he who avoids him will soonest misapprehend him." — *Ibid.*

ARIOSTO

"As nature decks her inward rich breast in a green variegated dress, so clothes he all that can make men honorable in the blooming garb of the fable.... The well of superfluity bubbles near, and lets us see variegated wonder-fishes. The air is filled with rare birds, the meads and copses with strange herds, wit lurks half concealed in the verdure, and wisdom from time to time lets sound from a golden cloud sustained words, while frenzy wildly seems to sweep the well-toned lute, yet holds itself measured in perfect time."

BEAUTY

"That beauty is transitory which alone you seem to honor." — GOETHE, *Torquato Tasso.*

THE FOG

Oct. 21. The prospect is limited to Nobscot and Annursnack. The trees stand with boughs downcast like pilgrims beaten by a storm, and the whole landscape wears a sombre aspect.

So when thick vapors cloud the soul, it strives in vain to escape from its humble working-day valley, and pierce the dense fog which shuts out from view the blue peaks in its horizon, but must be content to scan its near and homely hills.

DUCKS AT GOOSE POND

Oct. 29. Two ducks, of the summer or wood species, which were merrily dabbling in their favorite basin, struck up a retreat on my

approach, and seemed disposed to take French leave, paddling off with swan-like majesty. They are first-rate swimmers, beating me at a round pace, and — what was to me a new trait in the duck character — dove every minute or two and swam several feet under water, in order to escape our attention. Just before immersion they, seemed to give each other a significant nod, and then, as if by a common understanding, 't was heels up and head down in the shaking of a duck's wing. When they reappeared, it was amusing to observe with what a self-satisfied, darn-it-how-he-nicks-'em air they paddled off to repeat the experiment.

THE ARROWHEAD

A curious incident happened some four or six weeks ago which I think it worth the while to record. John and I had been searching for Indian relics, and been successful enough to find two arrowheads and a pestle, when, of a Sunday evening, with our heads full of the past and its remains, we strolled to the mouth of Swamp Bridge Brook. As we neared the brow of the hill forming the bank of the river, inspired by my theme, I broke forth into an extravagant eulogy on those savage times, using most violent gesticulations by way of illustration. "Thereon Nawshawtuct," said I, "was their lodge, the rendezvous of the tribe, and yonder, on Clamshell Hill, their feasting ground. This was, no doubt, a favorite haunt; here on this brow was an eligible lookout post. How often have they stood on this very spot, at this very hour, when the sun was sinking behind yonder woods and gilding with his last rays the waters of the Musketaquid, and pondered the day's success and the morrow's prospects, or communed with the spirit of their fathers gone before them to the land of shades!

"Here," I exclaimed, "stood Tahatawan; and there" (to complete the period) "is Tahatawan's arrowhead."

We instantly proceeded to sit down on the spot I had pointed to, and I, to carry out the joke, to lay bare an ordinary stone which my whim had selected, when lo! the first I laid hands on, the grubbing stone that was to be, proved a most perfect arrowhead, as sharp as if

just from the hands of the Indian fabricator!!!

SUNRISE

Oct. 30. First we have the gray twilight of the poets, with dark and barry clouds diverging to the zenith. Then glows the intruding cloud in the east, as if it bore a precious jewel in its bosom; a deep round gulf of golden gray indenting its upper edge, while slender rules of fleecy vapor, radiating from the common centre, like light-armed troops, fall regularly into their places.

SAILING WITH AND AGAINST THE STREAM

Nov. 3. If one would reflect, let him embark on some placid stream, and float with the current. He cannot resist the Muse. As we ascend the stream, plying the paddle with might and main, snatched and impetuous thoughts course through the brain. We dream of conflict, power, and grandeur. But turn the prow down stream, and rock, tree, kine, knoll, assuming new and varying positions, as wind and water shift the scene, favor the liquid lapse of thought, far-reaching and sublime, but ever calm and gently undulating.

TRUTH

Nov. 5. Truth strikes us from behind, and in the dark, as well as from before and in broad daylight.

STILL STREAMS RUN DEEPEST

Nov. 9. It is the rill whose "silver sands and pebbles sing eternal ditties with the spring." The early frosts bridge its narrow channel, and its querulous note is hushed. Only the flickering sunlight on its sandy bottom attracts the beholder. But there are souls whose depths are never fathomed, — on whose bottom the sun never shines. We

get a distant view from the precipitous banks, but never a draught from their mid-channels. Only a sunken rock or fallen oak can provoke a murmur, and their surface is a stranger to the icy fetters which bind fast a thousand contributory rills.

DISCIPLINE

Nov. 12. I yet lack discernment to distinguish the whole lesson of to-day; but it is not lost, — it will come to me at last. My desire is to know *what* I have lived, that I may know *how* to live henceforth.

SIN DESTROYS THE PERCEPTION OF THE BEAUTIFUL

Nov. 13. This shall be the test of innocence — if I can hear a taunt, and look out on this friendly moon, pacing the heavens in queen-like majesty, with the accustomed yearning.

TRUTH

Truth is ever returning into herself. I glimpse one feature to-day, another to-morrow; and the next day they are blended.

GOETHE

Nov. 15. “And now that it is evening, a few clouds in the mild atmosphere rest upon the mountains, more stand still than move in the heavens, and immediately after sunset the chirping of crickets begins to increase; then feels one once more at home in the world, and notas an alien, — an exile. I am contented as though I had been born and brought up here, and now returned from a Greenland or whaling voyage. Even the dust of my Fatherland, as it is whirled about the wagon, which for so long a time I had not seen, is welcome. The clock-and-bell jingling of the crickets is very agreeable, penetrating, and not without a meaning. Pleasant is it

when roguish boys whistle in emulation of a field of such songstresses. One imagines that they really enhance each other. The evening is perfectly mild as the day. Should an inhabitant of the south, coming from the south, hear of my rapture, he would deem me very childish. Alas! what I here express have I long felt under an unpropitious heaven. And now this joy is to me an exception, which I am henceforth to enjoy, — a necessity of my nature.*" — Italianische Reise.*

PONKAWTASSETT

Nov. 16. There goes the river, or rather is, "in serpent error wandering," the jugular vein of Musketaquid. Who knows how much of the proverbial moderation of the inhabitants was caught from its dull circulation?

The snow gives the landscape a washing-day appearance, — here a streak of white, there a streak of dark; it is spread like a napkin over the hills and meadows. This must be a rare drying day, to judge from the vapor that floats over the vast clothes-yard.

A hundred guns are firing and a flag flying in the village in celebration of the whig victory. Now a short dull report, — the mere disk of a sound, shorn of its beams, — and then a puff of smoke rises in the horizon to join its misty relatives in the skies.

GOETHE

He gives such a glowing description of the old tower, that they who had been born and brought up in the neighborhood must needs look over their shoulders, "that they might behold with their eyes, what I had praised to their ears... and I added nothing, not even the ivy which for centuries had decorated the walls." — *Italianische Reise.*

SUNRISE

Nov. 17. Now the king of day plays at bo-peep round the world's

corner, and every cottage window smiles a golden smile, — a very picture of glee. I see the water glistening in the eye. The smothered breathings of awakening day strike the ear with an undulating motion; over hill and dale, pasture and woodland, come they to me, and I am at home in the world.

THE SKY

If there is nothing new on earth, still there is something new in the heavens. We have always a resource in the skies. They are constantly turning a new page to view. The wind sets the types in this blue ground, and the inquiring may always read a new truth.

VIRGIL

Nov. 18. "Pulsae referunt ad sidera valles" is such a line as would save an epic; and how finely he concludes his "agrestem musam," now that Silenus has done, and the stars have heard his story, —

"Cogere donee oves stabulis, numerumque referre Jussit, et invito processit Vesper Olympo."

HARMONY

Nature makes no noise. The howling storm, the rustling leaf, the pattering rain are no disturbance, there is an essential and unexplored harmony in them. Why is it that thought flows with so deep and sparkling a current when the sound of distant music strikes the ear? When I would muse I complain not of a rattling tune on the piano — a Battle of Prague even — if it be harmony, but an irregular, discordant drumming is intolerable.

SHADOWS

When a shadow flits across the landscape of the soul, where is the substance? Has it always its origin in sin? and is that sin in me?

VIRGIL

Nov. 20. I would read Virgil, if only that I might be reminded of the identity of human nature in all ages. I take satisfaction in "jam laeto turgent in palmite gemmae," or "Strata jacent passim sua quaeque sub arbore poma." It was the same world, and the same men inhabited it.

NAWSHAWTUCT

Nov. 21. One must needs climb a hill to know what a world he inhabits. In the midst of this Indian summer I am perched on the topmost rock of Nawshawtuct, a velvet wind blowing from the southwest. I seem to feel the atoms as they strike my cheek. Hills, mountains, steeples stand out in bold relief in the horizon, while I am resting on the rounded boss of an enormous shield, the river like a vein of silver encircling its edge, and thence the shield gradually rises to its rim, the horizon. Not a cloud is to be seen, but villages, villas, forests, mountains, one above another, till they are swallowed up in the heavens. The atmosphere is such that, as I look abroad upon the length and breadth of the land, it recedes from my eye, and I seem to be looking for the threads of the velvet.

Thus I admire the grandeur of my emerald carriage, with its border of blue, in which I am rolling through space.

THOUGHTS

Nov. 26. I look around for thoughts when I am overflowing myself. While I live on, thought is still in embryo, — it stirs not within me. Anon it begins to assume shape and comeliness, and I deliver it, and clothe it in its garment of language. But alas! how often when thoughts choke me do I resort to a spat on the back, or swallow a

crust, or do anything but expectorate them!

HOAR FROST AND GREEN RIVER

Nov. 28. Every tree, fence, and spire of grass that could raise its head above the snow was this morning covered with a dense hoar frost. The trees looked like airy creatures of darkness caught napping. On this side they were huddled together, their gray hairs streaming, in a secluded valley which the sun had not yet penetrated, and on that they went hurrying off in Indian file by hedgerows and watercourses, while the shrubs and grasses, like elves and fairies of the night, sought to hide their diminished heads in the snow.

The branches and taller grasses were covered with a wonderful ice-foliage, answering leaf for leaf to their summer dress. The centre, diverging, and even more minute fibres were perfectly distinct and the edges regularly indented.

These leaves were on the side of the twig or stubble opposite to the sun (when it was not bent toward the east), meeting it for the most part at right angles, and there were others standing out at all possible angles upon these, and upon one another.

It struck me that these ghost leaves and the green ones whose forms they assume were the creatures of the same law. It could not be in obedience to two several laws that the vegetable juices swelled gradually into the perfect leaf on the one hand, and the crystalline particles trooped to their standard in the same admirable order on the other.

The river, viewed from the bank above, appeared of a yellowish-green color, but on a nearer approach this phenomenon vanished; and yet the landscape was covered with snow.

ICE-HARP

Dec. 5. My friend tells me he has discovered a new note in nature, which he calls the Ice-Harp. Chancing to throw a handful of pebbles upon the pond where there was an air chamber under the ice, it discoursed a pleasant music to him.

Herein resides a tenth muse, and as he was the man to discover it

probably the extra melody is in him.

GOETHE

Dec. 8. He is generally satisfied with giving an exact description of objects as they appear to him, and his genius is exhibited in the points he seizes upon and illustrates. His description of Venice and her environs as seen from the Marcusthurm is that of an unconcerned spectator, whose object is faithfully to describe what he sees, and that, too, for the most part, in the order in which he saw it. It is this trait which is chiefly to be prized in the book; even the reflections of the author do not interfere with his descriptions.

It would thus be possible for inferior minds to produce invaluable books.

MEASURE

Dec. 10. Not the carpenter alone carries his rule in his pocket. Space is quite subdued to us. The meanest peasant finds in a hair of his head, or the white crescent upon his nail, the unit of measure for the distance of the fixed stars. His middle finger measures how many *digits* into space; he extends a few times his thumb and finger, and the continent is *spanned;* he stretches out his arms, and the sea is *fathomed.*

THOUGHT

Dec. 12. There are times when thought elbows her way through the underwood of words to the clear blue beyond;

> "O'er bog, or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
> With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues *her* way,
> And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies;..."

but let her don her cumbersome working-day garment, and each

sparkling dewdrop will seem a “slough of despond.”

PECULIARITY

When we speak of a peculiarity in a man or a nation, we think to describe only one part, a mere mathematical point; but it is not so. It pervades all. Some parts may be further removed than others from this centre, but not a particle so remote as not to be either shined on or shaded by it.

THORNS

No faculty in man was created with a useless or sinister intent; in no respect can he be wholly bad, but the worst passions have their root in the best, — as anger, for instance, may be only a perverted sense of wrong which yet retains some traces of its origin. So a spine is proved to be only an abortive branch, “which, notwithstanding, even as a spine, bears leaves, and, in *Euphorbia heptagona*, sometimes flowers and fruit.”

JACK FROST

Dec. 15. As further confirmation of the fact that vegetation is a kind of crystallization, I observe that upon the edge of the melting frost on the windows, Jack is playing singular freaks, — now bundling together his needle-shaped leaves so as to resemble fields waving with grain, or shocks of wheat rising here and there from the stubble. On one side the vegetation of the torrid zone is presented you, — high-towering palms, and widespread banyans, such as we see in pictures of Oriental scenery; on the other are arctic pines, stiff-frozen, with branches downcast, like the arms of tender men in frosty weather. In some instances the panes are covered with little feathery flocks, where the particles radiate from a common centre, the number of radii varying from three to seven or eight. The crystalline particles are partial to the creases and flaws in the glass, and, when these

extend from sash to sash, form complete hedgerows, or miniature watercourses, where dense masses of crystal foliage "high over-arched imbower."

FROZEN MIST

Dec. 16. The woods were this morning covered with thin bars of vapor, — the evaporation of the leaves according to Sprengel, — which seemed to have been suddenly stiffened by the cold. In some places it was spread out like gauze over the tops of the trees, forming extended lawns, where elves and fairies held high tournament;

"before each van
Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close."

The east was glowing with a narrow but ill-defined crescent of light, the blue of the zenith mingling in all possible proportions with the salmon-color of the horizon. And now the neighboring hilltops telegraph to us poor crawlers of the plain the Monarch's golden ensign in the east, and anon his "long levelled rules" fall sector-wise, and humblest cottage windows greet their lord.

FACTS

How indispensable to a correct study of Nature is a perception of her true meaning. The fact will one day flower out into a truth. The season will mature and fructify what the understanding had cultivated. Mere accumulators of facts — collectors of materials for the master-workmen — are like those plants growing in dark forests, which "put forth only leaves instead of blossoms."

DRUIDS

Dec. 17. In all ages and nations we observe a leaning towards a right

state of things. This may especially be seen in the history of the priest, whose life approaches most nearly to that of the ideal man. The Druids paid no taxes, and "were allowed exemption from warfare and all other things." The clergy are even now a privileged class.

In the last stage of civilization Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy will be one; and this truth is glimpsed in the first. The druidical order was divided into Druids, Bards, and Ouates. "The Bards were the poets and musicians, of whom some were satirists, and some encomiasts. The Ouates sacrificed, divined, and contemplated the nature of things. The Druids cultivated physiology and moral philosophy; or, as Diodorus says, were their philosophers and theologians."

GOETHE

Dec. 18. He required that his heroine, Iphigenia, should say nothing which might not be uttered by the holy Agathe, whose picture he contemplated.

IMMORTALITY POST

The nations assert an immortality *post* as well as *ante.* The Athenians wore a golden grasshopper as an emblem that they sprang from the earth, and the Arcadians pretended that they were 'proselenoi' or before the moon.

The Platos do not seem to have considered this back-reaching tendency of the human mind.

THE PRIDE OF ANCESTRY

Men are pleased to be called the sons of their fathers, —— so little truth suffices them, — and whoever addresses them by this or a similar title is termed a poet. The orator appeals to the sons of Greece, of Britannia, of France, or of Poland; and our fathers'

homely name acquires some interest from the fact that Sakai-suna means sons-of-the-Sakai (Saxons).

HELL

Dec. 19. Hell itself may be contained within the compass of a spark.

SAXONS

The fact seems at first an anomalous one that the less a people have to contend for the more tenacious they are of their rights. The Saxons of Ditmarsia contended for a principle, not for their sterile sands and uncultivated marshes.

We are on the whole the same Saxons that our fathers were, when it was said of them, "They are emulous in hospitality, because to plunder and to lavish is the glory of an Holsatian; not to be versed in the science of depredation is, in his opinion, to be stupid and base."

The French are the same Franks of whom it is written, "Francis familiare est ridendo fidem frangere;"

"Gens Francorum infidelis est. Si perjeret Francus quid novi faciet, qui perjuriam ipsam sermonis genus putat esse non criminis."

CRYSTALS

I observed this morning that the ice at Swamp Bridge was checkered with a kind of mosaic-work of white creases or channels; and when I examined the under side, I found it to be covered with a mass of crystallizations from three to five inches deep, standing, or rather depending, at right angles to the true ice, which was about an eighth of an inch thick. There was a yet older ice six or eight inches below this. The crystals were for the most part triangular prisms with the lower end open, though, in some cases, they had run into each other so as to form four or five sided prisms. When the ice was laid upon its smooth side, they resembled the roofs and steeples of a Gothic city, or the vessels of a crowded haven under a press of canvas.

I noticed also that where the ice in the road had melted and left the mud bare, the latter, as if crystallized, discovered countless rectilinear fissures, an inch or more in length — a continuation, as it were, of the checkered ice.

Dec. 22. About a year ago, having set aside a bowl which had contained some rhubarb grated in water, without wiping it, I was astonished to find, a few days afterward, that the rhubarb had crystallized, covering the bottom of the bowl with perfect cubes, of the color and consistency of glue, and a tenth of an inch in diameter.

CRYSTALS

Dec. 23. Crossed the river to-day on the ice. Though the weather is raw and wintry and the ground covered with snow, I noticed a solitary robin, who looked as if he needed to have his services to the Babes in the Woods speedily requited.

In the side of the high bank by the Leaning Hemlocks, there were some curious crystallizations. Wherever the water, or other causes, had formed a hole in the bank, its throat and outer edge, like the entrance to a citadel of the olden time, bristled with a glistening ice armor. In one place you might see minute ostrich feathers, which seemed the waving plumes of the warriors filing into the fortress, in another the glancing fan-shaped banners of the Lilliputian host, and in another the needle-shaped particles, collected into bundles resembling the plumes of the pine, might pass for a phalanx of spears. The whole hill was like an immense quartz rock, with minute crystals sparkling from innumerable crannies. I tried to fancy that there was a disposition in these crystallizations to take the forms of the contiguous foliage.

REVOLUTIONS

Dec. 27. Revolutions are never sudden. Not one man, nor many men, in a few years or generations, suffice to regulate events and dispose

mankind for the revolutionary movement. The hero is but the crowning stone of the pyramid, — the keystone of the arch. Who was Romulus or Remus, Hengist or Horsa, that we should attribute to them Rome or England? They are famous or infamous because the progress of events has chosen to make them its stepping-stones. But we would know where the avalanche commenced, or the hollow in the rock whence springs the Amazon. The most important is apt to be some silent and unobtrusive fact in history. In 449 three Saxon cyules arrived on the British coast,— "Three scipen gode comen mid than flode, three hundred cnihten." The pirate of the British coast was no more the founder of a state than the scourge of the German shore.

HEROES

The real heroes of minstrelsy have been ideal, even when the names of actual heroes have been perpetuated.

The real Arthur, who "not only excelled the experienced past, but also the possible future," of whom it was affirmed for many centuries that he was not dead, but "had withdrawn from the world into some magical region; from which at a future crisis he was to reappear, and lead the Cymri in triumph through the island," whose character and actions were the theme of the bards of Bretagne and the foundation of their interminable romances, was only an ideal impersonation.

Men claim for the ideal an actual existence also, but do not often expand the actual into the ideal. "If you do not believe me, go into Bretagne, and mention in the streets or villages, that Arthur is really dead like other men; you will not escape with impunity; you will be either hooted with the curses of your hearers, or stoned to death."

HOMESICKNESS

The most remarkable instance of homesickness is that of the colony of Franks transplanted by the Romans from the German Ocean to the Euxine, who at length resolving to a man to abandon the country,

seized the vessels which carried them out, and reached at last their native shores, after innumerable difficulties and dangers upon the Mediterranean and Atlantic.

THE INTERESTING FACTS IN HISTORY

How cheering is it, after toiling through the darker pages of history, — the heartless and fluctuating crust of human rest and unrest, — to alight on the solid earth where the sun shines, or rest in the checkered shade. The fact that Edwin of Northumbria "caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where he had seen a clear spring," and that "brazen dishes were chained to them, to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced," is worth all Arthur's twelve battles. The sun again shines along the highway, the landscape presents us sunny glades and occasional cultivated patches as well as dark primeval forests, and it is *merry* England after all.

Dec. 31. As the least drop of wine tinges the whole goblet, so the least particle of truth colors our whole life. It is never isolated, or simply added as treasure to our stock. When any real progress is made, we unlearn and learn anew what we thought we knew before. We go picking up from year to year and laying side by side the *disjecta membra* of truth, as he who picked up one by one a row of a hundred stones, and returned with each separately to his basket.

1838

HEAVEN ON EARTH

Jan. 6. As a child looks forward to the coming of the summer, so could we contemplate with quiet joy the circle of the seasons returning without fail eternally. As the spring came round during so many years of the gods, we could go out to admire and adorn anew our Eden, and yet never tire.

SAXONS

Jan. 15. After all that has been said in praise of the Saxon race, we must allow that our blue-eyed and fairhaired ancestors were originally an ungodly and reckless crew.

WE MAKE OUR OWN FORTUNE

Jan. 16. Man is like a cork which no tempest can sink, but it will float securely to its haven at last. The world is never the less beautiful though viewed through a chink or knot-hole.

Jan. 21. Man is the artificer of his own happiness. Let him beware how he complains of the disposition of circumstances, for it is his own disposition he blames. If this is sour, or that rough, or the other steep, let him think if it be not his work. If his look curdles all hearts, let him not complain of a sour reception; if he hobble in his gait, let him not grumble at the roughness of the way; if he is weak in the knees, let him not call the hill steep. This was the pith of the inscription on the wall of the Swedish inn: "You will find at Trolhate excellent bread, meat, and wine, provided you bring them with you!"

HOAR FROST

Every leaf and twig was this morning covered with a sparkling ice armor; even the grasses in exposed fields were hung with innumerable diamond pendants, which jingled merrily when brushed by the foot of the traveller. It was literally the wreck of jewels and the crash of gems. It was as though some superincumbent stratum of the earth had been removed in the night, exposing to light a bed of untarnished crystals. The scene changed at every step, or as the head was inclined to the right or the left. There were the opal and sapphire and emerald and jasper and beryl and topaz and ruby.

Such is beauty ever, — neither here nor there, now nor then, — neither in Rome nor in Athens, but wherever there is a soul to admire. If I seek her elsewhere because I do not find her at home, my search will prove a fruitless one.

ZENO

Feb. 7. Zeno, the Stoic, stood in precisely the same relation to the world that I do now. He is, forsooth, bred a merchant — as how many still! — and can trade and barter, and perchance higgle, and moreover he can be shipwrecked and cast ashore at the Piræus, like one of your Johns or Thomases.

He strolls into a shop and is charmed by a book by Xenophon — and straightway he becomes a philosopher. The sun of a new life's day rises to him, — serene and unclouded, — which looks over stoa. And still the fleshly Zeno sails on, shipwrecked, buffeted, tempest-tossed; but the true Zeno sails ever a placid sea. Play high, play low, — rain, sleet, or snow, — it 's all the same with the Stoic. "Propriety and decorum" were his Palinurus, — not the base progeny of fashion, but the suggestions of an experienced taste.

When evening comes he sits down unwearied to the review of his day, — what's done that's to be undone, — what not done at all still to be done. Himself Truth's unconcerned helpmate. Another system of book-keeping this than that the Cyprian trader to Phoenicia practiced!

This was he who said to a certain garrulous young man, "On this account have we two ears and but one mouth, that we may hear

more, and speak less."

That he had talked concerned not our philosopher, but his audience; and herein we may see how it is more noble to hear than to speak. The wisest may apologize that he only said so to hear himself talk, for if he *heard* not, as well for him had he never spoken. What is all this gabble to the gabbler? Only the silent reap the profit of it.

SOCIETY

Feb. 9. It is wholesome advice,— "to be a man amongst folks." Go into society if you will, or if you are unwilling, and take a human interest in its affairs.

If you mistake these Messieurs and Mesdames for so many men and women, it is but erring on the safe side, — or, rather, it is their error and not yours. Armed with a manly sincerity, you shall not be trifled with, but drive this business of life. It matters not how many men are to be addressed, — rebuked, — provided one man rebuke them.

SMALL TALK

To manage the small talk of a party is to make an effort to do what was at first done, admirably because naturally, at your fireside.

INFLUENCE

Feb. 13. It is hard to subject ourselves to an influence. It must steal upon us when we expect it not, and its work be all done ere we are aware of it. If we make advances, it is shy; if, when we feel its presence, we presume to pry into its free-masonry, it vanishes and leaves us alone in our folly, — brimful but stagnant, — a full channel, it may be, but no inclination.

FEAR

All fear of the world or consequences is swallowed up in a manly anxiety to do Truth justice.

OLD BOOKS

Feb. 15. The true student will cleave ever to the good, recognizing no Past, no Present; but wherever he emerges from the bosom of time, his course is not with the sun, — eastward or westward, — but ever towards the seashore. Day and night pursues he his devious way, lingering by how many a Pierian spring, how many an Academus grove, how many a sculptured portico! — all which — spring, grove, and portico — lie not so wide but he may take them conveniently in his way.

GREECE

Feb. 16. In imagination I hie me to Greece as to enchanted ground. No storms vex her coasts, no clouds encircle her Helicon or Olympus, no tempests sweep the peaceful Tempe or ruffle the bosom of the placid Ægean; but always the beams of the summer's sun gleam along the entablature of the Acropolis, or are reflected through the mellow atmosphere from a thousand consecrated groves and fountains; always her seagirt isles are dallying with their zephyr guests, and the low of kine is heard along the meads, and the landscape sleeps — valley and hill and woodland — a dreamy sleep. Each of her sons created a new heaven and a new earth for Greece.

SUNDAY

Feb. 18. Rightly named Suna-day, or day of the sun. One is satisfied in some angle by wood-house and garden fence to bask in his beams — to exist barely — the livelong day.

SPRING

I had not been out long to-day when it seemed that a new Spring was already born, — not quite weaned, it is true, but verily entered upon existence. Nature struck up "the same old song in the grass," despite eighteen inches of snow, and I contrived to smuggle away a grin of satisfaction by a smothered "Pshaw! and is that all?"

Feb. 19. Each summer sound Is a summer round.

GOETHE

Feb. 27. He jogs along at a snail's pace, but ever mindful that the earth is beneath and the heavens above him. His Italy is not merely the fatherland of lazzaroni and maccaroni but a solid turf-clad soil, daily illumined by a genial sun and nightly gleaming in the still moonshine, — to say nothing of the frequent showers which are so faithfully recorded. That sail to Palermo was literally a plowing through of the waves from Naples to Trinacria, — the sky overhead, and the sea with its isles on either hand.

His hearty good-will to all men is most amiable; not one cross word has he spoken, but on one occasion, the post boy snivelling, "Signore, perdonate! quésta è la mia patria," he confesses, "to me poor northerner came something tear-like into the eyes."

SPRING

March 1. March fans it, April christens it, and May puts on its jacket and trousers. It never grows up, but Alexandrian-like "drags its slow length along," ever springing, bud following close upon leaf, and when winter comes it is not annihilated, but creeps on molelike under the snow, showing its face nevertheless occasionally by fuming springs and watercourses.

So let it be with man, — let his manhood be a more advanced and still advancing youth, bud following hard upon leaf. By the side of the ripening corn let's have a second or third crop of peas and turnips, decking the fields in a new green. So amid clumps of *sere*

herd's-grass sometimes flower the violet and buttercup spring-born.

HOMER

March 3. Three thousand years and the world so little changed! The Iliad seems like a natural sound which has reverberated to our days. Whatever in it is still freshest in the memories of men was most childlike in the poet. It is the problem of old age, — a second childhood exhibited in the life of the world. Phoebus Apollo went like night, — ὁ δ' ἤιε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς. This either refers to the gross atmosphere of the plague darkening the sun, or to the crescent of night rising solemn and stately in the east while the sun is setting in the west.

Then Agamemnon darkly lowers on Calchas, prophet of evil, — ὅσσε δέ οἱ πυρὶ λαμπετόωντε ἐίκτην, — such a fireeyed Agamemnon as you may see at town meetings and elections, as well here as in Troy neighborhood.

A SUNDAY SCENE

March 4. Here at my elbow sit five notable, or at least noteworthy, representatives of this nineteenth century, —— of the gender feminine. One a sedate, indefatigable knitter, not spinster, of the old school, who had the supreme felicity to be born in days that tried men's souls, who can, and not unfrequently does, say with Nestor, another of the old school: "But you are younger than I. For time was when I conversed with greater men than you. For not at any time have I seen such men, nor shall see them, as Perithous, and Dryas, and ποιμένα λαῶν," or, in one word, sole "shepherd of the people," Washington.

And when Apollo has now six times rolled westward, or seemed to roll, and now for the seventh time shows his face in the east, eyes well-nigh glazed, long glassed, which have fluctuated only between lamb's wool and worsted, explore ceaseless some good sermon book.

For six days shalt thou labor and do all thy knitting, but on the seventh, forsooth, thy reading.

Opposite, across this stone hearth, sits one of no school, but rather one who schools, a spinster who spins not, with elbow resting on the book of books, but with eyes turned towards the vain trumpery of that shelf, — trumpery of sere leaves, blossoms, and waxwork, built on sand, that presumes to look quite as gay, smell quite as earthy, as though this were not by good rights the sun's day. I marked how she spurned that innocent every-day book, "Germany by De Staël," as though a viper had stung her; — better to rest the elbow on The Book than the eye on such a page. Poor book! this is thy last chance.

Happy I who can bask in this warm spring sun which illumines all creatures, as well when they rest as when they toil, not without a feeling of gratitude! whose life is as blameless — how blameworthy soever it be — on the Lord's Mona-day as on his Suna-day!

Thus much at least a man may do: he may not impose on his fellows, — perhaps not on himself. Thus much *let* a man do: confidently and heartily live up to his thought; for its error, if there be any, will soonest appear in practice, and if there be none, so much he may reckon as actual progress in the way of living.

HOMER

The poet does not leap, even in imagination, from Asia to Greece through mid-air, neglectful of the fair sea and still fairer land beneath him, but jogs on humanly observant over the intervening segment of a sphere, —

ἐπειὴ μάλα πολλὰ μεταξύ
Οὔρεά τε σκιόεντα, θάλασσά τε ἠχήεσσα, —

for there are very many Shady mountains, and resounding seas between.

διάνδιχα

March 5. How often, when Achilles like one

μερμήριξεν whether to retaliate or suppress his wrath, has his good Genius, like Pallas Athene, gliding down from heaven, θυμῷ φιλέουσά τε, κηδομένη τε, stood behind him, and whispered peace in his ear!

Men may dispute about the fact whether a goddess did actually come down from heaven, calling it a poet's fancy, but was it not, considering the stuff that gods are made of, a very truth?

THE AGE OF HONEY

"And to them rose up the sweet-worded Nestor, the shrill orator of the Pylians, And words *sweeter than honey* flowed from his tongue."

E'en in old Homer's day was honey sweet, — not yet is sour, — tickling the palate of the blind old man, forsooth, with fresher sweet; then, as now, whene'er from leaky jar or drivelling lips it daubed the festive board, proving a baneful lure to swarms of parasites, Homer's cotemporaries, but alas! like Phthian hero, vulnerable in heel.

WHAT TO DO

But what does all this scribbling amount to? What is now scribbled in the heat of the moment one can contemplate with somewhat of satisfaction, but alas! to-morrow — aye, to-night — it is stale, flat, and unprofitable, — in fine, is not, only its shell remains, like some red parboiled lobster-shell which, kicked aside never so often, still stares at you in the path.

What may a man do and not be ashamed of it? He may not do nothing surely, for straightway he is dubbed Dolittle — aye! christens himself first — and reasonably, for he was first to duck. But let him do something, is he the less a Dolittle? Is it actually something done, or not rather something undone; or, if done, is it not badly done, or at most well done comparatively?

Such is man, — toiling, heaving, struggling ant-like to shoulder some stray unappropriated crumb and deposit it in his granary; then

runs out, complacent, gazes heavenward, earthward (for even pismires can look down), heaven and earth meanwhile looking downward, upward; there seen of men, world-seen, deed-delivered, vanishes into all-grasping night. And is he doomed ever to run the same course? Can he not, wriggling, screwing, self-exhorting, self-constraining, wriggle or screw out something that shall live, — respected, intact, intangible, not to be sneezed at?

March 6. How can a man sit down and quietly pare his nails, while the earth goes gyrating ahead amid such a din of sphere music, whirling him along about her axis some twenty-four thousand miles between sun and sun, but mainly in a circle some two millions of miles actual progress? And then such a hurly-burly on the surface —— wind always blowing — now a zephyr, now a hurricane — tides never idle, ever fluctuating — no rest for Niagara, but perpetual ran-tan on those limestone rocks —— and then that summer simmering which our ears are used to, which would otherwise be christened confusion worse confounded, but is now ironically called "silence audible," and above all the incessant tinkering named "hum of industry," the hurrying to and fro and confused jabbering of men. Can man do less than get up and shake himself?

COMPOSITION

March 7. We should not endeavor coolly to analyze our thoughts, but, keeping the pen even and parallel with the current, make an accurate transcript of them. Impulse is, after all, the best linguist, and for his logic, if not conformable to Aristotle, it cannot fail to be most convincing. The nearer we approach to a complete but simple transcript of our thought the more tolerable will be the piece, for we can endure to consider ourselves in a state of passivity or in involuntary action, but rarely our efforts, and least of all our rare efforts.

SCRAPS FROM A LECTURE ON "SOCIETY" WRITTEN MARCH

14TH, 1838, DELIVERED BEFORE OUR LYCEUM, APRIL

11TH

Every proverb in the newspapers originally stood for a truth. Thus the proverb that man was made for society, so long as it was not allowed to conflict with another important truth, deceived no one; but, now that the same words have come to stand for another thing, it may be for a lie, we are obliged, in order to preserve its significance, to write it anew, so that properly it will read, Society was made for man.

Man is not at once born into society, — hardly into the world. The world that he is hides for a time the world that he inhabits.

That which properly constitutes the life of every man is a profound secret. Yet this is what every one would give most to know, but is himself most backward to impart.

Hardly a rood of land but can show its fresh wound or indelible scar, in proof that earlier or later man has been there.

The mass never comes up to the standard of its best member, but on the contrary degrades itself to a level with the lowest. As the reformers say, it is a levelling down, not up. Hence the mass is only another name for the mob. The inhabitants of the earth assembled in one place would constitute the greatest mob. The mob is spoken of as an insane and blinded animal; magistrates say it must be humored; they apprehend it may incline this way or that, as villagers dread an inundation, not knowing whose land may be flooded, nor how many bridges carried away.

One goes to a cattle-show expecting to find many men and women assembled, and beholds only working oxen and neat cattle. He goes to a commencement thinking that there at least he may find the men of the country; but such, if there were any, are completely merged in the day, and have become so many walking commencements, so that he is fain to take himself out of sight and hearing of the orator, lest he lose his own identity in the nonentities around him.

But you are getting all the while further and further from true society. Your silence was an approach to it, but your conversation is only a refuge from the encounter of men; as though men were to be satisfied with a meeting of heels, and not heads.

Nor is it better with private assemblies, or meetings together, with a sociable design, of acquaintances so called, — that is to say of men and women who are familiar with the lineaments of each other's countenances, who eat, drink, sleep, and transact the business of living within the circuit of a mile.

With a beating heart he fares him forth, by the light of the stars, to this meeting of gods. But the illusion speedily vanishes; what at first seemed to him nectar and ambrosia, is discovered to be plain bohea and short gingerbread.

Then with what speed does he throw off his strait-jacket of a godship, and play the one-eared, twomouthed mortal, thus proving his title to the epithet applied to him of old by Homer of μέροψ ἄνθρωπος, , or that possesses an articulating voice. But unfortunately we have as yet invented no rule by which the stranger may know when he has culminated. We read that among the Finlanders when one "has succeeded in rendering himself agreeable, it is a custom at an assemblage for all the women present to give him on the back a sudden slap, when it is least expected; and the compliment is in proportion to the weight of the blow."

It is provoking, when one sits waiting the assembling together of his neighbors around his hearth, to behold merely their clay houses, for the most part newly shingled and clapboarded, and not unfrequently with a fresh coat of paint, trundled to his door. He has but to knock slightly at the outer gate of one of these shingle palaces, to be assured that the master or mistress is not at home.

After all, the field of battle possesses 'many advantages over the drawing-room. There at least is no room for pretension or excessive ceremony, no shaking of hands or rubbing of noses, which make one doubt your sincerity, but hearty as well as hard hand-play. It at least exhibits one of the faces of humanity, the former only a mask.

The utmost nearness to which men approach each other amounts barely to a mechanical contact. As when you rub two stones together, though they emit an audible sound, yet do they not actually touch each other.

In obedience to an instinct of their nature men have pitched their cabins and planted corn and potatoes within speaking distance of one another, and so formed towns and villages, but they have not associated, they have only assembled, and society has signified only a *convention* of men.

When I think of a playhouse, it is as if we had not time to appreciate the follies of the day in detail as they occur, and so devoted an hour of our evening to laughing or crying at them in the lump. Despairing of a more perfect intercourse, or perhaps never dreaming that such is desirable, or at least possible, we are contented to act our part in what deserves to be called the great farce, not drama, of life, like pitiful and mercenary stock actors whose business it is to keep up the semblance of a stage.

Our least deed, like the young of the land crab, wends its way to the sea of cause and effect as soon as born, and makes a drop there to eternity.

Let ours be like the meeting of two planets, not hastening to confound their jarring spheres, but drawn together by the influence of a subtile attraction, soon to roll diverse in their respective orbits, from this their perigee, or point of nearest approach.

If thy neighbor hail thee to inquire how goes the world, feel thyself put to thy trumps to return a true and explicit answer. Plant the feet firmly, and, will he nill he, dole out to him with strict and conscientious impartiality his modicum of a response.

Let not society be the element in which you swim, or are tossed about at the mercy of the waves, but be rather a strip of firm land running out into the sea, whose base is daily washed by the tide, but

whose summit only the spring tide can reach.

But after all, such a morsel of society as this will not satisfy a man. But like those women of Malamocco and Pelestrina, who when their husbands are fishing at sea, repair to the shore and sing their shrill songs at evening, till they hear the voices of their husbands in reply borne to them over the water, so go we about indefatigably, chanting our stanza of the lay, and awaiting the response of a kindred soul out of the distance. *

THE INDIAN AXE

April 1. The Indian must have possessed no small share of vital energy to have rubbed industriously stone upon stone for long months till at length he had rubbed out an axe or pestle, — as though he had said in the face of the constant flux of things, I at least will live an enduring life.

April 8. — FRIENDSHIP

Sole meat and sweetest drink,
And close connecting link
‘Tween heaven and earth.

I only know it is, not how or why,
My greatest happiness;
However hard I try,
Not if I were to die,
Can I explain.

I fain would ask my friend how it can be,
But, when the time arrives,
Then Love is more lovely
Than anything to me,
And so I’m dumb.

For, if the truth were known, Love cannot speak,
But only thinks and does;
Though surely out't will leak
Without the help of Greek,
Or any tongue.

A man may love the truth and practice it,
Beauty he may admire,
And goodness not omit,
As much as may befit
To reverence.

But only when these three together meet,
As they always incline,
And make one soul the seat
And favorite retreat
Of loveliness;

When under kindred shape, like loves and hates
And a kindred nature,
Proclaim us to be mates,
Exposed to equal fates
Eternally;

And each may other help, and service do,
Drawing Love's bands more tight,
Service he ne'er shall rue
While one and one make two,
And two are one;

In such case only doth man fully prove,
Fully as man can do,
What power there is in Love
His inmost soul to move
Resistlessly.

Two sturdy oaks I mean, which side by side

Withstand the winter's storm,
And, spite of wind and tide,
Grow up the meadow's pride,
For both are strong.

Above they barely touch, but, undermined
Down to their deepest source,
Admiring you shall find
Their roots are intertwined
Insep'raftly.

CONVERSATION *April* 15. Thomas Fuller relates that "in Merionethshire, in Wales, there are high mountains, whose hanging tops come so close together that shepherds on the tops of several hills may audibly talk together, yet will it be a day's journey for their bodies to meet, so vast is the hollowness of the valleys betwixt them." As much may be said in a moral sense of our intercourse in the plains, for, though we may audibly converse together, yet is there so vast a gulf of hollowness between that we are actually many days' journey from a veritable communication.

STEAMSHIPS

April 24. Men have been contriving new means and modes of motion. Steamships have been westering during these late days and nights on the Atlantic waves, —— the fuglers of a new evolution to this generation. Meanwhile plants spring silently by the brooksides, and the grim woods wave indifferent; the earth emits no howl, pot on fire simmers and seethes, and men go about their business.

April 26.

THE BLUEBIRDS

In the midst of the poplar that stands by our door

We planted a bluebird box,
And we hoped before the summer was o'er
A transient pair to coax.

One warm summer's day the bluebirds came
And lighted on our tree,
But at first the wand'rers were not so tame
But they were afraid of me.

They seemed to come from the distant south,
Just over the Walden wood,
And they skimmed it along with open mouth
Close by where the bellows stood.

Warbling they swept round the distant cliff,
And they warbled it over the lea,
And over the blacksmith's shop in a jiff
Did they come warbling to me.

They came and sat on the box's top
Without looking into the hole,
And only from this side to that did they hop,
As't were a common well-pole.

Methinks I had never seen them before,
Nor indeed had they seen me,
Till I chanced to stand by our back door,
And they came to the poplar tree.

In course of time they built their nest
And reared a happy brood,
And every morn they piped their best
As they flew away to the wood.
Thus wore the summer hours away
To the bluebirds and to me,

And every hour was a summer's day,

So pleasantly lived we.

They were a world within themselves,
And I a world in me,
Up in the tree — the little elves —
With their callow family.

One morn the wind blowed cold and strong,
And the leaves went whirling away;
The birds prepared for their journey long
That raw and gusty day.

Boreas came blust'ring down from the north,
And ruffled their azure smocks,
So they launched them forth, though somewhat loth,
By way of the old Cliff rocks.

Meanwhile the earth jogged steadily on
In her mantle of purest white,
And anon another spring was born
When winter was vanished quite.

And I wandered forth o'er the steamy earth,
And gazed at the mellow sky,
But never before from the hour of my birth
Had I wandered so thoughtfully.

For never before was the earth so still,
And never so mild was the sky,
The river, the fields, the woods, and the hill
Seemed to heave an audible sigh.

I felt that the heavens were all around,
And the earth was all below,
As when in the ears there rushes a sound
Which thrills you from top to toe.

I dreamed that I was a waking thought,
A something I hardly knew,
Not a solid piece, nor an empty nought,
But a drop of morning dew.

‘T was the world and I at a game of bo-peep,
As a man would dodge his shadow,
An idea becalmed in eternity’s deep,
‘Tween Lima and Segraddo.

Anon a faintly warbled note
From out the azure deep
Into my ears did gently float
As is the approach of sleep.

It thrilled but startled not my soul;
Across my mind strange mem’ries gleamed,
As often distant scenes unroll
When we have lately dreamed.

The bluebird had come from the distant South
To his box in the poplar tree,
And he opened wide his slender mouth
On purpose to sing to me.

JOURNEY TO MAINE

May 3-4. Boston to Portland.

What, indeed, is this earth to us of New England but a field for Yankee speculation? The Nantucket whaler goes a-fishing round it, and so knows it, — what it is, how long, how broad, and that no tortoise sustains it. He who has visited the confines of his real estate, looking out on all sides into space, will feel a new inducement to *be* the lord of creation.

We must all pay a small tribute to Neptune; the chief engineer must once have been seasick.

Midnight — head over the boat's side — between sleeping and waking — with glimpses of one or more lights in the vicinity of Cape Ann. Bright moonlight — the effect heightened by seasickness. Beyond that light yonder have my lines hitherto been cast, but now I know that there lies not the whole world, for I can say it is there and not here.

May 4. Portland. There is a proper and only right way to enter a city, as well as to make advances to a strange person; neither will allow of the least forwardness nor bustle. A sensitive person can hardly elbow his way boldly, laughing and talking, into a strange town, without experiencing some twinges of conscience, as when he has treated a stranger with too much familiarity.

May 5. Portland to Bath *via* Brunswick; Bath to Brunswick.

Each one's world is but a clearing in the forest, so much open and inclosed ground. When the mail coach rumbles into one of these, the villagers gaze after you with a compassionate look, as much as to say: "Where have you been all this time, that you make your début in the world at this late hour? Nevertheless, here we are; come and study us, that you may learn men and manners."

May 6. Brunswick to Augusta *via* Gardiner and Hallowell.

May 7. We occasionally meet an individual of a character and disposition so entirely the reverse of our own that we wonder if he can indeed be another man like ourselves. We doubt if we ever could draw any nearer to him, and understand him. Such was the old English gentleman whom I met with to-day in H. Though I peered in at his eyes I could not discern myself reflected therein. The chief wonder was how we could ever arrive at so fair-seeming an intercourse upon so small ground of sympathy. He walked and fluttered like a strange bird at my side, prying into and making a handle of the least circumstance. The bustle and rapidity of our communication were astonishing; we skated in our conversation. All at once he would stop short in the path, and, in an abstracted air, query whether the steamboat had reached Bath or Portland,

addressing me from time to time as his familiar genius, who could understand what was passing in his mind without the necessity of uninterrupted oral communication.

May 8. Augusta to Bangor *via* China.

May 10. Bangor to Oldtown.

The railroad from Bangor to Oldtown is civilization shooting off in a tangent into the forest. I had much conversation with an old Indian at the latter place, who sat dreaming upon a scow at the waterside and striking his deer-skin moccasins against the planks, while his arms hung listlessly by his side. He was the most communicative man I had met. Talked of hunting and fishing, old times and new times. Pointing up the Penobscot, he observed, "Two or three mile up the river one beautiful country!" and then, as if he would come as far to meet me as I had gone to meet him, he exclaimed, "Ugh! one very hard time!" But he had mistaken his man.

May 11. Bangor to Belfast *via* Saturday Cove.

May 12. Belfast.

May 13. To Castine by sailboat "Cinderilla [sic]." *May* 14. Castine to Belfast by packet, Captain Skinner. Found the Poems of Burns and an odd volume of the "Spectator" in the cabin.

May 15. Belfast to Bath *via* Thomaston.

May 16. To Portland.

May 17. To Boston and Concord.

May 21.

MAY MORNING

The school-boy loitered on his way to school,
Scorning to live so rare a day by rule.
So mild the air a pleasure't was to breathe,
For what seems heaven above was earth beneath.

Soured neighbors chatted by the garden pale,
Nor quarrelled who should drive the needed nail;
The most unsocial made new friends that day,
As when the sun shines husbandmen make hay.

How long I slept I know not, but at last
I felt my consciousness returning fast,
For Zephyr rustled past with leafy tread,
And heedlessly with one heel grazed my head.

My eyelids opened on a field of blue,
For close above a nodding violet grew;
A part of heaven it seemed, which one could scent,
Its blue commingling with the firmament.

June 3.

WALDEN

True, our converse a stranger is to speech;
Only the practiced ear can catch the surging words
That break and die upon thy pebbled lips.
Thy flow of thought is noiseless as the lapse of thy own waters,
Wafted as is the morning mist up from thy surface,
So that the passive Soul doth breathe it in,
And is infected with the truth thou wouldst express.

E'en the remotest stars have come in troops
And stooped low to catch the benediction
Of thy countenance. Oft as the day came round,
Impartial has the sun exhibited himself

Before thy narrow skylight; nor has the moon
For cycles failed to roll this way
As oft as elsewhither, and tell thee of the night.
No cloud so rare but hitherward it stalked,
And in thy face looked doubly beautiful.
O ! tell me what the winds have writ for the last thousand years
On the blue vault that spans thy flood,
Or sun transferred and delicately reprinted
For thy own private reading. Somewhat
Within these latter days I've read,
But surely there was much that would have thrilled the Soul,
Which human eye saw not.
I would give much to read that first bright page,
Wet from a virgin press, when Eurus, Boreas,
And the host of airy quill-drivers
First dipped their pens in mist.

June 14.
Truth, Goodness, Beauty, — those celestial thrins,
Continually are born; e'en now the Universe,
With thousand throats, and eke with greener smiles,
Its joy confesses at their recent birth.
Strange that so many fickle gods, as fickle as the weather,
Throughout Dame Nature's provinces should always pull together.

June 16.
In the busy streets, domains of trade,
Man is a surly porter, or a vain and hectoring bully,
Who can claim no nearer kindredship with me
Than brotherhood by law.

July 8.

CLIFFS

The loudest sound that burdens here the breeze

Is the wood's whisper; 't is, when we choose to list,
Audible sound, and when we list not,
It is calm profound. Tongues were provided
But to vex the ear with superficial thoughts.
When deeper thoughts upswell, the jarring discord
Of harsh speech is hushed, and senses seem
As little as may be to share the ecstasy.

July 8.

CLIFFS

The loudest sound that burdens here the breeze Is the wood's whisper; 't is, when we choose to list, Audible sound, and when we list not, It is calm profound. Tongues were provided But to vex the ear with superficial thoughts.

When deeper thoughts upswell, the jarring discord Of harsh speech is hushed, and senses seem As little as may be to share the ecstasy.

HEROISM

July 13. What a hero one can be without moving a finger! The world is not a field worthy of us, nor can we be satisfied with the plains of Troy. A glorious strife seems waging within us, yet so noiselessly that we but just catch the sound of the clarion ringing of victory, borne to us on the breeze. There are in each the seeds of a heroic ardor, which need only to be stirred in with the *soil where they lie*, by an inspired voice or pen, to bear fruit of a divine flavor.

SUSPICION

July 15. What though friends misinterpret your conduct, if it is right in sight of God and Nature. The wrong, if there be any, pertains only to the wrongdoer, nor is the integrity of your relations to the universe

affected, but you may gather encouragement from their mistrust. If the friend withhold his favor, yet does greater float gratuitous on the zephyr.

TRUTH

Aug. 4. Whatever of past or present wisdom has published itself to the world, is palpable falsehood till it come and utter itself by my side.

SPHERE MUSIC

Aug. 5. Some sounds seem to reverberate along the plain, and then settle to earth again like dust; such are Noise, Discord, Jargon. But such only as spring heavenward, and I may catch from steeples and hilltops in their upward course, which are the more refined parts of the former, are the true sphere music, — pure, unmixed music, — in which no wail mingles.

DIVINE SERVICE IN THE ACADEMY HALL

In dark places and dungeons these words might perhaps strike root and grow, but utter them in the daylight and their dusky hues are apparent. From this window I can compare the written with the preached word: within is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; without, grain fields and grasshoppers, which give those the lie direct.

THE TIME OF THE UNIVERSE

Aug. 10. Nor can all the vanities that so vex the world alter one whit the measure that night has chosen, but ever it must be short particular metre. The human soul is a silent harp in God's quire, whose strings need only to be swept by the divine breath to chime in with the

harmonies of creation. Every pulse-beat is in exact time with the cricket's chant, and the tickings of the death-watch in the wall. Alternate with these if you can.

CONSCIOUSNESS

Aug. 13. If with closed ears and eyes I consult consciousness for a moment, immediately are all walls and barriers dissipated, earth rolls from under me, and I float, by the impetus derived from the earth and the system, a subjective, heavily laden thought, in the midst of an unknown and infinite sea, or else heave and swell like a vast ocean of thought, without rock or headland, where are all riddles solved, all straight lines making there their two ends to meet, eternity and space gambolling familiarly through my depths. I am from the beginning, knowing no end, no aim. No sun illumines me, for I dissolve all lesser lights in my own intenser and steadier light. I am a restful kernel in the magazine of the universe.

RESOURCE

Men are constantly dinging in my ears their fair theories and plausible solutions of the universe, but ever there is no help, and I return again to my shoreless, islandless ocean, and fathom unceasingly for a bottom that will hold an anchor, that it may not drag.

SABBATH BELL

Aug. 19. The sound of the sabbath bell, whose farthest waves are at this instant breaking on these cliffs, does not awaken pleasing associations alone. Its muse is wonderfully condescending and philanthropic. One involuntarily leans on his staff to humor the unusually meditative mood. It is as the sound of many catechisms and religious books twanging a canting peal round the world, and seems to issue from some Egyptian temple, and echo along the shore

of the Nile, right opposite to Pharaoh's palace and Moses in the bulrushes, startling a multitude of storks and alligators basking in the sun. Not so these larks and pewees of Musketaquid. One is sick at heart of this pagoda worship. It is like the beating of gongs in a Hindoo subterranean temple.

HOLY WAR

Aug. 21. Passion and appetite are always an unholy land in which one may wage most holy war. Let him steadfastly follow the banner of his faith till it is planted on the enemy's citadel. Nor shall he lack fields to display his valor in, nor straits worthy of him. For when he has blown his blast, and smote those within reach, invisible enemies will not cease to torment him, who yet may be starved out in the garrisons where they lie.

SCRIPTURE

Aug. 22. How thrilling a noble sentiment in the oldest books, — in Homer, the Zendavesta, or Confucius! It is a strain of music wafted down to us on the breeze of time, through the aisles of innumerable ages. By its very nobleness it is made near and audible to us.

EVENING SOUNDS

Aug. 26. How strangely sounds of revelry strike the ear from over cultivated fields by the woodside, while the sun is declining in the west. It is a world we had not known before. We listen and are capable of no mean act or thought. We tread on Olympus and participate in the councils of the gods.

HOMER

It does one's heart good if Homer but say the sun sets, —— or, "As

when beautiful stars accompany the bright moon through the serene heavens; and the woody hills and cliffs are discerned through the mild light, and each star is visible, and the shepherd rejoices in his heart."

THE LOSS OF A TOOTH

Aug. 27. Verily I am the creature of circumstances. Here I have swallowed an indispensable tooth, and so am no whole man, but a lame and halting piece of manhood. I am conscious of no gap in my soul, but it would seem that, now the entrance to the oracle has been enlarged, the more rare and commonplace the responses that issue from it. I have felt cheap, and hardly dared hold up my head among men, ever since this accident happened. Nothing can I do as well and freely as before; nothing do I undertake but I am hindered and balked by this circumstance. What a great matter a little spark kindleth! I believe if I were called at this moment to rush into the thickest of the fight, I should halt for lack of so insignificant a piece of armor as a tooth. Virtue and Truth go undefended, and Falsehood and Affectation are thrown in my teeth, — though I am toothless. One does not need that the earth quake for the sake of excitement, when so slight a crack proves such an impassable moat. But let the lame man shake his leg, and match himself with the fleetest in the race. So shall he do what is in him to do. But let him who has lost a tooth open his mouth wide and gabble, lisp, and sputter never so resolutely.

DEFORMITY

Aug. 29. Here at the top of Nawshawtuct, this mild August afternoon, I can discern no deformed thing. The prophane hay-makers in yonder meadow are yet the hay-makers of poetry, — forsooth Faustus and Amyntas. Yonder schoolhouse of brick, than which, near at hand, nothing can be more mote-like to my eye, serves even to heighten the picturesqueness of the scene. Barns and outbuildings, which in the

nearness mar by their presence the loveliness of nature, are not only endurable, but, observed where they lie by some waving field of grain or patch of woodland, prove a very cynosure to the pensive eye. Let man after infinite hammering and din of crows uprear a deformity in the plain, yet will Nature have her revenge on the hilltop. Retire a stone's throw and she will have changed his base metal into gold.

CRICKETS

The crackling flight of grasshoppers is a luxury; and pleasant is it when summer has once more followed in the steps of winter to hear scald cricket piping a Nibelungenlied in the grass. It is the most infinite of singers. Wiselier had the Greeks chosen a golden cricket, and let the grasshopper eat grass. One opens both his ears to the invisible, incessant quire, and doubts if it be not earth herself chanting for all time.

GENII In the vulgar daylight of our self-conceit, good genii are still overlooking and conducting us; as the stars look down on us by day as by night — and we observe them not.

SPHERE MUSIC

Sept. 2. The cocks chant a strain of which we never tire. Some there are who find pleasure in the melody of birds and chirping of crickets, — aye, even the peeping of frogs. Such faint sounds as these are for the most part heard above the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth which so unhallow the Sabbath among us. The moan the earth makes is after all a very faint sound, infinitely inferior in volume to its creakings of joy and gleeful murmurs; so that we may expect the next balloonist will rise above the utmost range of discordant sounds into the region of pure melody. Never so loud was the wail but it seemed to taper off into a piercing melody and note of joy, which lingered not amid the clods of the valley.

CREEDS

Sept. 3. The only faith that men recognize is a creed. But the true creed which we unconsciously live by, and which rather adopts us than we it, is quite different from the written or preached one. Men anxiously hold fast to their creed, as to a straw, thinking this does them good service because their sheet anchor does not drag.

RIVERS

Sept. 5. For the first time it occurred to me this afternoon what a piece of wonder a river is, — a huge volume of matter ceaselessly rolling through the fields and meadows of this substantial earth, making haste from the high places, by stable dwellings of men and Egyptian Pyramids, to its restless reservoir. One would think that, by a very natural impulse, the dwellers upon the headwaters of the Mississippi and Amazon would follow in the trail of their waters to see the end of the matter.

HOMER

Sept. 7. When Homer's messengers repair to the tent of Achilles, we do not have to wonder how they get there, but step by step accompany them along the shore of the resounding sea.

FLOW OF SPIRITS IN YOUTH

Sept. 15. How unaccountable the flow of spirits in youth. You may throw sticks and dirt into the current, and it will only rise the higher. Dam it up you may, but dry it up you may not, for you cannot reach its source. If you stop up this avenue or that, anon it will come gurgling out where you least expected and wash away all fixtures. Youth grasps at happiness as an inalienable right. The tear does no sooner gush than glisten. Who shall say when the tear that sprung of sorrow first sparkled with joy?

ALMA NATURA *Sept.* 20. It is a luxury to muse by a wall-side in the sunshine of a September afternoon, — to cuddle down under a gray stone, and hearken to the siren song of the cricket. Day and night seem henceforth but accidents, and the time is always a still eventide, and as the close of a happy day. Parched fields and mulleins gilded with the slanting rays are my diet. I know of no word so fit to express this disposition of Nature as Alma Natura.

Sept. 23. If we will be quiet and ready enough, we shall find compensation in every disappointment. If a shower drives us for shelter to the maple grove or the trailing branches of the pine, yet in their recesses with microscopic eye we discover some new wonder in the bark, or the leaves, or the fungi at our feet. We are interested by some new resource of insect economy, or the chickadee is more than usually familiar. We can study Nature's nooks and corners then.

Oct. 16. — MY BOOTS

Anon with gaping fearlessness they quaff The dewy nectar with a natural thirst, Or wet their leathern lungs where cranberries lurk, With sweeter wine than Chian, Lesbian, or Falernian far.

Theirs was the inward lustre that bespeaks An open sole — unknowing to exclude The cheerful day — a worthier glory far Than that which gilds the outmost rind with darkness visible —

Virtues that fast abide through lapse of years, Rather rubbed in than off.

HOMER

Oct. 21. Hector hurrying from rank to rank is likened to the moon wading in majesty from cloud to cloud. We are reminded of the hour of the day by the fact that the woodcutter spreads now his morning meal in the recesses of the mountains, having already laid his axe at the root of many lofty trees.

Oct. 23. Nestor's simple repast after the rescue of Machaon is a fit subject for poetry. The woodcutter may sit down to his cold victuals,

the hero to soldier's fare, and the wild Arab to his dried dates and figs, without offense; but not so a modern gentleman to his dinner.

Oct. 24. It matters not whether these strains originate there in the grass or float thitherward like atoms of light from the minstrel days of Greece.

"The snowflakes fall thick and fast on a winter's day. The winds are lulled, and the snow falls incessant, covering the tops of the mountains, and the hills, and the plains where the lotus tree grows, and the cultivated fields. And they are falling by the inlets and shores of the foaming sea, but are silently dissolved by the waves."

SPECULATION

Dec. 7. We may believe it, but never do we live a quiet, free life, such as Adam's, but are enveloped in an invisible network of speculations. Our progress is only from one such speculation to another, and only at rare intervals do we perceive that it is no progress. Could we for a moment drop this by-play, and simply wonder, without reference or inference!

BYRON

Dec. 8. Nothing in nature is sneaking or chapfallen, as somewhat maltreated and slighted, but each is satisfied with its being, and so is as lavender and balm. If skunk-cabbage is offensive to the nostrils of men, still has it not drooped in consequence, but trustfully unfolded its leaf of two hands' breadth. What was it to Lord Byron whether England owned or disowned him, whether he smelled sour and was skunk-cabbage to the English nostril or violet-like, the pride of the land and ornament of every lady's boudoir? Let not the oyster grieve that he has lost the race; he has gained as an oyster.

Dec. 15.

FAIR HAVEN

When winter fringes every bough
With his fantastic wreath,
And puts the seal of silence now
Upon the leaves beneath;

When every stream in its penthouse
Goes gurgling on its way,
And in his gallery the mouse
Nibbleth the meadow hay;

Methinks the summer still is nigh,
And lurketh there below,
As that same meadow mouse doth lie
Snug underneath the snow.

And if perchance the chickadee
Lisp a faint note anon,
The snow is summer's canopy,
Which she herself put on.

Rare blossoms deck the cheerful trees,
And dazzling fruits depend,
The north wind sighs a summer breeze,
The nipping frosts to fend,

Bringing glad tidings unto me,
While that I stand all ear,
Of a serene eternity,
That need not winter fear.

Out on the silent pond straightway
The restless ice doth crack,
And pond sprites merry gambols play
Amid the deaf'ning rack.

Eager I press me to the vale
As I had heard brave news,
How nature held high festival,
Which it were hard to lose.

I crack me with my neighbor ice,
And sympathizing quake,
As each new rent darts in a trice
Across the gladsome lake.

One with the cricket in the ground,
And fuel on the hearth,
Resounds the rare domestic sound
Along the forest path.

Fair Haven is my huge tea-um
That seethes and sings to me,
And eke the crackling fagots burn, —
A homebred minstrelsy.

SOME SCRAPS FROM AN ESSAY ON "SOUND AND SILENCE" WRITTEN IN THE LATTER HALF OF THIS MONTH, — DECEMBER, 1838

As the truest society approaches always nearer to solitude, so the most excellent speech finally falls into silence. We go about to find Solitude and Silence, as though they dwelt only in distant glens and the depths of the forest, venturing out from these fastnesses at midnight. Silence *was*, say we, before ever the world was, as if creation had displaced her, and were not her visible framework and foil. It is only favorite dells that she deigns to frequent, and we dream not that she is then imported into them when we wend thither, as Selden's butcher busied himself with looking after his knife, when he had it in his mouth. For where man is, there is Silence.

Silence is the communing of a conscious soul with itself. If the soul attend for a moment to its own infinity, then and there is silence. She is audible to all men, at all times, in all places, and if we will we

may always hearken to her admonitions.

Silence is ever less strange than noise, lurking amid the boughs of the hemlock or pine just in proportion as we find ourselves there. The nuthatch, tapping the upright trunks by our side, is only a partial spokesman for the solemn stillness.

She is always at hand with her wisdom, by roadsides and street corners; lurking in belfries, the cannon's mouth, and the wake of the earthquake; gathering up and fondling their puny din in her ample bosom.

Those divine sounds which are uttered to our inward ear — which are breathed in with the zephyr or reflected from the lake — come to us noiselessly, bathing the temples of the soul, as we stand motionless amid the rocks.

The halloo is the creature of walls and mason work; the whisper is fittest in the depths of the wood, or by the shore of the lake; but silence is best adapted to the acoustics of space.

All sounds are her servants and purveyors, proclaiming not only that their mistress is, but is a rare mistress, and earnestly to be sought after. Behind the most distinct and significant hovers always a more significant silence which floats it. The thunder is only our signal gun, that we may know what communion awaits us. Not its dull sound, but the infinite expansion of our being which ensues, we praise and unanimously name sublime.

All sound is nearly akin to Silence; it is a bubble on her surface which straightway bursts, an emblem of the strength and prolificness of the undercurrent. It is a faint utterance of Silence, and then only agreeable to our auditory nerves when it contrasts itself with the former. In proportion as it does this, and is a heightener and intensifier of the Silence, it is harmony and purest melody.

Every melodious sound is the ally of Silence, — a help and not a hindrance to abstraction.

Certain sounds more than others have found favor with the poets only as foils to silence.

ANACREON'S ODE TO THE CICADA

We pronounce thee happy, cicada,
For on the tops of the trees,
Sipping a little dew,
Like any king thou singest,
For thine are they all,
Whatever thou seest in the fields,
And whatever the woods bear.
Thou art the friend of the husbandmen,
In no respect injuring any one;
And thou art honored among men,
Sweet prophet of summer.
The Muses love thee,
And Phoebus himself loves thee,
And has given thee a shrill song;
Age does not wrack thee,
Thou skillful, earth-born, song-loving,
Unsuffering, bloodless one;
Almost thou art like the gods.

Silence is the universal refuge, the sequel of all dry discourses and all foolish acts, as balm to our every chagrin, as welcome after satiety as [after] disappointment; that background which the painter may not daub, be he master or bungler, and which, however awkward a figure he may have made in the foreground, remains ever our inviolable asylum.

With what equanimity does the silent consider how his world goes, settles the awards of virtue and justice, is slandered and buffeted never so much and views it all as a phenomenon. He is one with Truth, Goodness, Beauty. No indignity can assail him, no

personality disturb him.

The orator puts off his individuality, and is then most eloquent when most silent. He listens while he speaks, and is a hearer along with his audience.

Who has not hearkened to her infinite din? She is Truth's speaking trumpet, which every man carries slung over his shoulder, and when he will may apply to his ear. She is the sole oracle, the true Delphi and Dodona, which kings and courtiers would do well to consult, nor will they be balked by an ambiguous answer. Through her have all revelations been made. Just as far as men have consulted her oracle, they have obtained a clear insight, and their age been marked for an enlightened one. But as often as they have gone gadding abroad to a strange Delphi and her mad priestess, they have been benighted, and their age Dark or Leaden. — These are garrulous and noisy eras, which no longer yield any sound; but the Grecian, or *silent* and melodious, Era is ever sounding on the ears of men.

A good book is the plectrum with which our silent lyres are struck. In all epics, when, after breathless attention, we come to the significant words "He said," then especially our inmost man is addressed. We not unfrequently refer the interest which belongs to our own unwritten sequel to the written and comparatively lifeless page. Of all valuable books this same sequel makes an indispensable part. It is the author's aim to say once and emphatically, "He said." This is the most the bookmaker can attain to. If he make his volume a foil whereon the waves of silence may break, it is well. It is not so much the sighing of the blast as that pause, as Gray expresses it, "when the gust is recollecting itself," that thrills us, and is infinitely grander than the importunate howlings of the storm.

At evening Silence sends many emissaries to me, some navigating the subsiding waves which the village murmur has agitated.

It were vain for me to interpret the Silence. She cannot be done

into English. For six thousand years have men translated her, with what fidelity belonged to each; still is she little better than a sealed book. A man may run on confidently for a time, thinking he has her under his thumb, and shall one day exhaust her, but he too must at last be silent, and men remark only how brave a beginning he made; for, when he at length dives into her, so vast is the disproportion of the told to the untold that the former will seem but the bubble on the surface where he disappeared.

Nevertheless will we go on, like those Chinese cliff swallows, feathering our nests with the froth, so they may one day be bread of life to such as dwell by the seashore.

ANACREONTICS

Dec. 23. — RETURN OF SPRING

Behold, how, spring appearing,
The Graces send forth roses;
Behold, how the wave of the sea
Is made smooth by the calm;
Behold, how the duck dives;
Behold, how the crane travels;
And Titan shines constantly bright.
The shadows of the clouds are moving;
The works of man shine;
The earth puts forth fruits;
The fruit of the olive puts forth.
The cup of Bacchus is crowned.
Along the leaves, along the branches,
The fruit, bending them down, flourishes.

CUPID WOUNDED

Love once among roses
A sleeping bee

Did not see, but was stung;
And, being wounded in the finger
Of his hand, cried for pain.
Running as well as flying
To the beautiful Venus,
I am killed, mother, said he,
I am killed, and I die.
A little serpent has stung me,
Winged, which they call
A bee, — the husbandmen.
And she said, If the sting
Of a bee afflicts you,
How, think you, are they afflicted,
Love, whom you smite?

[Dated only 1838.] Sometimes I hear the veery's silver clarion, or the brazen note of the impatient jay, or in secluded woods the chickadee doles out her scanty notes, which sing the praise of heroes, and set forth the loveliness of virtue evermore. — *Phe-be.*

1839

Jan. 11. THE THAW

I saw the civil sun drying earth's tears,
Her tears of joy, that only faster flowed.

Fain would I stretch me by the highway-side,
To thaw and trickle with the melting snow,
That, mingled soul and body with the tide,
I too may through the pores of nature flow.

But I, alas, nor trickle can nor fume,
One jot to forward the great work of Time,
'T is mine to hearken while these ply the loom,
So shall my silence with their music chime.

THE DREAM VALLEY

Jan. 20. The prospect of our river valley from Tahatawan Cliff appeared to me again in my dreams.

Last night, as I lay gazing with shut eyes
Into the golden land of dreams,
I thought I gazed adown a quiet reach
Of land and water prospect,
Whose low beach
Was peopled with the now subsiding hum
Of happy industry, whose work is done.

And as I turned me on my pillow o'er,
I heard the lapse of waves upon the shore,
Distinct as it had been at broad noonday,
And I were wandering at Rockaway.

LOVE

We two that planets erst had been
Are now a double star,
And in the heavens may be seen,
Where that we fixed are.

Yet, whirled with subtle power along,
Into new space we enter,
And evermore with spheral song
Revolve about one centre.

Feb. 3.
The deeds of king and meanest hedger
Stand side by side in heaven's ledger.

'T will soon appear if we but look
At evening into earth's day-book,
Which way the great account doth stand
Between the heavens and the land.

THE EVENING WIND

The eastern mail comes lumbering in,
With outmost waves of Europe's din;
The western sighs adown the slope,
Or 'mid the rustling leaves doth grope,
Laden with news from Califom',
Whate'er transpired hath since morn,
How wags the world by brier and brake,
From hence to Athabasca lake. POETIZING

Feb. 8. When the poetic frenzy seizes us, we run and scratch with our pen, delighting, like the cock, in the dust we make, but do not detect where the jewel lies, which perhaps we have in the meantime cast to a distance, or quite covered up again.

Feb. 9. It takes a man to make a room silent.

Feb. 10. THE PEAL OF THE BELLS
When the world grows old by the chimney-side,
Then forth to the youngling rocks I glide,
Where over the water, and over the land,
The bells are booming on either hand.

Now up they go ding, then down again dong,
And awhile they swing to the same old song,
And the metal goes round at a single bound,
A-lulling the fields with its measured sound,
Till the tired tongue falls with a lengthened boom
As solemn and loud as the crack of doom.

Then changed is their measure to tone upon tone,
And seldom it is that one sound comes alone,
For they ring out their peals in a mingled throng,
And the breezes waft the loud ding-dong along.

When the echo has reached me in this lone vale,
I am straightway a hero in coat of mail,
I tug at my belt and I march on my post,
And feel myself more than a match for a host.

I am on the alert for some wonderful Thing
Which somewhere's a-taking place;
'T is perchance the salute which our planet doth ring
When it meeteth another in space.

Feb. 25. — THE SHRIKE
Hark! hark! from out the thickest fog
Warbles with might and main
The fearless shrike, as all agog
To find in fog his gain.

His steady sails he never furls
At any time o' year,
And, perched now on Winter's curls,
He whistles in his ear.

THE POET

March 3. He must be something more than natural, — even supernatural. Nature will not speak through but along with him. His voice will not proceed from her midst, but, breathing on her, will make her the expression of his thought. He then poetizes when he takes a fact out of nature into spirit. He speaks without reference to time or place. His thought is one world, hers another. He is another Nature, — Nature's brother. Kindly offices do they perform for one another. Each publishes the other's truth.

MORNING

April 4. The atmosphere of morning gives a healthy hue to our prospects. Disease is a sluggard that overtakes, never encounters, us. We have the start each day, and may fairly distance him before the dew is off; but if we recline in the bowers of noon, he will come up with us after all. The morning dew breeds no cold. We enjoy a diurnal reprieve in the beginning of each day's creation. In the morning we do not believe in expediency; we will start afresh, and have no patching, no temporary fixtures. The afternoon man has an interest in the past; his eye is divided, and he sees indifferently well either way.

DRIFTING

Drifting in a sultry day on the sluggish waters of the pond, I almost cease to live and begin to be. A boatman stretched on the deck of his craft and dallying with the noon would be as apt an emblem of eternity for me as the serpent with his tail in his mouth. I am never so

prone to lose my identity. I am dissolved in the haze.

DISAPPOINTMENT

April 7. *Sunday.* The tediousness and detail of execution never occur to the genius projecting; it always antedates the completion of its work. It condescends to give time a few hours to do its bidding in.

RESOLVE

Most have sufficient contempt for what is mean to resolve that they will abstain from it, and a few virtue enough to abide by their resolution, but not often does one attain to such lofty contempt as to require no resolution to be made.

THE TEAMSTER

April 8. There goes a six-horse team, and a man by its side. He has rolled out of his cradle into a Tom-and-Jerry, and goes about his business while Nature goes about hers, without standing agape at his condition. As though sixty years were not enough for these things! What have death, and the cholera, and the immortal destiny of man, to do with the shipping interests? There is an unexplained bravery in this. What with bare astonishment one would think that man had his hands full for so short a term. But this is no drawback on the lace-working and cap-making interests. Some attain to such a degree of sang-froid and nonchalance as to be weavers of toilet cushions and manufacturers of pinheads, without once flinching or the slightest affection of the nerves, for the period of a natural life.

FAT PINE FOR SPEARING

April 9. Fat roots of pine lying in rich veins as of gold or silver, even in old pastures where you would least expect it, make you realize that

you live in the youth of the world, and you begin to know the wealth of the planet. Human nature is still in its prime, then. Bring axe, pickaxe, and shovel, and tap the earth here where there is most sap. The marrowy store gleams like some vigorous sinew, and you feel a new suppleness in your own limbs. These are the traits that conciliate man's moroseness, and make him civil to his fellows; every such pine root is a pledge of suavity. If he can discover absolute barrenness in any direction there will be some excuse for peevishness.

SOCIETY

April 14. There is a *terra firma* in society as well as in geography, some whose ports you may make by dead reckoning in all weather. All the rest are but floating and fabulous Atlantides which sometimes skirt the western horizon of our intercourse. They impose only on seasick mariners who have put into some Canary Island on the frontiers of society.

CIRCUMSTANCES

April 24. Why should we concern ourselves with what has happened to us, and the unaccountable fickleness of events, and not rather [with] how we have happened to the universe, and it has demeaned itself in consequence? Let us record in each case the judgment we have awarded to circumstances.

ACQUAINTANCE

Cheap persons will stand upon ceremony, because there is no other ground; but to the great of the earth we need no introduction, nor do they need any to us.

THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH

April 25. If we see the reality in things, of what moment is the superficial and apparent? Take the earth and all the interests it has known, — what are they beside one deep surmise that pierces and scatters them? The independent beggar disposes of all with one hearty, significant curse by the roadside. 'Tis true they are not worth a "tinker's damn."

PICTURE

April 30. Of some illuminated pictures which I saw last evening, one representing the plain of Babylon, with only a heap of brick-dust in the centre, and an uninterrupted horizon bounding the desert, struck me most. I would see painted a boundless expanse of desert, prairie, or sea, without other object than the horizon. The heavens and the earth, — the first and last painting, — where is the artist who shall undertake it?

May 11. The farmer keeps pace with his crops and the revolutions of the seasons, but the merchant with the fluctuations of trade. Observe how differently they walk in the streets.

VICE AND VIRTUE

May 16. Virtue is the very heart and lungs of vice: it cannot stand up but it lean on virtue.

Who has not admired the twelve labors? And yet nobody thinks if Hercules had sufficient motive for racking his bones to that degree. Men are not so much virtuous as patrons of virtue, and every one knows that it is easier to deal with the real possessor of a thing than the temporary guardian of it.

THE FORM OF STRENGTH

May 17. We say justly that the weak person is flat; for, like all flat substances, he does not stand in the direction of his strength, that is

on his edge, but affords a convenient surface to put upon. He slides all the way through life. Most things are strong in one direction, — a straw longitudinally, a board in the direction of its edge, a knee transversely to its grain, — but the brave man is a perfect sphere, which cannot fall on its flat side, and is equally strong every way. The coward is wretchedly spheroidal at best, too much educated or drawn out on one side commonly and depressed on the other; or he may be likened to a hollow sphere, whose disposition of matter is best when the greatest bulk is intended.

SELF-CULTURE

May 21. Who knows how incessant a surveillance a strong man may maintain over himself, — how far subject passion and appetite to reason, and lead the life his imagination paints? Well has the poet said, —

"By manly mind Not e'en in sleep is will resigned."

By a strong effort may he not command even his brute body in unconscious moments?

MY ATTIC

June 4. I sit here this fourth of June, looking out on men and nature from this that I call my perspective window, through which all things are seen in their true relations. This is my upper empire, bounded by four walls, viz., three of boards yellow-washed, facing the north, west, and south, respectively, and the fourth of plaster, likewise yellow-washed, fronting the sunrise, — to say nothing of the purlieus and outlying provinces, unexplored as yet but by rats.

The words of some men are thrown forcibly against you and adhere like burs.

RENCOUNTER

June 22. *Saturday.* I have within the last few days come into contact with a pure, uncompromising spirit, that is somewhere wandering in

the atmosphere, but settles not positively anywhere. Some persons carry about them the air and conviction of virtue, though they themselves are unconscious of it, and are even backward to appreciate it in others. Such it is impossible not to love; still is their loveliness, as it were, independent of them, so that you seem not to lose it when they are absent, for when they are near it is like an invisible presence which attends you.

That virtue we appreciate is as much ours as another's. We see so much only as we possess.

June 24. — SYMPATHY

Lately, alas, I knew a gentle boy,
Whose features all were cast in Virtue's mould,
As one she had designed for Beauty's toy,
But after manned him for her own stronghold.

On every side he open was as day,
That you might see no lack of strength within,
For walls and ports do only serve alway
For a pretense to feebleness and sin.

Say not that Cæsar was victorious,
With toil and strife who stormed the House of Fame;
In other sense this youth was glorious,
Himself a kingdom wheresoe'er he came.

No strength went out to get him victory,
When all was income of its own accord;
For where he went none other was to see,
But all were parcel of their noble lord.

He forayed like the subtle haze of summer,
That stilly shows fresh landscapes to our eyes,
And revolutions works without a murmur,
Or rustling of a leaf beneath the skies.

So was I taken unawares by this,

I quite forgot my homage to confess;
Yet now am forced to know, though hard it is,
I might have loved him, had I loved him less.

Each moment, as we nearer drew to each,
A stern respect withheld us farther yet,
So that we seemed beyond each other's reach,
And less acquainted than when first we met.

We two were one while we did sympathize,
So could we not the simplest bargain drive;
And what avails it now that we are wise,
If absence doth this doubleness contrive?

Eternity may not the chance repeat,
But I must tread my single way alone,
In sad remembrance that we once did meet,
And know that bliss irrevocably gone.

The spheres henceforth my elegy shall sing,
For elegy has other subject none;
Each strain of music in my ears shall ring
Knell of departure from that other one.

Make haste and celebrate my tragedy;
With fitting strain resound, ye woods and fields;
Sorrow is dearer in such case to me
Than all the joys other occasion yields.

Is't then too late the damage to repair?
Distance, forsooth, from my weak grasp hath reft
The empty husk, and clutched the useless tare,
But in my hands the wheat and kernel left.

If I but love that virtue which he is,
Though it be scented in the morning air,
Still shall we be truest acquaintances,

Nor mortals know a sympathy more rare.

July 4. THE "BOOK OF GEMS"
With cunning plates the polished leaves were decked,
Each one a window to the poet's world,
So rich a prospect that you might suspect
In that small space all paradise unfurled.

It was a right delightful road to go,
Marching through pastures of such fair herbage,
O'er hill and dale it led, and to and fro,
From bard to bard, making an easy stage;

Where ever and anon I slaked my thirst
Like a tired traveller at some poet's well,
Which from the teeming ground did bubbling burst,
And tinkling thence adown the page it fell.
Still through the leaves its music you might hear,
Till other springs fell faintly on the ear.

ANNURSNACK

July 11. At length we leave the river and take to the road which leads to the hilltop, if by any means we may spy out what manner of earth we inhabit. East, west, north, and south, it is farm and parish, this world of ours. One may see how at convenient, eternal intervals men have settled themselves, without thought for the universe. How little matters it all they have built and delved there in the valley! It is after all but a feature in the landscape. Still the vast impulse of nature breathes over all. The eternal winds sweep across the interval *to-day*, bringing mist and haze to shut out their works. Still the crow caws from Nawshawtuct to Annursnack, as no feeble tradesman nor smith may do. And in all swamps the hum of mosquitoes drowns this modem hum of industry.

EVERY MAN IS A ROMAN FORUM

All things are up and down, east and west, to *me*. In me is the forum out of which go the Appian and Sacred ways, and a thousand beside, to the ends of the world. If I forget my centralness, and say a bean winds with or against the *sun*, and not right or left, it will not be true south of the equator.

July 18.

THE ASSABET

Up this pleasant stream let's row
For the livelong summer's day,
Sprinkling foam where'er we go
In wreaths as white as driven snow.
Ply the oars! away! away!

Now we glide along the shore,
Chucking lilies as we go,
While the yellow-sanded floor
Doggedly resists the oar,
Like some turtle dull and slow.

Now we stem the middle tide,
Plowing through the deepest soil;
Ridges pile on either side,
While we through the furrow glide,
Reaping bubbles for our toil.

Dew before and drought behind,
Onward all doth seem to fly;
Naught contents the eager mind,
Only rapids now are kind,
Forward are the earth and sky.

Sudden music strikes the ear,
Leaking out from yonder bank,

Fit such voyagers to cheer.
Sure there must be Naiads here,
Who have kindly played this prank.

There I know the cunning pack
Where yon self-sufficient rill
All its telltale hath kept back,
Through the meadows held its clack,
And now bubbleth its fill.

Silent flows the parent stream,
And if rocks do lie below
Smothers with her waves the din,
As it were a youthful sin,
Just as still and just as slow.

But this gleeful little rill, — .
Purling round its storied pebble,
Tinkles to the selfsame tune
From December until June,
Nor doth any drought enfeeble.

See the sun behind the willows,
Rising through the golden haze,
How he gleams along the billows,
Their white crests the easy pillows
Of his dew-besprinkled rays.

Forward press we to the dawning,
For Aurora leads the way,
Sultry noon and twilight scorning;
In each dewdrop of the morning
Lies the promise of a day.

Rivers from the sun do flow,
Springing with the dewy morn;
Voyageurs ‘gainst time do row,

Idle noon nor sunset know,
Ever even with the dawn.

Since that first "Away! away!"
Many a lengthy league we've rowed,
Still the sparrow on the spray
Hastes to usher in the day
With her simple stanza'd ode.

July 20.

THE BREEZE'S INVITATION

Come let's roam the breezy pastures,
Where the freest zephyrs blow,
Batten on the oak tree's rustle,
And the pleasant insect bustle,
Dripping with the streamlet's flow.

What if I no wings do wear,
Thro' this solid-seeming air
I can skim like any swallow;
Whoso dareth let her follow,
And we'll be a jovial pair.

Like two careless swifts let's sail,
Zephyrus shall think for me;
Over hill and over dale,
Riding on the easy gale,
We will scan the earth and sea.

Yonder see that willow tree
Winnowing the buxom air;
You a gnat and I a bee.
With our merry minstrelsy
We will make a concert there.

One green leaf shall be our screen,
Till the sun doth go to bed,
I the king and you the queen
Of that peaceful little green,
Without any subject's aid.

To our music Time will linger,
And earth open wide her ear,
Nor shall any need to tarry
To immortal verse to marry
Such sweet music as he'll hear.

July 24.
Nature doth have her dawn each day,
But mine are far between;
Content, I cry, for, sooth to say,
Mine brightest are, I ween.

For when my sun doth deign to rise,
Though it be her noontide,
Her fairest field in shadow lies,
Nor can my light abide.

Sometimes I bask me in her day,
Conversing with my mate;
But if we interchange one ray,
Forthwith her heats abate.

Through his discourse I climb and see,
As from some eastern hill,
A brighter morrow rise to me
Than lieth in her skill.

As't were two summer days in one,
Two Sundays come together,
Our rays united make one sun,

With fairest summer weather.

July 25. There is no remedy for love but to love more.

Aug. 31. Made seven miles, and moored our boat on the west side of a little rising ground which in the spring forms an island in the river, the sun going down on one hand, and our eminence contributing its shadow to the night on the other. In the twilight so elastic is the air that the sky seems to tinkle [sic] over farmhouse and wood. Scrambling up the bank of our *terra incognita* we fall on huckleberries, which have slowly ripened here, husbanding the juices which the months have distilled, for our peculiar use this night. If they had been rank poison, the entire simplicity and confidence with which we plucked them would have insured their wholesomeness. The devout attitude of the hour asked a blessing on that repast. It was fit for the setting sun to rest on.

From our tent here on the hillside, through that isosceles door, I see our lonely mast on the shore, it may be as an eternity fixture, to be seen in landscapes henceforth, or as the most temporary standstill of time, the boat just come to anchor, and the mast still rocking to find its balance.

No human life is in night, — the woods, the boat, the shore, — yet is it lifelike. The warm pulse of a young life beats steadily underneath all. This slight wind is where one artery approaches the surface and is skin deep.

While I write here, I hear the foxes trotting about me over the dead leaves, and now gently over the grass, as if not to disturb the dew which is falling. Why should we not cultivate neighborly relations with the foxes? As if to improve upon our seeming advances, comes one to greet us nosewise under our tent-curtain. Nor do we rudely repulse him. Is man powder and the fox flint and steel? Has not the time come when men and foxes shall lie down together?

Hist! there, the musquash by the boat is taking toll of potatoes and

melons. Is not this the age of a community of goods? His presumption kindles in me a brotherly feeling. Nevertheless. I get up to reconnoitre, and tread stealthily along the shore to make acquaintance with him. But on the riverside I can see only the stars reflected in the water, and now, by some ripple ruffling the disk of a star, I discover him.

In the silence of the night the sound of a distant alarm bell is borne to these woods. Even now men have fires and extinguish them, and, with distant horizon blazings and barking of dogs, enact the manifold drama of life.

We begin to have an interest in sun, moon, and stars. What time riseth Orion? Which side the pole gropeth the bear? East, West, North, and South, — where are they? What clock shall tell the hours for us? — Billerica, midnight.

Sept. 1. *Sunday.* Under an oak on the bank of the canal in Chelmsford.

From Ball's Hill to Billerica meeting-house the river is a noble stream of water, flowing between gentle hills and occasional cliffs, and well wooded all the way. It can hardly be said to flow at all, but rests in the lap of the hills like a quiet lake. The boatmen call it a dead stream. For many long reaches you can see nothing to indicate that men inhabit its banks. Nature seems to hold a sabbath herself to-day, — a still warm sun on river and wood, and not breeze enough to ruffle the water. Cattle stand up to their bellies in the river, and you think Rembrandt should be here.

Camped under some oaks in Tyngsboro, on the east bank of the Merrimack, just below the ferry.

Sept. 2. Camped in Merrimack, on the west bank, by a deep ravine.

Sept. 3. In Bedford, on the west bank, opposite a large rock, above Coos Falls.

Sept. 4. *Wednesday.* Hooksett, east bank, two or three miles below

the village, opposite Mr. Mitchel's.

Sept. 5. Walked to Concord [N. H.], 10 miles.

Sept. 6. By stage to Plymouth, 40 miles, and on foot to Tilton's inn, Thornton. The scenery commences on Sanbornton Square, whence the White Mountains are first visible. In Campton it is decidedly mountainous.

Sept. 7. Walked from Thornton through Peeling and Lincoln to Franconia. In Lincoln visited Stone Flume and Basin, and in Franconia the Notch, and saw the Old Man of the Mountain.

Sept. 8. Walked from Franconia to Thomas J. Crawford's.

Sept. 9. At Crawford's.

Sept. 10. Ascended the mountain and rode to Conway.

Sept. 11. Rode to Concord.

Sept. 12. Rode to Hooksett and rowed to Bedford, N. H., or rather to the northern part of Merrimack, near the ferry, by a large island, near which we camped.

Sept. 13. Rowed and sailed to Concord, about 50 miles.

THE WISE REST

Sept. 17. Nature never makes haste; her systems revolve at an even pace. The bud swells imperceptibly, without hurry or confusion, as though the short spring days were an eternity. All her operations seem separately, for the time, the single object for which all things tarry. Why, then, should man hasten as if anything less than eternity were allotted for the least deed? Let him consume never so many æons, so that he go about the meanest task well, though it be but the

paring of his nails. If the setting sun seems to hurry him to improve the day while it lasts, the chant of the crickets fails not to reassure him, even-measured as of old, teaching him to take his own time henceforth forever. The wise man is restful, never restless or impatient. He each moment abides there where he is, as some walkers actually rest the whole body at each step, while others never relax the muscles of the leg till the accumulated fatigue obliges them to stop short.

As the wise is not anxious that time wait for him, neither does he wait for it.

Oct. 22. Nature will bear the closest inspection. She invites us to lay our eye level with her smallest leaf, and take an insect view of its plain.

ÆSCHYLUS

Nov. 5. There was one man lived his own healthy Attic life in those days. The words that have come down to us evidence that their speaker was a seer in his day and generation. At this day they owe nothing to their dramatic form, nothing to stage machinery, and the fact that they were spoken under these or those circumstances. All display of art for the gratification of a factitious taste is silently passed by to come at the least particle of absolute and genuine thought they contain. The reader will be disappointed, however, who looks for traits of a rare wisdom or eloquence, and will have to solace himself, for the most part, with the poet's humanity and what it was in him to say. He will discover that, like every genius, he was a solitary liver and worker in his day.

We are accustomed to say that the common sense of this age belonged to the seer of the last, — as if time gave him any vantage ground. But not so: I see not but Genius must ever take an equal start, and all the generations of men are virtually at a standstill for it to come and consider of them. Common sense is not so familiar with any truth but Genius will represent it in a strange light to it. Let the seer bring down his broad eye to the most stale and trivial fact, and

he will make you believe it a new planet in the sky.

As to criticism, man has never to make allowance to man; there is naught to excuse, naught to bear in mind.

All the past is here present to be tried; let it approve itself if it can.

GROWTH

We are not apt to remember that we grow. It is curious to reflect how the maiden waiteth patiently, confiding as the unripe houstonia of the meadow, for the slow moving years to work their will with her, — perfect and ripen her, — like it to be fanned by the wind, watered by the rain, and receive her education at the hands of nature.

These young buds of manhood in the streets are like buttercups in the meadows, — surrendered to nature as they.

Nov. 7. I was not aware till to-day of a rising and risen generation. Children appear to me as raw as the fresh fungi on a fence rail. By what degrees of consanguinity is this succulent and rank-growing slip of manhood related to me? What is it but another herb, ranging all the kingdoms of nature, drawing in sustenance by a thousand roots and fibres from all soils.

LACONICISM

Nov. 8. Prometheus' answer to Io's question, who has bound him to the rock, is a good instance: —

Βούλουμα μὲν τὸ δῖον, Ἡφαίστου δὲ χείρ.

(The will indeed of Zeus, of Vulcan the hand.)

Also: —

Πταίσας δὲ τῷδε πρὸς κακῷ, μαθήσεται,
Ὅσον τό, τ' ἄρχειν καὶ τὸ δουλούειν δίχα.

(Such naked speech is the standing aside of words to make room for thoughts.)

REGRET

Nov. 13. Make the most of your regrets; never smother your sorrow, but tend and cherish it till it come to have a separate and integral interest. To regret deeply is to live afresh. By so doing you will be astonished to find yourself restored once more to all your emoluments.

DESPONDENCY

Nov. 14. There is nowhere any apology for despondency. Always there is life which, rightly lived, implies a divine satisfaction. I am soothed by the rain-drops on the door-sill; every globule that pitches thus confidently from the eaves to the ground is my life insurance. Disease and a rain-drop cannot coexist. The east wind is not itself consumptive, but has enjoyed a rare health from of old. If a fork or brand stand erect, *good* is portended by it. They are the warrant of universal innocence.

Nov. 19. — FAREWELL
Light-hearted, thoughtless, shall I take my way,
When I to thee this being have resigned,
Well knowing where, upon a future day,
With us'rer's craft more than myself to find.

LINNÆUS

Nov. 22. Linnæus, setting out for Lapland, surveys his "comb" and "spare shirt," "leather breeches," and "gauze cap to keep off gnats," with as much complacency as Buonaparte would a park of artillery to be used in the Russian Campaign. His eye is to take in
fish, flower, and bird, quadruped and biped. The quiet bravery of the man is admirable. These facts have even a *novel* interest.

Nov. 29. Many brave men have there been, thank
Fortune, but I shall never grow brave by comparison.
When I remember myself I shall forget them.

BRAVERY

Dec. 2. A rare landscape immediately suggests a suitable inhabitant, whose breath shall be its wind, whose moods its seasons, and to whom it will always be fair. To be chafed and worried, and not as serene as Nature, does not become one whose nature is as steadfast as she. We do all stand in the front ranks of the battle every moment of our lives; where there is a brave man there is the thickest of the fight, there the post of honor. Not he who procures a substitute to go to Florida is exempt from service; he gathers his laurels in another field. Waterloo is not the only battle-ground: as many and fatal guns are pointed at my breast now as are contained in the English arsenals.

[Undated.] — NOON

[Undated.] — NOON

Straightway dissolved,
Like to the morning mists — or rather like the subtler mists of noon —

Stretched I far up the neighboring mountain's sides,
Adown the valleys, through the nether air,
Bathing, with fond expansiveness of soul,
The tiniest blade as the sublimest cloud.

What time the bittern, solitary bird,
Hides now her head amid the whispering fern,

And not a paddock vexes all the shore,
Nor feather ruffles the incumbent air,
Save where the wagtail interrupts the noon.

FROM A CHAPTER ON BRAVERY. — *Script*

Dec. Bravery deals not so much in resolute action, as in healthy and assured rest. Its palmy state is a staying at home, and compelling alliance in all directions.

The brave man never heareth the din of war; he is trustful and unsuspecting, so observant of the least trait of good or beautiful that, if you turn toward him the dark side of anything, he will still see only the bright.

One moment of serene and confident life is more glorious than a whole campaign of daring. We should be ready for all issues, not daring to die but daring to live. To the brave even danger is an ally. In their unconscious daily life all are braver than they know. Man slumbers and wakes in his twilight with the confidence of noonday; he is not palsied nor struck dumb by the inexplicable riddle of the universe. A mere surveyor's report or clause in a preemption bill contains matter of quite extraneous interest, of a subdued but confident tone, evincing such a steadiness in the writer as would have done wonders at Bunker's Hill or Marathon. Where there is the collected eye, there will not fail the effective hand; χεὶρ δ' ὁρᾷ τὸ δράσιμον.

Science is always brave, for to know is to know good; doubt and danger quail before her eye. What the coward overlooks in his hurry, she calmly scrutinizes, breaking ground like a pioneer for the array of arts in her train. Cowardice is unscientific, for there cannot be a science of ignorance. There may be a science of war for that advances, but a retreat is rarely well conducted; if it is, then is it an orderly advance in the face of circumstances.

If his fortune deserts him, the brave man in pity still abides by her. Samuel Johnson and his friend Savage, compelled by poverty to pass the night in the streets, resolve that they will stand by their country.

The state of complete manhood is virtue, and virtue and bravery

are one. This truth has long been in the languages. All the relations of the subject are hinted at in the derivation and analogies of the Latin words *vir* and *virtus,* and the Greek agathos and aristos. Language in its settled form is the record of men's second thoughts, a more faithful utterance than they can me mentarily give. What men say is so sifted and obliged to approve itself as answering to a common want, that nothing absolutely frivolous obtains currency in the language. The analogies of words are never whimsical and meaningless, but stand for real likenesses. Only the ethics of mankind, and not of any particular man, give point and vigor to our speech.

The coward was born one day too late, for he has never overtaken the present hour. He is the younger son of creation, who now waiteth till the elder decease. He does not dwell on the earth as though he had a deed of the land in his pocket, — not as another lump of nature, as imperturbable an occupant as the stones in the field. He has only rented a few acres of time and space, and thinks that every accident portends the expiration of his lease. He is a non-proprietor, a serf, in his moral economy nomadic, having no fixed abode. When danger appears, he goes abroad and clings to straws.

Bravery and Cowardice are kindred correlatives with Knowledge and Ignorance, Light and Darkness, Good and Evil.

If you let a single ray of light through the shutter, it will go on diffusing itself without limit till it enlighten the world, but the shadow that was never so wide at first as rapidly contracts till it comes to naught. The shadow of the moon when it passes nearest the sun is lost in space ere it can reach our earth to eclipse it. Always the *system* shines with uninterrupted light, for, as the sun is so much larger than any planet, no shadow can travel far into space. We may bask always in the light of the system, always may step back out of the shade. No man's shadow is as large as his body, if the rays make a right angle with the reflecting surface. Let our lives be passed under the equator, with the sun in the meridian.

There is no ill which may not be dissipated like the dark, if you let in a stronger light upon it. Overcome evil with good. Practice no such narrow economy as they whose bravery amounts to no more light than a farthing candle, before which most objects cast a shadow

wider than themselves.

It was a conceit of Plutarch, accounting for the preferences given to signs observed on the left hand, that men may have thought "things terrestrial and mortal directly over against heavenly and divine things, and do conjecture that the things which to us are on the left hand, the gods send down from their right hand." If we are not blind, we shall see how a right hand is stretched over all, as well the unlucky as lucky, and that the ordering soul is only right-handed, distributing with one palm all our fates.

Men have made war from a deeper instinct than peace. War is but the compelling of peace.

When the world is declared under martial law, every Esau retakes his birthright, and what there is in him does not fail to appear. He wipes off all old scores and commences a new account. The world is interested to know how any soul will demean itself in so novel a position. But when war too, like commerce and husbandry, gets to be a routine, and men go about it as indented apprentices, the hero degenerates into a marine, and the standing army into a standing jest.

No pains are spared to do honor to the brave soldier. All guilds and corporations are taxed to provide him with fit harness and equipment. His coat must be red as the sunset, or blue as the heavens. Gold or silver, pinchbeck or copper, solid or superficial, mark him for fortune's favorite. The skill of a city enchases and tempers his sword-blade; the Tyrian dye confounds him with emperors and kings. Wherever he goes, music precedes and prepares the way for him. His life is a holiday, and the contagion of his example unhinges the universe. The world puts by work and comes out to stare. He is the one only man. He recognizes no time-honored casts and conventions, no fixtures but transfixtures, no governments at length settled on a permanent basis. One tap of the drum sets the political and moral harmonies all ajar. His ethics may well bear comparison with the priest's. He may rally, charge, retreat in an orderly manner, but never flee nor flinch.

Each more melodious note I hear
Brings sad reproach to me,

That I alone afford the ear,
Who would the music be.

The brave man is the sole patron of music; he recognizes it for his mother-tongue, — a more mellifluous and articulate language than words, in comparison with which speech is recent and temporary. It is his voice. His language must have the same majestic movement and cadence that philosophy assigns to the heavenly bodies. The steady flux of his thought constitutes time in music. The universe falls in and keeps pace with it, which before proceeded singly and discordant. Hence are poetry and song. When Bravery first grew afraid and went to war, it took music along with it. The soul delighted still to hear the echo of its own voice. Especially the soldier insists on agreement and harmony always. Indeed, it is that friendship there is in war that makes it chivalrous and heroic. It was the dim sentiment of a noble friendship for the purest soul the world has seen, that gave to Europe a crusading era.

The day of tilts and tournaments has gone by, but no herald summons us to the tournament of love. one's virtue is bravery, the other's bravery virtue. Mankind still pay to the soldier the honors due only to the hero. They delight to do him honor. He is adorned with silver and gold and the colors of the rainbow, invested with outward splendor; music is for him especially, and his life is a holiday.

The brave warrior must have harmony if not melody at any sacrifice. Consider what shifts he makes. There are the bagpipe, the gong, the trumpet, the drum, — either the primitive central African or Indian, or the brass European. Ever since Jericho fell down before a blast of rams' horns, the martial and musical have gone hand in hand. If the soldier marches to the sack of a town, he must be preceded by drum and trumpet, which shall as it were identify his cause with the accordant universe. All woods and walls echo back his own spirit, and the hostile territory is then preoccupied for him. He is no longer insulated, but infinitely related and familiar. The roll-call musters for him all the forces of nature.

All sounds, and more than all, silence, do fife and drum for us. The least creaking doth whet all our senses and emit a tremulous

light, like the aurora borealis, over things. As polishing expresses the vein in marble and the grain in wood, so music brings out what of heroic lurks anywhere.

To the sensitive soul, the universe has its own fixed measure, which is its measure also, and, as a regular pulse is inseparable from a healthy body, so is its healthiness dependent on the regularity of its rhythm. In all sounds the soul recognizes its own rhythm, and seeks to express its sympathy by a correspondent movement of the limbs. When the body marches to the measure of the soul, then is true courage and invincible strength.

The coward would reduce this thrilling sphere music to a universal wail, this melodious chant to a nasal cant. He thinks to conciliate all hostile influences by compelling his neighborbood into a partial concord with himself, but his music is no better than a jingle which is akin to a jar, — jars regularly recurring.

He blows a feeble blast of slender melody, because nature can have no more sympathy with such a soul than it has of cheerful melody in itself. Hence hears he no accordant note in the universe, and is a coward, or consciously outcast and deserted man. But the brave man, without drum or trumpet, compels concord everywhere by the universality and tunefulness of his soul.

"Take a metallic plate," says Coleridge, "and strew sand on it; sound a harmonic chord over the sand, and the grains will whirl about in circles, and other geometrical figures, all, as it were, depending on some point relatively at rest. Sound a discord, and every grain will whisk about without any order at all, in no figures, and with no points of rest." The brave man is such a point of relative rest, over which the soul sounds ever a harmonic chord.

Music is either a sedative or a tonic to the soul. I read that "Plato thinks the gods never gave men music, the science of melody and harmony, for mere delectation or to tickle the ear; but that the discordant parts of the circulations and beauteous fabric of the soul, and that of it that roves about the body, and many times, for want of tune and air, breaks forth into many extravagances and excesses, might be sweetly recalled and artfully wound up to their former consent and agreement.

By dint of wind and stringed instruments the coward endeavors to

put the best face on the matter, — whistles to keep his courage up.

There are some brave traits related by Plutarch; *e g.*: "Homer acquaints us how Ajax, being to engage in a single combat with Hector, bade the Grecians pray to the gods for him; and while they were at their devotions, he was putting on his armor."

On another occasion, a storm arises, "which as soon as the pilot sees, he falls to his prayers, and invokes his tutelar dæmons, but neglects not in the meantime to hold to the rudder and let down the main yard."

"Homer directs his husbandman, before he either plow or sow, to pray to the terrestrial Jove and the venerable Ceres, but with his hand upon the plow-tail."

Ἀρχὴ γὰρ ὄντως τοῦ νικᾶν τὸ θαῤῥεῖν.

(Verily, to be brave is the beginning of victory.)

The Romans "made Fortune surname to Fortitude," for fortitude is that alchemy that turns all things to good fortune. The man of fortitude, whom the Latins called *jortis*, is no other than that lucky person whom *fors* favors, or *vir summae fortis.* If we will, every bark may "carry Cæsar and Cæsar's fortune." The brave man stays at home. For an impenetrable shield, stand inside yourself; he was an arrant coward who first made shields of brass. For armor of proof, *mea virtute me involvo* (I wrap myself in my virtue);

"Tumble me down, and I will sit
Upon my ruins, smiling yet."

The bravest deed, which for the most part is left quite out of history, which alone wants the staleness of a deed done and the uncertainty of a deed doing, is the life of a great man. To perform exploits is to be temporarily bold, as becomes a courage that ebbs and flows, the soul quite vanquished by its own deed subsiding into indifference and cowardice; but the exploit of a brave life consists in its momentary completeness.

FRIENDSHIP

Fall of 1839. Then first I conceive of a true friendship, when some rare specimen of manhood presents itself. It seems the mission of such to commend virtue to mankind, not by any imperfect preaching of her word, but by their own carriage and conduct. We may then worship moral beauty without the formality of a religion.

They are some fresher wind that blows, some new fragrance that breathes. They make the landscape and the sky for us.

The rules of other intercourse are all inapplicable to this.

We are one virtue, one truth, one beauty. All nature is our satellite, whose light is dull and reflected. She is subaltern to us, — an episode to our poem; but we are primary, and radiate light and heat to the system.

I am only introduced once again to myself.

Conversation, contact, familiarity are the steps to it and instruments of it, but it is most perfect when these are done, and distance and time oppose no barrier.

I need not ask any man to be my friend, more than the sun the earth to be attracted by him. It is not his to give, nor mine to receive. I cannot pardon my enemy; let him pardon himself.

Commonly we degrade Love and Friendship by presenting them under the aspect of a trivial dualism.

What matter a few words more or less with my friend, —— with all mankind; — they will still be my friends in spite of themselves. Let them stand aloof if they can! As though the most formidable distance could rob me of any real sympathy or advantage! No, when such interests are at stake, time, and distance, and difference fall into their own places.

But alas! to be actually separated from that parcel of heaven we call our friend, with the suspicion that we shall no more meet in nature, is source enough for all the elegies that ever were written. But the true remedy will be to recover our friend again piecemeal, wherever we can find a feature, as Æetes gathered up the members of his son, which Medea had strewn in her path.

The more complete our sympathy, the more our senses are struck dumb, and we are repressed by a delicate respect, so that to indifferent eyes we are least his friend, because no vulgar symbols pass between us. On after thought, perhaps, we come to fear that we

have been the losers by such seeming indifference, but in truth that which withholds us is the bond between us.

My friend will be as much better than myself as my aspiration is above my performance.

This is most serene autumn weather. The chirp of crickets may be heard at noon over all the land. As in summer they are heard only at nightfall, so now by their incessant chirp they usher in the evening of the year. The lively decay of autumn promises as infinite duration and freshness as the green leaves of spring.

1840

Jan. 10. — THE FISHER'S SON

THE FISHER'S SON

I know the world where land and water meet,
By yonder hill abutting on the main;
One while I hear the waves incessant beat,
Then, turning round, survey the land again.

Within a humble cot that looks to sea,
Daily I breathe this curious warm life;
Beneath a friendly haven's sheltering lee
My noiseless day with myst'ry still is rife.

'Tis here, they say, my simple life began;
And easy credit to the tale I lend,
For well I know't is here I am a man.
But who will simply tell me of the end?

These eyes, fresh opened, spied the far-off Sea,
Which like a silent godfather did stand,
Nor uttered one explaining word to me,
But introduced straight Godmother Land.

And yonder still stretches that silent main,
With many glancing ships besprinkled o'er;
And earnest still I gaze and gaze again
Upon the selfsame waves and friendly shore,

Till like a watery humor on the eye
It still appears whichever way I turn,
Its silent waste and mute o'erarching sky
With close-shut eyes I clearly still discern.

And yet with lingering doubt I haste each mom
To see if ocean still my gaze will greet,
And with each day once more to life am born,
And tread once more the earth with infant feet.

My years are like a stroll upon the beach,
As near the ocean's edge as I can go;
My tardy steps its waves do oft o'erreach,
Sometimes I stay to let them overflow.

Infinite work my hands find there to do,
Gathering the relics which the waves upcast;
Each storm doth scour the deep for something new,
And every time the strangest is the last.

My sole employment't is, and scrupulous care,
To place my gains beyond the reach of tides,
Each smoother pebble, and each shell more rare,
Which ocean kindly to my hand confides.

I have no fellow-laborer on the shore;
They scorn the strand who sail upon the sea;
Sometimes I think the ocean they've sailed o'er
Is deeper known upon the strand to me.

The middle sea can show no crimson dulse,
Its deeper waves cast up no pearls to view,
Along the shore my hand is on its pulse,
Whose feeble beat is elsewhere felt by few.

My neighbors come sometimes with lumb'ring carts.
As it would seem my pleasant toil to share,
But straightway take their loads to distant marts,
For only weeds and ballast are their care.

'T is by some strange coincidence, if I

Make common cause with ocean when he storms,
Who can so well support a separate sky,
And people it with multitude of forms.

Oft in the stillness of the night I hear
Some restless bird presage the coming din,
And distant murmurs faintly strike my ear
From some bold bluff projecting far within.

My stillest depths straightway do inly heave
More genially than rests the summer's calm;
The howling winds through my soul's cordage grieve,
Till every shelf and ledge gives the alarm.

Far from the shore the swelling billows rise,
And gathering strength come rolling to the land,
And, as each wave retires, and murmur dies,
I straight pursue upon the streaming sand,

Till the returning surge with gathered strength
Compels once more the backward way to take,
And, creeping up the beach a cable's length,
In many a thirsty hollow leaves a lake.

Oft as some ruling star my tide has swelled
The sea can scarcely brag more wrecks than I;
Ere other influence my waves has quelled,
The stanchest bark that floats is high and dry.

Jan. 19.
By a strong liking we prevail
Against the stoutest fort;
At length the fiercest heart will quail,
And our alliance court.

FRIENDS

Jan. 26. They are like air bubbles on water, hastening to flow together.

History tells of Orestes and Pylades, Damon and Pythias, but why should not we put to shame those old reserved worthies by a community of such?

Constantly, as it were through a remote skylight, I have glimpses of a serene friendship-land, and know the better why brooks murmur and violets grow.

This conjunction of souls, like waves which meet and break, subsides also backward over things, and gives all a fresh aspect. I would live henceforth with some gentle soul such a life as may be conceived, double for variety, single for harmony, — two, only that we might admire at our oneness, — one, because indivisible. Such community to be a pledge of holy living. How could aught unworthy be admitted into our society? To listen with one ear to each summer sound, to behold with one eye each summer scene, our visual rays so to meet and mingle with the object as to be one bent and doubled; with two tongues to be wearied, and thought to spring ceaselessly from a double fountain.

POETRY

Jan. No definition of poetry is adequate unless it be poetry itself. The most accurate analysis by the rarest wisdom is yet insufficient, and the poet will instantly prove it false by setting aside its requisitions. It is indeed all that we do not know.

The poet does not need to see how meadows are something else than earth, grass, and water, but how they are thus much. He does not need discover that potato blows are as beautiful as violets, as the farmer thinks, but only how good potato blows are.

The poem is drawn out from under the feet of the poet, his whole weight has rested on this ground.

It has a logic more severe than the logician's.

You might as well think to go in pursuit of the rainbow, and embrace it on the next hill, as to embrace the whole of poetry even in

thought. The best book is only an advertisement of it, such as is sometimes sewed in with its cover.

Its eccentric and unexplored orbit embraces the system.

Jan. 27. What a tame life we are living! How little heroic it is! Let us devise never so perfect a system of living, and straightway the soul leaves it to shuffle along its own way alone. It is easy enough to establish a durable and harmonious routine; immediately all parts of nature consent to it. The sun-dial still points to the noon mark, and the sun rises and sets for it. The neighbors are never fatally obstinate when such a scheme is to be instituted; but forthwith all lend a hand, and ring the bell, and bring fuel and lights, and put by work and don their best garments, with an earnest conformity which matches the operations of nature. There is always a present and extant life which all combine to uphold, though its insufficiency is manifest enough. Still the sing-song goes on.

Jan. 29. A friend in history looks like some premature soul. The nearest approach to a community of love in these days is like the distant breaking of waves on the seashore. An ocean there must be, for it washes our beach.

This alone do all men sail for, trade for, plow for, preach for, fight for.

ÆSCHYLUS

The Greeks, as the Southerns generally, expressed themselves with more facility than we in distinct and lively images, and as to the grace and completeness with which they treated the subjects suited to their genius they must be allowed to retain their ancient supremacy. But a rugged and uncouth array of thought, though never so modern, may rout them at any moment. It remains for other than Greeks to write the literature of the next century.

Æschylus had a clear eye for the commonest things. His genius was only an enlarged common sense. He adverts with chaste severity to all natural facts. His sublimity is Greek sincerity and simpleness,

naked wonder which mythology had not helped to explain.

Tydeus' shield had for device

"An artificial heaven blazing with stars;
A bright full moon in the midst of the shield,
Eldest of stars, eye of night, is prominent."

The Greeks were stem but simple children in their literature. We have gained nothing by the few ages which we have the start of them. This universal wondering at those old men is as if a matured grown person should discover that the aspirations of his youth argued a diviner life than the contented wisdom of his manhood.

He is competent to express any of the common manly feelings. If his hero is to make a boast, it does not lack fullness, it is as boastful as could be desired; he has a flexible mouth, and can fill it readily with strong, round words, so that you will say the man's speech wants nothing, he has left nothing unsaid, but he has actually wiped his lips of it.

Whatever the common eye sees at all and expresses as best it may, he sees uncommonly and describes with rare completeness. The multitude that thronged the theatre could no doubt go along with him to the end. The Greeks had no transcendent geniuses like Milton and Shakespeare, whose merit only posterity could fully appreciate.

The social condition of genius is the same in all ages. Æschylus was undoubtedly alone and without sympathy in his simple reverence for the mystery of the universe.

Feb. 10. CRITICISM ON AULUS PERSIUS FLACCUS

Feb. 11. "Truth," says Lord Bacon, "may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that sheweth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, which sheweth best in varied lights." Like the pearl, truth shines with a steady but pale light which invites to introspection; it is intrinsically bright, not accidentally as the diamond. We seem to behold its rear always, as though it were

not coming toward us but retiring from us. Its light is not reflected this way, but we see the sombre and wrong side of its rays. As the dust in his beams makes known that the sun shines.

Falsehoods that glare and dazzle are sloped toward us, reflecting full in our faces even the light of the sun. Wait till sunset, or go round them, and the falsity will be apparent.

It is never enough that our life is an easy one. We must live on the stretch; not be satisfied with a tame and undisturbed round of weeks and days, but retire to our rest like soldiers on the eve of a battle, looking forward with ardor to the strenuous sortie of the morrow. "Sit not down in the popular seats and common level of virtues, but endeavor to make them heroical. Offer not only peace offerings but holocausts unto God." To the brave soldier the rust and leisure of peace are harder than the fatigues of war. As our bodies court physical encounters, and languish in the mild and even climate of the tropics, so our souls thrive best on unrest and discontent.

He enjoys true leisure who has time to improve his soul's estate.

Feb. 12. Opposition is often so strong a likeness as to remind us of the difference.

Truth has properly no opponent, for nothing gets so far up on the other side as to be opposite. She looks broadcast over the field and sees no opponent.

The ring-leader of the mob will soonest be admitted into the councils of state.

Knavery is more foolish than folly, for that, half knowing its own foolishness, it still persists. The knave has reduced folly to a system, is the prudent, common-sense fool. The witling has the simplicity and directness of genius, is the inspired fool. His incomprehensible ravings become the creed of the dishonest of a succeeding era.

Feb. 13. An act of integrity is to an act of duty what the French verb *être* is to *devoir.* Duty is *ce que devrait être.*

Duty belongs to the understanding, but genius is not dutiful, the

highest talent is dutiful. Goodness results from the wisest use of talent.

The perfect man has both genius and talent. The one is his head, the other his foot; by one he is, by the other he lives.

The unconsciousness of man is the consciousness of God, the end of the world.

The very thrills of genius are disorganizing. The body is never quite acclimated to *its* atmosphere, but how often succumbs and goes into a decline!

Feb. 14. Beauty lives by rhymes. Double a deformity is a beauty. Draw this blunt quill over the paper, and fold it once transversely to the line, pressing it suddenly before the ink dries, and a delicately shaded and regular figure is the result, which art cannot surpass.

A very meagre natural history suffices to make me a child. Only their names and genealogy make me love fishes. I would know even the number of their finrays, and how many scales compose the lateral line. I fancy I am amphibious and swim in all the brooks and pools in the neighborhood, with the perch and bream, or doze under the pads of our river amid the winding aisles and corridors formed by their stems, with the stately pickerel. I am the wiser in respect to all knowledges, and the better qualified for all fortunes, for knowing that there is a minnow in the brook. Methinks I have need even of his sympathy, and to be his fellow in a degree. I do like him sometimes when he balances himself for an hour over the yellow floor of his basin.

Feb. 15. The good seem to inhale a more generous atmosphere and be bathed in a more precious light than other men. Accordingly Virgil describes the *sedes beatas* thus: —

"Largior hie campos aether et lumine vestit Purpureo: Solemque suum, sua sidera nôrunt."

Feb. 16. Divination is prospective memory.

There is a kindred principle at the bottom of all affinities. The magnet cultivates a steady friendship with the pole, all bodies with

all others. The friendliness of nature is that goddess Ceres who presides over every sowing and harvest, and we bless the same in sun and rain. The seed in the ground tarries for a season with its genial friends there; all the earths and grasses and minerals are its hosts, who entertain it hospitably, and plenteous crops and teeming wagons are the result.

Feb. 18. All romance is grounded on friendship. What is this rural, this pastoral, this poetical life but its invention? Does not the moon shine for Endymion? Smooth pastures and mild airs are for some Corydon and Phyllis. Paradise belongs to Adam and Eve. Plato's republic is governed by Platonic love.

Feb. 20. The coward's hope is suspicion, the hero's doubt a sort of hope. The gods neither hope nor doubt.

Feb. 22. The river is unusually high, owing to the melting of the snow. Men go in boats over their gardens and potato-fields, and all the children of the village are on tiptoe to see whose fence will be carried away next. Great numbers of muskrats, which have been driven out of their holes by the water, are killed by the sportsmen.

They are to us instead of the beaver. The wind from over the meadows is laden with a strong scent of musk, and by its racy freshness advertises us of an unexplored wildness. Those backwoods are not far off. I am affected by the sight of their cabins of mud and grass, raised four or five feet, along the river, as when I read of the Pyramids, or the barrows of Asia.

People step brisker in the street for this unusual movement of the waters. You seem to hear the roar of a waterfall and the din of factories where the river breaks over the road.

Who would have thought that a few feet might not have been spared from the trunks of most trees? Such as grow in the meadows, and are now surrounded by that depth of water, have a dwarfish appearance. No matter whether they are longer or shorter, they are now equally out of proportion.

Feb. 24.

THE FRESHET

A stir is on the Worcester hills,
And Nobscot too the valley fills;
Where scarce you'd fill an acorn cup
In summer when the sun was up,
No more you'll find a cup at all,
But in its place a waterfall.

O that the moon were in conjunction
To the dry land's extremest unction,
Till every dike and pier were flooded,
And all the land with islands studded,
For once to teach all human kind,
Both those that plow and those that grind,
There is no fixture in the land,
But all unstable is as sand.

The river swelleth more and more,
Like some sweet influence stealing o'er
The passive town; and for a while
Each tussock makes a tiny isle,
Where, on some friendly Ararat,
Resteth the weary water-rat.

No ripple shows Musketaquid,
Her very current e'en is hid,
As deepest souls do calmest rest
When thoughts are swelling in the breast;
And she, that in the summer's drought
Doth make a rippling and a rout,
Sleeps from Nawshawtuct to the Cliff,
Unruffled by a single skiff;
So like a deep and placid mind
Whose currents underneath it wind,

For by a thousand distant hills
The louder roar a thousand rills,
And many a spring which now is dumb,
And many a stream with smothered hum,
Doth faster well and swifter glide,
Though buried deep beneath the tide.

Our village shows a rural Venice,
Its broad lagunes where yonder fen is,
Far lovelier than the Bay of Naples
Yon placid cove amid the maples,
And in my neighbor's field of corn
I recognize the Golden Horn.

Here Nature taught from year to year,
When only red men came to hear,
Methinks't was in this school of art
Venice and Naples learned their part,
But still their mistress, to my mind,
Her young disciples leaves behind.

Feb. 26. The most important events make no stir on their first taking place, nor indeed in their effects directly. They seem hedged about by secrecy. It is concussion, or the rushing together of air to fill a vacuum, which makes a noise. The great events to which all things consent, and for which they have prepared the way, produce no explosion, for they are gradual, and create no vacuum which requires to be suddenly filled; as a birth takes place in silence, and is whispered about the neighborhood, but an assassination, which is at war with the constitution of things, creates a tumult immediately.

Corn grows in the night.

Feb. 27. Some geniuses seem to hover in the horizon, like heat lightning, which is not accompanied with fertilizing rain to us, but we are obliged to rest contented with the belief that it is purifying the air somewhere. Others make known their presence by their effects, like that vivid lightning which is accompanied by copious rain and

thunder and, though it clears our atmosphere, sometimes destroys our lives. Others still impart a steady and harmless light at once to large tracts, as the aurora borealis; and this phenomenon is hardest to be accounted for, some thinking it to be a reflection of the polar splendor, others a subtle fluid which pervades all things and tends always to the zenith. All are agreed that these are equally electrical phenomena, as some clever persons have shown by drawing a spark with their knuckles. Modem philosophy thinks it has drawn down lightning from the clouds.

Feb. 28. On the death of a friend, we should consider that the fates through confidence have devolved on us the task of a double living, that we have henceforth to fulfill the promise of our friend's life also, in our own, to the world.

Feb. 29. A friend advises by his whole behavior, and never condescends to particulars; another chides away a fault, he loves it away. While he sees the other's error, he is silently conscious of it, and only the more loves truth himself, and assists his friend in loving it, till the fault is expelled and gently extinguished.

March 2. Love is the burden of all Nature's odes. The song of the birds is an epithalamium, a hymeneal. The marriage of the flowers spots the meadows and fringes the hedges with pearls and diamonds. In the deep water, in the high air, in woods and pastures, and the bowels of the earth, this is the employment and condition of all things.

March 4. I learned to-day that my ornithology had done me no service. The birds I heard, which fortunately did not come within the scope of my science, sung as freshly as if it had been the first morning of creation, and had for background to their song an untrodden wilderness, stretching through many a Carolina and Mexico of the soul.

March 6. There is no delay in answering great questions; for them all things have an answer ready. The Pythian priestess gave her

answers instantly, and oft-times before the questions were fairly propounded. Great topics do not wait for past or future to be determined, but the state of the crops or Brighton market no bird concerns itself about.

March 8. The wind shifts from northeast and east to northwest and south, and every icicle which has tinkled on the meadow grass so long trickles down its stem and seeks its water level unerringly with a million comrades. In the ponds the ice cracks with a busy and inspiriting din and down the larger streams is whirled, grating hoarsely and crashing its way along, which was so lately a firm field for the woodman's team and the fox, sometimes with the tracks of the skaters still fresh upon it, and the holes cut for pickerel. Town committees inspect the bridges and causeways, as if by mere eye-force to intercede with the ice and save the treasury.

In the brooks the slight grating sound of small cakes of ice, floating with various speed, is full of content and promise, and where the water gurgles under a natural bridge, you may hear these hasty rafts hold conversa tion in an undertone. Every rill is a channel for the juices of the meadow. Last year's grasses and flower-stalks have been steeped in rain and snow, and now the brooks flow with meadow tea, — thoroughwort, mint, flagroot, and pennyroyal, all at one draught.

In the ponds the sun makes incroachments around the edges first, as ice melts in a kettle on the fire, darting his rays through this crevice, and preparing the deep water to act simultaneously on the under side.

Two years and twenty now have flown;
Their meanness time away has flung;
These limbs to man's estate have grown,
But cannot claim a manly tongue.

Amidst such boundless wealth without
I only still am poor within;
The birds have sung their summer out,
But still my spring does not begin.

In vain I see the morning rise,
In vain observe the western blaze,
Who idly look to other skies,
Expecting life by other ways.

The sparrow sings at earliest dawn,
Building her nest without delay;
All things are ripe to hear her song,
And now arrives the perfect day.
Shall I then wait the autumn wind,
Compelled to seek a milder ray,
And leave no empty nest behind,
No wood still echoing to my lay?

March 16. The cabins of the settlers are the points whence radiate these rays of green and yellow and russet over the landscape; out of these go the axes and spades with which the landscape is painted. How much is the Indian summer and the budding of spring related to the cottage? Have not the flight of the crow and the gyrations of the hawk a reference to that roof?

The ducks alight at this season on the windward side of the river, in the smooth water, and swim about by twos and threes, pluming themselves and diving to peck at the root of the lily and the cranberries which the frost has not loosened. It is impossible to approach them within gunshot when they are accompanied by the gull, which rises sooner and makes them restless. They fly to windward first, in order to get under weigh, and are more easily reached by the shot if approached on that side. When preparing to fly, they swim about with their heads erect, and then, gliding along a few feet with their bodies just touching the surface, rise heavily with much splashing and fly low at first, if not suddenly aroused, but otherwise rise directly to survey the danger. The cunning sportsman is not in haste to desert his position, but waits to ascertain if, having got themselves into flying trim, they will not return over the ground in their course to a new resting-place.

March 20. In society all the inspiration of my lonely hours seems to flow back on me, and then first have expression.

Love never degrades its votaries, but lifts them up to higher walks of being. They *over-look* one another. All other charities are swallowed up in this; it is gift and reward both.

We will have no vulgar Cupid for a go-between, to make us the playthings of each other, but rather cultivate an irreconcilable hatred instead of this.

March 21. The world is a fit theatre to-day in which any part may be acted. There is this moment proposed to me every kind of life that men lead anywhere, or that imagination can paint. By another spring I may be a mail-carrier in Peru, or a South African planter, or a Siberian exile, or a Greenland whaler, or a settler on the Columbia River, or a Canton merchant, or a soldier in Florida, or a mackerel-fisher off Cape Sable, or a Robinson Crusoe in the Pacific, or a silent navigator of any sea. So wide is the choice of parts, what a pity if the part of Hamlet be left out!

I am freer than any planet; no complaint reaches round the world. I can move away from public opinion, from government, from religion, from education, from society. Shall I be reckoned a ratable poll in the county of Middlesex, or be rated at one spear under the palm trees of Guinea? Shall I raise corn and potatoes in Massachusetts, or figs and olives in Asia Minor? sit out the day in my office in State Street, or ride it out on the steppes of Tartary? For my Brobdingnag I may sail to Patagonia; for my Lilliput, to Lapland. In Arabia and Persia, my day's adventures may surpass the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. I may be a logger on the head waters of the Penobscot, to be recorded in fable hereafter as an amphibious river-god, by as sounding a name as Triton or Proteus; carry furs from Nootka to China, and so be more renowned than Jason and his golden fleece; or go on a South Sea exploring expedition, to be hereafter recounted along with the periplus of Hanno. I may repeat the adventures of Marco Polo or Mandeville.

These are but few of my chances, and how many more things may I do with which there are none to be compared!

Thank Fortune, we are not rooted to the soil, and here is not all the world. The buckeye does not grow in New England; the mockingbird is rarely heard here. Why not keep pace with the day, and not allow of a sunset nor fall behind the summer and the migration of birds? Shall we not compete with the buffalo, who keeps pace with the seasons, cropping the pastures of the Colorado till a greener and sweeter grass awaits him by the Yellowstone? The wild goose is more a cosmopolite than we; he breaks his fast in Canada, takes a luncheon in the Susquehanna, and plumes himself for the night in a Louisiana bayou. The pigeon carries an acorn in his crop from the King of Holland's to Mason and Dixon's line. Yet we think if rail fences are pulled down and stone walls set up on our farms, bounds are henceforth set to our lives and our fates decided. If you are chosen town clerk, forsooth, you can't go to Tierra del Fuego this summer.

But what of all this? A man may gather his limbs snugly within the shell of a mammoth squash, with his back to the northeastern boundary, and not be unusually straitened after all. Our limbs, indeed, have room enough, but it is our souls that rust in a corner. Let us migrate interiorly without intermission, and pitch our tent each day nearer the western horizon. The really fertile soils and luxuriant prairies lie on this side the Alleghanies. There has been no Hanno of the affections. Their domain is untravelled ground, to the Mogul's dominions.

March 22. While I bask in the sun on the shores of Walden Pond, by this heat and this rustle I am absolved from all obligation to the past. The council of nations may reconsider their votes; the grating of a pebble annuls them.

March 27. How many are now standing on the European coast whom another spring will find located on the Red River, or Wisconsin! To-day we live an antediluvian life on our quiet homesteads, and to-morrow are transported to the turmoil and bustle of a crusading era.

Think how finite after all the known world is. Money coined at

Philadelphia is a legal tender over how much of it! You may carry ship biscuit, beef, and pork quite round to the place you set out from. England sends her felons to the other side for safe keeping and convenience.

March 30. Pray, what things interest me at present? A long, soaking rain, the drops trickling down the stubble, while I lay drenched on a last year's bed of wild oats, by the side of some bare hill, ruminating. These things are of moment. To watch this crystal globe just sent from heaven to associate with me. While these clouds and this sombre drizzling weather shut all in, we two draw nearer and know one another. The gathering in of the clouds with the last rush and dying breath of the wind, and then the regular dripping of twigs and leaves the country o'er, the impression of inward comfort and sociableness, the drenched stubble and trees that drop beads on you as you pass, their dim outline seen through the rain on all sides drooping in sympathy with yourself. These are my undisputed territory. This is Nature's English comfort. The birds draw closer and are more familiar under the thick foliage, composing new strains on their roosts against the sunshine.

April 4. We look to windward for fair weather.

April 8. How shall I help myself? By withdrawing into the garret, and associating with spiders and mice, determining to meet myself face to face sooner or later. Completely silent and attentive I will be this hour, and the next, and forever. The most positive life that history notices has been a constant retiring out of life, a wiping one's hands of it, seeing how mean it is, and having nothing to do with it.

April 9. I read in Cudworth how "Origen determines that the stars do not make but signify; and that the heavens are a kind of divine volume, in whose characters they that are skilled may read or spell out human events." Nothing can be truer, and yet astrology is possible. Men seem to be just on the point of discerning a truth when the imposition is greatest.

April 17. Farewell, etiquette! My neighbor inhabits a hollow sycamore, and I a beech tree. What then becomes of morning calls with cards, and deference paid to door-knockers and front entries, and presiding at one's own table?

April 19. The infinite bustle of Nature of a summer's noon, or her infinite silence of a summer's night, gives utterance to no dogma. They do not say to us even with a seer's assurance, that this or that law is immutable and so ever and only can the universe exist. But they are the indifferent occasion for all things and the annulment of all laws.

April 20. The universe will not wait to be explained. Whoever seriously attempts a theory of it is already behind his age. His yea has reserved no nay for the morrow.

The wisest solution is no better than dissolution. Already the seer *whispers* his *convictions* to bare walls; no audience in the land can attend to them.

An early morning walk is a blessing for the whole day. To my neighbors who have risen in mist and rain I tell of a clear sunrise and the singing of birds as some traditionary mythus. I look back to those fresh but now remote hours as to the old dawn of time, when a solid and blooming health reigned and every deed was simple and heroic.

April 22. Thales was the first of the Greeks who taught that souls are immortal, and it takes equal wisdom to discern this old fact to-day. What the first philosopher taught, the last will have to repeat. The *world* makes no progress.

I cannot turn on my heel in a carpeted room. What a gap in the morning is a breakfast! A supper supersedes the sunset.

Methinks I hear the *ranz des vaches* and shall soon be tempted to desert.

Will not one thick garment suffice for three thin ones? Then I shall be less compound, and can lay my hand on myself in the dark.

May 14. A kind act or gift lays us under obligation not so much to the giver as to Truth and Love. We must then be truer and kinder

ourselves. Just in proportion to our sense of the kindness, and pleasure at it, is the debt paid. What is it to be *grateful* but to be *gratified*, — to be *pleased?* The nobly poor will dissolve all obligations by nobly accepting a kindness.

If we are not sensible of kindness, then indeed we incur a debt. Not to be pleased by generous deeds at any time, though done to another, but to sit crabbedly silent in a comer, what is it but a voluntary imprisonment for debt? It is to see the world through a grating. Not to let the light of virtuous actions shine on us at all times, through every crevice, is to live in a dungeon.

War is the sympathy of concussion. We would fain rub one against another. Its rub may be friction merely, but it would rather be titillation. We discover in the quietest scenes how faithfully war has copied the moods of peace. Men do not peep into heaven but they see embattled hosts there. Milton's heaven was a camp. When the sun bursts through the morning fog I seem to hear the din of war louder than when his chariot thundered on the plains of Troy. Every man is a warrior when he aspires. He marches on his post. The soldier is the practical idealist; he has no sympathy with matter, he revels in the annihilation of it. So do we all at times. When a freshet destroys the works of man, or a fire consumes them, or a Lisbon earthquake shakes them down, our sympathy with persons is swallowed up in a wider sympathy with the universe. A crash is apt to grate agreeably on our ears.

Let not the faithful sorrow that he has no ear for the more fickle harmonies of creation, if he is awake to the slower measure of virtue and truth. If his pulse does not beat in unison with the musician's quips and turns, it accords with the pulse-beat of the ages.

June 11. We had appointed Saturday, August 31st, 1839, for the commencement of our White Mountain expedition. We awake to a warm, drizzling rain which threatens delay to our plans, but at length the leaves and grass are dried, and it comes out a mild afternoon, of such a sober serenity and freshness that Nature herself seems maturing some greater scheme of her own. All things wear the aspect

of a fertile idleness. It is the eventide of the soul. After this long dripping and oozing from every pore Nature begins to respire again more healthily than ever. So with a vigorous shove we launch our boat from the bank, while the flags and bulrushes curtsy a God-speed, and drop silently down the stream. As if we had launched our bark in the sluggish current of our thoughts, and were bound nowhither.

Gradually the village murmur subsides, as when one falls into a placid dream and on its Lethe tide is floated from the past into the future, or as silently as fresh thoughts awaken us to new morning or evening light.

Our boat was built like a fisherman's dory, with thole-pins for four oars. Below it was green with a border of blue, as if out of courtesy [to] the green sea and the blue heavens. It was well calculated for service, but of consequence difficult to be dragged over shoal places or carried round falls.

A boat should have a sort of life and independence of its own. It is a sort of amphibious animal, a creature of two elements, a fish to swim and a bird to fly, related by one half of its structure to some swift and shapely fish and by the other to some strong-winged and graceful bird. The fins of the fish will tell where to set the oars, and the tail give some hint for the form and position of the rudder. And so may we learn where there should be the greatest breadth of beam and depth in the hold. The bird will show how to rig and trim the sails, and what form to give to the prow, that it may balance the boat and divide the air and water best.

The boat took to the water; from of old there had been a tacit league struck between these two, and now it gladly availed itself of the old law that the heavier shall float the lighter.

Two masts we had provided, one to serve for a tent-pole at night, and likewise other slender poles, that we might exchange the tedium of rowing for poling in shallow reaches. At night we lay on a buffalo-skin under a tent of drilled cotton eight feet high and as many in diameter, which effectually defended from dampness, so short a step is it from tiled roofs to drilled cotton, from carpeted floors to a buffalo-skin.

There were a few berries left still on the hills, hanging with brave

content by the slenderest threads.

As the night stole over, such a freshness stole across the meadow that every blade of cut-grass seemed to teem with life.

We stole noiselessly down the stream, occasionally driving a pickerel from the covert of the pads, or a bream from her nest, and the small green bittern would now and then sail away on sluggish wings from some recess of the shore. With its patient study by rocks and sandy capes, has it wrested the whole of her secret from Nature yet? It has looked out from its dull eye for so long, standing on one leg, on moon and stars sparkling through silence and dark, and now what a rich experience is its! What says it of stagnant pools, and reeds, and damp night fogs? It would be worth while to look in the eye which has been open and seeing at such hours and in such solitudes. When I behold that dull yellowish green, I wonder if my own soul is not a bright, invisible green. I would fain lay my eye side by side with its and learn of it.

End of my Journal of 546 *pages.*

June 14.

Λόγος τοῦ ἔργου ἄνευ ὕλης. — *Aristotle's definition of art.*

Ὅ χρή σε νοεῖν νόου ἄνθει. — *Chaldaic Oracles.*

Ἐγώ εἰμι πᾶν τὸ γεγονὸν, καὶ ὂν, καὶ ἐσόμενον, καὶ τὸν ἐμὸν πέπλον οὐδείς πω θνητὸς ἀπεκάλυψεν. — *Inscription upon the temple at Sais.*

Plotinus aimed at ἐπαφήν, and παρουσίαν ἐπιστήμης κρείττονα, and τὸ ἑαυτὸν κέντρον τῷ ὑΐῳ πάντων κέντρῳ συνάπτειν.

Μέλλει τὸ Θεῖον δ' ἐστὶ τοιοῦτον φύσει. — EURIPIDES in *Orestes.*

"The right Reason is in part divine, in part human; the second can be expressed, but no language can translate the first." — EMPEDOCLES.

"In glory and in joy,
Behind his plough, upon the mountain-side!"

I seemed to see the woods wave on a hundred mountains, as I read these lines, and the distant rustling of their leaves reached my ear.

June 15. I stood by the river to-day considering the forms of the elms reflected in the water. For every oak and birch, too, growing on the hilltop, as well as for elms and willows, there is a graceful ethereal tree making down from the roots, as it were the original idea of the tree, and sometimes Nature in high tides brings her mirror to its foot and makes it visible. Anxious Nature sometimes reflects from pools and puddles the objects which our grovelling senses may fail to see relieved against the sky with the pure ether for background.

It would be well if we saw ourselves as in perspective always, impressed with distinct outline on the sky, side by side with the shrubs on the river's brim. So let our life stand to heaven as some fair, sunlit tree against the western horizon, and by sunrise be planted on some eastern hill to glisten in the first rays of the dawn.

Why always insist that men incline to the moral side of their being? Our life is not all moral. Surely, its actual phenomena deserve to be studied impartially. The science of Human Nature has never been attempted, as the science of Nature has. The dry light has never shone on it. Neither physics nor metaphysics have touched it.

We have not yet met with a sonnet, genial and affectionate, to prophane swearing, breaking on the still night air, perhaps, like the hoarse croak of some bird. Noxious weeds and stagnant waters have their lovers, and the utterer of oaths must have honeyed lips, and be another Attic bee after a fashion, for only prevalent and essential harmony and beauty can employ the laws of sound and of light.

June 16. The river down which we glided for that long afternoon was like a clear drop of dew with the heavens and the landscape reflected in it. And as evening drew on, faint purple clouds began to be reflected in its water, and the cow-bells tinkled louder and more incessantly on the banks, and like shy water-rats we stole along near the shore, looking out for a place to pitch our camp.

It seems insensibly to grow lighter as night shuts in; the furthest hamlet begins to be revealed, which before lurked in the shade of the noon. It twinkles now through the trees like some fair evening star darting its ray across valley and wood.

Would it not be a luxury to stand up to one's chin in some retired swamp for a whole summer's day, scenting the sweet-fern and bilberry blows, and lulled by the minstrelsy of gnats and mosquitoes? A day passed in the society of those Greek sages, such as described in the "Banquet" of Xenophon, would not be comparable with the dry wit of decayed cranberry vines, and the fresh Attic salt of the moss beds. Say twelve hours of genial and familiar converse with the leopard frog. The sun to rise behind alder and dogwood, and climb buoyantly to his meridian of three hands' breadth, and finally sink to rest behind some bold western hummock. To hear the evening chant of the mosquito from a thousand green chapels, and the bittern begin to boom from his concealed fort like a sunset gun! Surely, one may as profitably be soaked in the juices of a marsh for one day, as pick his way dry-shod over sand. Cold and damp, — are they not as rich experience as warmth and dryness?

So is not shade as good as sunshine, night as day? Why be eagles and thrushes always, and owls and whip-poor-wills never?

I am pleased to see the landscape through the bottom of a tumbler, it is clothed in such a mild, quiet light, and the barns and fences checker and partition it with new regularity. These rough and uneven fields stretch away with lawn-like smoothness to the horizon. The clouds are finely distinct and picturesque, the light-blue sky contrasting with their feathery whiteness. They are fit drapery to hang over Persia. The smith's shop, resting in such a Grecian light, is worthy to stand beside the Parthenon. The potato and grain fields are such gardens as he imagines who has schemes of ornamental

husbandry.

If I were to write of the dignity of the farmer's life, I would behold his farms and crops through a tumbler. All the occupations of men are ennobled so.

Our eyes, too, are convex lenses, but we do not learn with the eyes; they introduce us, and we learn after by converse with things.

June 17. Our lives will not attain to be spherical by lying on one or the other side forever; but only by resigning ourselves to the law of gravity in us, will our axis become coincident with the celestial axis, and [only] by revolving incessantly through all circles, shall we acquire a perfect sphericity.

Men are inclined to lay the chief stress on likeness and not on difference. We seek to know how a thing is related to us, and not if it is strange. We call those bodies warm whose temperature is many degrees below our own, and never those cold which are warmer than we. There are many degrees of warmth below blood heat, but none of cold above it.

Even the motto "Business before friends" admits of a high interpretation. No interval of time can avail to defer friendship. The concerns of time must be attended to in time. I need not make haste to explore the whole secret of a star; if it were vanished quite out of the firmament, so that no telescope could longer discover it, I should not despair of knowing it entirely one day.

We meet our friend with a certain awe, as if he had just lighted on the earth, and yet as if we had some title to be acquainted with him by our old familiarity with sun and moon.

June 18. I should be pleased to meet man in the woods. I wish he were to be encountered like wild caribous and moose. I am startled when I consider how little I am *actually* concerned about the things I write in my journal.

Think of the Universal History, and then tell me, — when did burdock and plantain sprout first?

A fair land, indeed, do books spread open to us, from the Genesis down; but alas! men do not take them up kindly into their own being,

and breathe into them a fresh beauty, knowing that the grimmest of them belongs to such warm sunshine and still moonlight as the present.

Of what consequence whether I stand on London bridge for the next century, or look into the depths of this bubbling spring which I have laid open with my hoe?

June 19. The other day I rowed in my boat a free, even lovely young lady, and, as I plied the oars, she sat in the stern, and there was nothing but she between me and the sky. So might all our lives be picturesque if they were free enough, but mean relations and prejudices intervene to shut out the sky, and we never see a man as simple and distinct as the man-weathercock on a steeple.

The faint bugle notes which I hear in the west seem to flash on the horizon like heat lightning. Cows low in the street more friendly than ever, and the note of the whip-poor-will, borne over the fields, is the voice with which the woods and moonlight woo me. I shall not soon forget the sounds which lulled me when falling asleep on the banks of the Merrimack.

Far into night I hear some tyro beating a drum incessantly with a view to some country muster, and am thrilled by an infinite sweetness as of a music which the breeze drew from the sinews of war. I think of the line, —

"When the drum beat at dead of night."

How I wish it would wake the whole world to march to its melody, but still it drums on alone in the silence and the dark. Cease not, thou drummer of the night, thou too shalt have thy reward. The stars and the firmament hear thee, and their aisles shall echo thy beat till its call is answered, and the forces are mustered. The universe is attentive as a little child to thy sound, and trembles as if each stroke bounded against an elastic vibrating firmament. I should be contented if the night never ended, for in the darkness heroism will not be deferred, and I see fields where no hero has couched his lance.

June 20. Perfect sincerity and transparency make a great part of beauty, as in dewdrops, lakes, and diamonds. A spring is a cynosure in the fields. All Muscovy glitters in the minute particles of mica on

its bottom, and the ripples cast their shadows flickeringly on the white sand, as the clouds which flit across the landscape.

Something like the woodland sounds will be heard to echo through the leaves of a good book. Sometimes I hear the fresh emphatic note of the oven-bird, and am tempted to turn many pages; sometimes the hurried chuckling sound of the squirrel when he dives into the wall.

If we only see clearly enough how mean our lives are, they will be splendid enough. Let us remember not to strive upwards too long, but sometimes drop plumb down the other way, and wallow in meanness. From the deepest pit we may see the stars, if not the sun. Let us have presence of mind enough to sink when we can't swim. At any rate, a carcass had better lie on the bottom than float an offense to all nostrils. It will not be falling, for we shall ride wide of the earth's gravity as a star, and always be drawn upward still, — *semper cadendo nunquam cadit*, — and so, by yielding to universal gravity, at length become fixed stars.

Praise begins when things are seen partially. We begin to praise when we begin to see that a thing needs our assistance.

When the heavens are obscured to us, and nothing noble or heroic appears, but we are oppressed by imperfection and shortcoming on all hands, we are apt to suck our thumbs and decry our fates. As if nothing were to be done in cloudy weather, or, if heaven were not accessible by the upper road, men would not find out a lower. Sometimes I feel so cheap that I am inspired, and could write a poem about it, — but straightway I cannot, for I am no longer mean. Let me know that I am ailing, and I am well. We should not always beat off the impression of trivialness, but make haste to welcome and cherish it. Water the weed till it blossoms; with cultivation it will bear fruit. There are two ways to victory, — to strive bravely, or to yield. How much pain the last will save we have not yet learned.

June 21. I shall not soon forget my first night in a tent, —— how the distant barking of dogs for so many still hours revealed to me the riches of the night. Who would not be a dog and bay the moon?

I never feel that I am inspired unless my body is also. It too spurns

a tame and commonplace life. They are fatally mistaken who think, while they strive with their minds, that they may suffer their bodies to stagnate in luxury or sloth. The body is the first proselyte the Soul makes. Our life is but the Soul made known by its fruits, the body. The whole duty of man may be expressed in one line, — Make to yourself a perfect body.

June 22. What a man knows, that he does.

It is odd that people will wonder how Shakespeare could write as he did without knowing Latin, or Greek, or geography, as if these were of more consequence than to know how to whistle. They are not backward to recognize Genius, — how it dispenses with those furtherances which others require, leaps where they crawl, — and yet they never cease to marvel that so it was, — that it was Genius, and helped itself.

Nothing can shock a truly brave man but dullness. One can tolerate many things. What mean these sly, suspicious looks, as if you were an odd fish, a piece of crockery-ware to be tenderly handled? Surely people forget how many rebuffs every man has experienced in his day, — perhaps has fallen into a horsepond, eaten freshwater clams, or worn one shirt for a week without washing. Cannot a man be as calmly tolerant as a potato field in the sun, whose equanimity is not disturbed by Scotch thistles over the wall, but there it smiles and waxes till the harvest, let thistles mount never so high? You cannot receive a shock, unless you have an electric affinity for that which shocks you. Have no affinity for what is shocking.

Do not present a gleaming edge to ward off harm, for that will oftenest attract the lightning, but rather be the all-pervading ether which the lightning does not strike but purify. Then will the rudeness or profanity of your companion be like a flash across the face of your sky, lighting up and revealing its serene depths. Earth cannot shock the heavens; but its dull vapor and foul smoke make a bright cloud spot in the ether, and anon the sun, like a cunning artificer, will cut and paint it, and set it for a jewel in the breast of the sky.

When we are shocked at vice we express a lingering sympathy with it. Dry rot, rust, and mildew shock no man, for none is subject

to them.

June 23. We Yankees are not so far from right, who answer one question by asking another. Yes and No are lies. A true answer will not aim to establish anything, but rather to set all well afloat. All answers are in the future, and day answereth to day. Do we think we can anticipate them?

In Latin, to respond is to pledge one's self before the gods to do faithfully and honorably, as a man should, in any case. This is good.

Music soothes the din of philosophy and lightens incessantly over the heads of sages.

How can the language of the poet be more expressive than nature? He is content that what he has already read in simple characters, or indifferently in all, be translated into the same again.

He is the true artist whose life is his material; every stroke of the chisel must enter his own flesh and bone and not grate dully on marble.

The Springs. — What is any man's discourse to me if I am not sensible of something in it as steady and cheery as the creak of the crickets? In it the woods must be relieved against the sky. Men tire me when I am not constantly greeted and cheered in their discourse, as it were by the flux of sparkling streams.

I cannot see the bottom of the sky, because I cannot see to the bottom of myself. It is the symbol of my own infinity. My eye penetrates as far into the ether as that depth is inward from which my contemporary thought springs.

Not by constraint or severity shall you have access to true wisdom, but by abandonment, and childlike mirthfulness. If you would know aught, be gay before it.

June 24. When I read Cudworth I find I can tolerate all, — atomists, pneumatologists, atheists, and theists, —— Plato, Aristotle, Leucippus, Democritus, and Pythagoras. It is the attitude of these men, more than any communication, which charms me. It is so rare to find a man musing. But between them and their commentators there is an endless dispute. But if it come to that, that you compare notes, then you are all wrong. As it is, each takes me up into the

serene heavens, and paints earth and sky. Any sincere thought is irresistible; it lifts us to the zenith, whither the smallest bubble rises as surely as the largest.

Dr. Cudworth does not consider that the belief in a deity is as great a heresy as exists. Epicurus held that the gods were "of human form, yet were so thin and subtile, as that, comparatively with our terrestrial bodies, they might be called incorporeal; they having not so much *carnem* as *quasi-carnem*, nor *sanguinem* as *quasi-sanguinem*, a certain kind of aerial or ethereal flesh and blood." This, which Cudworth pronounces "romantical," is plainly as good doctrine as his own. As if any sincere thought were not the best sort of truth!

There is no doubt but the highest morality in the books is rhymed or measured, — is, in form as well as substance, poetry. Such is the scripture of all nations. If I were to compile a volume to contain the condensed wisdom of mankind, I should quote no rhythmless line.

Not all the wit of a college can avail to make one harmonious line. It never *happens.* It may get so as to jingle, but a jingle is akin to a jar, — jars regularly recurring.

So delicious is plain speech to my ears, as if I were to be more delighted by the whistling of the shot than frightened by the flying of the splinters, I am content, I — fear, to be quite battered down and made a ruin of. I outgeneral myself when I direct the enemy to my vulnerable points.

The loftiest utterance of Love is, perhaps, sublimely satirical. Sympathy with what is sound makes sport of what is unsound.

Cliffs. Evening. — Though the sun set a quarter of an hour ago, his rays are still visible, darting half-way to the zenith. That glowing morrow in the west flashes on me like a faint presentiment of morning when I am falling asleep. A dull mist comes rolling from the west, as if it were the dust which day has raised. A column of smoke is rising from the woods yonder, to uphold heaven's roof till the light comes again. The landscape, by its patient resting there, teaches me that all good remains with him that waiteth, and that I shall sooner overtake the dawn by remaining here, than by hurrying

over the hills of the west.

Morning and evening are as like as brother and sister. The sparrow and thrush sing and the frogs peep for both.

The woods breathe louder and louder behind me. With what hurry-skurry night takes place! The wagon rattling over yonder bridge is the messenger which day sends back to night; but the dispatches are sealed. In its rattle the village seems to say, This one sound, and I have done.

Red, then, is Day's color; at least it is the color of his heel. He is 'stepping westward.' We only notice him when he comes and when he goes.

With noble perseverance the dog bays the stars yonder. I too, like thee, walk alone in this strange, familiar night, my voice, like thine, beating against its friendly concave; and barking I hear only my own voice. 10 o'clock.

June 25. Let me see no other conflict but with prosperity. If my path run on before me level and smooth, it is all a mirage; in reality it is steep and arduous as a chamois pass. I will not let the years roll over me like a Juggernaut car.

We will warm us at each other's fire. Friendship is not such a cold refining process as a double sieve, but a glowing furnace in which all impurities are consumed.

Men have learned to touch before they scrutinize, — to shake hands, and not to stare.

June 26. The best poetry has never been written, for ' when it might have been, the poet forgot it, and when it was too late remembered it; or when it might have been, the poet remembered it, and when it was too late forgot it.

The highest condition of art is artlessness.

Truth is always paradoxical.

He will get to the goal first who stands stillest.

There is one let better than any help, and that is, — *Let-alone.*

By sufferance you may escape suffering.

He who resists not at all will never surrender.

When a dog runs at you, whistle for him.

Say, Not so, and you will outcircle the philosophers.

Stand outside the wall, and no harm can reach you. The danger is that you be walled in with it.

June 27. I am living this 27th of June, 1840, a dull, cloudy day and no sun shining. The clink of the smith's hammer sounds feebly over the roofs, and the wind is sighing gently, as if dreaming of cheerfuler days. The farmer is plowing in yonder field, craftsmen are busy in the shops, the trader stands behind the counter, and all works go steadily forward. But I will have nothing to do; I will tell fortune that I play no game with her, and she may reach me in my Asia of serenity and indolence if she can.

For an impenetrable shield, stand inside yourself.

He was no artist, but an artisan, who first made shields of brass.

Unless we meet religiously, we prophane one another. What was the consecrated ground round the temple, we have used as no better than a domestic court.

Our friend's is as holy a shrine as any God's, to be approached with sacred love and awe. Veneration is the measure of Love. Our friend answers ambiguously, and sometimes before the question is propounded, like the oracle of Delphi. He forbears to ask explanation, but doubts and surmises darkly with full faith, as we silently ponder our fates.

In no presence are we so susceptible to shame. Our hour is a sabbath, our abode a temple, our gifts peace offerings, our conversation a communion, our silence a prayer. In prophanity we are absent, in holiness near, in sin estranged, in innocence reconciled.

June 28. The prophane never hear music; the holy ever hear it. It is God's voice, the divine breath audible. Where it is heard, there is a sabbath. It is omnipotent; all things obey it as they obey virtue. It is the herald of virtue. It passes by sorrow, for grief hangs its harp on the willows.

June 29. Of all phenomena, my own race are the most mysterious and undiscoverable. For how many years have I striven to meet one, even on common manly ground, and have not succeeded!

June 30. I sailed from Fair Haven last evening as gently and steadily as the clouds sail through the atmosphere. The wind came blowing blithely from the southwest fields, and stepped into the folds of our sail like a winged horse, pulling with a strong and steady impulse. The sail bends gently to the breeze, as swells some generous impulse of the heart, and anon flutters and flaps with a kind of human suspense. I could watch the motions of a sail forever, they are so rich and full of meaning. I watch the play of its pulse, as if it were my own blood beating there. The varying temperature of distant atmospheres is graduated on its scale. It is a free, buoyant creature, the bauble of the heavens and the earth. A gay pastime the air plays with it. If it swells and tugs, it is because the sun lays his windy finger on it. The breeze it plays with has been outdoors so long. So thin is it, and yet so full of life; so noiseless when it labors hardest, so noisy and impatient when least serviceable. So am I blown on by God's breath, so flutter and flap, and fill gently out with the breeze.

In this fresh evening each blade and leaf looks as if it had been dipped in an icy liquid greenness. Let eyes that ache come here and look, — the sight will be a sovereign eyewater, — or else wait and bathe them in the dark.

We go forth into the fields, and there the wind blows freshly onward, and still on, and we must make new efforts not to be left behind. What does the dogged wind intend, that, like a willful cur, it will not let me turn aside to rest or content? Must it always reprove and provoke me, and never welcome me as an equal?

The truth shall prevail and falsehood discover itself, as long as the wind blows on the hills.

A man's life should be a stately march to a sweet but unheard music, and when to his fellows it shall seem irregular and inharmonious, he will only be stepping to a livelier measure, or his nicer ear hurry him into a thousand symphonies and concordant variations. There will be no halt ever, but at most a marching on his

post, or such a pause as is richer than any sound, when the melody runs into such depth and wildness as to be no longer heard, but implicitly consented to with the whole life and being. He will take a false step never, even in the most arduous times, for then the music will not fail to swell into greater sweetness and volume, and itself rule the movement it inspired.

I have a deep sympathy with war, it so apes the gait and bearing of the soul.

Value and effort are as much coincident as weight and a tendency to fall. In a very wide but true sense, effort is the deed itself, and it is only when these sensible stuffs intervene, that our attention is distracted from the deed to the accident. It is never the deed men praise, but some marble or canvas which are only a staging to the real work.

July 1. To be a man is to do a man's work; always our resource is to endeavor. We may well say, Success to our endeavors. Effort is the prerogative of virtue.

The true laborer is recompensed by his labor, not by his employer. Industry is its own wages. Let us not suffer our hands to lose one jot of their handiness by looking behind to a mean recompense, knowing that our true endeavor cannot be thwarted, nor we be cheated of our earnings unless by not earning them.

The true poem is not that which the public read. There is always a poem not printed on paper, coincident with the production of this, which is stereotyped in the poet's life, is what he has become through his work. Some symbol of value may shape itself to the senses in wood, or marble, or verse, but this is fluctuating as the laborer's hire, which may or may not be withheld. His very material is not material but supernatural. Perhaps the hugest and most effective deed may have no sensible result at all on earth, but paint itself in the heavens in new stars and constellations. Its very material lies out of nature. When, in rare moments, we strive wholly with one consent, which we call a yearning, we may not hope that our work

will stand in any artist's gallery.

Let not the artist expect that his true work will stand in any prince's gallery.

July 2. I am not taken up, like Moses, upon a mountain to learn the law, but lifted up in my seat here, in the warm sunshine and genial light.

They who are ready to go are already invited.

Neither men nor things have any true mode of invitation but to be inviting.

Can that be a task which all things abet, and to postpone which is to strive against nature?

July 3. When Alexander appears, the Hercynian and Dodonean woods seem to wave a welcome to him.

Do not thoughts and men's lives enrich the earth and change the aspect of things as much as a new growth of wood?

What are Godfrey and Gonsalvo unless we breathe a life into them, and reenact their exploits as a prelude to our own? The past is only so heroic as we see it; it is the canvas on which our conception of heroism is painted, the dim prospectus of our future field. We are dreaming of what we are to do.

The last sunrise I witnessed seemed to outshine the splendor of all preceding ones, and I was convinced that it behooved man to dawn as freshly, and with equal promise and steadiness advance into the career of life, with as lofty and serene a countenance to move onward through his midday to a yet fairer and more promising setting. Has the day grown old when it sets? and shall man wear out sooner than the sun? In the crimson colors of the west I discern the budding hues of dawn. To my western brother it is rising pure and bright as it did to me, but the evening exhibits in the still rear of day the beauty which through morning and noon escaped me. When we are oppressed by the heat and turmoil of the noon, let us remember that the sun which scorches us with brazen beams is gilding the hills of morning and awaking the woodland quires for other men.

We will have a dawn, and noon, and serene sunset in ourselves.

What we call the gross atmosphere of evening is the accumulated

deed of the day, which absorbs the rays of beauty, and shows more richly than the naked promise of the dawn. By earnest toil in the heat of the noon, let us get ready a rich western blaze against the evening of our lives.

Low-thoughted, plodding men have come and camped in my neighbor's field to-night, with camp music and bustle. Their bugle instantly finds a sounding board in the heavens, though mean lips blow it. The sky is delighted with strains which the connoisseur rejects. It seems to say, Now is this my own earth.

In music are the centripetal and centrifugal forces. The universe needed only to hear a divine harmony that every star might fall into its proper place and assume a true sphericity.

July 4. 4 o'clock, A. M. The Townsend Light Infantry encamped last night in my neighbor's inclosure.

The night still breathes slumberously over field and wood, when a few soldiers gather about one tent in the twilight, and their band plays an old Scotch air, with bugle and drum and fife attempered to the season. It seems like the morning hymn of creation. The first sounds of the awakening camp, mingled with the chastened strains which so sweetly salute the dawn, impress me as the morning prayer of an army.

And now the morning gun fires. The soldier awakening to creation and awakening it. I am sure none are cowards now. These strains are the roving dreams which steal from tent to tent, and break forth into distinct melody. They are the soldier's morning thought. Each man awakes himself with lofty emotions, and would do some heroic deed. You need preach no homily to him; he is the stuff they are made of.

The whole course of our lives should be analogous to one day of the soldier's. His Genius seems to whisper in his ear what demeanor is befitting, and in his bravery and his march he yields a blind and partial obedience.

The fresher breeze which accompanies the dawn rustles the oaks

and birches, and the earth respires calmly with the creaking of crickets. Some hazel leaf stirs gently, as if anxious not to awake the day too abruptly, while the time is hastening to the distinct line between darkness and light. And soldiers issue from their dewy tents, and as if in answer to expectant nature, sing a sweet and far-echoing hymn.

We may well neglect many things, provided we overlook them.

When to-day I saw the "Great Ball" rolled majestically along, it seemed a shame that man could not move like it. All dignity and grandeur has something of the undulatoriness of the sphere. It is the secret of majesty in the rolling gait of the elephant, and of all grace in action and in art. The line of beauty is a curve. Each man seems striving to imitate its gait, and keep pace with it, but it moves on regardless and conquers the multitude with its majesty. What shame that our lives, which should be the source of planetary motion and sanction the order of the spheres, are full of abruptness and angularity, so as not to roll, nor move majestically.

July 5. Go where we will, we discover infinite change in particulars only, not in generals.

You cannot rob a man of anything which he will miss.

July 6. All this worldly wisdom was once the unamiable heresy of some wise man.

I observe a truly wise practice on every hand, in education, in religion, and the morals of society, — enough embodied wisdom to have set up many an ancient philosopher.

This society, if it were a person to be met face to face, would not only be tolerated but courted, with its so impressive experience and admirable acquaintance with things.

Consider society at any epoch, and who does not see that heresy has already *prevailed* in it?

Have no mean hours, but be grateful for every hour, and accept what it brings. The reality will make any sincere record respectable. No day will have been wholly misspent, if one sincere, thoughtful page has been written. of Concord, in that summer [1840],... turning out to roll a huge ball, emblematic of the popular movement against President Van Buren, from the battle-ground of Concord to that of Bunker Hill, singing as they rolled: —

'It is the Ball a-rolling on For Tippecanoe and Tyler too.'"

Let the daily tide leave some deposit on these pages, as it leaves sand and shells on the shore. So much increase of *terra firma.* This may be a calendar of the ebbs and flows of the soul; and on these sheets as a beach, the waves may cast up pearls and seaweed.

July 7. I have experienced such simple joy in the trivial matters of fishing and sporting, formerly, as might inspire the muse of Homer and Shakespeare. And now, when I turn over the pages and ponder the plates of the "Angler's Souvenir," I exclaim with the poet, —

"Can such things be, And overcome us like a summer's cloud?"

When I hear a sudden burst from a horn, I am startled, as if one had provoked such wildness as he could not rule nor tame. He dares to wake the echoes which he cannot put to rest.

July 8. Doubt and falsehood are yet good preachers. They affirm roundly, while they deny partially.

I am pleased to learn that Thales was up and stirring by night not unfrequently, as his astronomical discoveries prove.

It was a saying of Solon that "it is necessary to observe a medium in all things."

The golden mean, in ethics as in physics, is the centre of the system, and that about which all revolve; and though, to a distant and

plodding planet, it is the uttermost extreme, yet, when that planet's year is complete, it will be found central. They who are alarmed lest virtue run into extreme good, have not yet wholly embraced her, but described only a slight arc about her, and from so small a curvature you can calculate no centre whatever; but their mean is no better than meanness, nor their medium than mediocrity.

The brave man, while he observes strictly this golden mean, seems to run through all extremes with impunity; like the sun, which now appears in the zenith, now in the horizon, and again is faintly reflected from the moon's disk, and has the credit of describing an entire great circle, crossing the equinoctial and solstitial colures, without detriment to his steadfastness or mediocrity.

Every planet asserts its own to be the centre of the system.

Only *meanness* is mediocre, *moderate;* but the true *medium* is not contained within any *bounds*, but is as wide as the ends it connects.

When Solon endeavored to prove that Salamis had formerly belonged to the Athenians and not to the Megarians, he caused the tombs to be opened, and showed that the inhabitants of Salamis turned the faces of their dead to the same side with the Athenians, but the Megarians to the opposite side.

So does each part bear witness to all, and the history of all the past may be read in a single grain of its ashes.

July 9. In most men's religion the ligature which should be its muscle and sinew is rather like that thread which the accomplices of Cylon held in their hands, when they went abroad from the temple of Minerva, the other end being attached to the statue of the goddess. But frequently, as in their case, the thread breaks, being stretched, and they are left without an asylum.

The value of many traits in Grecian history depends not so much on their importance as history, as [on] the readiness with which they accept a wide interpretation, and illustrate the poetry and ethics of mankind. When they announce no particular truth, they are yet

central to all truth. They are like those examples by which we improve, but of which we never formally extract the moral. Even the isolated and unexplained facts are like the ruins of the temples which in imagination we restore, and ascribe to some Phidias, or other master.

The Greeks were boys in the sunshine, the Romans were men in the field, the Persians women in the house, the Egyptians old men in the dark.

He who receives an injury is an accomplice of the wrong-doer.

July 10. To myself I am as pliant as osier, and my courses seem not so easy to be calculated as Encke's comet; but I am powerless to bend the character of another; he is like iron in my hands. I could tame a hyena more easily than my friend. I contemplate Him as a granite boulder. He is material which no tool of mine will work. A naked savage will fell an oak with a firebrand, and wear a hatchet out of the rock, but I cannot hew the smallest chip out of my fellow. There is a character in every one which no art can reach to beautify or deform.

Nothing was ever so unfamiliar and startling to me as my own thoughts.

We know men through their eyes. You might say that the eye was always original and unlike another. It is the feature of the individual, and not of the family, —— in twins still different. All a man's privacy is in his eye, and its expression he cannot alter more than he can alter his character. So long as we look a man in the eye, it seems to rule the other features, and make them, too, original. When I have mistaken one person for another, observing only his form, and carriage, and inferior features, the unlikeness seemed of the least consequence; but when I caught his eye, and my doubts were removed, it seemed to pervade every feature.

The eye revolves on an independent pivot which we can no more control than our own will. Its axle is the axle of the soul, as the axis

of the earth is coincident with the axis of the heavens.

July 11. The true art is not merely a sublime consolation and holiday labor which the gods have given to sickly mortals, to be wrought at in parlors, and not in stithies amid soot and smoke, but such a masterpiece as you may imagine a dweller on the table-lands of Central Asia might produce, with threescore and ten years for canvas, and the faculties of a man for tools, — a human life, wherein you might hope to discover more than the freshness of Guido's Aurora, or the mild light of Titian's landscapes; not a bald imitation or rival of Nature, but the restored original of which she is the reflection. For such a work as this, whole galleries of Greece and Italy are a mere mixing of colors and preparatory quarrying of marble.

Not how is the idea expressed in stone or on canvas, is the question, but how far it has obtained form and expression in the life of the artist.

There is much covert truth in the old mythology which makes Vulcan a brawny and deformed smith, who sweat more than the other gods. His stithy was not like a modem studio.

Let us not wait any longer, but step down from the mountains on to the plain of earth. Let our delay be like the sun's, when he lingers on the dividing line of day and night a brief space when the world is grateful for his light. We will make such haste as the morning and such delay as the evening.

It concerns us rather to be something here present than to leave something behind us.

It is the man determines what is said, not the words. If a mean person uses a wise maxim, I bethink me how it can be interpreted so as to commend itself to his meanness; but if a wise man makes a commonplace remark, I consider what wider construction it will admit. When Pittacus says, "It is necessary to accommodate one's self to the time and take advantage of the occasion," I assent. He might have considered that to accommodate one's self to all times, and take advantage of all occasions, was really to be independent,

and make our own opportunity.

July 12. What first suggested that necessity was grim, and made fate so fatal? The strongest is always the least violent. Necessity is a sort of Eastern cushion on which I recline. I contemplate its mild, inflexible countenance, as the haze in October days. When I am vexed I only ask to be left alone with it. Leave me to my fate. It is the bosom of time and the lap of eternity; since to be necessary is to be needful, it is only another name for inflexibility of good. How I welcome my grim fellow and aspire to be such a necessity as he! He is so flexible, and yields to me as the air to my body! I leap and dance in his midst, and play with his beard till he smiles. I greet thee, my elder brother, who with thy touch ennoblest all things. Must it be so, then is it good. Thou commendest even petty ills by thy countenance.

Over Greece hangs the divine necessity, ever a mellower heaven of itself, whose light too gilds the Acropolis and a thousand fanes and groves.

Pittacus said there was no better course than to endeavor to do well what you are doing at any moment.

Go where he will, the wise man is proprietor of all things. Everything bears a similar inscription, if we could but read it, to that on the vase found in the stomach of a fish in old times,— "To the most wise."

When his impious fellow-passengers invoked the gods in a storm, Bias cried, "Hist! hist! lest the gods perceive that you are here, for we should all be lost."

A wise man will always have his duds picked up, and be ready for whatever may happen, as the prudent merchant, notwithstanding the lavish display of his wares, will yet have them packed or easy to be removed in emergencies. In this sense there is something sluttish in all finery. When I see a fine lady or gentleman dressed to the top of the fashion, I wonder what they would do if an earthquake should happen, or a fire suddenly break out, for they seem to have counted

only on fair weather, and that things will go on smoothly and without jostling. Those curls and jewels, so nicely adjusted, expect an unusual deference from the elements.

Our dress should be such as will hang conveniently about us, and fit equally well in good and in bad fortune; such as will approve itself of the right fashion and fabric, whether for the cotillion or the earthquake. In the sack of Priene, when the inhabitants with much hurry and bustle were carrying their effects to a place of safety, some one asked Bias, who remained tranquil amid the confusion, why he was not thinking how he should save something, as the others were. "I do so," said Bias, "for I carry all my effects with me."

July 14. Our discourse should be *ex tempore*, but not *pro tempore.*

July 16. We are as much refreshed by sounds as by sights, or scents, or flavors, — as the barking of a dog heard in the woods at midnight, or the tinklings which attend the dawn.

As I picked blackberries this morning, by starlight, the distant yelping of a dog fell on my inward ear, as the cool breeze on my cheek.

July 19. These two days that I have not written in my Journal, set down in the calendar as the 17th and 18th of July, have been really an æon in which a Syrian empire might rise and fall. How many Persias have been lost and won in the interim? Night is spangled with fresh stars.

July 26. When I consider how, after sunset, the stars come out gradually in troops from behind the hills and woods, I confess that I could not have contrived a more curious and inspiring night.

July 27. Some men, like some buildings, are bulky but not great. The Pyramids any traveller may measure with his line, but the dimensions of the Parthenon in feet and inches will seem to dangle from its entablature like an elastic drapery.

Much credit is due to a brave man's eye. It is the focus in which all rays are collected. It sees from within, or from the centre, just as

we scan the whole concave of the heavens at a glance, but can compass only one side of the pebble at our feet.

The grandeur of these stupendous masses of clouds, tossed into such irregular greatness across the sky, seems thrown away on the meanness of my employment. The drapery seems altogether too rich for such poor acting.

In vain the sun challenges man to equal greatness in his career. We look in vain over earth for a Roman greatness to answer the eternal provocation.

We look up to the gilded battlements of the eternal city, and are contented to be suburban dwellers outside the walls.

By the last breath of the May air I inhale I am reminded that the ages never got so far down as this before. The wood thrush is a more modem philosopher than Plato and Aristotle. They are now a dogma, but he preaches the doctrine of this hour.

This systole-diastole of the heart, the circulation of the blood from the centre to the extremities, the chylification which is constantly going on in our bodies are a sort of military evolution, a struggle to outgeneral the decay of time by the skillfulest tactics.

When bravery is worsted, it joins the peace society.

A word is wiser than any man, than any series of words. In its present received sense it may be false, but in its inner sense by descent and analogy it approves itself. Language is the most perfect work of art in the world. The chisel of a thousand years retouches it.

Nature refuses to sympathize with our sorrow. She seems not to have provided for, but by a thousand contrivances against, it. She has bevelled the margins of the eyelids that the tears may not overflow on the cheek.

We can conceive of a Bravery so wide that nothing can meet to befall it, so omnipresent that nothing can lie in wait for it, so permanent that no obstinacy can reduce it. The stars are its silent sentries by night, and the sun its pioneer by day. From its abundant cheerfulness spring flowers and the rainbow, and its infinite humor

and wantonness produce com and vines.

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Jan. 23. A day is lapsing. I hear cockerels crowing in the yard, and see them stalking among the chips in the sun. I hear busy feet on the floors, and the whole house jars with industry. Surely the day is well spent, and the time is full to overflowing. Mankind is as busy as the flowers in summer, which make haste to unfold themselves in the forenoon, and close their petals in the afternoon.

The momentous topics of human life are always of secondary importance to the business in hand, just as carpenters discuss politics between the strokes of the hammer while they are shingling a roof.

The squeaking of the pump sounds as necessary as the music of the spheres.

The solidity and apparent necessity of this routine insensibly recommend it to me. It is like a cane or a cushion for the infirm, and in view of it all are infirm. If there were but one erect and solid-standing tree in the woods, all creatures would go to rub against it and make sure of their footing. Routine is a ground to stand on, a wall to retreat to; we cannot draw on our boots without bracing ourselves against it. It is the fence over which neighbors lean when they talk. All this cockcrowing, and hawing and geeing, and business in the streets, is like the spring-board on which tumblers perform and develop their elasticity. Our health requires that we should recline on it from time to time. When we are in it, the hand stands still on the face of the clock, and we grow like corn in the genial dankness and silence of the night. Our weakness wants it, but our strength uses it. Good for the body is the work of the body, good for the soul the work of the soul, and good for either the work of the other. Let them not call hard names, nor know a divided interest.

When I detect a beauty in any of the recesses of nature, I am reminded, by the serene and retired spirit in which it requires to be contemplated, of the inexpressible privacy of a life, — how silent and unambitious it is. The beauty there is in mosses will have to be considered from the holiest, quietest nook.

The gods delight in stillness; they say,'St— 'st. My truest,

serenest moments are too still for emotion; they have woollen feet. In all our lives we live under the hill, and if we are not gone we live there still.

Jan. 24. Sunday. I almost shrink from the arduousness of meeting men erectly day by day.

Be resolutely and faithfully what you are; be humbly what you aspire to be. Be sure you give men the best of your wares, though they be poor enough, and the gods will help you to lay up a better store for the future.

Man's noblest gift to man is his sincerity, for it embraces his integrity also. Let him not dole out of himself anxiously, to suit their weaker or stronger stomachs, but make a clean gift of himself, and empty his coffers at once. I would be in society as in the landscape; in the presence of nature there is no reserve, nor effrontery.

Coleridge says of the "*ideas* spoken out everywhere in the Old and New Testament," that they "resemble the fixed stars, which appear of the same size to the naked as to the armed eye; the magnitude of which the telescope may rather seem to diminish than to increase."

It is more proper for a spiritual fact to have suggested an analogous natural one, than for the natural fact to have preceded the spiritual in our minds.

By spells seriousness will be forced to cut capers, and drink a deep and refreshing draught of silliness; to turn this sedate day of Lucifer's and Apollo's, into an all fools' day for Harlequin and Cornwallis. The sun does not grudge his rays to either, but they are alike patronized by the gods. Like overtasked schoolboys, all my members and nerves and sinews petition Thought for a recess, and my very thigh-bones itch to slip away from under me, and run and join the mêlée. I exult in stark inanity, leering on nature and the soul. We think the gods reveal themselves only to sedate and musing gentlemen. But not so; the buffoon in the midst of his antics catches unobserved glimpses, which he treasures for the lonely hour. When I have been playing tomfool, I have been driven to exchange the old for a more liberal and catholic philosophy.

Jan. 25. *Monday.* To-day I feel the migratory instinct strong in me, and all my members and humors anticipate the breaking up of winter. If I yielded to this impulse, it would surely guide me to summer haunts. This indefinite restlessness and fluttering on the perch do, no doubt, prophesy the final migration of souls out of nature to a serene summer, in long harrows and waving lines in the spring weather, over what fair uplands and fertile Elysian meadows winging their way at evening and seeking a resting-place with loud cackling and uproar!

Wealth, no less than knowledge, is power. Among the Bedouins the richest man is the sheik, among savages he who has most iron and wampum is chief, and in England and America he is the merchant prince.

We should strengthen, and beautify, and industriously mould our bodies to be fit companions of the soul, — assist them to grow up like trees, and be agreeable and wholesome objects in nature. I think if I had had the disposal of this soul of man, I should have bestowed it sooner on some antelope of the plains than upon this sickly and sluggish body.

Jan. 26. *Tuesday.* I have as much property as I can command and use. If by a fault in my character I do not derive my just revenues, there is virtually a mortgage on my inheritance. A man's wealth is never entered in the registrar's office. Wealth does not come in along the great thoroughfares, it does not float on the Erie or Pennsylvania canal, but is imported by a solitary track without bustle or competition, from a brave industry to a quiet mind.

I had a dream last night which had reference to an act in my life in which I had been most disinterested and true to my highest instinct but completely failed in realizing my hopes; and now, after so many months, in the stillness of sleep, complete justice was rendered me. It was a divine remuneration. In my waking hours I could not have conceived of such retribution; the presumption of desert would have damned the whole. But now I was permitted to be not so much a subject as a partner to that retribution. It was the award of divine justice, which will at length be and is even now accomplished.

Good writing as well as good acting will be obedience to conscience. There must not be a particle of will or whim mixed with it. If we can listen, we shall hear. By reverently listening to the inner voice, we may reinstate ourselves on the pinnacle of humanity.

Jan. 27. Wednesday. In the compensation of the dream, there was no implied loss to any, but immeasurable advantage to all.

The punishment of sin is not positive, as is the reward of virtue.

For a flower, I like the name pansy, or *pensée*, best of any.

Jan. 28. No innocence can quite stand up under suspicion, if it is conscious of being suspected. In the company of one who puts a wrong construction upon your actions, they are apt really to deserve a mean construction. While in that society I can never retrieve myself. Attribute to me a great motive, and I shall not fail to have one; but a mean one, and the fountain of virtue will be poisoned by the suspicion. Show men unlimited faith as the coin with which you will deal with them, and they will invariably exhibit the best wares they have. I would meet men as the friends of all their virtue, and the foes of all their vice, for no man is the partner of his guilt. If you suspect me you will never see me, but all our intercourse will be the politest leave-taking; I shall constantly defer and apologize, and postpone myself in your presence. The self-defender is accursed in the sight of gods and men; he is a superfluous knight, who serves no lady in the land. He will find in the end that he has been fighting windmills, and battered his mace to no purpose. The injured man with querulous tone resisting his fate is like a tree struck by lightning, which rustles its sere leaves the winter through, not having vigor enough [to] cast them off.

As for apologies, I must be off with the dew and the frost, and leave mankind to repair the damage with their gauze screens and straw.

Resistance is a very wholesome and delicious morsel at times. When Venus advanced against the Greeks with resistless valor, it

was by far the most natural attitude into which the poet could throw his hero to make him resist heroically. To a devil one might yield gracefully, but a god would be a worthy foe, and would pardon the affront.

It would be worth while, once for all, fairly and cleanly to tell how we are to be used, as vendors of lucifer matches send directions in the envelope, both how light may be readily procured and no accident happen to the user.

Let your mood determine the form of salutation, and approach the creature with a natural nonchalance, as though he were anything but what he is, and you were anything but what you are, — as though he were he, and you were you; in short, as though he were so insignificant that it did not signify, and so important that it did not import. Depend upon it, the timber is well seasoned and tough, and will bear rough usage; and if it should crack, there is plenty more where it came from. I am no piece of china-ware that cannot be jostled against my neighbor, without danger of rupture from the collision, and must needs ring a scrannel strain to the end of my days when once I am cracked; but rather one of the old-fashioned wooden trenchers, which one while stands at the head of the table, and at another is a milking-stool, and at another a seat for children, and finally goes down to its grave not unadorned with honorable scars, and does not die till it is *worn* out. Use me, for I am useful in my way. I stand as one of many petitioners, from toadstool and henbane up to dahlia and violet, supplicating to be put to my use, if by any means ye may find me serviceable; whether for a medicated drink or bath, as balm and lavender; or for fragrance, as verbena and geranium; or for sight, as cactus; or for thoughts, as pansy.

Jan. 29. There is something proudly thrilling in the thought that this obedience to conscience and trust in God, which is so solemnly preached in extremities and arduous circumstances, is only to retreat to one's self, and rely on our own strength. In trivial circumstances I find myself sufficient to myself, and in the most momentous I have no ally but myself, and must silently put by their harm by my own

strength, as I did the former. As my own hand bent aside the willow in my path, so must my single arm put to flight the devil and his angels. God is not our ally when we shrink, and neuter when we are bold. If by trusting in God you lose any particle of your vigor, trust in Him no longer. When you trust, do not lay aside your armor, but put it on and buckle it tighter. If by reliance on the gods I have disbanded one of my forces, then was it poor policy. I had better have retained the most inexperienced tyro who had straggled into the camp, and let go the heavenly alliance. I cannot afford to relax discipline because God is on my side, for He is on the side of discipline. And if the gods were only the heavens I fought under, I would not care if they stormed or were calm. I do not want a countenance, but a help. And there is more of God and divine help in a man's little finger than in idle prayer and trust.

The best and bravest deed is that which the whole man — heart, lungs, hands, fingers, and toes — at any time prompts. Each hanger-on in the purlieus of the camp, must strike his standard at the signal from the Prætorian tent, and fall into the line of march; but if a single sutler delay to make up his pack, then suspect the fates and consult the omens again. This is the meaning of integrity; this is to be an integer, and not a fraction. Be even for all virtuous ends, but odd for all vice. Be a perfect power, so that any of your roots multiplied into itself may give the whole again.

Beauty is compared, not measured, for it is the creature of proportions, not of size. Size must be subdued to it. It is hard for a tall or a short person to be beautiful.

To graft the Persian lilac on the ash, is as if you were to splice the thigh-bones of the Venus de Medici.

Friends will have to be introduced each time they meet. They will be eternally strange to one another, and when they have mutually appropriated their value for the last hour, they will go and gather a new measure of strangeness for the next. They are like two boughs crossed in the wood, which play backwards and forwards upon one another in the wind, and only wear into each other, but never the sap of the one flows into the pores of the other, for then the wind would no more draw from them those strains which enchanted the wood.

They are not two united, but rather one divided.

Of all strange and unaccountable things this journalizing is the strangest. It will allow nothing to be predicated of it; its good is not good, nor its bad bad. If I make a huge effort to expose my innermost and richest wares to light, my counter seems cluttered with the meanest homemade stuffs; but after months or years I may discover the wealth of India, and whatever rarity is brought overland from Cathay, in that confused heap, and what perhaps seemed a festoon of dried apple or pumpkin will prove a string of Brazilian diamonds, or pearls from Coromandel.

Men lie behind the barrier of a relation as effectually concealed as the landscape by a mist; and when at length some unforeseen accident throws me into a new attitude to them, I am astounded, as if for the first time I saw the sun on the hillside. They lie out before me like a new order of things. As, when the master meets his pupil as a man, then first do we stand under the same heavens, and master and pupil alike go down the resistless ocean stream together.

Jan. 30. *Saturday*. Far over the fields, between the tops of yonder wood, I see a slight cloud not larger than the vapor from a kettle, drifting by its own inward purpose in a direction contrary to the planet. As it flits across the dells and defiles of the tree-tops, now seen, then lost beyond a pine, I am curious to know wherein its will resides, for to my eye it has no heart, nor lungs, nor brain, nor any interior and private chamber which it may inhabit.

Its motion reminds me of those lines of Milton: —

"As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood,
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole."

The snow collects upon the plumes of the pitch pine in the form of a pineapple, which if you divide in the middle will expose three red kernels like the tamarind-stone. So does winter with his mock

harvest jeer at the sincerity of summer. The tropical fruits, which will not bear the rawness of our summer, are imitated in a thousand fantastic shapes by the whimsical genius of winter.

In winter the warmth comes directly from the sun, and is not radiated from the earth. In summer I forget to bless the sun for his heat; but when I feel his beams on my back as I thread some snowy dale, I am grateful as for a special kindness which would not be weary of well doing but had pursued me even into that by-place.

When the wind blows, the fine snow comes filtering down through all the aisles of the wood in a golden cloud.

The trees covered with snow admit a very plain and clean light, but not brilliant, as if through windows of ground glass; a sort of white darkness it is, all of the sun's splendor that can be retained.

The fashions of the wood are more fluctuating than those of Paris; snow, rime, ice, green and dry leaves incessantly make new patterns. There are all the shapes and hues of the kaleidoscope and the designs and ciphers of books of heraldry in the outlines of the trees. Every time I see a nodding pine-top, it seems as if a new fashion of wearing plumes had come into vogue.

I saw a team come out of a path in the woods, as though it had never gone in, but belonged there, and only came out like Elisha's bears. It was wholly of the village, and not at all of the wood.

These particles of snow which the early wind shakes down are what is stirring, or the morning news of the wood. Sometimes it is blown up above the trees, like the sand of the desert.

You glance up these paths, closely imbowered by bent trees, as through the side aisles of a cathedral, and expect to hear a choir chanting from their depths. You are never so far in them as they are far before you.

Their secret is where you are not and where your feet can never carry you.

I tread in the tracks of the fox which has gone before me by some hours, or which perhaps I have started, with such a tiptoe of expectation as if I were on the trail of the Spirit itself which resides in these woods, and expected soon to catch it in its lair.

The snow falls on no two trees alike, but the forms it assumes are as various as those of the twigs and leaves which receive it. They are, as it were, predetermined by the genius of the tree. So one divine spirit descends alike on all, but bears a peculiar fruit in each. The divinity subsides on all men, as the snowflakes settle on the fields and ledges and takes the form of the various clefts and surfaces on which it lodges.

Here is the distinct trail of a fox stretching [a] quarter of a mile across the pond. Now I am curious to know what has determined its graceful curvatures, its greater or less spaces and distinctness, and how surely they were coincident with the fluctuations of some mind, why they now lead me two steps to the right, and then three to the left. If these things are not to be called up and accounted for in the Lamb's Book of Life, I shall set them down for careless accountants. Here was one expression of the divine mind this morning. The pond was his journal, and last night's snow made a *tabula rasa* for him. I know which way a mind wended this morning, what horizon it faced, by the setting of these tracks; whether it moved slowly or rapidly, by the greater or less intervals and distinctness, for the swiftest step leaves yet a lasting trace.

Sometimes I come out suddenly upon a high plain, which seems to be the upper level and true surface of the earth, and by its very baldness aspires and lies up nearer to the stars, — a place where a decalogue might be let down or a saint translated.

I take a horse and oxen, standing among the woodpiles in the forest, for one of them, and when at length the horse pricks his ears, and I give him another name, where's the difference? I am startled by the possibility of such errors, and the indifference with [which] they are allowed to occur.

Fair Haven Pond is *scored* with the trails of foxes, and you may see where they have gambolled and gone through a hundred evolutions, which testify to a singular listlessness and leisure in

nature.

Suddenly, looking down the river, I saw a fox some sixty rods off, making across to the hills on my left. As the snow lay five inches deep, he made but slow progress, but it was no impediment to me. So, yielding to the instinct of the chase, I tossed my head aloft and bounded away, snuffing the air like a fox-hound, and spurning the world and the Humane Society at each bound. It seemed the woods rang with the hunter's horn, and Diana and all the satyrs joined in the chase and cheered me on. Olympian and Elean youths were waving palms on the hills. In the meanwhile I gained rapidly on the fox; but he showed a remarkable presence of mind, for, instead of keeping up the face of the hill, which was steep and unwooded in that part, he kept along the slope in the direction of the forest, though he lost ground by it. Notwithstanding his fright, he took no step which was not beautiful. The course on his part was a series of most graceful curves. It was a sort of leopard canter, I should say, as if he were nowise impeded by the snow, but were husbanding his strength all the while. When he doubled I wheeled and cut him off, bounding with fresh vigor, and Antæus-like, recovering my strength each time I touched the snow. Having got near enough for a fair view, just as he was slipping into the wood, I gracefully yielded him the palm. He ran as though there were not a bone in his back, occasionally dropping his muzzle to the snow for a rod or two, and then tossing his head aloft when satisfied of his course. When he came to a declivity he put his fore feet together and slid down it like a cat. He trod so softly that you could not have heard it from any nearness, and yet with such expression that it would not have been quite inaudible at any distance. So, hoping this experience would prove a useful lesson to him, I returned to the village by the highway of the river.

There is all the romance of my youthfulest moment in music. Heaven lies about us, as in our infancy. There is nothing so wild and extravagant that it does not make true. It makes a dream my only real experience, and prompts faith to such elasticity that only the incredible can satisfy it. It tells me again to trust the remotest and finest, as the divinest, instinct. All that I have imagined of heroism, it reminds and reassures me of. It is a life unlived, a life beyond life, where at length my years will pass. I look under the lids of Time.

Jan. 31. *Sunday.* At each step man measures himself against the system. If he cannot actually belay the sun and make it fast to this planet, yet the British man alone spins a yarn in one year which will reach fifty-one times the distance from the earth to the sun. So, having his cable ready twisted and coiled, the fixed stars are virtually within his grasp. He carries his lasso coiled at his saddle bow, but is never forced to cast it.

All things are subdued to me by virtue of that coiled lasso I carry, and I lead them without the trouble of a cast. It is the rope that lies coiled on the deck, which moors my ship, and I have never to bend a cable.

In God's hall hang cables of infinite length, and in His entries stand bars of infinite strength; but those cables were never bent, nor those bars ever poised, for all things have been subdued to the divinity from the first, and these are the seals of His power.

The guilty never escape, for a steed stands ever ready saddled and bridled at God's door, and the sinner surrenders at last.

End of my Journal of 396 *pages.*

Feb. 2. *Tuesday.* It is easy to repeat, but hard to originate. Nature is readily made to repeat herself in a thousand forms, and in the daguerreotype her own light is amanuensis, and the picture too has more than a surface significance, — a depth equal to the prospect, —— so that the microscope may be applied to the one as the spy-glass to the other. Thus we may easily multiply the forms of the outward; but to give the within outwardness, that is not easy.

That an impression may be taken, perfect stillness, though but for an instant, is necessary. There is something analogous in the birth of all rhymes.

Our sympathy is a gift whose value we can never know, nor when we impart it. The instant of communion is when, for the least point of time, we cease to oscillate, and coincide in rest by as fine a point as a star pierces the firmament.

The stars are the mountain peaks of celestial countries.

A child asked its father what became of the old moon, and he said it was cut up into stars.

There is always a single ear in the audience, to which we address ourselves.

How much does it concern you, the good opinion of your friend? Therein is the measure of fame. For the herd of men multiplied many times will never come up to the value of one friend. In this society there is no fame but love; for as our name may be on the lips of men, so are we in each other's hearts. There is no ambition but virtue; for why should we go round about, who may go direct?

All those contingences which the philanthropist, statesman, and housekeeper write so many books to meet are simply and quietly settled in the intercourse of friends.

For our aspirations there is no expression as yet, but if we obey steadily, by another year we shall have learned the language of last year's aspirations.

When I read the other day the weight of some of the generals of the Revolution, it seemed no unimportant fact in their biography. It is at least one other means of comparing ourselves with them. Tell me how much Milton or Shakespeare weighed, and I will get weighed myself, that I may know better what they are to me.

Weight has something very imposing in it, for we cannot get rid of it. Once in the scales we must weigh. And are we not always in the scales, and weighing just our due, though we kick the beam, and do all we can to heavy or lighten ourselves?

Feb. 3. *Wednesday.* The present seems never to get its due; it is the least obvious, — neither before, nor behind, but within us. All the past plays into this moment, and we are what we are. My aspiration is one thing, my reflection another, but, over all, myself and condition is and does. To men and nature I am each moment a finished tool, — a spade, a barrow, or a pickaxe. This immense promise is no *efficient* quality. For all practical purposes I am done.

When we do a service to our neighbor, we serve our next neighbor.

We are constantly invited to be what we are; as to something worthy and noble. I never waited but for myself to come round; none ever detained me, but I lagged or tagged after myself.

It steads us to be as true to children and boors as to God himself. It is the only attitude which will suit all occasions; it only will make the earth yield her increase, and by it do we effectually expostulate with the wind. If I run against a post, this is the remedy. I would meet the morning and evening on very sincere ground. When the sun introduces me to a new day, I silently say to myself, "Let us be faithful all round; we will do justice and receive it." Something like this is the secret charm of Nature's demeanor toward us, strict conscientiousness [?] and disregard of us when we have ceased to have regard for ourselves. So she can never offend us. How true she is! — and never swerves. In her most genial moment her laws are as steadfastly and relentlessly fulfilled — though the decalogue is rhymed and set to sweetest music — as in her sternest.

Any exhibition of affection — as an inadvertent word, or act, or look — seems premature, as if the time were not ripe for it; like the buds which the warm days near the end of winter cause to push out and unfold before the frosts are yet gone.

My life must seem as if it were passing at a higher level than that which I occupy. It must possess a dignity which will not allow me to be familiar.

The unpretending truth of a simile implies sometimes such distinctness in the conception as only experience could have supplied. Homer could not improve the simile of a soldier who was careful enough to tell the truth. If he knows what it was, he will know what it was like.

As the ancient Britons were exhibited in Rome in their native costume, and the Dacian came to display his swordsmanship in the arena, so Tyrolese peasants have come farther yet, even from the neighborhood of Rome to Concord, for our entertainment this night.

Feb. 4. *Thursday.* When you are once comfortably seated at a public meeting, there is something unmanly in the sitting on tiptoe

and *qui vive* attitude, — the involuntarily rising into your throat, as if gravity had ceased to operate, — when a lady approaches, with quite godlike presumption, to elicit the miracle of a seat where none is.

Music will make the most nervous chord vibrate healthily.

Such a state of unrest becomes only a fluttered virtue. When once I have learned my place in the sphere, I will fill it once for all, rather like a fixed star than a planet. I will rest as the mountains do, so that your ladies might as well walk into the midst of the Tyrol, and look for Nature to spread them a green lawn for their disport in the midst of those solemn fastnesses, as that I should fly out of my orbit at their approach and go about eccentric, like a comet, to endanger other systems. No, be true to your instincts, and sit; wait till you can be genuinely polite, if it be till doomsday, and not lose your chance everlastingly by a cowardly yielding to young etiquette. By your look say unto them, The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places, and I will fill that station God has assigned me. As well Miss Cassiopeia up there might ask the brazen-fronted Taurus to draw in his horns, that she might shine in his stead. No, no! not till my cycle is completed.

How is it that motion will always find space to move in, and rest a seat? Men hate antagonism, and the weaker will always yield to the stronger. If a stranger enter with sufficient determination into a crowded assembly, as if commissioned by the gods to find a seat there, as the falling stone by a divine impulse seeks a resting-place, each one will rise without thinking to offer his place. Now we have only to be commissioned to sit, and depend upon it the gods will not balk their own work. Ye came one day too late, as did the poet after the world had been divided, and so returned to dwell with the god that sent him. When presumptuous womanhood demands to surrender my position, I bide my time, — though it be with misgiving, — and yield to no mortal shove, but expect a divine impulse. Produce your warrant, and I will retire; for not now can I give you a clear seat, but must leave part of my manhood behind and wander a diminished man, who at length will not have length and breadth enough to fill any seat at all. It was very kind in the gods who gave us a now condition, or condition of rest, in which we might

unhurriedly deliberate before taking a step. When I give up my now and here without having secured my then and there, I am the prodigal son of a kind father and deserve no better than the husks which the swine eat, nor that the fatted calf be killed for me.

Rest forever. When instinct comes to the rescue of your politeness, it will seat you securely still, though it be to hang by a rail or poise yourself on a stick. To do otherwise is to be polite only as the soldier who runs away when the enemy demands his post. Politeness is rather when the generals interchange civilities before the fight, not when one returns a sword after the victory.

Not only in his cunning hand and brain, but when he speaks, too, does man assert his superiority. He conquers the spaces with his voice, as well as the lion. The voice of a strong man modulated to the cadence of some tune is more imposing than any natural sound. The keeper's is the most commanding, and is heard over all the din of the menagerie. A strong, musical voice imposes a new order and harmony upon nature; from it as a centre the law is promulgated to the universe. What it lacks in volume and loudness may always be made up in musical expression and distinctness. The brute growls to secure obedience; he threatens. The man speaks as though obedience were already secured.

Brave speaking is the most entire and richest sacrifice to the gods.

Feb. 5. *Friday.* Only on rare occasions am I reminded that man too has a voice, as well as birds and quadrupeds, which breaks on the stillness of nature with its peculiar accent. The least sound pervades and subdues all space to it as long as it fills my ear. Contrasted single with the silence, it is as wide as it. Music is the crystallization of sound. There is something in the effect of a harmonious voice upon the disposition of its neighborhood analogous to the law of crystals; it centralizes itself and sounds like the published law of things. If the law of the universe were to be audibly promulgated, no mortal lawgiver would suspect it, for it would be a finer melody than his ears ever attended to. It would be sphere music.

When by tutoring their voices singers enhance one another's performance, the harmony is more complete and essential than is

heard. The quire is one family held together by a very close bond. Hence the romance we associate with Gypsies and circus companies and strolling musicians. The idea of brotherhood is so strong in them. Their society is ideal for that one end.

There is something in this brotherhood — this feeling of kind, or kindness — which insensibly elevates the subjects of it in our eyes. However poor or mean, they have something which counterbalances our contempt. This is that in the strolling pauper *family* which does not court our charity but can even bless and smile on us and make the kindness reciprocal. It sanctifies the place and the hour.

These Rainers, if they are not brothers and sisters, must be uncles and cousins at least. These Swiss who have come to sing to us, we have no doubt are the flower of the Tyrol. Such is the instinctive kindness with which the foreigner is always received, that he is ever presumed to be the fairest and noblest of his race. The traveller finds that it is not easy to move away from his friends, after all, but all people whom he visits are anxious to supply the place to him of his parents and brothers and sisters. To these Swiss I find that I have attributed all Tell's patriotism and the devotion of Arnold Winkelried and whatever goodness or greatness belongs to the nation.

All costume off a man, when not simply doffed, is grotesque. There must be a heart inside it. When these Swiss appear before me in gaiters and high-crowned hats with feathers, I am disposed to laugh, but soon I see that their serious eye becomes these and they it. It is the sincere life passed within it which consecrates the costume of any people. A sufficiently sober eye will retrieve itself and subordinate any grotesqueness. Let Harlequin be taken with a fit of the colic in the midst of his buffoonery, and his trappings and finery will serve that mood too and with their drooping sympathy enhance the sincerity of his misfortune. When the soldier is hit by a cannon-ball, rags are as becoming as purple. So soon as a man engages to eat, drink, sleep, walk, and sit, and meet all the contingencies of life therein, his costume is hallowed and a theme for poetry, whether it be a bear's skin or ermine, a beaver hat or a Turkish turban. He will not wear anything because it is blue, or black, or round, or square, but from a necessity which cannot be superseded.

I look into the face and manners for something familiar and

homely even, to be assured that the costume of the foreigner is not whimsical or finical.

In all emergencies there is always one step which you may take on firm ground where gravity will assure you footing. So you hold a draft on Fate payable at sight.

Feb. 6. *Saturday.* One may discover a new side to his most intimate friend when for the first time he hears him speak in public. He will be stranger to him as he is more familiar to the audience. The longest intimacy could not foretell how he would behave then. When I observe my friend's conduct toward others, then chiefly I learn the traits in his character, and in each case I am unprepared for the issue.

When one gets up to address briefly a strange audience, in that little he may have opportunity to say he will not quite do himself injustice. For he will instantly and instinctively average himself to his audience, and while he is true to his own character still, he will in a few moments make that impression which a series of months and years would but expand. Before he answers, his thought like lightning runs round the whole compass of his experiences, and he is scrupulous to speak from that which he is and with a more entire truthfulness than usual. How little do we know each other then! Who can tell how his friend would behave on any occasion?

As for those Swiss, I think of the fields their hands have plowed and reaped, and respect their costume as the memorial or rather cotemporary and witness of this. What is there in a toga but a Roman? What but a Quaker in a broad-brimmed hat? He who describes the dress of a Janizary going to war does me a similar service as when he paints the scenery of the battle-field. It helps make his exploit picturesque.

Costume is not determined by whim, not even the tattooing and paint of the savage. Sun, wind, rain, and the form of our bodies shape our hats and coats for us, more even than taste. Good taste secures the utmost gratification without sacrificing any conveniences. If all nations derived their fashions from Paris or London, the world would seem like a Vanity Fair or all fools' day, and the Tartar and Bedouin ride in it like jesters in a circus, and the Pawnee and Esquimau hunt

in masquerade. What I am must make you forget what I wear. The fashionable world is content to be eclipsed by its dress, and never will bear the contrast. Only industry will reform *their* dress. They are idle, — exostrious, building without.

The value of the recess in any public entertainment consists in the opportunity for self-recovery which it offers. We who have been swayed as one heart, expanding and contracting with the common pulse, find ourselves in the interim, and set us up again, and feel our own hearts beating in our breasts. We are always a little astonished to see a man walking across the room, through an attentive audience, with any degree of selfpossession. He makes himself strange to us. He is a little stubborn withal, and seems to say, "I am selfsustained and independent as well as the performer, and am not to be swallowed up in the common enthusiasm. No, no, there are two of us, and John's as good as Thomas." In the recess the audience is cut up into a hundred little coteries, and as soon as each individual life has recovered its tone and the purposes of health have been answered, it is time for the performances to commence again.

In a public performer, the simplest actions, which at other times are left to unconscious nature, as the ascending a few steps in front of an audience, acquire a fatal importance and become arduous deeds.

When I select one here and another there, and strive to join sundered thoughts, I make but a partial heap after all. Nature strews her nuts and flowers broadcast, and never collects them into heaps. A man does not tell us all he has thought upon truth or beauty at a sitting, but, from his last thought on the subject, wanders through a varied scenery of upland, meadow, and woodland to his next. Sometimes a single and casual thought rises naturally and inevitably with a queenly majesty and escort, like the stars in the east. Fate has surely enshrined it in this hour and circumstances for some purpose. What she has joined together, let not man put asunder. Shall I transplant the primrose by the river's brim, to set it beside its sister on the mountain? *This* was the soil it grew in, *this* the hour it bloomed in. If sun, wind, and rain came *here* to cherish and expand it, shall not we come here to pluck it? Shall we require it to grow in a

conservatory for our convenience?

I feel slightly complimented when Nature condescends to make use of me without my knowledge, as when I help scatter her seeds in my walk, or carry burs and cockles on my clothes from field to field. I feel as though I had done something for the commonweal, and were entitled to board and lodging. I take such airs upon me as the boy who holds a horse for the circus company, whom all the spectators envy.

"Lu ral lu ral lu" may be more impressively sung than very respectable wisdom talked. It is well-timed, as wisdom is not always.

All things prophesy but the prophet. In augury and divination nature is put to the torture. In Ben Jonson's tragedy of "Catiline," Lentulus makes answer to Catiline, who has bribed the augurs to say that he is that third Cornelius who is to be king of Rome, "All prophecies, you know, suffer the torture." He who inspects the entrails is *always* bribed, but they are unbribable. He who seeks to know the future by unlawful means has unavoidably subjected the oracle to the torture of *private* and *partial* interests. The oracles of God serve the public interest without fee. To the just and benevolent mind nature *declares*, as the sun lights the world.

Feb. 7. *Sunday.* Without greatcoat or drawers I have advanced thus far into the snow-banks of the winter, without thought and with impunity. When I meet my neighbors in muffs and furs and tippets, they look as if they had retreated into the interior fastnesses from some foe invisible to me. They remind me that this is the season of winter, in which it becomes a man to be cold. For feeling, I am a piece of clean wood of this shape, which will do service till it rots, and though the cold has its physical effect on me, it is a kindly one, for it "finds its acquaintance there." My diet is so little stimulating, and my body in consequence so little heated, as to excite no antagonism in nature, but flourishes like a tree, which finds even the winter genial to its expansion and the secretion of sap. May not the body defend itself against cold by its very nakedness, and its elements be so simple and single that they cannot congeal? Frost

does not affect one but several. My body now affords no more pasture for cold than a leafless twig. I call it a protestant warmth. My limbs do not tire as formerly, but I use myself as any other piece of nature, and from mere indifference and thoughtlessness may break the timber.

It is the vice of the last season which compels us to arm ourselves for the next. If man always conformed to Nature, he would not have to defend himself against her, but find her his constant nurse and friend, as do plants and quadrupeds.

In the sunshine and the crowing of cocks I feel an illimitable holiness, which makes me bless God and myself. The warm sun casts his incessant gift at my feet as I walk along, unfolding his yellow worlds. Yonder sexton with a few cheap sounds makes me richer than these who mind his summons. The true gift is as wide as my gratitude, and as frequent, and the donor is as grateful as the recipient. There would be a New Year's gift indeed, if we would bestow on each other our sincerity. We should communicate our wealth, and not purchase that which does not belong to us for a sign. Why give each other a sign to keep? If we gave the thing itself, there would be no need of a sign. I am not sure I should find out a really great person soon. He would be simple Thomas or Oliver for some centuries first. The lesser eminences would hide the higher, and I should at last reach his top by a gentle acclivity. I felt it would be necessary to remain some weeks at the Notch to be impressed by the grandeur of the scenery. We do not expect that Alexander will conquer Asia the first time we are introduced to him. A great man accepts the occasion the fates offer him. Let us not be disappointed. We stand at first upon the pampas which surround him. It is these mountains round about which make the valleys here below. He is not a dead level, so many feet above low-water mark. Greatness is in the ascent. But there is no accounting for the little men.

"They must sweat no less
To fit their properties, than t' express their parts."

Or the line before this: —

"Would you have
Such an Herculean actor in the scene,
And not his hydra?" — Jonson.

The eaves are ïnning on the south side of the house; the titmouse lisps in the poplar; the bells are ringing for church; while the sun presides over all and makes his simple warmth more obvious than all else. What shall I do with this hour, so like time and yet so fit for eternity? Where in me are these russet patches of ground, and scattered logs and chips in the yard? I do not feel cluttered. I have some notion what the John'swort and life-everlasting may be thinking about when the sun shines on me as on them and turns my prompt thought into just such a seething shimmer. I lie out indistinct as a heath at noonday. I am evaporating and ascending into the sun.

Nothing stands in the way to success, but to failure. To victory is all the way up hill; to defeat the simplest wight that weighs may soon slide down. Cowards would not have victory but the fruits of victory; but she it is that sweetens all the spoil. Thus, by a just fate, the booty cannot fall to him who did not win it. There is victory in every effort. In the least swing of the arm, in indignant thought, in stern content, we conquer our foes.

Great thoughts make great men. Without these no heraldry nor blood will avail.

The blood circulates to the feet and hands, but the thought never descends from the head.

The most I can do for my friend is simply to be his friend. I have no wealth to bestow on him. If he knows that I am happy in loving him, he will want no other reward. Is not Friendship divine in this?

I have myself to respect, but to myself I am not amiable; but my friend is my amiableness personified.

And yet we walk the stage indifferent actors, not thinking what a sublime drama we might enact if we would be joint workers and a mutual material. Why go to the woods to cut timber to display our art

upon, when here are men as trees walking? The world has never learned what men can build each other up to be, when both master and pupil work in love.

He that comes as a stranger to my house will have to stay as a stranger. He has made his own reception. But persevering love was never yet refused.

"The vicious count their years, virtuous their acts."

JONSON.

The former consider the length of their service, the latter its quality.

Wait not till I invite thee, but observe I'm glad to see thee when thou com'st.

The most ardent lover holds yet a private court, and his love can never be so strong or ethereal that there will not be danger that judgment may be rendered against the beloved.

I would have men make a *greater* use of me. Now I must belittle myself to have dealings with them. My friend will show such a noble confidence that I shall aspire to the society of his good opinion. Never presume men less that you may make them more. So far as we respond to our ideal estimate of each other do we have profitable intercourse.

A brave man always knows the way, no matter how intricate the roads.

Feb. 8. All we have experienced is so much gone within us, and there lies. It is the company we keep. One day, in health or sickness, it will come out and be remembered. Neither body nor soul forgets anything. The twig always remembers the wind that shook it, and the stone the cuff it received. Ask the old tree and the sand.

To be of most service to my brother I must meet him on the most equal and even ground, the platform on which our lives are passing. But how often does politeness permit this?

I seek a man who will appeal to me when I am in fault. We will treat as gods settling the affairs of men. In his intercourse I shall be always a god to-day, who was a man yesterday. He will never confound me with my guilt, but let me be immaculate and hold up my skirts. Differences he will make haste to clear up, but leave agreements unsettled the while.

As time is measured by the lapse of ideas, we may grow of our own force, as the mussel adds new circles to its shell. My thoughts secrete the lime. We may grow old with the vigor of youth. Are we not always in youth so long as we face heaven? We may always live in the morning of our days. To him who seeks early, the sun never gets over the edge of the hill, but his rays fall slanting forever. His wise sayings are like the chopping of wood and crowing of cocks in the dawn.

My Journal is that of me which would else spill over and run to waste, gleanings from the field which in action I reap. I must not live for it, but in it for the gods.

They are my correspondent, to whom daily I send off this sheet postpaid. I am clerk in their counting-room, and at evening transfer the account from day-book to ledger. It is as a leaf which hangs over my head in the path. I bend the twig and write my prayers on it; then letting it go, the bough springs up and shows the scrawl to heaven. As if it were not kept shut in my desk, but were as public a leaf as any in nature. It is papyrus by the riverside; it is vellum in the pastures; it is parchment on the hills. I find it everywhere as free as the leaves which troop along the lanes in autumn. The crow, the goose, the eagle carry my quill, and the wind blows the leaves as far as I go. Or, if my imagination does not soar, but gropes in slime and mud, then I write with a reed.

It is always a chance scrawl, and commemorates some accident, — as great as earthquake or eclipse. Like the sere leaves in yonder vase, these have been gathered far and wide. Upland and lowland, forest and field have been ransacked.

In our holiest moment our devil with a leer stands close at hand. He is a very busy devil. It gains vice some respect, I must confess, thus to be reminded how indefatigable it is. It has at least the merit of industriousness. When I go forth with zeal to some good work, my devil is sure to get his robe tucked up the first and arrives there as soon as I, with a look of sincere earnestness which puts to shame my best intent. He is as forward as I to a good work, and as disinterested. He has a winning way of recommending himself by making himself useful. How readily he comes into my best project, and does his work with a quiet and steady cheerfulness which even virtue may take pattern from.

I never was so rapid in my virtue but my vice kept up with me. It always came in by a hand, and never panting, but with a curried coolness halted, as if halting were the beginning not the end of the course. It only runs the swifter because it has no rider. It never was behind me but when I turned to look and so fell behind myself. I never did a charitable thing but there he stood, scarce in the rear, with hat in hand, partner on the same errand, ready to share the smile of gratitude. Though I shut the door never so quick and tell it to stay at home like a good dog, it will out with me, for I shut in my own legs so, and it escapes in the meanwhile and is ready to back and reinforce me in most virtuous deeds. And if I turn and say, "Get thee behind me," he then indeed turns too and takes the lead, though he seems to retire with a pensive and compassionate look, as much as to say, "Ye know not what ye do."

Just as active as I become to virtue, just so active is my remaining vice. Every time we teach our virtue a new nobleness, we teach our vice a new cunning. When we sharpen the blade it will stab better as well as whittle. The scythe that cuts will cut our legs. We are double-edged blades, and every time we whet our virtue the return stroke straps our vice. And when we cut a clear descending blow, our vice on tother edge rips up the work. Where is the skillful swordsman that can draw his blade straight back out of the wound?

Every man proposes fairly, and does not willfully take the devil for his guide; as our shadows never fall between us and the sun. Go towards the sun and your shadow will fall behind you.

Feb. 9. *Tuesday.*

"*Cato.* Good Marcus Tullius (which is more than great),
Thou hadst thy education with the gods."

JONSON.

Better be defamed than overpraised. Thou canst then justly praise thyself. What notoriety art thou that can be defamed? Who can be praised for what they are not deserve rather to be damned for what they are. It is hard to wear a dress that is too long and loose without stumbling.

"Whoe'er is raised, For wealth he has not, he is tax'd, not prais'd,"

says Jonson. If you mind the flatterer, you rob yourself and still cheat him. The fates never exaggerate; men pass for what they are. The state never fails to get a revenue out of you without a direct tax. Flattery would lay a direct tax. What I am praised for what I am not I put to the account of the gods. It needs a skillful eye to distinguish between their coin and my own. But however there can be no loss either way, for what meed I have earned is equally theirs. Let neither fame nor infamy hit you, but the one go as far beyond as the other falls behind. Let the one glance past you to the gods, and the other wallow where it was engendered. The home thrusts are at helmets upon blocks, and my worst foes but stab an armor through.

My life at this moment is like a summer morning when birds are singing. Yet that is false, for nature's is an idle pleasure in comparison: my hour has a more solid serenity. I have been breaking silence these twenty-three years and have hardly made a rent in it. Silence has no end; speech is but the beginning of it. My friend thinks I *keep* silence, who am only choked with letting it out so fast. Does he forget that new mines of secrecy are constantly opening in me?

If any scorn your love, let them see plainly that you serve not them but another. If these bars are up, go your way to other of God's pastures, and browse there the while. When your host shuts his door

on you he incloses you in the dwelling of nature. He thrusts you over the threshold of the world. My foes restore me to my friends.

I might say friendship had no ears as love has no eyes, for no word is evidence in its court. The least act fulfills more than all words profess. The most gracious speech is but partial kindness, but the least genuine deed takes the whole man. If we had waited till doomsday it could never have been uttered.

Feb. 10. *Wednesday.* That was fine praise which Ben Jonson gave to Thomas, Lord Chancellor: —

"Whilst thou art certain to thy words, once gone, As is thy conscience, which is always one."

Words do not lose their truth by time or misinterpretation, but stand unscathed longer than he who spoke them.

Let our words be such as we may unblushingly behold sculptured in granite on the walls to the least syllable. Our thoughts and actions may be very private for a long time, for they demand a more catholic publicity to be displayed in than the world can afford. Our best deeds shun the narrow walks of men, and are not ambitious of the faint light the world can shed on them, but delight to unfold themselves in that public ground between God and conscience.

Truth has for audience and spectator all the world. Within, where I resolve and deal with principles, there is more space and room than anywhere without, where my hands execute. Men should hear of your virtue only as they hear the creaking of the earth's axle and the music of the spheres. It will fall into the course of nature and be effectually concealed by publicness.

I asked a man to-day if he would rent me some land, and he said he had four acres as good soil "as any outdoors." It was a true poet's account of it. He and I, and all the world, went outdoors to breathe the free air and stretch ourselves. For the world is but outdoors, —— and we duck behind a panel.

Feb. 11. True help, for the most part, implies a greatness in him

who is to be helped as well as in the helper. It takes a god to be helped even. A great person, though unconsciously, will constantly give you great opportunities to serve him, but a mean one will quite preclude all active benevolence. It needs but simply and *greatly* to want it for once, that all true men may contend who shall be foremost to render aid. My neighbor's state must pray to heaven so devoutly yet disinterestedly as he never prayed in words, before my ears can hear. It must ask divinely. But men so cobble and botch their request, that you must stoop as low as they to give them aid. Their meanness would drag down your deed to be a compromise with conscience, and not leave it to be done on the high table-land of the benevolent soul. They would have you doff your bright and knightly armor and drudge for them, — serve *them* and not God. But if I am to serve them I must not serve the devil.

What is called charity is no charity, but the interference of a third person. Shall I interfere with fate? Shall I defraud man of the opportunities which God gave him, and so take away his life? Beggars and silent poor cry — how often!— "Get between me and my god." I will not stay to cobble and patch God's rents, but do clean, new work when he has given me my hands full. This almshouse charity is like putting new wine into old bottles, when so many tuns in God's cellars stand empty. We go about mending the times, when we should be building the eternity.

I must serve a strong master, not a weak one. Help implies a sympathy of energy and effort, else no alleviation will avail.

Feb. 12. Friday. Those great men who are unknown to their own generation are already famous in the society of the great who have gone before them. All worldly fame but subsides from their high estimate beyond the stars. We may still keep pace with those who have gone out of nature, for we run on as smooth ground as they.

The early and the latter saints are separated by no eternal interval.

The child may soon stand face to face with the best father.

Feb. 13. By the truthfulness of our story to-day we help explain ourselves for all our life henceforth. How we hamper and belay ourselves by the least exaggeration! The truth is God's concern; He

will sustain it; but who can afford to maintain a lie? We have taken away one of the Pillars of Hercules, and must support the world on our shoulders, who might have walked freely upon it.

My neighbor says that his hill-farm is poor stuff and "only fit to hold the world together." He deserves that God should give him better for so brave a treating of his gifts, instead of humbly putting up therewith. It is a sort of stay, or gore, or gusset, and he will not be blinded by modesty or gratitude, but sees it for what it is; knowing his neighbor's fertile land, he calls his by its right name. But perhaps my farmer forgets that his lean soil has sharpened his wits. This is a crop it was good for. And beside, you see the heavens at a lesser angle from the hill than from the vale.

We have nothing to fear from our foes; God keeps a standing army for that service; but we have no ally against our friends, those ruthless vandals whose kind intent is a subtler poison than the Colchian, a more fatal shaft than the Lydian.

Feb. 14. *Sunday.* I am confined to the house by bronchitis, and so seek to content myself with that quiet and serene life there is in a warm corner by the fireside, and see the sky through the chimney-top. Sickness should not be allowed to extend further than the body. We need only to retreat further within us to preserve uninterrupted the continuity of serene hours to the end of our lives.

As soon as I find my chest is not of tempered steel, and heart of adamant, I bid good-by to these and look out a new nature. I will be liable to no accidents.

I shall never be poor while I can command a still hour in which to take leave of my sin.

The jingling team which is creaking past reminds me of that verse in the Bible which speaks of God being heard in the bells of the horses.

Feb. 15. There is elevation in every hour. No part of the earth is so low and withdrawn that the heavens cannot be seen from it, but every part supports the sky. We have only to stand on the eminence of the hour, and look out thence into the empyrean, allowing no

pinnacle above us, to command an uninterrupted horizon. The moments will lie outspread around us like a blue expanse of mountain and valley, while we stand on the summit of our hour as if we had descended on eagle's wings. For the eagle has stooped to his perch on the highest cliff and has never climbed the rock; he stands by his wings more than by his feet. We shall not want a foothold, but wings will sprout from our shoulders, and we shall walk securely, self-sustained.

For how slight an accident shall two noble souls wait to bring them together!

Feb. 17. Our work should be fitted to and lead on the time, as bud, flower, and fruit lead the circle of the seasons.

The mechanic works no longer than his labor will pay for lights, fuel, and shop rent. Would it not be well for us to consider if our deed will warrant the expense of nature? Will it maintain the sun's light?

Our actions do not use time independently, as the bud does. They should constitute its lapse. It is their room. But they shuffle after and serve the hour.

Feb. 18. *Thursday.* I do not judge men by anything they can do. Their greatest deed is the impression they make on me. Some serene, inactive men can do everything. Talent only indicates a depth of character in some direction. We do not acquire the ability to do new deeds, but a new capacity for all deeds. My recent growth does not appear in any visible new talent, but its deed will enter into my gaze when I look into the sky, or vacancy. It will help me to consider ferns and everlasting. Man is like a tree which is limited to no age, but grows as long as it has its root in the ground. We have only to live in the alburnum and not in the old wood. The gnarled stump has as tender a bud as the sapling.

Sometimes I find that I have frequented a higher society during sleep, and my thoughts and actions proceed on a higher level in the morning.

A man is the hydrostatic paradox, the counterpoise of the system. You have studied flowers and birds cheaply enough, but you must lay yourself out to buy him.

Feb. 19. A truly good book attracts very little favor to itself. It is so true that it teaches me better than to read it. I must soon lay it down and commence living on its hint. I do not see how any can be written more, but this is the last effusion of genius. When I read an indifferent book, it seems the best thing I can do, but the inspiring volume hardly leaves me leisure to finish its latter pages. It is slipping out of my fingers while I read. It creates no atmosphere in which it may be perused, but one in which its teachings may be practiced. It confers on me such wealth that I lay it down with the least regret. What I began by reading I must finish by acting. So I cannot stay to hear a *good* sermon and applaud at the conclusion, but shall be half-way to Thermopylæ before that.

When any joke or hoax traverses the Union in the newspapers it apprises me of a fact which no geography or guide-book contains, of a certain leisure and nonchalance pervading society. It is a piece of information from over the Alleghanies, which I know how to prize, though I did not expect it. And it is just so in Nature. I sometimes observe in her a strange trifling, almost listlessness, which conducts to beauty and grace, — the fantastic and whimsical forms of snow and ice, the unaccountable freaks which the tracks of rabbits exhibit. I know now why all those busy speculators do not die of fever and ague.

Coleridge observed the "landscapes made by damp on a whitewashed wall," and so have I.

We seem but to linger in manhood to tell the dreams of our childhood, and they vanish out of memory ere we learn the language.

It is the unexplored grandeur of the storm which keeps up the spirits of the traveller. When I contemplate a hard and bare life in the woods, I find my last consolation in its untrivialness. Shipwreck is less distressing because the breakers do not trifle with us. We are

resigned as long as we recognize the sober and solemn mystery of nature. The dripping mariner finds consolation and sympathy in the infinite sublimity of the storm. It is a moral force as well as he. With courage he can lay down his life on the strand, for it never turned a deaf ear to him, nor has he ever exhausted its sympathy.

In the love of narrow souls I make many short voyages, but in vain; I find no sea-room. But in great souls I sail before the wind without a watch, and never reach the shore.

You demand that I be less your friend that you may know it.

Nothing will reconcile friends but love. They make a fatal mistake when they go about like foes to explain and treat with one another. It is a mutual mistake. None are so unmanageable.

Feb. 20. Saturday. I suspect the moral discrimination of the oldest and best authors. I doubt if Milton distinguished greatly between his Satan and his Raphael. In Homer and Æschylus and Dante I miss a nice discrimination of the *important* shades of character.

When I am going out for an evening I arrange the fire in my stove so that I do not fail to find a good one when I return, though it would have engaged my frequent attention present. So that, when I know I am to be at home, I sometimes make believe that I may go out, to save trouble. And this is the art of living, too, — to leave our life in a condition to go alone, and not to require a constant supervision. We will then sit down serenely to live, as by the side of a stove.

When I sit in earnest, nothing must stand, all must be sedentary with me.

I hear the faint sound of a viol and voices from the neighboring cottage, and think to myself, "I will believe the Muse only for evermore." It assures me that no gleam which comes over the serene soul is deceptive. It warns me of a reality and substance, of which the best that I see is but the phantom and shadow. O music, thou tellest me of things of which memory takes no heed; thy strains are

whispered aside from memory's ear.

This is the noblest plain of earth, over which these sounds are borne, the plain of Troy or Eleusis.

Thou openest all my senses to catch thy least hint, and givest me no thought. It would be good to sit at my door of summer evenings forever and hear thy strains. Thou makest me to toy with speech, or walk content without it, not regretting its absence. I am pleased to think how ignorant and shiftless the wisest are. My imperfect sympathies with my friend are cheerful, glimmering light in the valley.

Feb. 21. *Sunday.* It is hard to preserve equanimity and greatness on that debatable ground between love and esteem. There is nothing so stable and unfluctuating as love. The waves beat steadfast on its shore forever, and its tide has no ebb. It is a resource in all extremities, and a refuge even from itself. And yet love will not be leaned on.

Feb. 22. Love is the tenderest mood of that which is tough — and the toughest mood of that which is tender. It may be roughly handled as the nettle, or gently as the violet. It has its holidays, but is not made for them.

The whole of the day should not be daytime, nor of the night night-time, but some portion be rescued from time to oversee time in. All our hours must not be current; all our time must not lapse. There must be one hour at least which the day did not bring forth, — of ancient parentage and long-established nobility, — which will be a serene and lofty platform overlooking the rest. We should make our notch every day on our characters, as Robinson Crusoe on his stick. We must be at the helm at least once a day; we must feel the tiller-rope in our hands, and know that if we sail, we steer.

Friends will be much apart; they will respect more each other's privacy than their communion, for therein is the fulfillment of our high aims and the conclusion of our arguments. That we know and

would associate with not only has high intents, but goes on high errands, and has much private business. The hours he devotes to me were snatched from higher society. He is hardly a gift level to me, but I have to reach up to take it. My imagination always assigns him a nobler employment in my absence than ever I find him engaged in.

We have to go into retirement religiously, and enhance our meeting by rarity and a degree of unfamiliarity. Would you know why I see thee so seldom, my friend? In solitude I have been making up a packet for thee.

The actions which grow out of some common but natural relations affect me strangely, as sometimes the behavior of a mother to her children. So quiet and noiseless an action often moves me more than many sounding exploits.

Feb. 23. Tuesday. Let all our stores and munitions be provided for the lone state.

The care of the body is the highest exercise of prudence. If I have brought this weakness on my lungs, I will consider calmly and disinterestedly how the thing came about, that I may find out the truth and render justice. Then, after patience, I shall be a wiser man than before!

Let us apply all our wit to the repair of our bodies, as we would mend a harrow, for the body will be dealt plainly and implicitly with. We want no moonshine nor surmises about it. This matter of health and sickness has no fatality in it, but is a subject for the merest prudence. If I know not what ails me, I may resort to amulets and charms and, moonstruck, die of dysentery.

We do wrong to slight our sickness and feel so ready to desert our posts when we are harassed. So much the more should we rise above our condition, and make the most of it, for the fruit of disease may be as good as that of health.

There is a subtle elixir in society which makes it a fountain of health to the sick. We want no consolation which is not the overflow of our friend's health. We will have no condolence who are not dolent ourselves. We would have our friend come and respire healthily before us, with the fragrance of many meadows and heaths

in his breath, and we will inhabit his body while our own recruits.

Nothing is so good medicine in sickness as to witness some nobleness in another which will advertise us of health. In sickness it is our faith that ails, and noble deeds reassure us. —

That anybody has thought of you on some indifferent occasion frequently implies more good will than you had reason to expect. You have henceforth a higher motive for conduct. We do not know how many amiable thoughts are current.

Feb. 26. *Friday.* My prickles or smoothness are as much a quality of your hand as of myself. I cannot tell you what I am, more than a ray of the summer's sun. What I am I am, and say not. Being is the great explainer. In the attempt to explain, shall I plane away all the spines, till it is no thistle, but a cornstalk?

If my world is not sufficient without thee, my friend, I will wait till it is and then call thee. You shall come to a palace, not to an almshouse.

My homeliest thought, like the diamond brought from farthest within the mine, will shine with the purest lustre.

Though I write every day, yet when I say a good thing it seems as if I wrote but rarely.

To be great, we do as if we would be tall merely, be longer than we are broad, stretch ourselves and stand on tiptoe. But greatness is well proportioned, unstrained, and stands on the soles of the feet.

How many are waiting for health and warm weather! But they wait for none.

In composition I miss the hue of the mind. As if we could be satisfied with the dews of the morning and evening without their colors, or the heavens without their azure.

This good book helps the sun shine in my chamber. The rays fall on its page as if to explain and illustrate it. I who have been sick hear cattle low in the street, with such a healthy ear as prophesies my cure. These sounds lay a finger on my pulse to some purpose. A fragrance comes in at all my senses which proclaims that I am still of Nature the child. The threshing in yonder barn and the tinkling of the anvil come from the same side of Styx with me. If I were a physician

I would try my patients thus. I would wheel them to a window and let Nature feel their pulse. It will soon appear if their sensuous existence is sound. These sounds are but the throbbing of some pulse in me.

Nature seems to have given me these hours to pry into her private drawers. I watch the shadow of the insensible perspiration rising from my coat or hand on the wall. I go and feel my pulse in all the recesses of the house and see if I am of force to carry a homely life and comfort into them.

Feb. 21. Saturday. Life looks as fair at this moment as a summer's sea, or a blond dress in a saffron light, with its sun and grass and walled towns so bright and chaste, as fair as my own virtue which would adventure therein. Like a Persian city or hanging gardens in the distance, so washed in light, so untried, only to be thridded by clean thoughts. All its flags are flowing, and tassels streaming, and drapery flapping, like some gay pavilion. The heavens hang over it like some low screen, and seem to undulate in the breeze.

Through this pure, unwiped hour, as through a crystal glass, I look out upon the future, as a smooth lawn for my virtue to disport in. It shows from afar as unrepulsive as the sunshine upon walls and cities, over which the passing life moves as gently as a shadow. I see the course of my life, like some retired road, wind on without obstruction into a country maze.

I am attired for the future so, as the sun setting presumes all men at leisure and in contemplative mood, — and am thankful that it is thus presented blank and indistinct. It still o'ertops my hope. My future deeds bestir themselves within me and move grandly towards a consummation, as ships go down the Thames. A steady onward motion I feel in me, as still as that, or like some vast, snowy cloud, whose shadow first is seen across the fields. It is the material of all things loose and set afloat that makes my sea.

These various words are not without various meanings. The combined voice of the race makes nicer distinctions than any individual. There are the words "diversion" and "amusement." It takes more to amuse than to divert. We must be surrendered to our

amusements, but only turned aside to our diversions. We have no will in the former, but oversee the latter. We are oftenest diverted in the street, but amused in our chambers. We are diverted from our engagements, but amused when we are listless. We may be diverted from an amusement, and amused by a diversion. It often happens that a diversion becomes our amusement, and our amusement our employment.

Feb. 28. Nothing goes by luck in composition. It allows of no tricks. The best you can write will be the best you are. Every sentence is the result of a long probation. The author's character is read from title-page to end. Of this he never corrects the proofs. We read it as the essential character of a handwriting without regard to the flourishes. And so of the rest of our actions; it runs as straight as a ruled line through them all, no matter how many curvets about it. Our whole life is taxed for the least thing well done; it is its net result. How we eat, drink, sleep, and use our desultory hours, now in these indifferent days, with no eye to observe and no occasion [to] excite us, determines our authority and capacity for the time to come.

March 3. I hear a man blowing a horn this still evening, and it sounds like the plaint of nature in these times. In this, which I refer to some man, there is something greater than any man. It is as if the earth spoke. It adds a great remoteness to the horizon, and its very distance is grand, as when one draws back the head to speak. That which I now hear in the west seems like an invitation to the east. It runs round the earth as a whisper gallery. It is the spirit of the West calling to the spirit of the East, or else it is the rattling of some team lagging in Day's train. Coming to me through the darkness and silence, all things great seem transpiring there. It is friendly as a distant hermit's taper. When it is trilled, or undulates, the heavens are crumpled into time, and successive waves flow across them.

It is a strangely healthy sound for these disjointed times. It is a rare soundness when cow-bells and horns are heard from over the fields. And now I see the beauty and full meaning of that word "sound." Nature always possesses a certain sonorousness, as in the hum of insects, the booming of ice, the crowing of cocks in the

morning, and the barking of dogs in the night, which indicates her sound state. God's voice is but a clear bell sound. I drink in a wonderful health, a cordial, in sound. The effect of the slightest tinkling in the horizon measures my own soundness. I thank God for sound; it always mounts, and makes me mount. I think I will not trouble myself for any wealth, when I can be so cheaply enriched. Here I contemplate to drudge that I may own a farm — and may have such a limitless estate for the listening. All good things are cheap: all bad are very dear.

As for these communities, I think I had rather keep bachelor's hall in hell than go to board in heaven. Do you think your virtue will be boarded with you? It will never live on the interest of your money, depend upon it. The boarder has no home. In heaven I hope to bake my own bread and clean my own linen. The tomb is the only boarding-house in which a hundred are served at once. In the catacomb we may dwell together and prop one another without loss.

March 4. Ben Jonson says in his epigrams, —

"He makes himself a thorough-fare of Vice."

This is true, for by vice the substance of a man is not changed, but all his pores, and cavities, and avenues are prophaned by being made the thoroughfares of vice. He is the highway of his vice. The searching devil courses through and through him. His flesh and blood and bones are cheapened. He is all trivial, a place where three highways of sin meet. So is another the thoroughfare of virtue, and virtue circulates through all his aisles like a wind, and he is hallowed.

We reprove each other unconsciously by our own behavior. Our very carriage and demeanor in the streets should be a reprimand that will go to the conscience of every beholder. An infusion of love from a great soul gives a color to our faults, which will discover them, as lunar caustic detects impurities in water.

The best will not seem to go contrary to others, but, as if *they*

could afford to travel the same way, they go a parallel but higher course, a sort of upper road. Jonson says, —

"That to the vulgar canst thyself apply, Treading a better path not contrary."

Their way is a mountain slope, a river valley's course, a tide which mingles a myriad lesser currents.

March 5. Friday. How can our love increase, unless our loveliness increase also? We must securely love each other as we love God, with no more danger that our love be unrequited or ill-bestowed. There is that in my friend before which I must first decay and prove untrue. Love is the least moral and the most. Are the best good in their love? or the worst, bad?

March 6. An honest misunderstanding is often the ground of future intercourse.

THE SPHINX

(An interpretation of Emmerson's poem - the numbers refer to stanzas)

March 7,8,9,10. The Sphinx is man's insatiable and questioning spirit, which still, as of old, stands by the roadside in us and proposes the riddle of life to every passer. The ancients represented this by a monster who was a riddle of herself, having a body composed of various creatures, as if to hint that she had no individual existence, but was nearly allied to and brooded ' over all. They made her devour those who were unable to explain her enigmas, as we are devoured by doubt, and struggle towards the light, as if to be assured of our lives. For we live by confidence, and our bravery is in some moment when we are certain to that degree that our certainty cannot be increased; as, when a ray bursts through a gap in a cloud, it darts as far, and reaches the earth as surely, as the whole sun would have

done.

1. — In the first four lines is described the mood in which the Sphinx bestirs herself in us. We must look on the world with a drowsy and half-shut eye, that it may not be too much in our eye, and rather stand aloof from than within it. When we are awake to the real world, we are asleep to the actual. The sinful drowse to eternity, the virtuous to time. Menu says that the "supreme omnipresent intelligence" is "a spirit which can only be conceived by a mind *slumbering*." Wisdom and holiness always slumber; they are never active in the ways of the world. As in our night-dreams we are nearest to awakening, so in our day-dreams we are nearest to a supernatural awakening, and the plain and flat satisfactoriness of life becomes so significant as to be questioned.

The Sphinx hints that in the ages her secret is kept, but in the annihilation of ages alone is it revealed. So far from solving the problem of life, Time only serves to propose and keep it in. Time waits but for its solution to become eternity. Its lapse is measured by the successive failures to answer the incessant question, and the generations of men are the unskillful passengers devoured.

2. — She hints generally at man's mystery. He knows only that he is, not what, nor whence. Not only is he curiously and wonderfully wrought, but with Dædalian intricacy. He is lost in himself as a labyrinth and has no clue to get out by. If he could get out of his humanity, he would have got out of nature. "Dædalian" expresses both the skill and the inscrutable design of the builder.

The insolubleness of the riddle is only more forcibly expressed by the lines, —

"Out of sleeping a waking,
Out of waking a sleep."

They express the complete uncertainty and renunciation of knowledge of the propounder.

3, — 4, 5, 6. In these verses is described the integrity of all animate and inanimate things but man, — how each is a problem of itself and not the solution of one and presides over and uses the

mystery of the universe as unhesitatingly as if it were the partner of God; how, by a sort of *essential and practical faith*, each understands all, for to see that we understand is to know that we misunderstand. Each natural object is an end to itself. A brave, undoubting life do they all live, and are content to be a part of the mystery which is God, and throw the responsibility on man of explaining them and himself too.

3. — The outlines of the trees are as correct as if ruled by God on the sky. The motions of quadrupeds and birds Nature never thinks to mend, but they are a last copy and the flourishes of His hand.

4. — The waves lapse with such a melody on the shore as shows that they have long been at one with Nature. Theirs is as perfect play as if the heavens and earth were not. They meet with a sweet difference and independently, as old playfellows. Nothing do they lack more than the world. The ripple is proud to be a ripple and balances the sea. The atoms, which are in such a continual flux, notwithstanding their minuteness, have a certain essential valor and independence. They have the integrity of worlds, and attract and repel firmly as such. The least has more manhood than Democritus.

5. — So also in Nature the perfection of the whole is the perfection of the parts, and what is itself perfect serves to adorn and set off all the rest. Her distinctions are but reliefs. Night veileth the morning for the morning's sake, and the vapor adds a new attraction to the hill. Nature looks like a conspiracy for the advantage of all her parts; when one feature shines, all the rest seem suborned to heighten its charm. In her circle each gladly gives precedence to the other. Day gladly alternates with night. Behind these the vapor atones to the hill for its interference, and this harmonious scene is the effect of that at-one-ment.

6. — In a sense the babe takes its departure from Nature as the grown man his departure out of her, and so during its nonage is at one with her, and as a part of herself. It is indeed the very flower and blossom of Nature. —

"Shines the peace of all being
Without cloud, in its eyes;
And the *sum* of the world

In soft *miniature* lies."

To the charming consistency of the palm and thrush, this universal and serene beauty is added, as all the leaves of the tree flower in the blossom.

7. — But alas, the fruit to be matured in these petals is fated to break the stem which holds it to universal consistency. It passes *through Nature* to manhood, and becomes unnatural, without being as yet quite supernatural. Man's most approved life is but conformity, not a simple and independent consistency, which would make all things conform to it. His actions do not adorn Nature nor one another, nor does she exist in harmony but in contrast with them. She is not their willing scenery. We conceive that if a true action were to be performed it would be assisted by Nature, and perhaps be fondled and reflected many times as the rainbow. The sun is a true light for the trees in a picture, but not for the actions of men. They will not bear so strong a light as the stubble; the universe has little sympathy with them, and sooner or later they rebound hollowly on the memory. The April shower should be as reviving to our life as to the garden and the grove, and the scenery in which we live reflect our own beauty, as the dew-drop the flower. It is the actual man, not the actual Nature, that hurts the romance of the landscape. "He poisons the ground." The haymakers must be lost in the grass of the meadow. They may be Faustus and Amyntas here, but near at hand they are Reuben and Jonas. The woodcutter must not be better than the wood, lest he be *worse.* Neither will bear to be considered as a distinct feature. Man's works must lie in the bosom of Nature, cottages be buried in trees, or under vines and moss, like rocks, that they may not outrage the landscape. The hunter must be dressed in Lincoln green, with a plume of eagle's feathers, to imbosom him in Nature. So the skillful painter secures the distinctness of the whole by the indistinctness of the parts. We can endure best to consider our repose and silence. Only when the city, the hamlet, or the cottage is viewed from a distance does man's life seem in harmony with the universe; but seen closely his actions have no eagle's feathers or Lincoln green to redeem them. The sunlight on cities at a distance is a deceptive beauty, but foretells the final harmony of man with Nature.

Man as he is, is not the subject of any art, strictly speaking. The naturalist pursues his study with love, but the moralist persecutes his with hate. In man is the material of a picture, with a design partly sketched, but Nature is such a picture drawn and colored. He is a studio, Nature a gallery. If men were not idealists, no sonnets to beautiful persons nor eulogies on worthy ones would ever be written. We wait for the preacher to express *such* love for his congregation as the botanist for his herbarium.

8. — Man, however, detects something in the lingering ineradicable sympathy of Nature which seems to side with him against the stern decrees of the soul. Her essential friendliness is only the more apparent to his waywardness, for disease and sorrow are but a rupture with her. In proportion as he renounces his will, she repairs his hurts, and, if she burns, does oftener warm, if she freezes, oftener refreshes. This is the motherliness which the poet personifies, and the Sphinx, or wisely inquiring man, makes express a real concern for him. Nature shows us a stem kindness, and only we are unkind. She endures long with us, and though the severity of her law is unrelaxed, yet its evenness and impartiality look relenting, and almost sympathize with our fault.

9, — 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. But to the poet there are no riddles. They are "pleasant songs" to him; his faith solves the enigmas which recurring wisdom does not fail to repeat. Poetry is the only solution time can offer. But the poet is soonest a pilgrim from his own faith. Our brave moments may still be distinguished from our wise. Though the problem is always solved for the soul, still does it remain to be solved by the intellect. Almost faith puts the question, for only in her light can it be answered. However true the answer, it does not prevent the question; for the best answer is but plausible, and man can only tell his relation to truth, but render no account of truth to herself.

9. — Believe, and ask not, says the poet.

"Deep love lieth under
These pictures of time;
They fade in the light of
Their meaning sublime."

Nothing is plain but love.

10, — 11, 12, 13. Man comes short, because he seeks perfection. He adorns no world, while he is seeking to adorn a better. His best actions have no reference to their actual scenery. For when our actions become of that worth that they might confer a grace on Nature, they pass out of her into a higher arena, where they are still mean and awkward. So that the world beholds only the rear of great deeds, and mistakes them often for inconsistencies, not knowing with what higher they consist. Nature is beautiful as in repose, not promising a higher beauty to-morrow. Her actions are level to one another, and so are never unfit or inconsistent. Shame and remorse, which are so unsightly to her, have a prospective beauty and fitness which redeem them. We would have our lover to be nobler than we, and do not fear to sacrifice our love to his greater nobleness. Better the disagreement of noble lovers than the agreement of base ones. In friendship each will be nobler than the other, and so avoid the cheapness of a level and idle harmony. Love will have its chromatic strains, —— discordant yearnings for higher chords, — as well as symphonies. Let us expect no finite satisfaction.

13. — Who looks in the sun will see no light else; but also he will see no shadow. Our life revolves unceasingly, but the centre is ever the same, and the wise will regard only the seasons of the soul.

14. — The poet concludes with the same trust he began with, and jeers at the blindness which could inquire. But our sphinx is so wise as to put no riddle that can be answered. It is a great presumption to answer conclusively a question which any sincerity has put. The wise answer no questions, — nor do they ask them. She silences his jeers with the conviction that she is the eye-beam of his eye. Our proper eye never quails before an answer. To rest in a reply, as a response of the oracle, that is error; but to suspect time's reply, because we would not degrade one of God's meanings to be intelligible to us, that is wisdom. We shall never arrive at his meaning, but it will ceaselessly arrive to us. The truth we seek with ardor and devotion will not reward us with a cheap acquisition. We run unhesitatingly in our career, not fearing to pass any goal of truth in our haste. We career toward her eternally. A truth rested in stands for all the vice of

an age, and revolution comes kindly to restore health.

16. The cunning Sphinx, who had been hushed into stony silence and repose in us, arouses herself and detects a mystery in all things, — in infancy, the moon, fire, flowers, sea, mountain, — and, (17) in the spirit of the old fable, declares proudly, —

"Who telleth one of my meanings Is master of all I am."

When some (Edipus has solved one of her enigmas, she will go dash her head against a rock.

You may find this as enigmatical as the Sphinx's riddle. Indeed, I doubt if she could solve it herself.

March 11. *Thursday.* Every man understands why a fool sings.

March 13. *Saturday.* There is a sort of homely truth and naturalness in some books, which is very rare to find, and yet looks quite cheap. There may be nothing lofty in the sentiment, or polished in the expression, but it is careless, countrified talk. The scholar rarely writes as well as the farmer talks. Homeliness is a great merit in a book; it is next to beauty and a high art. Some have this merit only. A few homely expressions redeem them. Rusticity is pastoral, but affectation merely civil. The scholar does not make his most familiar experience come gracefully to the aid of his expression, and hence, though he live in it, his books contain no tolerable pictures of the country and simple life. Very few men can speak of Nature with any truth. They confer no favor; they do not speak a good word for her. Most cry better than they speak. You can get more nature out of them by pinching than by addressing them. It is naturalness, and not simply good nature, that interests. I like better the surliness with which the woodchopper speaks of his woods, handling them as indifferently as his axe, than the mealy-mouthed enthusiasm of the lover of nature. Better that the primrose by the river's brim be a yellow primrose and nothing more, than the victim of his bouquet or herbarium, to shine with the flickering dull light of his imagination, and not the golden gleam of a star.

Aubrey relates of Thomas Fuller that his was "a very working head, in so much, that walking and meditating before dinner, he

would eat up a penny loaf, not knowing that he did it. His natural memory was very great, to which he added the art of memory. He would repeat to you forwards and backwards all the signs from Ludgate to Charing-cross." These are very good and wholesome facts to know of a man, as copious as some modern volumes.

He also says of Mr. John Hales, that, "he loved Canarie" and was buried "under an altar monument of black marble... with a too long epitaph;" of Edmund Hailey, that he "at sixteen could make a dial, and then he said he thought himself a brave fellow;" of William Holder, who wrote a book upon his curing one Popham, who was deaf and dumb, "He was beholding to no author; did only consult with nature." For the most part an author but consults with all who have written before upon any subject, and his book is but the advice of so many. But a true book will never have been forestalled, but the topic itself will be new, and, by consulting with nature, it will consult not only with those who have gone before, but with those who may come after. There is always room and occasion enough for a true book on any subject, as there is room for more light the brightest day, and more rays will not interfere with the first.

How alone must our life be lived! We dwell on the seashore, and none between us and the sea. Men are my merry companions, my fellow-pilgrims, who beguile the way but leave me at the first turn in the road, for none are travelling *one* road so far as myself.

Each one marches in the van. The weakest child is exposed to the fates henceforth as barely as its parents. Parents and relations but entertain the youth; they cannot stand between him and his destiny. This is the one bare side of every man. There is no fence; it is clear before him to the bounds of space.

What is fame to a living man? If he live aright, the sound of no man's voice will resound through the aisles of his secluded life. His life is a hallowed silence, a fane. The loudest sounds have to thank my little ear that they are heard.

March 15. When I have access to a man's barrel of sermons, which were written from week to week, as his life lapsed, though I now know him to live cheerfully and bravely enough, still I cannot

conceive what interval there was for laughter and smiles in the midst of so much sadness. Almost in proportion to the sincerity and earnestness of the life will be the sadness of the record. When I reflect that twice a week for so many years he pondered and preached such a sermon, I think he must have been a splenetic and melancholy man, and wonder if his food digested well. It seems as if the fruit of virtue was never a careless happiness.

A great cheerfulness have all great wits possessed, almost a prophane levity to such as understood them not, but their religion had the broader basis in proportion as it was less prominent. The religion I love is very laic. The clergy are as diseased, and as much possessed with a devil, as the reformers. They make their topic as offensive as the politician, for our religion is as unpublic and incommunicable as our poetical vein, and to be approached with as much love and tenderness.

March 17. *Wednesday.* The stars go up and down before my only eye. Seasons come round to me alone. I cannot lean so hard on any arm as on a sunbeam. So solid men are not to my sincerity as is the shimmer of the fields.

March 19. *Friday.* No true and brave person will be content to live on such a footing with his fellow and himself as the laws of every household now require. The house is the very haunt and lair of our vice. I am impatient to withdraw myself from under its roof as an unclean spot. There is no circulation there; it is full of stagnant and mephitic vapors.

March 20. Even the wisest and best are apt to use their lives as the occasion to do something else in than to live greatly. But we should hang as fondly over this work as the finishing and embellishment of a poem.

It is a great relief when for a few moments in the day we can retire to our chamber and be completely true to ourselves. It leavens the rest of our hours. In that moment I will be nakedly as vicious as I am; this false life of mine shall have a being at length.

March 21. *Sunday.* To be associated with others by my friend's generosity when he bestows a gift is an additional favor to be grateful for.

March 27. *Saturday.* Magnanimity, though it look expensive for a short course, is always economy in the long run. Be generous in your poverty, if you would be rich. To make up a great action there are no subordinate mean ones. We can never afford to postpone a true life to-day to any future and anticipated nobleness. We think if by tight economy we can manage to arrive at independence, then indeed we will begin to be generous without stay. We sacrifice all nobleness to a little present meanness. If a man charges you eight hundred pay him eight hundred and fifty, and it will leave a clean edge to the sum. It will be like nature, overflowing and rounded like the bank of a river, not close and precise like a drain or ditch.

It is always a short step to peace — of mind.

Under this line there is or has been life; as, when I see the mole's raised gallery in the meadow, I know that he has passed underneath. I must not lose any of my freedom by being a farmer and landholder. Most who enter on any profession are doomed men. The world might as well sing a dirge over them forthwith. The farmer's muscles are rigid. He can do one thing long, not many well. His pace seems determined henceforth; he never quickens it. A very rigid Nemesis is his fate. When the right wind blows or a star calls, I can leave this arable and grass ground, without making a will or settling my estate. I would buy a farm as freely as a silken streamer. Let me not think my front windows must face east henceforth because a particular hill slopes that way. My life must undulate still. I will not feel that my wings are clipped when once I have settled on ground which the law calls my own, but find new pinions grown to the old, and talaria to my feet beside.

March 30. *Tuesday.* I find my life growing slovenly when it does not exercise a constant supervision over itself. Its duds accumulate. Next to having lived a day well is a clear and calm overlooking of all our days.

FRIENDSHIP

Now we are partners in such legal trade,
We'll look to the beginnings, not the ends,
Nor to pay-day, knowing true wealth is made
For current stock and not for dividends.

I am amused when I read how Ben Jonson engaged that the ridiculous masks with which the royal family and nobility were to be entertained should be "grounded upon antiquity and solid learning."

April 1. ON THE SUN COMING OUT IN THE AFTERNOON Methinks all things have travelled since you shined, But only Time, and clouds, Time's team, have moved; Again foul weather shall not change my mind, But in the shade I will believe what in the sun I loved.

In reading a work on agriculture, I skip the author's moral reflections, and the words "Providence" and "He" scattered along the page, to come at the profitable level of what he has to say. There is no science in men's religion; it does not teach me so much as the report of the committee on swine. My author shows he has dealt in corn and turnips and can worship God with the hoe and spade, but spare me his morality.

April 3. Friends will not only live in harmony, but in melody.

April 4. *Sunday.* The rattling of the tea-kettle below stairs reminds me of the cow-bells I used to hear when berrying in the Great Fields many years ago, sounding distant and deep amid the birches. That cheap piece of tinkling brass which the farmer hangs about his cow's neck has been more to me than the tons of metal which are swung in the belfry.

They who prepare my evening meal below
Carelessly hit the kettle as they go,

With tongs or shovel,
And, ringing round and round,
Out of this hovel
It makes an Eastern temple by the sound.

At first I thought a cow-bell, right at hand
'Mid birches, sounded o'er the open land,
Where I plucked flowers
Many years ago,
Speeding midsummer hours
With such secure delight they hardly seemed to flow.

April 5. This long series of desultory mornings does not tarnish the brightness of the prospective days. Surely faith is not dead. Wood, water, earth, air are essentially what they were; only society has degenerated. This lament for a golden age is only a lament for golden men.

I only ask a clean seat. I will build my lodge on the southern slope of some hill, and take there the life the gods send me. Will it not be employment enough to accept gratefully all that is yielded me between sun and sun? Even the fox digs his own burrow. If my jacket and trousers, my boots and shoes, are fit to worship God in, they will do. Won't they, Deacon Spaulding?

April 7. Wednesday. My life will wait for nobody, but is being matured still irresistibly while I go about the streets and chaffer with this man and that to secure it a living. It will cut its own channel, like the mountain stream, which by the longest ridges and by level prairies is not kept from the sea finally. So flows a man's life, and will reach the sea water, if not by an earthy channel, yet in dew and rain, overleaping all barriers, with rainbows to announce its victory. It can wind as cunningly and unerringly as water that seeks its level; and shall I complain if the gods make it meander? This staying to buy me a farm is as if the Mississippi should stop to chaffer with a clamshell.

What have I to do with plows? I cut another furrow than you see. Where the off ox treads, there is it not, it is farther off; where the nigh

ox walks, it will not be, it is nigher still. If corn fails, my crop fails not. What of drought? What of rain? Is not my sand well clayed, my peat well sanded? Is it not underdrained and watered?

My ground is high,
But ‘t is not dry,
What you call dew
Comes filtering through;
Though in the sky,
It still is nigh;
Its soil is blue
And virgin too.

If from your price ye will not swerve,
Why, then I’ll think the gods reserve
A greater bargain there above,
Out of their sup’rabundant love

Have meantime better for me cared,
And so will get my stock prepared,
Plows of new pattern, hoes the same,
Designed a different soil to tame,
And sow my seed broadcast in air,
Certain to reap my harvest there.

April 8. Friends are the ancient and honorable of the earth. The oldest men did not begin friendship. It is older than Hindostan and the Chinese Empire. How long has it been cultivated, and is still the staple article! It is a divine league struck forever. Warm, serene days only bring it out to the surface. There is a friendliness between the sun and the earth in pleasant weather; the gray content of the land is its color.

You can tell what another’s suspicions are by what you feel forced to become. You will wear a new character, like a strange habit, in their presence.

April 9. *Friday.* It would not be hard for some quiet brave man to

leap into the saddle to-day and eclipse Napoleon's career by a grander, — show men at length the meaning of war. One reproaches himself with supineness, that he too has sat quiet in his chamber, and not treated the world to the sound of the trumpet; that the indignation which has so long rankled in his breast does not take to horse and to the field. The bravest warrior will have to fight his battles in his dreams, and no earthly war note can arouse him. There are who would not run with Leonidas. Only the third-rate Napoleons and Alexanders does history tell of. The brave man does not mind the call of the trumpet nor hear the idle clashing of swords without, for the infinite din within. War is but a training, compared with the active service of his peace. Is he not at war? Does he not resist the ocean swell within him, and walk as gently as the summer's sea? Would you have him parade in uniform, and manœuvre men, whose equanimity is his uniform and who is himself manoeuvred?

The times have no heart. The true reform can be undertaken any morning before unbarring our doors. It calls no convention. I can do two thirds the reform of the world myself. When two neighbors begin to eat com bread, who before ate wheat, then the gods smile from ear to ear, for it is very pleasant to them. When an individual takes a sincere step, then all the gods attend, and his single deed is sweet.

April 10. *Saturday.* I don't know but we should make life all too tame if we had our own way, and should miss these impulses in a happier time.

How much virtue there is in simply seeing! We may almost say that the hero has striven in vain for his preeminency, if the student oversees him. The woman who sits in the house and *sees* is a match for a stirring captain. Those still, piercing eyes, as faithfully exercised on their talent, will keep her even with Alexander or Shakespeare. They may go to Asia with parade, or to fairyland, but not beyond her ray. We are as much as we see. Faith is sight and knowledge. The hands only serve the eyes. The farthest blue streak in the horizon I can see, I may reach before many sunsets. What I saw alters not; in my night, when I wander, it is still steadfast as the star which the sailor steers by.

Whoever has had one thought quite lonely, and could contentedly digest that in solitude, knowing that none could accept it, may rise to the height of humanity, and overlook all living men as from a pinnacle.

Speech never made man master of men, but the eloquently refraining from it.

April 11. *Sunday.* A greater baldness my life seeks, as the crest of some bare hill, which towns and cities do not afford. I want a directer relation with the sun.

FRIENDSHIP'S STEADFASTNESS

True friendship is so firm a league
That's maintenance falls into the even tenor
Of our lives, and is no tie,
But the continuance of our life's thread.

If I would safely keep this new-got pelf,
I have no care henceforth but watch myself,
For lo! it goes untended from my sight,
Waxes and wanes secure with the safe star of night.

See with what liberal step it makes its way,
As we could well afford to let it stray
Throughout the universe, with the sun and moon,
Which would dissolve allegiance as soon.

Shall I concern myself for fickleness,
And undertake to make my friends more sure,
When the great gods out of sheer kindliness,
Gave me this office for a sinecure?

Death cannot come too soon
Where it can come at all,
But always is too late

Unless the fates it call.

April 15. Thursday. The gods are of no sect; they side with no man. When I imagine that Nature inclined rather to some few earnest and faithful souls, and specially existed for them, I go to see an obscure individual who lives under the hill, letting both gods and men alone, and find that strawberries and tomatoes grow for him too in his garden there, and the sun lodges kindly under his hillside, and am compelled to acknowledge the unbribable charity of the gods.

Any simple, unquestioned mode of life is alluring to men. The man who picks peas steadily for a living is more than respectable. He is to be envied by his neighbors.

April 16. I have been inspecting my neighbors' farms to-day and chaffering with the landholders, and I must confess I am startled to find everywhere the old system of things so grim and assured. Wherever I go the farms are run out, and there they lie, and the youth must buy old land and bring it to. Everywhere the relentless opponents of reform are a few old maids and bachelors, who sit round the kitchen fire, listening to the singing of the tea-kettle and munching cheese-rinds.

April 18. *Sunday.* We need pine for no office for the sake of a certain culture, for all valuable experience lies in the way of a man's duty. My necessities of late have compelled me to study Nature as she is related to the farmer, — as she simply satisfies a want of the body. Some interests have got a footing on the earth which I have not made sufficient allowance for. That which built these barns and cleared the land thus had some valor.

We take little steps, and venture small stakes, as if our actions were very fatal and irretrievable. There is no swing to our deeds. But our life is only a retired valley where we rest on our packs awhile. Between us and our end there is room for any delay. It is not a short and easy southern way, but we must go over snowcapped mountains to reach the sun.

April 20. You can't beat down your virtue; so much goodness it

must have.

When a room is furnished, comfort is not furnished.

Great thoughts hallow any labor. To-day I earned seventy-five cents heaving manure out of a pen, and made a good bargain of it. If the ditcher muses the while how he may live uprightly, the ditching spade and turf knife may be engraved on the coat-of-arms of his posterity.

There are certain current expressions and blasphemous moods of viewing things, as when we say "he is doing a good business," more prophane than cursing and swearing. There is death and sin in such words. Let not the children hear them.

April 22. Thursday. There are two classes of authors: the one write the history of their times, the other their biography.

April 23. Friday. Any greatness is not to be mistaken. Who shall cavil at it? It stands once for all on a level with the heroes of history. It is not to be patronized. It goes alone.

When I hear music, I flutter, and am the scene of life, as a fleet of merchantmen when the wind rises.

April 24. Music is the sound of the circulation in nature's veins. It is the flux which melts nature. Men dance to it, glasses ring and vibrate, and the fields seem to undulate. The healthy ear always hears it, nearer or more remote.

It has been a cloudy, drizzling day, with occasional brightenings in the mist, when the trill of the tree sparrow seemed to be ushering in sunny hours.

April 25. A momentous silence reigns always in the woods, and their meaning seems just ripening into expression. But alas! they make no haste. The rush sparrow, Nature's minstrel of serene hours, sings of an immense leisure and duration.

When I hear a robin sing at sunset, I cannot help contrasting the equanimity of Nature with the bustle and impatience of man. We

return from the lyceum and caucus with such stir and excitement, as if a crisis were at hand; but no natural scene or sound sympathizes with us, for Nature is always silent and unpretending as at the break of day. She but rubs her eyelids.

I am struck with the pleasing friendships and unanimities of nature in the woods, as when the moss on the trees takes the form of their leaves.

There is all of civilized life in the woods. Their wildest scenes have an air of domesticity and homeliness, and when the flicker's cackle is heard in the clearings, the musing hunter is reminded that civilization has imported nothing into them. The ball-room is represented by the catkins of the alder at this season, which hang gracefully like a lady's ear-drops.

All the discoveries of science are equally true in their deepest recesses; nature there, too, obeys the same laws. Fair weather and foul concern the little red bug upon a pine stump; for him the wind goes round the right way and the sun breaks through the clouds.

April 26. *Monday.* At R. W. E.'s.

The charm of the Indian to me is that he stands free and unconstrained in Nature, is her inhabitant and not her guest, and wears her easily and gracefully. But the civilized man has the habits of the house. His house is a prison, in which he finds himself oppressed and confined, not sheltered and protected. He walks as if he sustained the roof; he carries his arms as if the walls would fall in and crush him, and his feet remember the cellar beneath. His muscles are never relaxed. It is rare that he overcomes the house, and learns to sit at home in it, and roof and floor and walls support themselves, as the sky and trees and earth.

It is a great art to saunter.

April 27. It is only by a sort of voluntary blindness, and omitting to see, that we know ourselves, as when we see stars with the side of the eye. The nearest approach to discovering what we are is in dreams. It is as hard to see one's self as to look backwards without

turning round. And foolish are they that look in glasses with that intent.

The porters have a hard time, but not so hard as he that carries his own shoulders. That beats the Smyrna Turks. Some men's broad shoulders are load enough. Even a light frame can stand under a great burden, if it does not have to support itself. Virtue is buoyant and elastic; it stands without effort and does not feel gravity; but sin plods and shuffles. Newton needed not to wait for an apple to fall to' discover the attraction of gravitation; it was implied in the fall of man.

April 28. *Wednesday.* We falsely attribute to men a determined character; putting together all their yesterdays and averaging them, we presume we know them. Pity the man who has a character to support. It is worse than a large family. He is silent poor indeed. But in fact character is never explored, nor does it get developed in time, but eternity is its development, time its envelope. In view of this distinction, a sort of divine politeness and heavenly good breeding suggests itself, to address always the enveloped character of a man. I approach a great nature with infinite expectation and uncertainty, not knowing what I may meet. It lies as broad and unexplored before me as a scraggy hillside or pasture. I may hear a fox bark, or a partridge drum, or some bird new to these localities may fly up. It lies out there as old, and yet as new. The aspect of the woods varies every day, what with their growth and the changes of the seasons and the influence of the elements, so that the eye of the forester never twice rests upon the same prospect. Much more does a character show newly and variedly, if directly seen. It is the highest compliment to suppose that in the intervals of conversation your companion has expanded and grown. It may be a deference which he will not understand, but the nature which underlies him will understand it, and your influence will be shed as finely on him as the dust in the sun settles on our clothes. By such politeness we may educate one another to some purpose. So have I felt myself educated sometimes; I am expanded and enlarged.

April 29. Birds and quadrupeds pass freely through nature,

without prop or stilt. But man very naturally carries a stick in his hand, seeking to ally himself by many points to nature, as a warrior stands by his horse's side with his hand on his mane. We walk the gracefuler for a cane, as the juggler uses a leaded pole to balance him when he dances on a slack wire.

Better a monosyllabic life than a ragged and muttered one; let its report be short and round like a rifle, so that it may hear its own echo in the surrounding silence.

April 30. Where shall we look for standard English but to the words of any man who has a depth of feeling in him? Not in any smooth and leisurely essay. From the gentlemanly windows of the country-seat no sincere eyes are directed upon nature, but from the peasant's horn windows a true glance and greeting occasionally. "For summer being ended, all things," said the Pilgrim, "stood in appearance with a weather-beaten face, and the whole country full of woods and thickets represented a wild and savage hue." Compare this with the agricultural report.

May 1. *Saturday.* Life in gardens and parlors is unpalatable to me. It wants rudeness and necessity to give it relish. I would at least strike my spade into the earth with as good will as the woodpecker his bill into a tree.

May 2.

WACHUSETT

Especial I remember thee,
Wachusett, who like me
Standest alone without society.
Thy far blue eye,
A remnant of the sky,
Seen through the clearing or the gorge,
Or from the windows of the forge,
Doth leaven all it passes by.

Nothing is true
But stands ‘tween me and you,
Thou western pioneer,
Who know’st not shame nor fear,
By venturous spirit driven
Under the eaves of heaven;
And canst expand thee there,
And breathe enough of air?
Upholding heaven, holding down earth,
Thy pastime from thy birth,
Not steadied by the one, nor leaning on the other;

May I approve myself thy worthy brother!

May 3. *Monday.* We are all pilots of the most intricate Bahama channels. Beauty may be the sky overhead, but Duty is the water underneath. When I see a man with serene countenance in the sunshine of summer, drinking in peace in the garden or parlor, it looks like a great inward leisure that he enjoys; but in reality he sails on no summer’s sea, but this steady sailing comes of a heavy hand on the tiller. We do not attend to larks and bluebirds so leisurely but that conscience is as erect as the attitude of the listener. The man of principle gets never a holiday. Our true character silently underlies all our words and actions, as the granite underlies the other strata. Its steady pulse does not cease for any deed of ours, as the sap is still ascending in the stalk of the fairest flower.

May 6. *Thursday.* The fickle person is he that does not know what is true or right absolutely, — who has not an ancient wisdom for a lifetime, but a new prudence for every hour. We must sail by a sort of dead reckoning on this course of life, not speak any vessel nor spy any headland, but, in spite of all phenomena, come steadily to port at last. In general we must have a catholic and universal wisdom, wiser than any particular, and be prudent enough to defer to it always. We are literally wiser than we know. Men do not fail for want of knowledge, but for want of prudence to give wisdom the preference. These low weathercocks on barns and fences show not which way

the general and steady current of the wind sets, — which brings fair weather or foul, — but the vane on the steeple, high up in another stratum of atmosphere, tells that. What we need to know in any case is very simple. I shall not mistake the direction of my life; if I but know the high land and the main, — on this side the Cordilleras, on that the Pacific, — I shall know how to run. If a ridge intervene, I have but to seek, or make, a gap to the sea.

May 9. *Sunday.* The pine stands in the woods like an Indian, — untamed, with a fantastic wildness about it, even in the clearings. If an Indian warrior were well painted, with pines in the background, he would seem to blend with the trees, and make a harmonious expression. The pitch pines are the ghosts of Philip and Massasoit. The white pine has the smoother features of the squaw.

The poet speaks only those thoughts that come unbidden, like the wind that stirs the trees, and men cannot help but listen. He is not listened to, but heard. The weathercock might as well dally with the wind as a man pretend to resist eloquence. The breath that inspires the poet has traversed a whole Campagna, and this new climate here indicates that other latitudes are chilled or heated.

Speak to men as to gods and you will not be insincere.

WESTWARD, HO!

The needles of the pine
All to the west incline.

THE ECHO OF THE SABBATH BELL HEARD IN THE WOODS

Dong, sounds the brass in the east,
As if for a civic feast,
But I like that sound the best
Out of the fluttering west.

The steeple rings a knell,
But the fairies' silvery bell
Is the voice of that gentle folk,
Or else the horizon that spoke.

Its metal is not of brass,
But air, and water, and glass,
And under a cloud it is swung,
And by the wind is rung,
With a slim silver tongue.

When the steeple tolls the noon,
It soundeth not so soon,
Yet it rings an earlier hour,
And the sun has not reached its tower.

May 10. *Monday.* A good warning to the restless tourists of these days is contained in the last verses of Claudian's "Old Man of Verona."

"Erret, et extremos alter scrutetur Iberos.
Plus habet hie vitae, plus habet ille viae."

May 23. Sunday. Barn. — The distant woods are but the tassels of my eye.

Books are to be attended to as new sounds merely. Most would be put to a sore trial if the reader should assume the attitude of a listener. They are but a new note in the forest. To our lonely, sober thought the earth is a wild unexplored. Wildness as of the jay and muskrat reigns over the great part of nature. The oven-bird and plover are heard in the horizon. Here is a new book of heroes, come to me like the note of the chewink from over the fen, only over a deeper and wider fen. The pines are unrelenting sifters of thought; nothing petty leaks through them. Let me put my ear close, and hear the sough of this book, that I may know if any inspiration yet haunts it. There is always a later edition of every book than the printer wots of, no matter how recently it was published. All nature is a new

impression every instant.

The aspects of the most simple object are as various as the aspects of the most compound. Observe the same sheet of water from different eminences. When I have travelled a few miles I do not recognize the profile of the hills of my native village.

May 27. Thursday. I sit in my boat on Walden, playing the flute this evening, and see the perch, which I seem to have charmed, hovering around me, and the moon travelling over the bottom, which is strewn with the wrecks of the forest, and feel that nothing but the wildest imagination can conceive of the manner of life we are living. Nature is a wizard. The Concord nights are stranger than the Arabian nights.

We not only want elbow-room, but eye-room in this gray air which shrouds all the fields. Sometimes my eyes see over the county road by daylight to the tops of yonder birches on the hill, as at others by moonlight.

Heaven lies above, because the air is deep.

In all my life hitherto I have left nothing behind.

May 31. *Monday.* That title, "The Laws of Menu with the Gloss of Culluca," comes to me with such a volume of sound as if it had swept unobstructed over the plains of Hindostan; and when my eye rests on yonder birches, or the sun in the water, or the shadows of the trees, it seems to signify the laws of them all. They are the laws of you and me, a fragrance wafted down from those old times, and no more to be refuted than the wind.

When my imagination travels eastward and backward to those remote years of the gods, I seem to draw near to the habitation of the morning, and the dawn at length has a place. I remember the book as an hour before sunrise.

We are height and depth both, a calm sea at the foot of a promontory. Do we not overlook our own depths?

June 1. To have seen a man out of the East or West is sufficient to establish their reality and locality. I have seen a Mr. Wattles to-day,

from Vermont, and now know where that is and that it is; a reformer, with two soldier's eyes and shoulders, who began to belabor the world at ten years, a ragged mountain boy, as fifer of a company, with set purpose to remould it from those first years.

The great person never wants an opportunity to be great, but makes occasion for all about him.

June 2. *Wednesday.* I am brought into the near neighborhood and am become a silent observer of the moon's paces to-night, by means of a glass, while the frogs are peeping all around me on the earth, and the sound of the accordion seems to come from some bright saloon yonder. I am sure the moon floats in a human atmosphere. It is but a distant scene of the world's drama. It is a wide theatre the gods have given us, and our actions must befit it. More sea and land, mountain and valley, here is, — a further West, a freshness and wildness in reserve when all the land shall be cleared.

I see three little lakes between the hills near its edge, reflecting the sun's rays. The light glimmers as on the water in a tumbler. So far off do the laws of reflection hold. I seem to see the ribs of the creature. This is the aspect of their day, its outside, — their heaven above their heads, towards which they breathe their prayers. So much is between me and them. It is noon there, perchance, and ships are at anchor in the havens or sailing on the seas, and there is a din in the streets, and in this light or that shade some leisurely soul contemplates.

But now dor-bugs fly over its disk and bring me back to earth and night.

June 7. *Monday.* The inhabitants of those Eastern plains seem to possess a natural and hereditary right to be conservative and magnify forms and traditions. "Immemorial custom is transcendent law," says Menu. That is, it was the custom of gods before men used it. The fault of our New England custom is that it is memorial. What is morality but immemorial custom? It is not manner but character, and the conservative conscience sustains it.

We are accustomed to exaggerate the immobility and stagnation of those eras, as of the waters which levelled the steppes; but those

slow revolving "years of the gods" were as rapid to all the needs of virtue as these bustling and hasty seasons. Man stands to revere, he kneels to pray. Methinks history will have to be tried by new tests to show what centuries were rapid and what slow. Corn grows in the night. Will this bustling era detain the future reader longer? Will the earth seem to have conversed more with the heavens during these times? Who is writing better Vedas? How science and art spread and flourished, how trivial conveniences were multiplied, that which is the gossip of the world is not recorded in them; and if they are left out of our scripture, too, what will remain?

Since the Battle of Bunker Hill we think the world has *not* been at a standstill.

When I remember the treachery of memory and the manifold accidents to which tradition is liable, how soon the vista of the past closes behind, — as near as night's crescent to the setting day, — and the dazzling brightness of noon is reduced to the faint glimmer of the evening star, I feel as if it were by a rare indulgence of the fates that any traces of the past are left us, — that my ears which do not hear across the interval over which a crow caws should chance to hear this far-travelled sound. With how little cooperation of the societies, after all, is the past remembered!

I know of no book which comes to us with grander pretensions than the "Laws of Menu;" and this immense presumption is so impersonal and sincere that it is never offensive or ridiculous. Observe the modes in which modern literature is advertised, and then consider this Hindoo prospectus. Think what a reading public it addresses, what criticism it expects. What wonder if the times were not ripe for it?

June 8. Having but one chair, I am obliged to receive my visitors standing, and, now I think of it, those old sages and heroes must always have met erectly.

July 10 *to* 12. This town, too, lies out under the sky, a port of entry and departure for souls to and from heaven.

A slight sound at evening lifts me up by the ears, and makes life

seem inexpressibly serene and grand. It may be in Uranus, or it may be in the shutter. It is the original sound of which all literature is but the echo. It makes all fear superfluous. Bravery comes from further than the sources of fear.

Aug. 1. *Sunday.* I never met a man who cast a free and healthy glance over life, but the best live in a sort of Sabbath light, a Jewish gloom. The best thought is not only without sombreness, but even without morality. The universe lies outspread in floods of white light to it. The moral aspect of nature is a jaundice reflected from man. To the innocent there are no cherubim nor angels. Occasionally we rise above the necessity of virtue into an unchangeable morning light, in which we have not to choose in a dilemma between right and wrong, but simply to live right on and breathe the circumambient air. There is no name for this life unless it be the very vitality of *vita.* Silent is the preacher about this, and silent must ever be, for he who knows it will not preach.

Aug. 4. *Wednesday.* My pen is a lever which, in proportion as the near end stirs me further within, the further end reaches to a greater depth in the reader.

Nawshawtuct. — Far in the east I read *Nature's Com Law Rhymes.* Here, in sight of Wachusett and these rivers and woods, my mind goes singing to itself of other themes than taxation. The rush sparrow sings still unintelligible, as from beyond a depth in me which I have not fathomed, where my future lies folded up. I hear several faint notes, quite outside me, which populate the waste.

This is such fresh and flowing weather, as if the waves of the morning had subsided over the day.

Aug. 6. If I am well, then I see well. The bulletins of health are twirled along my visual rays, like pasteboards on a kite string.

I cannot read a sentence in the book of the Hindoos without being elevated as upon the table-land of the Ghauts. It has such a rhythm as the winds of the desert, such a tide as the Ganges, and seems as superior to criticism as the Himmaleh Mounts. Even at this late hour,

unworn by time, with a native and inherent dignity it wears the English dress as indifferently as the Sanscrit. The great tone of the book is of such fibre and such severe tension that no time nor accident can relax it. The great thought is never found in a mean dress, but is of virtue to ennoble any language. Let it issue from the lips of the Wolofs, or from the forum of Rome, the nine Muses will seem to have been purveyors for it. Its education is always liberal; it has all the graces of oratory and of poetry. The lofty tone which is its indispensable breath is grace to the eye and music to the ear. It can endow a college.

So supremely religious a book imposes with authority on the latest age. The very simplicity of style of the ancient lawgiver, implying all in the omission of all, proves an habitual elevation of thought, which the multiplied glosses of later days strive in vain to slope up to. The whole book by noble gestures and inclinations seems to render words unnecessary. The abbreviated sentence points to the thing for explanation. As the sublimest thought is most faithfully printed in the face, and needs the fewest interpreting words. The page nods toward the fact and is silent.

As I walk across the yard from the bam to the house through the fog, with a lamp in my hand, I am reminded of the Merrimack nights, and seem to see the sod between tent-ropes. The trees, seen dimly through the mist, suggest things which do not at all belong to the past, but are peculiar to my fresh New England life. It is as novel as green peas. The dew hangs everywhere upon the grass, and I breathe the rich, damp air in slices.

Aug. 7. Saturday. The impression which those sublime sentences made on me last night has awakened me before any cockcrowing. Their influence lingers around me like a fragrance, or as the fog hangs over the earth late into the day.

The very locusts and crickets of a summer day are but later or older glosses on the Dherma Sâstra of the Hindoos, a continuation of the sacred code.

Aug. 9. It is vain to try to write unless you feel strong in the knees. Any book of great authority and genius seems to our imagination

to permeate and pervade all space. Its spirit, like a more subtle ether, sweeps along with the prevailing winds of the country. Its influence conveys a new gloss to the meadows and the depths of the wood, and bathes the huckleberries on the hills, as sometimes a new influence in the sky washes in waves over the fields and seems to break on some invisible beach in the air. All things confirm it. It spends the mornings and the evenings.

Everywhere the speech of Menu demands the widest apprehension and proceeds from the loftiest plateau of the soul. It is spoken unbendingly to its own level, and does not imply any contemporaneous speaker.

I read history as little critically as I consider the landscape, and am more interested in the atmospheric tints and various lights and shades which the intervening spaces create than in its groundwork and composition. It is the morning now turned evening and seen in the west, — the same sun, but a new light and atmosphere. Its beauty is like the sunset; not a fresco painting on a wall, flat and bounded, but atmospheric and roving, or free. But, in reality, history fluctuates as the face of the landscape from morning to evening. What is of moment in it is its hue and color. Time hides no treasures; we want not its *then,* but its *now*. We do not complain that the mountains in the horizon are blue and indistinct; they are the more like the heavens.

Of what moment are facts that can be lost, — which need to be commemorated? The monument of death will outlast the memory of the dead. The Pyramids do not tell the tale confided to them. The living fact commemorates itself. Why look in the dark for light? Look in the light rather. Strictly speaking, the Societies have not recovered one fact from oblivion, but they themselves are instead of the fact that is lost. The researcher is more memorable than the researched. The crowd stood admiring the mist and the dim outline of the trees seen through it, and when one of their number advanced to explore the phenomenon, with fresh admiration all eyes were turned on his dimly retreating figure. Critical acumen is exerted in vain to uncover the past; the *past* cannot be *presented;* we cannot know what we are not. But one veil hangs over past, present, and

future, and it is the province of the historian to find out, not what was, but what is. Where a battle has been fought, you will find nothing but the bones of men and beasts; where a battle is being fought, there are hearts beating. We will sit on a mound and muse, and not try to make these skeletons stand on their legs again. Does Nature remember, think you, that they *were* men, or not rather that they *are* bones?

Ancient history has an air of antiquity. It should be more modern. It is written as if the spectator should be thinking of the back side of the picture on the wall, as if the author expected the dead would be his readers, and wished to detail to them their own experience. Men seem anxious to accomplish an orderly retreat through the centuries, earnestly rebuilding the works behind, as they are battered down by the incroachments of time; but while they loiter, they and their works both fall a prey to the enemy.

Biography is liable to the same objection; it should be autobiography. Let us not leave ourselves empty that, so vexing our bowels, we may go abroad and be somebody else to explain him. If I am not I, who will be? As if it were to dispense justice to all. But the time has not come for that.

Aug. 12. We take pleasure in beholding the form of a mountain in the horizon, as if by retiring to this distance we had then first conquered it by our vision, and were made privy to the design of the architect; so when we behold the shadow of our earth on the moon's disk. When we climb a mountain and observe the lesser irregularities, we do not give credit to the comprehensive and general intelligence which shaped them; but when we see the outline in the horizon, we confess that the hand which moulded those opposite slopes, making one balance the other, worked round a deep centre, and was privy to the plan of the universe. The smallest of nature's works fits the farthest and widest view, as if it had been referred in its bearings to every point in space. It harmonizes with the horizon line and the orbits of the planets.

Aug. 13. *Friday.* I have been in the swamp by Charles Miles's this afternoon, and found it so bosky and sylvan that Art would never

have freedom or courage to imitate it. It can never match the luxury and superfluity of Nature. In Art all is seen; she cannot afford concealed wealth, and in consequence is niggardly; but Nature, even when she is scant and thin outwardly, contents us still by the assurance of a certain generosity at the roots. Surely no stinted hand has been at work here for these centuries to produce these particular tints this summer. The double spruce attracts me here, which I had hardly noticed in the gardens, and now I understand why men try to make them grow about their houses.

Nature has her luxurious and florid style as well as Art. Having a pilgrim's cup to make, she gives to the whole — stem, bowl, handle, and nose — some fantastic shape, as if it were to be the car of a fabulous marine deity, — a Nereus or Triton. She is mythical and mystical always, and spends her whole genius upon the least work.

Aug. 16. There is a double virtue in the sound that can wake an echo, as in the lowing of the cows this morning. Far out in the horizon that sound travels quite round the town, and invades each recess of the wood, advancing at a grand pace and with a sounding Eastern pomp.

Aug. 18. I sailed on the North River last night with my flute, and my music was a tinkling stream which meandered with the river, and fell from note to note as a brook from rock to rock. I did not hear the strains after they had issued from the flute, but before they were breathed into it, for the original strain precedes the sound by as much as the echo follows after, and the rest is the perquisite of the rocks and trees and beasts. Unpremeditated music is the true gauge which measures the current of our thoughts, the very undertow of our life's stream.

Of all the duties of life it is hardest to be in earnest; it implies a good deal both before and behind. I sit here in the bam this flowing afternoon weather, while the school bell is ringing in the village, and find that all the things immediate to be done are very trivial. I could postpone them to hear this locust sing. The cockerels crow and the hens cluck in the yard as if time were dog-cheap. It seems something worth detaining time, — the laying of an egg. Cannot man do

something to comfort the gods, and not let the world prove such a piddling concern? No doubt they would be glad to sell their shares at a large discount by this time. Eastern Railroad stock promises a better dividend.

The best poets, after all, exhibit only a tame and civil side of nature. They have not seen the west side of any mountain.

Day and night, mountain and wood, are visible from the wilderness as well as the village. They have their primeval aspects, sterner, savager than any poet has sung. It is only the white man's poetry. We want the Indian's report. Wordsworth is too tame for the Chippeway.

The landscape contains a thousand dials which indicate the natural divisions of time; the shadows of a thousand styles point to the hour. The afternoon is now far advanced, and a fresh and leisurely wind is blowing on the river, causing long reaches of serene ripples. It has done its stent, and seems not to flow but lie at its length reflecting the light. The haze over the woods seems like the breath of all nature, rising from a myriad pores into the attenuated atmosphere. It is sun smoke, the woof he has woven, his day's toil displayed.

If I were awaked from a deep sleep, I should know which side the meridian the sun might be by the chirping of the crickets. Night has already insidiously set her foot in the valley in many places, where the shadows of the shrubs and fences begin to darken the landscape. There is a deeper shading in the colors of the afternoon landscape. Perhaps the forenoon is brighter than the afternoon, not only because of the greater transparency of the atmosphere then, but because we naturally look most into the west, — as we look forward into the day, — and so in the forenoon see the sunny side of things, but in the afternoon the shadow of every tree.

What a drama of light and shadow from morning to night! Soon as the sun is over the meridian, in deep ravines under the east side of the cliffs night forwardly plants her foot, and, as day retreats, steps into his trenches, till at length she sits in his citadel. For long time she skulks behind the needles of the pine, before she dares draw out her forces into the plain. Sun, moon, wind, and stars are the allies of

one side or the other.

How much will some officious men give to preserve an old book, of which perchance only a single [copy] exists, while a wise God is already giving, and will still give, infinitely more to get it destroyed!

Aug. 20. *Friday.* It seems as if no cock lived so far in the horizon but a faint vibration reached me here, spread the wider over earth as the more distant.

In the morning the crickets snore, in the afternoon they chirp, at midnight they dream.

Aug. 24. Let us wander where we will, the universe is built round about us, and we are central still. By reason of this, if we look into the heavens, they are concave, and if we were to look into a gulf as bottomless, it would be concave also. The sky is curved downward to the earth in the horizon, because I stand in the plain. I draw down its skirts. The stars so low there seem loth to go away from me, but by a circuitous path to be remembering and returning to me.

Aug. 28. *Saturday*. A great poet will write for his peers alone, and indite no line to an inferior. He will remember only that he saw truth and beauty from his position, and calmly expect the time when a vision as broad shall overlook the same field as freely.

Johnson can no more criticise Milton than the naked eye can criticise Herschel's map of the sun.

The art which only gilds the surface and demands merely a superficial polish, without reaching to the core, is but varnish and filigree. But the work of genius is rough-hewn from the first, because it anticipates the lapse of time and has an ingrained polish, which still appears when fragments are broken off, an essential quality of its substance. Its beauty is its strength. It breaks with a lustre, and splits in cubes and diamonds. Like the diamond, it has only to be cut to be polished, and its surface is a window to its interior splendors.

True verses are not counted on the poet's fingers, but on his heart-strings.

My life hath been the poem I would have writ, But I could not

both live and live to utter it.

In the Hindoo scripture the idea of man is quite illimitable and sublime. There is nowhere a loftier conception of his destiny. He is at length lost in Brahma himself, "the divine male." Indeed, the distinction of races in this life is only the commencement of a series of degrees which ends in Brahma.

The veneration in which the Vedas are held is itself a remarkable fact. Their code embraced the whole moral life of the Hindoo, and in such a case there is no other truth than sincerity. Truth is such by reference to the heart of man within, not to any standard without. There is no creed so false but faith can make it true.

In inquiring into the origin and genuineness of this scripture it is impossible to tell when the divine agency in its composition ceased, and the human began. "From fire, from air, and from the sun" was it "milked out."

There is no grander conception of creation anywhere. It is peaceful as a dream, and so is the annihilation of the world. It is such a beginning and ending as the morning and evening, for they had learned that God's methods are not violent. It was such an awakening as might have been heralded by the faint dreaming chirp of the crickets before the dawn.

The very indistinctness of its theogony implies a sublime truth. It does not allow the reader to rest in any supreme first cause, but directly hints of a supremer still which created the last. The creator is still behind, increate. The divinity is so fleeting that its attributes are never expressed.

Aug. 30. What is a day, if the day's work be not done? What are the divisions of time to them who have nothing to do? What is the present or the future to him who has no occasion for them, who does not create them by his industry?

It is now easy to apply to this ancient scripture such a catholic criticism as it will become the part of some future age to apply to the Christian, — wherein the design and idea which underlies it is considered, and not the narrow and partial fulfillment.

These verses are so eminently textual, that it seems as if those old

sages had concentrated all their wisdom in little fascicles, of which future times were to be the commentary; as the light of this lower world is only the dissipated rays of the sun and stars. They seem to have been uttered with a sober morning prescience, in the dawn of time. There is a sort of holding back, or withdrawal of the full meaning, that the ages may follow after and explore the whole. The sentence opens unexpensively and almost unmeaningly, as the petals of a flower.

To our nearsightedness this mere outward life seems a constituent part of us, and we do not realize that as our soul expands it will cast off the shell of routine and convention, which afterward will only be an object for the cabinets of the curious. But of this people the temples are now crumbled away, and we are introduced to the very hearth of Hindoo life and to the primeval conventicle where how to eat and to drink and to sleep were the questions to be decided.

The simple life herein described confers on us a degree of freedom even in the perusal. We throw down our packs and go on our way unencumbered. Wants so easily and gracefully satisfied that they seem like a more refined pleasure and repleteness.

Sept. 1. *Wednesday.* When I observe the effeminate taste of some of my contemporaries in this matter of poetry, and how hardly they bear with certain incongruities, I think if this age were consulted it would not choose granite to be the backbone of the world, but Bristol spar or Brazilian diamonds. But the verses which have consulted the refinements even of a golden age will be found weak and nerveless for an iron one.

The poet is always such a Cincinnatus in literature as with republican simplicity to raise all to the chiefest honors of the state.

Each generation thinks to inhabit only a west end of the world, and have intercourse with a refined and civilized Nature, not conceiving of her broad equality and republicanism. They think her aristocratic and exclusive because their own estates are narrow. But the sun indifferently selects his rhymes, and with a liberal taste weaves into his verse the planet and the stubble.

Let us know and conform only to the fashions of eternity.

The very austerity of these Hindoos is tempting to the devotional as a more refined and nobler luxury. They seem to have indulged themselves with a certain moderation and temperance in the severities which their code requires, as divine exercises not to be excessively used as yet. One may discover the root of a Hindoo religion in his own private history, when, in the silent intervals of the day or the night, he does sometimes inflict on himself like austerities with a stem satisfaction.

The "Laws of Menu" are a manual of private devotion, so private and domestic and yet so public and universal a word as is not spoken in the parlor or pulpit in these days. It is so impersonal that it exercises our sincerity more than any other. It goes with us into the yard and into the chamber, and is yet later spoken than the advice of our mother and sisters.

Sept. 2. *Thursday.* There is but one obligation, and that is the obligation to obey the highest dictate. None can lay me under another which will supersede this. The gods have given me these years without any incumbrance; society has no mortgage on them. If any man assist me in the way of the world, let him derive satisfaction from the deed itself, for I think I never shall have dissolved my prior obligations to God. Kindness repaid is thereby annulled. I would let his deed lie as fair and generous as it was intended. The truly beneficent never relapses into a creditor; his great kindness is still extended to me and is never done. Of those noble deeds which have me for their object I am only the most fortunate spectator, and would rather be the abettor of their nobleness than stay their tide with the obstructions of impatient gratitude. As true as action and reaction are equal, that nobleness which was as wide as the universe will rebound not on him the individual, but on the world. If any have been kind to me, what more do they want? I cannot make them richer than they are. If they have not been kind, they cannot take from me the privilege which they have not improved. My obligations will be my lightest load, for that gratitude which is of kindred stuff in me, expanding every pore, will easily sustain the pressure. We walk the freest through the air we breathe.

The sublime sentences of Menu carry us back to a time when

purification and sacrifice and self-devotion had a place in the faith of men, and were not as now a superstition. They contain a subtle and refined philosophy also, such as in these times is not accompanied with so lofty and pure a devotion.

I saw a green meadow in the midst of the woods to-day which looked as if Dame Nature had set her foot there, and it had bloomed in consequence. It was the print of her moccasin.

Sometimes my thought rustles in midsummer as if ripe for the fall. I anticipate the russet hues and the dry scent of autumn, as the feverish man dreams of balm and sage.

I was informed to-day that no Hindoo tyranny presided at the framing of the world, — that I am a freeman of the universe, and not sentenced to any caste.

When I write verses I serve my thoughts as I do tumblers; I rap them to see if they will ring.

Sept. 3. *Friday.* Next to Nature, it seems as if man's actions were the most natural, they so gently accord with her. The small seines of flax or hemp stretched across the shallow and transparent parts of the river are no more intrusion than the cobweb in the sun. It is very slight and refined outrage at most. I stay my boat in mid-current and look down in the running water to see the civil meshes of his nets, and wonder how the blustering people of the town could have done this elvish work. The twine looks like a new river-weed and is to the river like a beautiful memento of man, man's presence in nature discovered as silently and delicately as Robinson discovered that there [were] savages on his island by a footprint in the sand.

Moonlight is the best restorer of antiquity. The houses in the village have a classical elegance as of the best days of Greece, and this half-finished church reminds me of the Parthenon, or whatever is most famous and excellent in art. So serene it stands, reflecting the moon, and intercepting the stars with its rafters, as if it were refreshed by the dews of the night equally with me. By day Mr. Hosmer, but by night Vitruvius rather. If it were always to stand in this mild and sombre light it would be finished already. It is in progress by day but completed by night, and already its designer is

an old master. The projecting rafter so carelessly left on the tower, holding its single way through the sky, is quite architectural, and in the unnecessary length of the joists and flooring of the staging around the walls there is an artistic superfluity and grace. In these fantastic lines described upon the sky there is no trifling or conceit. Indeed, the staging for the most part is the only genuine native architecture and deserves to stand longer than the building it surrounds. In this obscurity there are no fresh colors to offend, and the light and shade of evening adorn the new equally with the old.

Sept. 4. *Saturday.* I think I could write a poem to be called "Concord." For argument I should have the River, the Woods, the Ponds, the Hills, the Fields, the Swamps and Meadows, the Streets and Buildings, and the Villagers. Then Morning, Noon, and Evening, Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, Night, Indian Summer, and the Mountains in the Horizon.

A book should be so true as to be intimate and familiar to all men, as the sun to their faces, — such a word as is occasionally uttered to a companion in the woods in summer, and both are silent.

As I pass along the streets of the village on the day of our annual fair, when the leaves strew the ground, I see how the trees keep just such a holiday all the year. The lively spirits of their sap mount higher than any plowboy's let loose that day. A walk in the autumn woods, when, with serene courage, they are preparing for their winter campaign, if you have an ear for the rustling of their camp or an eye for the glancing of their armor, is more inspiring than the Greek or Peninsular war. Any grandeur may find society as great as itself in the forest.

Pond Hill. — I see yonder some men in a boat, which floats buoyantly amid the reflections of the trees, like a feather poised in mid-air, or a leaf wafted gently from its twig to the water without turning over. They seem very delicately to have availed themselves of the natural laws, and their floating there looks like a beautiful and suc' cessful experiment in philosophy. It reminds me how much more refined and noble the life of man might be made, how its whole economy might be as beautiful as a Tuscan villa, — a new and more catholic art, the art of life, which should have its impassioned

devotees end make the schools of Greece and Rome to be deserted.

Sept. 5. Saturday. Bam.

Greater is the depth of sadness
Than is any height of gladness.

I cannot read much of the best poetry in prose or verse without feeling that it is a partial and exaggerated plaint, rarely a carol as free as Nature's. That content which the sun shines for between morning and evening is unsung. The Muse solaces herself; she is not delighted but consoled. But there are times when we feel a vigor in our limbs, and our thoughts are like a flowing morning light, and the stream of our life without reflection shows long reaches of serene ripples. And if we were to sing at such an hour, there would be no catastrophe contemplated in our verse, no tragic element in it, nor yet a comic. For the life of the gods is not in any sense dramatic, nor can be the subject of the drama; it is epic without beginning or end, an eternal interlude without plot, — not subordinate one part to another, but supreme as a whole, at once leaf and flower and fruit. At present the highest strain is Hebraic. The church bell is the tone of all religious thought, the most musical that men consent to sing. In the youth of poetry, men love to praise the lark and the morning, but they soon forsake the dews and skies for the nightingale and evening shades. Without instituting a wider comparison I might say that in Homer there is more of the innocence and serenity of youth than in the more modern and moral poets. The Iliad is not Sabbath but morning reading, and men cling to this old song, because they have still moments of unbaptized and uncommitted life which give them an appetite for more. There is no cant in him, as there is no religion. We read him with a rare sense of freedom and irresponsibleness, as though we trod on native ground, and were autochthones of the soil.

Through the fogs of this distant vale we look back and upward to the source of song, whose crystal stream still ripples and gleams in the clear atmosphere of the mountain's side.

Some hours seem not to be occasion for anything, unless for great

resolves to draw breath and repose in, so religiously do we postpone all action therein. We do not straight go about to execute our thrilling purpose, but shut our doors behind us, and saunter with prepared mind, as if the half were already done.

Sometimes a day serves only to hold time together.

Sept. 12. *Sunday.*

Where I have been There was none seen.

Sept. 14. No bravery is to be named with that which can face its own deeds.

In religion there is no society.

Do not dissect a man till he is dead.

Love does not analyze its object.

We do not know the number of muscles in a caterpillar dead; much less the faculties of a man living.

You must believe that I know before you can tell me.

To the highest communication I can make no reply; I lend only a silent ear.

Sept. 18. *Saturday.* Barn. — It is a great event, the hearing of a bell ring in one of the neighboring towns, particularly in the night. It excites in me an unusual hilarity, and I feel that I am in season wholly and enjoy a prime and leisure hour.

Sept. 20. *Monday.* Visited Sampson Wilder of Boston. His method of setting out peach trees is as follows: —

Dig a hole six feet square and two deep, and remove the earth; cover the bottom to the depth of six inches with lime and ashes in equal proportions, and upon this spread another layer of equal

thickness, of horn parings, tips of horns, bones, and the like, then fill up with a compost of sod and strong animal manure, say four bushels of hog manure to a cartload of sod. Cover the tree — which should be budded at two years old — but slightly, and at the end of two years dig a trench round it three feet from the tree and six inches deep, and fill it with lime and ashes.

For grapes: —

Let your trench be twelve feet wide and four deep, cover the bottom with paving-stones six inches, then old bricks with mortar attached or loose six inches more, then beef-bones, horns, etc., six more (Captain Bobadil), then a compost similar to the preceding. Set your roots one foot from the north side, the trench running east and west, and bury eight feet of the vine crosswise the trench, not more than eight inches below the surface. Cut it down for three or four years, that root may accumulate, and then train it from the sun up an inclined plane.

Sept. 28. *Tuesday.* I anticipate the coming in of spring as a child does the approach of some pomp through a gate of the city.

Sept. 30.
Better wait
Than be too late.

Nov. 29. Cambridge. — One must fight his way, after a fashion, even in the most civil and polite society. The most truly kind and gracious have to be won by a sort of valor, for the seeds of suspicion seem to lurk in every spadeful of earth, as well as those of confidence. The president and librarian turn the cold shoulder to your application, though they are known for benevolent persons. They wonder if you can be anything but a thief, contemplating frauds on the library. It is the instinctive and salutary principle of self-defense; that which makes the cat show her talons when you take her by the paw.

Certainly that valor which can open the hearts of men is superior to that which can only open the gates of cities.

You must always let people see that they serve themselves more

than you, — not by your ingratitude, but by sympathy and congratulation.

The twenty-first volume of Chalmers's English Poets contains Hoole's and Mickle's Translations. In the shape of a note to the Seventh Book of the Lusiad, Mickle has written a long "Inquiry into the Religious Tenets and Philosophy of the Bramins."

Nov. 30. *Tuesday.* Cambridge. — When looking over the dry and dusty volumes of the English poets, I cannot believe that those fresh and fair creations I had imagined are contained in them. English poetry from Gower down, collected into one alcove, and so from the library window compared with the commonest nature, seems very mean. Poetry cannot breathe in the scholar's atmosphere. The Aubreys and Hickeses, with all their learning, prophane it yet indirectly by their zeal. You need not envy his feelings who for the first time has cornered up poetry in an alcove. I can hardly be serious with myself when I remember that I have come to Cambridge after poetry; and while I am running over the catalogue and collating and selecting, I think if it would not be a shorter way to a complete volume to step at once into the field or wood, with a very low reverence to students and librarians. Milton did not foresee what company he was to fall into. On running over the titles of these books, looking from time to time at their first pages or farther, I am oppressed by an inevitable sadness. One must have come into alibrary by an oriel window, as softly and undisturbed as the light which falls on the books through a stained window, and not by the librarian's door, else all his dreams will vanish. Can the Valhalla be warmed by steam and go by clock and bell?

Good poetry seems so simple and natural a thing that when we meet it we wonder that all men are not always poets. Poetry is nothing but healthy speech. Though the speech of the poet goes to the heart of things, yet he is that one especially who speaks civilly to Nature as a second person and in some sense is the patron of the world. Though more than any he stands in the midst of Nature, yet more than any he can stand aloof from her. The best lines, perhaps, only suggest to me that that man simply saw or heard or felt what seems the commonest fact in my experience.

One will know how to appreciate Chaucer best who has come down to him the natural way through the very meagre pastures of Saxon and ante-Chaucerian poetry. So human and wise he seems after such diet that we are as liable to misjudge him so as usually.

The Saxon poetry extant seems of a more serious and philosophical cast than the very earliest that can be called English. It has more thought, but less music. It translates Boethius, it paraphrases the Hebrew Bible, it solemnly sings of war, of life and death, and chronicles events. The earliest English poetry is tinctured with romance through the influence of the Normans, as the Saxon was not. The ballad and metrical romance belong to this period. Those old singers were for the most part imitators or translators. Or will it not appear, when viewed at a sufficient distance, that our brave new poets are also secondary as they, and refer the eye that reads them and their poetry, too, back and backward without end?

Nothing is so attractive and unceasingly curious as character. There is no plant that needs such tender treatment, there is none that will endure so rough. It is the violet and the oak. It is the thing we mean, let us say what we will. We mean our own character, or we mean yours. It is divine and related to the heavens, as the earth is by the flashes of the Aurora. It has no acquaintance nor companion. It goes silent and unobserved longer than any planet in space, but when at length it does show itself, it seems like the flowering of all the world, and its before unseen orbit is lit up like the trail of a meteor. I hear no good news ever but some trait of a noble character. It reproaches me plaintively. I am mean in contrast, but again am thrilled and elevated that I can see my own meanness, and again still, that my own aspiration is realized in that other. You reach me, my friend, not by your kind or wise words to me here or there; but as you retreat, perhaps after years of vain familiarity, some gesture or unconscious action in the distance speaks to me with more emphasis than all those years. I am not concerned to know what eighth planet is wandering in space up there, or when Venus or Orion rises, but if, in any cot to east or west and set behind the woods, there is any planetary character illuminating the earth.

Packed in my mind lie all the clothes
Which outward nature wears,
For, as its hourly fashions change,
It all things else repairs.

My eyes look inward, not without,
And I but hear myself,
And this new wealth which I have got
Is part of my own pelf.

For while I look for change abroad,
I can no difference find,
Till some new ray of peace uncalled
Lumines my inmost mind,

As, when the sun streams through the wood,
Upon a winter's mom,
Where'er his silent beams may stray
The murky night is gone.

How could the patient pine have known
The morning breeze would come,
Or simple flowers anticipate
The insect's noonday hum,

Till that new light with morning çheer
From far streamed through the aisles,
And nimbly told the forest trees
For many stretching miles?

[Dec.] 12. Sunday. All music is only a sweet striving to express character. Now that lately I have heard of some traits in the character of a fair and earnest maiden whom I had only known superficially, but who has gone hence to make herself more known by distance, they sound like strains of a wild harp music. They make all persons and places who had thus forgotten her to seem late and behindhand. Every maiden conceals a fairer flower and more luscious fruit than

any calyx in the field, and if she go with averted face, confiding in her own purity and high resolves, she will make the heavens retrospective, and all nature will humbly confess its queen.

There is apology enough for all the deficiency and shortcoming in the world in the patient waiting of any bud of character to unfold itself.

Only character can command our reverent love. It is all mysteries in itself.

What is it gilds the trees and clouds
And paints the heavens so gay,
But yonder fast-abiding light
With its unchanging ray?

I've felt within my inmost soul
Such cheerful morning news,
In the horizon of my mind
I've seen such morning hues,

As in the twilight of the dawn,
When the first birds awake,
Is heard within some silent wood
Where they the small twigs break;

Or in the eastern skies is seen
Before the sun appears,
Foretelling of the summer heats
Which far away he bears.

P. M. Walden. — I seem to discern the very form of the wind when, blowing over the hills, it falls in broad flakes upon the surface of the pond, this subtle element obeying the same law with the least subtle. As it falls it spreads itself like a mass of lead dropped upon an anvil. I cannot help being encouraged by this blithe activity in the elements in these degenerate days of men. Who hears the rippling of the rivers will not utterly despair of anything. The wind in the wood yonder sounds like an incessant waterfall, the water dashing and

roaring among rocks.

[*Dec.*] 13. *Monday.* We constantly anticipate repose. Yet it surely can only be the repose that is in entire and healthy activity. It must be a repose without rust. What is leisure but opportunity for more complete and entire action? Our energies pine for exercise. That time we spend in our duties is so much leisure, so that there is no man but has sufficient of it.

I make my own time, I make my own terms. I cannot see how God or Nature can ever get the start of me.

This ancient Scotch poetry, at which its contemporaries so marvelled, sounds like the uncertain lisping of a child. When man's speech flows freest it but stutters and stammers. There is never a free and clear deliverance; but, read now when the illusion of smooth verse is destroyed by the antique spelling, the sense is seen to stammer and stumble all the plainer. To how few thoughts do all these sincere efforts give utterance! An hour's conversation with these men would have done more. I am astonished to find how meagre that diet is which has fed so many men. The music of sound, which is all-sufficient at first, is speedily lost, and then the fame of the poet must rest on the music of the sense. A great philosophical and moral poet would give permanence to the language by making the best sound convey the best sense.

[Dec.] 14. *Tuesday.* To hear the sunset described by the old Scotch poet Douglas, as I have seen it, repays me for many weary pages of antiquated Scotch. Nothing so restores and humanizes antiquity and makes it blithe as the discovery of some natural sympathy between it and the present. Why is it that there is something melancholy in antiquity? We forget that it had any other future than our present. As if it were not as near to *the* future as ourselves! No, thank heavens, these ranks of men to right and left, posterity and ancestry, are not to be thridded by any earnest mortal. The heavens stood over the heads of our ancestors as near as to us. Any living word in their books abolishes the difference of time. It need only be considered from the present standpoint.

[Dec.] 15. *Wednesday.* A mild summer sun shines over forest and lake. The earth looks as fair this morning as the Valhalla of the gods.

Indeed our spirits never go beyond nature. In the woods there is an inexpressible happiness. Their mirth is but just repressed. In winter, when there is but one green leaf for many rods, what warm content is in them! They are not rude, but tender, even in the severest cold. Their nakedness is their defense. All their sounds and sights are elixir to my spirit. They possess a divine health. God is not more well. Every sound is inspiriting and fraught with the same mysterious assurance, from the creaking of the boughs in January to the soft sough of the wind in July.

How much of my well-being, think you, depends on the condition of my lungs and stomach, — such cheap pieces of Nature as they, which, indeed, she is every day reproducing with prodigality. Is the arrow indeed fatal which rankles in the breast of the bird on the bough, in whose eye all this fair landscape is reflected, and whose voice still echoes through the wood?

The trees have come down to the bank to see the river go by. This old, familiar river is renewed each instant; only the channel is the same. The water which so calmly reflects the fleeting clouds and the primeval trees I have never seen before. It may have washed some distant shore, or framed a glacier or iceberg at the north, when I last stood here. Seen through a mild atmosphere, the works of the husbandman, his plowing and reaping, have a beauty to the beholder which the laborer never sees.

I seem to see somewhat more of my own kith and kin in the lichens on the rocks than in any books. It does seem as if mine were a peculiarly wild nature, which so yearns toward all wildness. I know of no redeeming qualities in me but a sincere love for some things, and when I am reproved I have to fall back on to this ground. This is my argument in reserve for all cases. My love is invulnerable. Meet me on that ground, and you will find me strong. When I am condemned, and condemn myself utterly, I think straightway, “But I rely on my love for some things.” Therein I am whole and entire. Therein I am God-propped.

When I see the smoke curling up through the woods from some farmhouse invisible, it is more suggestive of the poetry of rural and domestic life than a nearer inspection can be. Up goes the smoke as quietly as the dew exhales in vapor from these pine leaves and oaks;

as busy, disposing itself in circles and in wreaths, as the housewife on the hearth below. It is cotemporary with a piece of human biography, and waves as a feather in some *man's* cap. Under that rod of sky there is some plot a-brewing, some ingenuity has planted itself, and we shall see what it will do. It tattles of more things than the boiling of the pot. It is but one of man's breaths. All that is interesting in history or fiction is transpiring beneath that cloud. The subject of all life and death, of happiness and grief, goes thereunder.

When the traveller in the forest, attaining to some eminence, descries a column of smoke in the distance, it is a very gentle hint to him of the presence of man. It seems as if it would establish friendly relations between them without more ado.

[Dec.] 18. *Saturday.* Some men make their due impression upon their generation, because a petty occasion is enough to call forth all their energies; but are there not others who would rise to much higher levels, whom the world has never provoked to make the effort? I believe there are men now living who have never opened their mouths in a public assembly, in whom nevertheless there is such a well of eloquence that the appetite of any age could never exhaust it; who pine for an occasion worthy of them, and will pine till they are dead; who can admire, as well as the rest, at the flowing speech of the orator, but do yet miss the thunder and lightning and visible sympathy of the elements which would garnish their own utterance.

If in any strait I see a man fluttered and his ballast gone, then I lose all hope of him, he is undone; but if he reposes still, though he do nothing else worthy of him, if he is still a man in reserve, then is there everything to hope of him. The age may well go pine itself that it cannot put to use this gift of the gods. He lives on, still unconcerned, not needing to be used. The greatest occasion will be the slowest to come.

Sometimes a particular body of men do unconsciously assert that their will is fate, that the right is decided by their fiat without appeal, and when this is the case they can never be mistaken; as when one man is quite silenced by the thrilling eloquence of another, and submits to be neglected as to his fate, because such is not the willful

vote of the assembly, but their instinctive decision.

Dec. 23. Thursday. Concord. — The best man's spirit makes a fearful sprite to haunt his tomb. The ghost of a priest is no better than that of a highwayman. It is pleasant to hear of one who has blest whole regions after his death by having frequented them while alive, who has prophaned or tabooed no place by being buried in it. It adds not a little to the fame of Little John that his grave was long "celebrous for the yielding of excellent whetstones."

A forest is in all mythologies a sacred place, as the oaks among the Druids and the grove of Egeria; and even in more familiar and common life a celebrated wood is spoken of with respect, as "Barnsdale Wood" and "Sherwood." Had Robin Hood no Sherwood to resort [to], it would be difficult to invest his story with the charms it has got. It is always the tale that is untold, the deeds done and the life lived in the unexplored secrecy of the wood, that charm us and make us children again, — to read his ballads, and hear of the greenwood tree.

Dec. 24. Friday. I want to go soon and live away by the pond, where I shall hear only the wind whispering among the reeds. It will be success if I shall have left myself behind. But my friends ask what I will do when I get there. Will it not be employment enough to watch the progress of the seasons?

Dec. 25. Saturday. It does seem as if Nature did for a long time gently overlook the prophanity of man. The wood still kindly echoes the strokes of the axe, and when the strokes are few and seldom, they add a new charm to a walk. All the elements strive to *naturalize* the sound.

Such is our sympathy with the seasons that we experience the same degree of heat in the winter as in the summer.

It is not a true apology for any coarseness to say that it is natural. The grim woods can afford to be very delicate and perfect in the details.

I don't want to feel as if my life were a sojourn any longer. That philosophy cannot be true which so paints it. It is time now that I

begin to live.

Dec. 26. Sunday. He is the rich man and enjoys the fruits of riches, who, summer and winter forever, can find delight in the contemplation of his soul. I could look as unweariedly up to that cope as into the heavens of a summer day or a winter night. When I hear this bell ring, I am carried back to years and Sabbaths when I was newer and more innocent, I fear, than now, and it seems to me as if there were a world within a world. Sin, I am sure, is not in overt acts or, indeed, in acts of any kind, but is in proportion to the time which has come behind us and displaced eternity, — that degree to which our elements are mixed with the elements of the world. The whole duty of life is contained in the question how to respire and aspire both at once.

Dec. 29. *Wednesday.* One does not soon learn the trade of life. That one may work out a true life requires more art and delicate skill than any other work. There is need of the nice fingers of the girl as well as the tough hand of the farmer. The daily work is too often toughening the pericarp of the heart as well as the hand. Great familiarity with the world must be nicely managed, lest it win away and bereave us of some susceptibility. Experience bereaves us of our innocence; wisdom bereaves us of our ignorance. Let us walk in the world without learning its ways. Whole weeks or months of my summer life slide away in thin volumes like mist or smoke, till at length some warm morning, perchance, I see a sheet of mist blown down the brook to the swamp, its shadow flitting across the fields, which have caught a new significance from that accident; and as that vapor is raised above the earth, so shall the next weeks be elevated above the plane of the actual; or when the setting sun slants across the pastures, and the cows low to my inward ear and only enhance the stillness, and the eve is as the dawn, a beginning hour and not a final one, as if it would never have done, with its clear western amber inciting men to lives of as limpid purity. Then do other parts of my day's work shine than I had thought at noon, for I discover the real purport of my toil, as, when the husbandman has reached the end of the furrow and looks back, he can best tell where the pressed earth

shines most.

All true greatness runs as level a course, and is as unaspiring, as the plow in the furrow. It wears the homeliest dress and speaks the homeliest language. Its theme is gossamer and dew lines, johnswort and loosestrife, for it has never stirred from its repose and is most ignorant of foreign parts. Heaven is the inmost place. The good have not to travel far. What cheer may we not derive from the thought that our courses do not diverge, and we wend not asunder, but as the web of destiny is woven it [is] fulled, and we are cast more and more into the centre! And our fates even are social. There is no wisdom which can take [the] place of humanity, and I find that in old Chaucer that love rings longest which rhymes best with some saw of Milton's or Edmunds's. I wish I could be as still as God is. I can recall to my mind the stillest summer hour, in which the grasshopper sings over the mulleins, and there is a valor in that time the memory of which is armor that can laugh at any blow of fortune. A man should go out [of] nature with the chirp of the cricket or the trill of the veery ringing in his ear. These earthly sounds should only die away for a season, as the strains of the harp rise and swell. Death is that expressive pause in the music of the blast. I would be as clean as ye, O woods. I shall not rest till I be as innocent as you. I know that I shall sooner or later attain to an unspotted innocence, for when I consider that state even now I am thrilled.

If we were wise enough, we should see to what virtue we were indebted for any happier moment we might have, nor doubt we had earned this at some time.

These motions everywhere in nature must surely [be] the circulations of God. The flowing sail, the running stream, the waving tree, the roving wind, — whence else their infinite health and freedom? I can see nothing so proper and holy as unrelaxed play and frolic in this bower God has built for us. The suspicion of sin never comes to this thought. Oh, if men felt this they would never build temples even of marble or diamond, but it would be sacrilege and prophane, but disport them forever in this paradise.

In the coldest day it melts somewhere.

It seems as if only one trait, one little incident in human

biography, need to be said or written in some era, that all readers may go mad after it, and the man who did the miracle is made a demigod henceforth.

What we all do, not one can tell; and when some lucky speaker utters a truth of our experience and not of our speculation, we think he must have had the nine Muses and the three Graces to help him. I can at length stretch me when I come to Chaucer's breadth; and I think, "Well, I could be *that* man's acquaintance," for he walked in that low and retired way that I do, and was not too good to live. I am grieved when they hint of any unmanly submissions he may have made, for that subtracts from his breadth and humanity.

Dec. 30. *Thursday.* I admire Chaucer for a sturdy English wit. The easy height he speaks from in his Prologue to the Canterbury Tales is as good as anything in it, — as if he were indeed better than any of the company there assembled.

The poet does not have to go out of himself and cease to tattle of his domestic affairs, to win our confidence, but is so broad that we see no limits to his sympathy.

Great delicacy and gentleness of character is constantly displayed in Chaucer's verse. The simplest and humblest words come readily to his lips. The natural innocence of the man appears in the simple and pure spirit in which "The Prioresses Tale" is conceived, in which the child sings *O alma redemptoris mater*, and in the account of the departure of Custance with her child upon the sea, in "The Man of Lawes Tale." The whole story of Chanticleer and Dame Partlet in "The Nonnes Preestes Tale" is genuine humanity. I know nothing better in its kind. The poets seem to be only more frank and plain-spoken than other men. Their verse is but confessions. They always confide in the reader, and speak privily with him, keeping nothing back.

I know of no safe rule by which to judge of the purity of a former age but that I see that the impure of the present age are not apt to rise to noble sentiments when they speak or write, and suspect, therefore, that there may be more truth than is allowed in the apology that such was the manner of the age.

Within the circuit of this plodding life,
There are moments of an azure hue
And as unspotted fair as is the violet
Or anemone, when the spring strews them
By some south woodside; which make untrue
The best philosophy which has so poor an aim
But to console man for his grievance here.
I have remembered when the winter came,
High in my chamber in the frosty nights,
How in the summer past some
Unrecorded beam slanted across
Some upland pasture where the Johnswort grew,
Or heard, amidst the verdure of my mind, the bee's long-smothered hum,
So by the cheap economy of God made rich to go upon my wintry work again.
In the still, cheerful cold of winter nights,
When, in the cold light of the moon,
On every twig and rail and jutting spout
The icy spears are doubling their length
Against the glancing arrows of the sun,
And the shrunk wheels creak along the way,
Some summer accident long past
Of lakelet gleaming in the July beams,
Or hum of bee under the blue flag,
Loitering in the meads, or busy rill which now stands dumb and still, its own memorial, purling at its play along the slopes, and through the meadows next, till that its sound was quenched in the staid current of its parent stream.
In memory is the more reality. I have seen how the furrows shone but late upturned, and where the fieldfare followed in the rear, when all the fields stood bound and hoar beneath a thick integument of snow.

When the snow is falling thick and fast, the flakes nearest you seem to be driving straight to the ground, while the more distant seem to float in the air in a quivering bank, like feathers, or like birds

at play, and not as if sent on any errand. So, at a little distance, all the works of Nature proceed with sport and frolic. They are more in the eye and less in the deed.

Dec. 31. *Friday.* Books of natural history make the most cheerful winter reading. I read in Audubon with a thrill of delight, when the snow covers the ground, of the magnolia, and the Florida keys, and their warm sea breezes; of the fence-rail, and the cotton-tree, and the migrations of the rice-bird; or of the breaking up of winter in Labrador. I seem to hear the melting of the snow on the forks of the Missouri as I read. I imbibe some portion of health from these reminiscences of luxuriant nature.

There is a singular health for me in those words Labrador and East Main which no desponding creed recognizes. How much more than federal are these States! If there were no other vicissitudes but the seasons, with their attendant and consequent changes, our interest would never flag. Much more is a-doing than Congress wots of in the winter season. What journal do the persimmon and buckeye keep, or the sharp-shinned hawk? What is transpiring from summer to winter in the Carolinas, and the Great Pine Forest, and the Valley of the Mohawk? The merely political aspect of the land is never very cheering. Men are degraded when considered as the members of a political organization. As a nation the people never utter one great and healthy word. From this side all nations present only the symptoms of disease. I see but Bunker's Hill and Sing Sing, the District of Columbia and Sullivan's Island, with a few avenues connecting them. But paltry are all these beside one blast of the east or south wind which blows over them all.

In society you will not find health, but in nature. You must converse much with the field and woods, if you would imbibe such health into your mind and spirit as you covet for your body. Society is always diseased, and the best is the sickest. There is no scent in it so wholesome as that of the pines, nor any fragrance so penetrating and restorative as that of everlasting in high pastures. Without that our feet at least stood in the midst of nature, all our faces would be pale and livid.

I should like to keep some book of natural history always by me

as a sort of elixir, the reading of which would restore the tone of my system and secure me true and cheerful views of life. For to the sick, nature is sick, but to the well, a fountain of health. To the soul that contemplates some trait of natural beauty no harm nor disappointment can come. The doctrines of despair, of spiritual or political servitude, no priestcraft nor tyranny, was ever [sic] taught by such as drank in the harmony of nature.

1842

Jan. 1. Virtue is the deed of the bravest. It is that art which demands the greatest confidence and fearlessness. Only some hardy soul ventures upon it. Virtue is a bravery so hardy that it deals in what it has no experience in. The virtuous soul possesses a fortitude and hardihood which not the grenadier nor pioneer can match. It never shrunk. It goes singing to its work. Effort is its relaxation. The rude pioneer work of this world has been done by the most devoted worshippers of beauty. Their resolution has possessed a keener edge than the soldier's. In winter is their campaign; they never go into quarters. They are elastic under the heaviest burden, under the extremest physical suffering.

Methinks good courage will not flag here on the Atlantic border as long as we are outflanked by the *Fur Countries.* There is enough in that sound to cheer one under any circumstances. The spruce, the hemlock, and the pine will not countenance despair. Methinks some creeds in vestries and churches do forget the hunter wrapped in furs by the Great Slave Lake, or how the Esquimaux sledges are drawn by dogs, and in the twilight of the northern night the hunter does not give over to follow the seal and walrus over the ice. These men are sick and of diseased imaginations who would toll the world's knell so soon. Cannot these sedentary sects do better than prepare the shrouds and write the epitaphs of those other busy living men? The practical faith of men belies the preacher's consolation. This is the creed of the hypochondriac.

There is no infidelity so great as that which prays, and keeps the Sabbath, and founds churches. The sealer of the South Pacific preaches a truer doctrine. The church is the hospital for men's souls, but the reflection that he may one day occupy a ward in it should not discourage the cheerful labors of the able-bodied man. Let him remember the sick in their extremities, but not look thither as to his goal.

Jan. 2. Sunday. The ringing of the church bell is a much more melodious sound than any that is heard within the church. All great

values are thus public, and undulate like sound through the atmosphere. Wealth cannot purchase any great private solace or convenience. Riches are only the means of sociality. I will depend on the extravagance of my neighbors for my luxuries, for they will take care to pamper me if I will be overfed. The poor man who sacrificed nothing for the gratification seems to derive a safer and more natural enjoyment from his neighbor's extravagance than he does himself. It is a new natural product, from the contemplation of which he derives new vigor and solace as from a natural phenomenon.

In moments of quiet and leisure my thoughts are more apt to revert to some natural than any human relation.

Chaucer's sincere sorrow in his latter days for the grossness of his earlier works, and that he "cannot recall and annul" what he had "written of the base and filthy love of men towards women; but alas they are now continued from man to man," says he, "and I cannot do what I desire," is all very creditable to his character.

Chaucer is the make-weight of his century, — a worthy representative of England while Petrarch and Boccaccio lived in Italy, and Tell and Tamerlane in Switzerland and Asia, and Bruce and Rienzi in Europe, and Wickliffe and Gower in his own land. Edward III and John of Gaunt and the Black Prince complete the company. The fame of Roger Bacon came down from the preceding century, and Dante, though just departed, still exerted the influence of a living presence.

With all his grossness he is not undistinguished for the tenderness and delicacy of his muse. A simple pathos and feminine gentleness is peculiar to him which not even Wordsworth can match. And then his best passages of length are marked by a happy and healthy wit which is rather rare in the poetry of any nation. On the whole, he impresses me as greater than his reputation, and not a little like Homer and Shakespeare, for he would have held up his head in their company. Among the earliest English poets he is their landlord and host, and has the authority of such. We read him with affection and without criticism, for he pleads no cause, but speaks for us, his readers, always. He has that greatness of trust and reliance which compels popularity. He is for a whole country and country [sic] to know and to be proud of. The affectionate mention which succeeding early

poets make of him, coupling him with Homer and Virgil, is also to be taken into the account in estimating his character. King James and Dunbar of Scotland speak with more love and reverence of him than any cotemporary poet of his predecessors of the last century. That childlike relation, indeed, does not seem to exist now which was then.

Jan. 3. *Monday.* It is pleasant when one can relieve the grossness of the kitchen and the table by the simple beauty of his repast, so that there may be anything in it to attract the eye of the artist even. I have been popping com to-night, which is only a more rapid blossoming of the seed under a greater than July heat. The popped com is a perfect winter flower, hinting of anemones and houstonias. For this little grace man has, mixed in with the vulgarness of his repast, he may well thank his stars. The law by which flowers unfold their petals seems only to have operated more suddenly under the intense heat. It looks like a sympathy in this seed of the com with its sisters of the vegetable kingdom, as if by preference it assumed the flower form rather than the crystalline. Here has bloomed for my repast such a delicate blossom as will soon spring by the wall-sides. And this is as it should be. Why should not Nature revel sometimes, and genially relax and make herself familiar at my board? I would have my house a bower fit to entertain her. It is a feast of such innocence as might have snowed down. By my warm hearth sprang these cerealious blossoms; here was the bank where they grew.

Methinks some such visible token of approval would always accompany the simple and healthy repast. There would be such a smiling and blessing upon it. Our appetite should always be so related to our taste, and the board we spread for its gratification be an epitome of the universal table which Nature sets by hill and wood and stream for her dumb pensioners.

Jan. 5. Wednesday. I find that whatever hindrances may occur I write just about the same amount of truth in my Journal; for the record is more concentrated, and usually it is some very real and earnest life, after all, that interrupts. All flourishes are omitted. If I saw wood from morning to night, though I grieve that I could not

observe the train of my thoughts during that time, yet, in the evening, the few scrannel lines which describe my day's occupations will make the creaking of the saw more musical than my freest fancies could have been. I find incessant labor with the hands, which engrosses the attention also, the best method to remove palaver out of one's style. One will not dance at his work who has wood to cut and cord before the night falls in the short days of winter; but every stroke will be husbanded, and ring soberly through the wood; and so will his lines ring and tell on the ear, when at evening he settles the accounts of the day. I have often been astonished at the force and precision of style to which busy laboring men, unpracticed in writing, easily attain when they are required to make the effort. It seems as if their sincerity and plainness were the main thing to be taught in schools, — and yet not in the schools, but in the fields, in actual service, I should say. The scholar not unfrequently envies the propriety and emphasis with which the farmer calls to his team, and confesses that if that lingo were written it would surpass his labored sentences.

Who is not tired of the weak and flowing periods of the politician and scholar, and resorts not even to the Farmer's Almanac, to read the simple account of the month's labor, to restore his tone again? I want to see a sentence run clear through to the end, as deep and fertile as a well-drawn furrow which shows that the plow was pressed down to the beam. If our scholars would lead more earnest lives, we should not witness those lame conclusions to their ill-sown discourses, but their sentences would pass over the ground like loaded rollers, and not mere hollow and wooden ones, to press in the seed and make it germinate.

A well-built sentence, in the rapidity and force with which it works, may be compared to a modem corn-planter, which furrows out, drops the seed, and covers it up at one movement.

The scholar requires hard labor as an impetus to his pen. He will learn to grasp it as firmly and wield it as gracefully and effectually as an axe or a sword. When I consider the labored periods of some gentleman scholar, who perchance in feet and inches comes up to the standard of his race, and is nowise deficient in girth, I am amazed at the immense sacrifice of thews and sinews. What! these proportions

and these bones, and this their work! How these hands hewed this fragile matter, mere filagree or embroidery fit for ladies' fingers! Can this be a stalwart man's work, who has marrow in his backbone and a tendon Achilles in his heel? They who set up Stonehenge did somewhat, — much in comparison, — if it were only their strength was once fairly laid out, and they stretched themselves.

I discover in Raleigh's verses the vices of the courtier. They are not equally sustained, as if his noble genius were warped by the frivolous society of the court. He was capable of rising to a remarkable elevation. His poetry has for the most part a heroic tone and vigor as of a knight errant. But again there seems to have been somewhat unkindly in his education, and as if he had by no means grown up to be the man he promised. He was apparently too genial and loyal a soul, or rather he was incapable of resisting temptations from that quarter. If to his genius and culture he could have added the temperament of Fox or Cromwell, the world would have had cause longer to remember him. He was the pattern of nobility. One would have said it was by some lucky fate that he and Shakespeare flourished at the same time in England, and yet what do we know of their acquaintanceship?

Jan. 7. Friday. I am singularly refreshed in winter when I hear tell of service-berries, pokeweed, juniper. Is not heaven made up of these cheap summer glories?

The great God is very calm withal. How superfluous is any excitement in his creatures! He listens equally to the prayers of the believer and the unbeliever. The moods of man should unfold and alternate as gradually and placidly as those of nature. The sun shines for aye! The sudden revolutions of these times and this generation have acquired a very exaggerated importance. They do not interest me much, for they are not in harmony with the longer periods of nature. The present, in any aspect in which it can be presented to the smallest audience, is always mean. God does not sympathize with the popular movements.

Jan. 8. *Saturday.* When, as now, in January a south wind melts the snow, and the bare ground appears, covered with sere grass and

occasionally wilted green leaves which seem in doubt whether to let go their greenness quite or absorb new juices against the coming year, — in such a season a perfume seems to exhale from the earth itself and the south wind melts my integuments also. Then is she my mother earth. I derive a real vigor from the scent of the gale wafted over the naked ground, as from strong meats, and realize again how man is the pensioner of Nature. We are always conciliated and cheered when we are fed by [such] an influence, and our needs are felt to be part of the domestic economy of Nature.

What offends me most in my compositions is the moral element in them. The repentant say never a brave word. Their resolves should be mumbled in silence. Strictly speaking, morality is not healthy. Those undeserved joys which come uncalled and make us more pleased than grateful are they that sing.

One music seems to differ from another chiefly in its more perfect time, to use this word in a true sense. In the steadiness and equanimity of music lies its divinity. It is the only assured tone. When men attain to speak with as settled a faith and as firm assurance, their voices will sing and their feet march as do the feet of the soldier. The very dogs howl if time is disregarded. Because of the perfect time of this music-box — its harmony with itself — is its greater dignity and stateliness. This music is more nobly related for its more exact measure. So simple a difference as this more even pace raises it to the higher dignity.

Man's progress through nature should have an accompaniment of music. It relieves the scenery, which is seen through it as a subtler element, like a very clear morning air in autumn. Music wafts me through the clear, sultry valleys, with only a slight gray vapor against the hills.

Of what manner of stuff is the web of time wove, when these consecutive sounds called a strain of music can be wafted down through the centuries from Homer to me, and Homer have been conversant with that same unfathomable mystery and charm which so newly tingles my ears? These single strains, these melodious cadences which plainly proceed out of a very deep meaning and a sustained soul, are the interjections of God. They are perhaps the

expression of the perfect knowledge which the righteous at length attain to. Am I so like thee, my brother, that the cadence of two notes affects us alike? Shall I not some time have an opportunity to thank him who made music? I feel a sad cheer when I hear these lofty strains, because there must be something in me as lofty that hears. But ah, I hear them but rarely! Does it not rather hear me? If my blood were clogged in my veins, I am sure it would run more freely. God must be very rich, who, for the turning of a pivot, can pour out such melody on me. It is a little prophet; it tells me the secrets of futurity. Where are its secrets wound up but in this box? So much hope had slumbered. There are in music such strains as far surpass any faith in the loftiness of man's destiny. He must be very sad before he can comprehend them. The clear, liquid notes from the morning fields beyond seem to come through a vale of sadness to man, which gives all music a plaintive air. It hath caught a higher pace than any virtue I know. It is the arch-reformer. It hastens the sun to his setting. It invites him to his rising. It is the sweetest reproach, a measured satire.

I know there is a people somewhere [where] this heroism has place. Or else things are to be learned which it will be sweet to learn. This cannot be all rumor. When I hear this, I think of that everlasting and stable something which is not sound, but to be a thrilling reality, and can consent to go about the meanest work for as many years of time as it pleases even the Hindoo penance, for a year of the gods were as nothing to that which shall come after. What, then, can I do to hasten that other time, or that space where there shall be no time, and these things be a more living part of my life, — where there will be no discords in my life?

Jan. 9. *Sunday.* One cannot too soon forget his errors and misdemeanors; for [to] dwell long upon them is to add to the offense, and repentance and sorrow can only be displaced by somewhat better, and which is as free and original as if they had not been. Not to grieve long for any action, but to go immediately and do freshly and otherwise, subtracts so much from the wrong. Else we may make the delay of repentance the punishment of the sin. But a great nature will not consider its sins as its own, but be more absorbed in the

prospect of that valor and virtue for the future which is more properly it, than in those improper actions which, by being sins, discover themselves to be not it.

Sir W. Raleigh's faults are those of a courtier and a soldier. In his counsels and aphorisms we see not unfrequently the haste and rashness of a boy. His philosophy was not wide nor deep, but continually giving way to the generosity of his nature. What he touches he adorns by his greater humanity and native nobleness, but he touches not the true nor original. He thus embellishes the old, but does not unfold the new. He seems to have been fitted by his genius for short flights of impulsive poetry, but not for the sustained loftiness of Shakespeare or Milton. He was not wise nor a seer in any sense, but rather one of nature's nobility; the most generous nature which can be spared to linger in the purlieus of the court.

His was a singularly perverted genius, with such an inclination to originality and freedom, and yet who never steered his own course. Of so fair and susceptible a nature, rather than broad or deep, that he delayed to slake his thirst at the nearest and even more turbid wells of truth and beauty. Whose homage to the least fair or noble left no space for homage to the all fair. The misfortune of his circumstances, or rather of the man, appears in the fact that he was the author of "Maxims of State" and "The Cabinet Council" and "The Soul's Errand."

Feb. 19. *Saturday.* I never yet saw two men sufficiently great to meet as two. In proportion as they are great the differences are fatal, because they are felt not to be partial but total. Frankness to him who is unlike me will lead to the utter denial of him. I begin to see how that the preparation for all issues is to do virtuously. When two approach to meet, they incur no petty dangers, but they run terrible risks. Between the sincere there will be no civilities. No greatness seems prepared for the little decorum, even savage unmannerliness, it meets from equal greatness.

Feb. 20. *Sunday.* "Examine animal forms geometrically, from man, who represents the perpendicular, to the reptile which forms the horizontal line, and then applying to those forms the rules of the

exact sciences, which God himself cannot change, we shall see that visible nature contains them all; that the combinations of the seven primitive forms are entirely exhausted, and that, therefore, they can represent all possible varieties of morality." — From "The True Messiah; or the Old and New Testaments, examined according to the Principles of the Language of Nature. By G. Segger," translated from French by Grater.

I am amused to see from my window here how busily man has divided and staked off his domain. God must smile at his puny fences running hither and thither everywhere over the land.

My path hitherto has been like a road through a diversified country, now climbing high mountains, then descending into the lowest vales. From the summits I saw the heavens; from the vales I looked up to the heights again. In prosperity I remember God, or memory is one with consciousness; in adversity I remember my own elevations, and only hope to see God again.

It is vain to talk. What do you want? To bandy words, or deliver some grains of truth which stir within you? Will you make a pleasant rumbling sound after feasting, for digestion's sake, or such music as the birds in springtime?

The death of friends should inspire us as much as their lives. If they are great and rich enough, they will leave consolation to the mourners before the expenses of their funerals. It will not be hard to part with any worth, because it is worthy. How can any good depart? It does not go and come, but we. Shall we wait for it? Is it slower than we?

Feb. 21. I must confess there is nothing so strange to me as my own body. I love any other piece of nature, almost, better.

I was always conscious of sounds in nature which my ears could never hear, — that I caught but the prelude to a strain. She always retreats as I advance. Away behind and behind is she and her meaning. Will not this faith and expectation make to itself ears at length? I never saw to the end, nor heard to the end; but the best part was unseen and unheard.

I am like a feather floating in the atmosphere; on every side is depth unfathomable.

I feel as if years had been crowded into the last month, and yet the regularity of what we call time has been so far preserved as that I... will be welcome in the present. I have lived ill for the most part because too near myself. I have tripped myself up, so that there was no progress for my own narrowness. I cannot walk conveniently and pleasantly but when I hold myself far off in the horizon. And the soul dilutes the body and makes it passable. My soul and body have tottered along together of late, tripping and hindering one another like unpracticed Siamese twins. They two should walk as one, that no obstacle may be nearer than the firmament.

There must be some narrowness in the soul that compels one to have secrets.

Feb. 23. Wednesday. Every poet's muse is circumscribed in her wanderings, and may be well said to haunt some favorite spring or mountain. Chaucer seems to have been the poet of gardens. He has hardly left a poem in which some retired and luxurious retreat of the kind is not described, to which he gains access by some secret port, and there, by some fount or grove, is found his hero and the scene of his tale. It seems as if, by letting his imagination riot in the matchless beauty of an ideal garden, he thus fed [sic] his fancy on to the invention of a tale which would fit the scene. The muse of the most universal poet retires into some familiar nook, whence it spies out the land as the eagle from his eyrie, for he who sees so far over plain and forest is perched in a narrow cleft of the crag. Such pure childlike love of Nature is nowhere to be matched. And it isnot strange that the poetry of so rude an age should contain such polished praise of Nature; for the charms of Nature are not enhanced by civilization, as society is, but she possesses a permanent refinement, which at last subdues and educates men.

The reader has great confidence in Chaucer. He tells no lies. You read his story with a smile, as if it were the circumlocution of a child, and yet you find that he has spoke with more directness and economy of words than a sage. He is never heartless. So new was all his theme

in those days, that [he] had not to invent, but only to tell.

The language of poetry is *infantile.* It cannot talk.

It is the charm and greatness of all society, from friendship to the drawing-room, that it takes place on a level slightly higher than the actual characters of the parties would warrant; it is an expression of faith. True politeness is only hope and trust in men. It never addresses a fallen or falling man, but salutes a rising generation. It does not flatter, but only congratulates. The rays of light come to us in such a curve that every fellow in the street appears higher than he really is. It is the innate civility of nature.

I am glad that it was so because it could be.

March 1. Whatever I learn from any circumstances, that especially I needed to know. Events come out of God, and our characters determine them and constrain fate, as much as they determine the words and tone of a friend to us. Hence are they always acceptable as experience, and we do not see how we could have done without them.

March 2. The greatest impression of character is made by that person who consents to have no character. He who sympathizes with and runs through the whole circle of attributes cannot afford to be an individual. Most men stand pledged to themselves, so that their narrow and confined virtue has no suppleness. They are like children who cannot walk in bad company and learn the lesson which even it teaches, without their guardians, for fear of contamination. He is a fortunate man who gets through the world without being burthened by a name and reputation, for they are at any rate but his past history and no prophecy, and as such concern him no more than another. Character is Genius settled. It can maintain itself against the world, and if it relapses it repents. It is as a dog set to watch the property of Genius. Genius, strictly speaking, is not responsible, for it is not moral.

March 8. I live in the perpetual verdure of the globe. I die in the

annual decay of nature.

We can understand the phenomenon of death in the animal better if we first consider it in the order next below us, the vegetable.

The death of the flea and the elephant are but phenomena of the life of nature.

Most lecturers preface their discourses on music with a history of music, but as well introduce an essay on virtue with a history of virtue. As if the possible combinations of sound, the last wind that sighed, or melody that waked the wood, had any history other than a perceptive ear might hear in the least and latest sound of nature! A history of music would be like the history of the future; for so little past is it, and capable of record, that it is but the hint of a prophecy. It is the history of gravitation. It has no history more than God. It circulates and resounds forever, and only flows like the sea or air. There might be a history of men or of hearing, but not of the unheard. Why, if I should sit down to write its story, the west wind would rise to refute me. Properly speaking, there can be no history but natural history, for there is no past in the soul but in nature. So that the history of anything is only the true account of it, which will be always the same. I might as well write the history of my aspirations. Does not the last and highest contain them all? Do the lives of the great composers contain the facts which interested them? What is this music? Why, thinner and more evanescent than ether; subtler than sound, for it is only a disposition of sound. It is to sound what color is to matter. It is the color of a flame, or of the rainbow, or of water. Only one sense has known it. The least profitable, the least tangible fact, which cannot be bought or cultivated but by virtuous methods, and yet our ears ring with it like shells left on the shore.

March 11. *Friday.* Chaucer's familiar, but innocent, way of speaking of God is of a piece with his character. He comes readily to his thoughts without any false reverence. If Nature is our mother, is not God much more? God should come into our thoughts with no more parade than the zephyr into our ears. Only strangers approach him with ceremony. How rarely in our English tongue do we find expressed any affection for God! No sentiment is so rare as love of God, — universal love. Herbert is almost the only exception. "Ah,

my dear God," etc. Chaucer's was a remarkably affectionate genius. There is less love and simple trust in Shakespeare. When he sees a beautiful person or object, he almost takes a pride in the "maistry" of his God. The Protestant Church seems to have nothing to supply the place of the Saints of the Catholic calendar, who were at least channels for the affections. Its God has perhaps too many of the attributes of a Scandinavian deity.

We can only live healthily the life the gods assign us. I must receive my life as passively as the willow leaf that flutters over the brook. I must not be for myself, but God's work, and that is always good. I will wait the breezes patiently, and grow as Nature shall determine. My fate cannot but be grand so. We may live the life of a plant or an animal, without living an animal life. This constant and universal content of the animal comes of resting quietly in God's palm. I feel as if [I] could at any time resign my life and the responsibility of living into God's hands, and become as innocent, free from care, as a plant or stone.

My life, my life! why will you linger? Are the years short and the months of no account? How often has long delay quenched my aspirations! Can God afford that I should forget him? Is he so indifferent to my career? Can heaven be postponed with no more ado? Why were my ears given to hear those everlasting strains which haunt my life, and yet to be prophaned much more by these perpetual dull sounds?

Our doubts are so musical that they persuade themselves.

Why, God, did you include me in your great scheme? Will you not make me a partner at last? Did it need there should be a conscious material?

My friend, my friend, I'd speak so frank to thee that thou wouldst pray me to keep back some part, for fear I robbed myself. To address thee delights me, there is such cleanness in the delivery. I am delivered of my tale, which, told to strangers, still would linger on my lips as if untold, or doubtful how it ran.

March 12. Consider what a difference there is between living and dying. To die is not to *begin* to die, and *continue;* it is not a state of continuance, but of transientness; but to live is a condition of continuance, and does not mean to be born merely. There is no continuance of death. It is a transient phenomenon. Nature presents nothing in a state of death.

March 13. *Sunday.* The sad memory of departed friends is soon incrusted over with sublime and pleasing thoughts, as their monuments are overgrown with moss. Nature doth thus kindly heal every wound. By the mediation of a thousand little mosses and fungi, the most unsightly objects become radiant of beauty. There seem to be two sides to this world, presented us at different times, as we see things in growth or dissolution, in life or death. For seen with the eye of a poet, as God sees them, all are alive and beautiful; but seen with the historical eye, or the eye of the memory, they are dead and offensive. If we see Nature as pausing, immediately all mortifies and decays; but seen as progressing, she is beautiful.

I am startled that God can make me so rich even with my own cheap stores. It needs but a few wisps of straw in the sun, or some small word dropped, or that has long lain silent in some book. When heaven begins and the dead arise, no trumpet is blown; perhaps the south wind will blow. What if you or I be dead! God is alive still.

March 14. Chaucer's genius does not soar like Milton's, but is genial and familiar. It is only a greater portion of humanity, with all its weakness. It is not heroic, as Raleigh, or pious, as Herbert, or philosophical, as Shakespeare, but the child of the English nation, but that child that is "father of the man." His genius is only for the most part an exceeding naturalness. It is perfect sincerity, though with the behavior of a child rather than of a man. He can complain, as in the "Testament of Love," but yet so truly and unfeignedly that his complaint does not fail to interest. All England has his case at heart.

He shows great tenderness and delicacy, but not the heroic sentiment. His genius was feminine, not masculine, — not but such

is rarest to find in woman (though the appreciation of it is not), — but less manly than the manliest.

It is not easy to find one brave enough to play the game of love quite alone with you, but they must get some third person, or world, to countenance them. They thrust others between. Love is so delicate and fastidious that I see not how [it] can ever begin. Do you expect me to love with you, unless you make my love secondary to nothing else? Your words come tainted, if the thought of the world darted between thee and the thought of me. You are not venturous enough for love. It goes alone unscared through wildernesses.

As soon as I see people loving what they see merely, and not their own high hopes that they form of others, I pity, and do not want their love. Such love delays me. Did I ask thee to love me who hate myself? No! Love that I love, and I will love thee that lovest it.

The love is faint-hearted and short-lived that is contented with the past history of its object. It does not prepare the soil to bear new crops lustier than the old.

"I would I had leisure for these things," sighs the world. "When I have done my quilting and baking, then I will not be backward."

Love never stands still, nor does its object. It is the revolving sun and the swelling bud. If I know what I love, it is because I *remember* it.

Life is grand, and so are its environments of Past and Future. Would the face of nature be so serene and beautiful if man's destiny were not equally so? What am I good for now, who am still marching after high things, but to hear and tell the news, to bring wood and water, and count how many eggs the hens lay? In the meanwhile, I expect my life will begin. I will not aspire longer. I will see what it is I would be after. I will be unanimous.

March 15. *Tuesday.* It is a new day; the sun shines. The poor have come out to employ themselves in the sunshine, the old and feeble to scent the air once more. I hear the bluebird and the song sparrow and the robin, and the note of the lark leaks up through the meadows, as if its bill had been thawed by the warm sun.

As I am going to the woods I think to take some small book in my

pocket whose author has been there already, whose pages will be as good as my thoughts, and will eke them out or show me human life still gleaming in the horizon when the woods have shut out the town. But I can find none. None will sail as far forward into the bay of nature as my thought. They stay at home. I would go home. When I get to the wood their thin leaves rustle in my fingers. They are bare and obvious, and there is no halo or haze about them. Nature lies far and fair behind them all. I should like to meet the great and serene sentence, which does not reveal itself, — only that it is great, — which I may never with my utmost intelligence pierce through and beyond (more than the earth itself), which no intelligence can understand. There should be a kind of life and palpitation to it; under its rind a kind of blood should circulate forever, communicating freshness to its countenance.

Cold Spring. — I hear nothing but a phœbe, and the wind, and the rattling of a chaise in the wood. For a few years I stay here, not knowing, taking my own life by degrees, and then I go. I hear a spring bubbling near, where I drank out of a can in my earliest youth. The birds, the squirrels, the alders, the pines, they seem serene and in their places. I wonder if my life looks as serene to them too. Does no creature, then, see with the eyes of its own narrow destiny, but with God's? When God made man, he reserved some parts and some rights to himself. The eye has many qualities which belong to God more than man. It is his lightning which flashes in it. When I look into my companion's eye, I think it is God's private mine. It is a noble feature; it cannot be degraded; for God can look on all things undefiled.

Pond. — Nature is constantly original and inventing new patterns, like a mechanic in his shop. When the overhanging pine drops into the water, by the action of the sun, and the wind rubbing it on the shore, its boughs are worn white and smooth and assume fantastic forms, as if turned by a lathe. All things, indeed, are subjected to a rotary motion, either gradual and partial or rapid and complete, from the planet and system to the simplest shellfish and pebbles on the beach; as if all beauty resulted from an object turning on its own axis, or others turning about it. It establishes a new centre in the universe. As all curves have reference to their centres or foci, so all

beauty of character has reference to the soul, and is a graceful gesture of recognition or waving of the body toward it.

The great and solitary heart will love alone, without the knowledge of its object. It cannot have society in its love. It will expend its love as the cloud drops rain upon the fields over which [it] floats.

The only way to speak the truth is to speak lovingly; only the lover's words are heard. The intellect should never speak; it is not a natural sound. How trivial the best actions are! I am led about from sunrise to sunset by an ignoble routine, and yet can find no better road. I must make a part of the planet. I must obey the law of nature.

March 16. *Wednesday.* Raleigh's Maxims are not true and impartial, but yet are expressed with a certain magnanimity, which was natural to the man, as if this selfish policy could easily afford to give place in him to a more human and generous. He gives such advice that we have more faith in his conduct than his principles.

He seems to have carried the courtier's life to the highest pitch of magnanimity and grace it was capable of. He is liberal and generous as a prince, — that is, within bounds; brave, chivalrous, heroic, as the knight in armor and not as a defenseless man. His was not the heroism of Luther, but of Bayard. There was more of grace than of truth in it. He had more taste than character. There may be something petty in a refined taste; it easily degenerates into effeminacy; it does not consider the broadest use. It is not content with simple good and bad, and so is fastidious and curious, or nice only.

The most attractive sentences are not perhaps the wisest, but the surest and soundest. He who uttered them had a right to speak. He did not stand on a rolling stone, but was well assured of his footing, and naturally breathed them without effort. They were spoken in the nick of time. With rare fullness were they spoken, as a flower expands in the field; and if you dispute their doctrine, you will say, "But there is truth in their assurance." Raleigh's are of this nature, spoken with entire satisfaction and heartiness. They are not philosophy, but poetry.

With him it was always well done and nobly said.

That is very true which Raleigh says about the equal necessity of war and law, — that "the necessity of war, which among human actions is most lawless, hath some kind of affinity and near resemblance with the necessity of law;" for both equally rest on force as their basis, and war is only the resource of law, either on a smaller or larger scale, — its authority asserted. In war, in some sense, lies the very genius of law. It is law creative and active; it is the first principle of the law. What is human warfare but just this, — an effort to make the laws of God and nature take sides with one party. Men make an arbitrary code, and, because it is not right, they try to make it prevail by might. The moral law does not want any champion. Its asserters do not go to war. It was never infringed with impunity. It is inconsistent to decry war and maintain law, for if there were no need of war there would be no need of law. I must confess I see no resource but to conclude that conscience was not given us to no purpose, or for a hindrance, but that, however flattering order and expediency may look, it is but the repose of a lethargy; and we will choose rather to be awake, though it be stormy, and maintain ourselves on this earth and in this life as we may, without signing our death-warrant in the outset. What does the law protect? My rights? or any rights? My right, or the right? If I avail myself of it, it may help my sin; it cannot help my virtue. Let us see if we cannot stay here, where God has put us, on his own conditions. Does not his law reach to the earth? While the law holds fast the thief and murderer for my protection (I should say its own), it lets itself go loose. Expediencies differ. They may clash. English law may go to war with American law, that is English interest with American interest, but what is expedient for the whole world will be absolute right, and synonymous with the law of God. So the law is only partial right. It is selfish, and consults for the interest of the few.

Somehow, strangely, the vice of men gets well represented and protected, but their virtue has none to plead its cause, nor any charter of immunities and rights. The Magna Charta is not chartered rights, but chartered wrongs.

March 17. *Thursday.* I have been making pencils all day, and then

at evening walked to see an old schoolmate who is going to help make the Welland Canal navigable for ships round Niagara. He cannot see any such motives and modes of living as I; professes not to look beyond the securing of certain "creature comforts." And so we go silently different ways, with all serenity, I in the still moonlight through the village this fair evening to write these thoughts in my journal, and he, forsooth, to mature his schemes to ends as good, maybe, but different. So are we two made, while the same stars shine quietly over us. If I or he be wrong, Nature yet consents placidly. She bites her lip and smiles to see how her children will agree. So does the Welland Canal get built, and other conveniences, while I live. Well and good, I must confess. Fast sailing ships are hence not detained.

What means this changing sky, that now I freeze and contract and go within myself to warm me, and now I say it is a south wind, and go all soft and warm along the way? I sometimes wonder if I do not breathe the south wind.

March 18. *Friday.* Whatever book or sentence will bear to be read twice, we may be sure was thought twice. I say this thinking of Carlyle, who writes pictures or first impressions merely, which consequently will only bear a first reading. As if any transient, any *new*, mood of the best man deserved to detain the world long. I should call Carlyle's writing essentially dramatic, excellent acting, entertaining especially to those who see rather than those who hear, not to be repeated more than a joke. If he did not think who made the joke, how shall we think who hear it? He never consults the oracle, but thinks to utter oracles himself. There is nothing in his books for which he is not, and does not feel, responsible. He does not retire behind the truth he utters, but stands in the foreground. I wish he would just think, and tell me what he thinks, appear to me in the attitude of a man with his ear inclined, who comes as silently and meekly as the morning star, which is unconscious of the dawn it heralds, leading the way up the steep as though alone and unobserved in its observing, without looking behind. He is essentially a humorist. But humors will not feed a man; they are the least satisfactory morsel to the healthy appetite. They circulate; I want rather to meet that

about which they circulate. The heart is not a humor, nor do they go to the heart, as the blood does.

March 19. *Saturday.* When I walk in the fields of Concord and meditate on the destiny of this prosperous slip of the Saxon family, the unexhausted energies of this new country, I forget that this which is now Concord was once Musketaquid, and that the *American race* has had its destiny also. Everywhere in the fields, in the corn and grain land, the earth is strewn with the relics of a race which has vanished as completely as if trodden in with the earth. I find it good to remember the eternity behind me as well as the eternity before. Wherever I go, I tread in the tracks of the Indian. I pick up the bolt which he has but just dropped at my feet. And if I consider destiny I am on his trail. I scatter his hearthstones with my feet, and pick out of the embers of his fire the simple but enduring implements of the wigwam and the chase. In planting my corn in the same furrow which yielded its increase to his support so long, I displace some memorial of him.

I have been walking this afternoon over a pleasant field planted with winter rye, near the house, where this strange people once had their dwelling-place. Another species of mortal men, but little less wild to me than the musquash they hunted. Strange spirits, dæmons, whose eyes could never meet mine; with another nature and another fate than mine. The crows flew over the edge of the woods, and, wheeling over my head, seemed to rebuke, as dark-winged spirits more akin to the Indian than I. Perhaps only the present disguise of the Indian. If the new has a meaning, so has the old.

Nature has her russet hues as well as green. Indeed, our eye splits on every object, and we can as well take one path as the other. If I consider its history, it is old; if its destiny, it is new. I may see a part of an object, or the whole. I will not be imposed on and think Nature is old because the season is advanced. I will study the botany of the mosses and fungi on the decayed [wood], and remember that decayed wood is not old, but has just begun to be what it is. I need not think of the pine almond or the acorn and sapling when I meet the fallen pine or oak, more than of the generations of pines and oaks which have fed the young tree. The new blade of the com, the third leaf of

the melon, these are not green but gray with time, but sere in respect of time.

The pines and the crows are not changed, but instead that Philip and Paugus stand on the plain, here are Webster and Crockett. Instead of the council-house is the legislature. What a new aspect have new eyes given to the land! Where is this country but in the hearts of its inhabitants? Why, there is only so much of Indian America left as there is of the American Indian in the character of this generation.

A blithe west wind is blowing over all. In the fine flowing haze, men at a distance seem shadowy and gigantic, as ill-defined and great as men should always be. I do not know if yonder be a man or a ghost.

What a consolation are the stars to man! — so high and out of his reach, as is his own destiny. I do not know but my life is fated to be thus low and grovelling always. I cannot discover its use even to myself. But it is permitted to see those stars in the sky equally useless, yet highest of all and deserving of a fair destiny. My fate is in some sense linked with that of the stars, and if they are to persevere to a great end, shall I die who could conjecture it? It surely is some encouragement to know that the stars are my fellow-creatures, for I do not suspect but they are reserved for a high destiny. Has not he who discovers and names a planet in the heavens as long a year as it? I do not fear that any misadventure will befall *them.* Shall I not be content to disappear with the missing stars? Do I mourn their fate?

Man's moral nature is a riddle which only eternity can solve.

I see laws which never fail, of whose failure I never conceived. Indeed I cannot detect failure anywhere but in my fear. I do not fear that right is not right, that good is not good, but only the annihilation of the present existence. But only that can make me incapable of fear. My fears are as good prophets as my hopes.

March 20. *Sunday.* My friend is cold and reserved because his love for me is waxing and not waning. These are the early processes;

the particles are just beginning to shoot in crystals. If the mountains came to me, I should no longer go to the mountains. So soon as that consummation takes place which I wish, it will be past. Shall I not have a friend in reserve? Heaven is to come. I hope this is not it.

Words should pass between friends as the lightning passes from cloud to cloud. I don't know how much I assist in the economy of nature when I declare a fact. Is it not an important part in the history of the flower that I tell my friend where I found it? We do [not] wish friends to feed and clothe our bodies, — neighbors are kind enough for that, — but to do the like offices to ourselves. We wish to spread and publish ourselves, as the sun spreads its rays; and we toss the new thought to the friend, and thus it is dispersed. Friends are those twain who feel their interests to be one. Each knows that the other might as well have said what he said. All beauty, all music, all delight springs from apparent dualism but real unity. My friend is my real brother. I see his nature groping yonder like my own. Does there go one whom I know? then I go there.

The field where friends have met is consecrated forever. Man seeks friendship out of the desire to realize a home here. As the Indian thinks he receives into himself the courage and strength of his conquered enemy, so we add to ourselves all the character and heart of our friends. He is my creation. I can do what I will with him. There is no possibility of being thwarted; the friend is like wax in the rays that fall from our own hearts.

The friend does not take my word for anything, but he takes me. He trusts me as I trust myself. We only need be as true to others as we are to ourselves, that there may be ground enough for friendship. In the beginnings of friendship, — for it does not grow, — we realize such love and justice as are attributed to God.

Very few are they from whom we derive any information. The most only announce and tell tales, but the friend in-forms.

What is all nature and human life at this moment, what the scenery and vicinity of a human soul, but the song of an early sparrow from yonder fences, and the cackling hens in the bam? So for one while my destiny loiters within ear-shot of these sounds. The great busy Dame Nature is concerned to know how many eggs her hens lay. The Soul, the proprietor of the world, has an interest in the

stacking of hay, the foddering of cattle, and the draining of peat meadows. Away in Scythia, away in India, they make butter and cheese for its larder. I wish that in some page of the Testament there were something like Charlemagne's egg account. Was not Christ interested in the setting hens of Palestine?

Nature is very ample and roomy. She has left us plenty of space to move in. As far as I can see from this window, how little life in the landscape! The few birds that flit past do not crowd; they do not fill the valley. The traveller on the highway has no fellow-traveller for miles before or behind him. Nature was generous and not niggardly, certainly.

How simple is the natural connection of events. We complain greatly of the want of flow and sequence in books, but if the journalist only move himself from Boston to New York, and speak as before, there is link enough. And so there would be, if he were as careless of connection and order when he stayed at home, and let the incessant progress which his life makes be the apology for abruptness. Do I not travel as far away from my old resorts, though I stay here at home, as though I were on board the steamboat? Is not my life riveted together? Has not it sequence? Do not my breathings follow each other naturally?

March 21. Who is old enough to have learned from experience?

March 22. *Tuesday.* Nothing can be more useful to a man than a determination not to be hurried.

I have not succeeded if I have an antagonist who fails. It must be humanity's success.

I cannot think nor utter my thought unless I have infinite room. The cope of heaven is not too high, the sea is not too deep, for him who would unfold a great thought. It must feed me and warm and clothe me. It must be an entertainment to which my whole nature is invited. I must know that the gods are to be my fellow-guests.

We cannot well do without our sins; they are the highway of our virtue.

March 23. *Wednesday.* Plain speech is always a desideratum. Men write in a florid style only because they would match the simple beauties of the plainest speech. They prefer to be misunderstood, rather than come short of its exuberance. Hussein Effendi praises the epistolary style of Ibrahim Pasha to the French traveller Botta, because of "the difficulty of understanding it: there was, he said, but one person at Jidda who was capable of understanding and explaining the Pasha's correspondence." A plain sentence, where every word is rooted in the soil, is indeed flowery and verdurous. It has the beauty and variety of mosaic with the strength and compactness of masonry. All fullness looks like exuberance. We are not rich without superfluous wealth; but the imitator only copies the superfluity. If the words were sufficiently simple and answering to the thing to be expressed, our sentences would be as blooming as wreaths of evergreen and flowers. You cannot fill a wine-glass quite to the brim without heaping it. Simplicity is exuberant.

When I look back eastward over the world, it seems to be all in repose. Arabia, Persia, Hindostan are the land of contemplation. Those Eastern nations have perfected the luxury of idleness. Mount Sabér, according to the French traveller and naturalist Botta, is celebrated for producing the Kât tree. "The soft tops of the twigs and tender leaves are eaten," says his reviewer, "and produce an agreeable soothing excitement, restoring from fatigue, banishing sleep, and disposing to the enjoyment of conversation." What could be more dignified than to browse the tree-tops with the camelopard? Who would not be a rabbit or partridge sometimes, to chew mallows and pick the apple tree buds? It is not hard to discover an instinct for the opium and betel and tobacco chewers.

After all, I believe it is the style of thought entirely, and not the style of expression, which makes the difference in books. For if I find any thought worth extracting, I do not wish to alter the language. Then the author seems to have had all the graces of eloquence and poetry given him.

I am pleased to discover myself as much a pensioner in Nature as moles and titmice. In some very direct and simple uses to which man puts Nature he stands in this relation to her. Oriental life does not want this grandeur. It is in Sadi and the Arabian Nights and the

Fables of Pilpay. In the New England noontide I have discovered more materials of Oriental history than the Sanskrit contains or Sir W. Jones has unlocked. I see why it is necessary there should be such history at all. Was not Asia mapped in my brain before it was in any geography? In my brain is the Sanskrit which contains the history of the primitive times. The Vedas and their Angas are not so ancient as my serenest contemplations. My mind contemplates them, as Brahma his scribe.

I occasionally find myself to be nothing at all, because the gods give me nothing to do. I cannot brag; I can only congratulate my masters.

In idleness I am of no thickness, I am thinnest wafer. I never compass my own ends. God schemes for me.

We have our times of action and our times of reflection. The one mood caters for the other. Now I am Alexander, and then I am Homer. One while my hand is impatient to handle an axe or hoe, and at another to *[sic]* pen. I am sure I write the tougher truth for these calluses on my palms. They give firmness to the sentence. The sentences of a laboring man are like hardened thongs, or the sinews of the deer, or the roots of the pine.

March 24. Thursday. Those authors are successful who do not *write down* to others, but make their own taste and judgment their audience. By some strange infatuation we forget that we do not approve what yet we recommend to others. It is enough if I please myself with writing; I am then sure of an audience.

If hoarded treasures can make me rich, have I not the wealth of the planet in my mines and at the bottom of the sea?

It is always singular to meet common sense in very old books, as the Veeshnoo Sarma, — as if they could have dispensed with the experience of later times. We had not given space enough to *their* antiquity for the accumulation of wisdom. We meet even a trivial wisdom in them, as if truth were already hackneyed. The present is always younger than antiquity. A playful wisdom, which has eyes behind as well as before and oversees itself. This pledge of sanity cannot be spared in a book, that it sometimes reflect upon itself, that it pleasantly behold itself, that it hold the scales over itself. The wise

can afford to doubt in his wisest moment. The easiness of doubt is the ground of his assurance. Faith keeps many doubts in her pay. If I could not doubt, I should not believe.

It is seen in this old scripture how wisdom is older than the talent of composition. It is a simple and not a compound rock. The story is as slender as the thread on which pearls are strung; it is a spiral line, growing more and more perplexed till it winds itself up and dies like the silkworm in its cocoon. It is an interminable labyrinth. It seems as if the old philosopher could not talk without moving, and each motion were made the apology or occasion for a sentence, but, this being found inconvenient, the fictitious progress of the tale was invented. The story which winds between and around these sentences, these barrows in the desert, these oases, is as indistinct as a camel track between Mourzuk and Darfur, between the Pyramids and the Nile, from Gaza to Jaffa.

The great thoughts of a wise man seem to the vulgar who do not generalize to stand far apart like isolated mounts; but science knows that the mountains which rise so solitary in our midst are parts of a great mountain-chain, dividing the earth, and the eye that looks into the horizon toward the blue Sierra melting away in the distance may detect their flow of thought. These sentences which take up your common life so easily are not seen to run into ridges, because they are the table-land on which the spectator stands. I do not require that the mountain-peaks be chained together, but by the common basis on which they stand, nor that the path of the muleteer be kept open at so much pains, when they may be bridged by the Milky Way. That they stand frowning upon one another, or mutually reflecting the sun's rays, is proof enough of their common basis.

The book should be found where the sentence is, and its connection be as inartificial. It is the inspiration of a day and not of a moment. The links should be gold also. Better that the good be not united than that a bad man be admitted into their society. When men can select they will. If there be any stone in the quarry better than the rest, they will forsake the rest because of it. Only the good will be quarried.

In these fables the story goes unregarded, while the reader leaps from sentence to sentence, as the traveller leaps from stone to stone

while the water rushes unheeded between them.

March 25. *Friday.* Great persons are not soon learned, not even their outlines, but they change like the mountains in the horizon as we ride along.

A man's life should be as fresh as a river. It should be the same channel, but a new water every instant. Some men have no inclination; they have no rapids nor cascades, but marshes, and alligators, and miasma instead.

How insufficient is all wisdom without love! There may be courtesy, there may be good will, there may be even temper, there may be wit, and talent, and sparkling conversation, — and yet the soul pine for life. Just so sacred and rich as my life is to myself will it be to another. Ignorance and bungling with love are better than wisdom and skill without. Our life without love is like coke and ashes, — like the cocoanut in which the milk is dried up. I want to see the sweet sap of living wood in it. Men may be pure as alabaster and Parian marble, elegant as a Tuscan villa, sublime as Terni, but if they are not in society as retiring and inexperienced as children, we shall go join Alaric and the Goths and Vandals. There is no milk mixed with the wine at the entertainment.

Enthusiasm which is the formless material of thought. Comparatively speaking, I care not for the man or his designs who would make the highest use of me short of an all-adventuring friendship. I wish by the behavior of my friend toward me to be led to have such regard for myself as for a box of precious ointment. I shall not be so cheap to myself if I see that another values me.

We talk much about education, and yet none will assume the office of an educator. I never gave any one the whole advantage of myself. I never afforded him the culture of my love. How can I talk of charity, who at last withhold the kindness which alone makes charity desirable? The poor want nothing less than me myself, and I shirk charity by giving rags and meat.

Very dangerous is the talent of composition, the striking out the heart of life at a blow, as the Indian takes off a scalp. I feel as if my life had grown more outward since I could express it.

What can I give or what deny to another but myself?

The stars are God's dreams, thoughts remembered in the silence of his night.

In company, that person who alone can understand you you cannot get out of your mind.

The artist must work with indifferency. Too great interest vitiates his work.

March 26. *Saturday.* The wise will not be imposed on by wisdom. You can tell, but what do you know?

I thank God that the cheapness which appears in time and the world, the trivialness of the whole scheme of things, is in my own cheap and trivial moment. I am time and the world. I assert no independence. In me are summer and winter, village life and commercial routine, pestilence and famine and refreshing breezes, joy and sadness, life and death. How near is yesterday! How far to-morrow! I have seen nails which were driven before I was bom. Why do they look old and rusty? Why does not God make some mistake to show to us that time is a delusion? Why did I invent time but to destroy it?

Did you ever remember the moment when you were not mean?

Is it not a satire to say that life is organic?

Where is my heart gone? They say men cannot part with it and live.

Are setting hens troubled with ennui? Nature is very kind; does she let them reflect? These long March days, setting on and on in the crevice of a hayloft, with no active employment! Do setting hens sleep?

A book should be a vein of gold ore, as the sentence is a diamond found in the sand, or a pearl fished out of the sea.

He who does not borrow trouble does not lend it.

I must confess I have felt mean enough when asked how I was to act on society, what errand I had to mankind. Undoubtedly I did not feel mean without a reason, and yet my loitering is not without defense. I would fain communicate the wealth of my life to men, would really give them what is most precious in my gift. I would

secrete pearls with the shellfish and lay up honey with the bees for them. I will sift the sunbeams for the public good. I know no riches I would keep back. I have no private good, unless it be my peculiar ability to serve the public. This is the only individual property. Each one may thus be innocently rich. I inclose and foster the pearl till it is grown. I wish to communicate those parts of my life which I would gladly live again myself.

It is hard to be a good citizen of the world in any great sense; but if we do render no interest or increase to mankind out of that talent God gave us, we can at least preserve the principle unimpaired. One would like to be making large dividends to society out [of] that deposited capital in us, but he does well for the most part if he proves a secure investment only, without adding to the stock.

In such a letter as I like there will be the most naked and direct speech, the least circumlocution.

March 27. Sunday. The eye must be firmly anchored to this earth which beholds birches and pines waving in the breeze in a certain light, a serene rippling light.

Cliffs. — Two little hawks have just come out to play, like butterflies rising one above the other in endless alternation far below me. They swoop from side to side in the broad basin of the tree-tops, with wider and wider surges, as if swung by an invisible pendulum. They stoop down on this side and scale up on that.

Suddenly I look up and see a new bird, probably an eagle, quite above me, laboring with the wind not more than forty rods off. It was the largest bird of the falcon kind I ever saw. I was never so impressed by any flight. She sailed the air, and fell back from time to time like a ship on her beam ends, holding her talons up as if ready for the arrows. I never allowed before for the grotesque attitudes of our national bird.

The eagle must have an educated eye.

See what a life the gods have given us, set round with pain and pleasure. It is too strange for sorrow; it is too strange for joy. One while it looks as shallow, though as intricate, as a Cretan labyrinth, and again it is a pathless depth. I ask for bread incessantly, — that

my life sustain me, as much as meat my body. No man knoweth in what hour his life may come. Say not that Nature is trivial, for to-morrow she will be radiant with beauty. I am as old — as old as the Alleghanies. I was going to say Wachusett, but it excites a youthful feeling, as I were but too happy to be so young.

March 28. *Monday.* How often must one feel, as he looks back on his past life, that he has gained a talent but lost a character! My life has got down into my fingers. My inspiration at length is only so much breath as I can breathe.

Society affects to estimate men by their talents, but really feels and knows them by their characters. What a man does, compared with what he is, is but a small part. To require that our friend possess a certain skill is not to be satisfied till he is something less than our friend.

Friendship should be a great promise, a perennial springtime.

I can conceive how the life of the gods may be dull and tame, if it is not disappointed and insatiate.

One may well feel chagrined when he finds he can do nearly all he can conceive.

Some books ripple on like a stream, and we feel that the author is in the full tide of discourse. Plato and Jamblichus and Pythagoras and Bacon halt beside them. Long, stringy, slimy thoughts which flow or run together. They read as if written for military men or men of business, there is such a dispatch in them, and a double-quick time, a Saratoga march with beat of drum. But the grave thinkers and philosophers seem not to have got their swaddling-clothes off; they are slower than a Roman army on its march, the rear encampment to-night where the van camped last night. The wise Jamblichus eddies and gleams like a watery slough.

But the reviewer seizes the pen and shouts, “Forward! Alamo and Fanning!” and after rolls the tide of war. Immediately the author discovers himself launched, and if the slope was easy and the grease good, does not go to the bottom.

They flow as glibly as mill-streams sucking under a race-way. The flow is ofttimes in the poor reader who makes such haste over their

pages, as to the traveller the walls and fences seem to travel. But the most rapid trot is no flow after all.

If I cannot chop wood in the yard, can I not chop wood in my journal? Can I not give vent to that appetite so? I wish to relieve myself of superfluous energy. How poor is the life of the best and wisest! The petty side will appear at last. Understand once how the best in society live, — with what routine, with what tedium and insipidity, with what grimness and defiance, with what chuckling over an exaggeration of the sunshine. Altogether, are not the actions of your great man poor, even pitiful and ludicrous?

I am astonished, I must confess, that man looks so respectable in nature, considering the littlenesses Socrates must descend to in the twenty-four hours, that he yet wears a serene countenance and even adorns nature.

March 29. *Tuesday.*

March 30. *Wednesday.* Though Nature's laws are more immutable than any despot's, yet to our daily life they rarely seem rigid, but we relax with license in summer weather. We are not often nor harshly reminded of the things we may not do. I am often astonished to see how long, and with what manifold infringements of the natural laws, some men I meet in the highway maintain life. She does not deny them quarter; they do not die without priest. All the while she rejoices, for if they are not one part of her they are another. I am convinced that consistency is the secret of health. How many a poor man, striving to live a pure life, pines and dies after a life of sickness, and his successors doubt if Nature is not pitiless; while the confirmed and consistent sot, who is content with his rank life like mushrooms, a mass of corruption, still dozes comfortably under a hedge. He has made his peace with himself; there is no strife. Nature is really very kind and liberal to all persons of vicious habits. They take great licenses with her. She does not exhaust them with many excesses.

How hard it is to be greatly related to mankind! They are only my uncles and aunts and cousins. I hear of some persons greatly related,

but only he is so who has all mankind for his friend. Our intercourse with the best grows soon shallow and trivial. They no longer inspire us. After enthusiasm comes insipidity and blankness. The sap of all noble schemes drieth up, and the schemers return again and again in despair to "common sense and labor." If I could help infuse some life and heart into society, should I not do a service? Why will not the gods mix a little of the wine of nobleness with the air we drink? Let virtue have some firm foothold in the earth. Where does she dwell? Who are the salt of the earth? May not Love have some resting-place on the earth as sure [as] the sunshine on the rock? The crystals imbedded in the cliff sparkle and gleam from afar, as if they did certainly enrich our planet; but where does any virtue permanently sparkle and gleam? She was sent forth over the waste too soon, before the earth was prepared for her.

Rightfully we are to each other the gate of heaven and redeemers from sin, but now we overlook these lowly and narrow ways. We will go over the bald mountain-tops without going through the valleys.

Men do not after all meet on the ground of their real acquaintance and actual understanding of one another, but degrade themselves immediately into the puppets of convention. They do as if, in given circumstances, they had agreed to know each other only so well. They rarely get to that [point] that they inform one another gratuitously, and use each other like the sea and woods for what is new and inspiring there.

The best intercourse and communion they have is in silence above and behind their speech. We should be very simple to rely on words. As it is, what we knew before always interprets a man's words. I cannot easily remember what any man has said, but how can I forget what he is to me? We know each other better than we are aware; we are admitted to startling privacies with every person we meet, and in some emergency we shall find how well we knew him. To my solitary and distant thought my neighbor is shorn of his halo, and is seen as privately and barely as a star through a glass.

March 31. *Thursday.* I cannot forget the majesty of that bird at the

Cliff. It was no sloop or smaller craft hove in sight, but a ship of the line, worthy to struggle with the elements. It was a great presence, as of the master of river and forest. His eye would not have quailed before the owner of the soil; none could challenge his rights. And then his retreat, sailing so steadily away, was a kind of advance. How is it that man always feels like an interloper in nature, as if he had intruded on the domains of bird and beast?

The really efficient laborer will be found not to crowd his day with work, but will saunter to his task surrounded by a wide halo of ease and leisure. There will be a wide margin for relaxation to his day. He is only earnest to secure the kernels of time, and does not exaggerate the value of the husk. Why should the hen set all day? She can lay but one egg, and besides she will not have picked up materials for a new one. Those who work much do not work hard.

Nothing is so rare as sense. Very uncommon sense is poetry, and has a heroic or sweet music. But in verse, for the most part, the music now runs before and then behind the sense, but is never coincident with it. Given the metre, and one will make music while another makes sense. But good verse, like a good soldier, will make its own music, and it will march to the same with one consent. In most verse there is no inherent music. The man should not march, but walk like a citizen. It is not time of war but peace. Boys study the metres to write Latin verses, but it does not help them to write English.

Lydgate's "Story of Thebes," intended for a Canterbury Tale, is a specimen of most unprogressive, unmusical verse. Each line rings the knell of its brother, as if it were introduced but to dispose of him. No mortal man could have breathed to that cadence without long intervals of relaxation; the repetition would have been fatal to the lungs. No doubt there was much healthy exercise taken in the meanwhile. He should forget his rhyme and tell his story, or forget his story and breathe himself.

In Shakespeare and elsewhere the climax may be somewhere along the line, which runs as varied and meandering as a country road, but in Lydgate it is nowhere but in the rhyme. The couplets slope headlong to their confluence.

April 2. Saturday. The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales is full of good sense and humanity, but is riot transcendent poetry. It is so good that it seems like faultfinding to esteem it second to any other. For picturesque description of persons it is without a parallel. It did not need inspiration, but a cheerful and easy wit. It is essentially humorous, as no inspired poetry is. Genius is so serious as to be grave and sublime rather. Humor takes a narrower vision — however broad and genial it may be — than enthusiasm. Humor delays and looks back.

April 3. *Sunday.* I can remember when I was more enriched by a few cheap rays of light falling on the pond-side than by this broad sunny day. Riches have wings, indeed. The weight of present woe will express the sweetness of past experience. When sorrow comes, how easy it is to remember pleasure! When, in winter, the bees cannot make new honey, they consume the old.

Experience is in the fingers and head. The heart is inexperienced.

Sorrow singeth the sweetest strain: "The Daughters of Zion,"

"The Last Sigh of the Moor."

Joy is the nectar of flowers, sorrow the honey of bees.

I thank God for sorrow. It is hard to be abused. Is not He kind still, who lets this south wind blow, this warm sun shine on me?

I have just heard the flicker among the oaks on the hillside ushering in a new dynasty. It is the age and youth of time. Why did Nature set this lure for sickly mortals? Eternity could not begin with more security and momentousness than the spring. The summer's eternity is reëstablished by this note. All sights and sounds are seen and heard both in time and eternity. And when the eternity of any sight or sound strikes the eye or ear, they are intoxicated with delight.

Sometimes, as through a dim haze, we see objects in their eternal relations; and they stand like Stonehenge and the Pyramids, and we wonder who set them up and what for.

The destiny of the soul can never be studied by the reason, for its modes are not ecstatic. In the wisest calculation or demonstration I but play a game with myself. I am not to be taken captive by myself.

I cannot convince myself. God must convince. I can calculate a problem in arithmetic, but not any morality.

Virtue is incalculable, as it is inestimable. Well, man's destiny is but virtue, or manhood. It is wholly moral, to be learned only by the life of the soul. God cannot calculate it. He has no moral philosophy, no ethics. The reason, before it can be applied to such a subject, will have to fetter and restrict it. How can he, step by step, perform that long journey who has not conceived whither he is bound? How can he expect to perform an arduous journey without interruption who has no passport to the end?

On one side of man is the actual, and on the other the ideal. The former is the province of the reason; it is even a divine light when directed upon it, but it cannot reach forward into the ideal without blindness. The moon was made to rule by night, but the sun to rule by day. Reason will be but a pale cloud, like the moon, when one ray of divine light comes to illumine the soul.

How rich and lavish must be the system which can afford to let so many moons burn all the day as well as the night, though no man stands in need of their light! There is none of that kind of economy in Nature that husbands its stock, but she supplies inexhaustible means to the most frugal methods. The poor may learn of her frugality, and the rich generosity. Having carefully determined the extent of her charity, she establishes it forever; her almsgiving is an annuity. She supplies to the bee only so much wax as is necessary for its cell, so that no poverty could stint it more; but the little economist which fed the Evangelist in the desert still keeps in advance of the immigrant, and fills the cavities of the forest for his repast.

1845-1846

July 5. *Saturday.* Walden. — Yesterday I came here to live. My house makes me think of some mountain houses I have seen, which seemed to have a fresher auroral atmosphere about them, as I fancy of the halls of Olympus. I lodged at the house of a saw-miller last summer, on the Caatskill Mountains, high up as Pine Orchard, in the blueberry and raspberry region, where the quiet and cleanliness and coolness seemed to be all one, — which had their ambrosial character. He was the miller of the Kaaterskill Falls. They were a clean and wholesome family, inside and out, like their house. The latter was not plastered, only lathed, and the inner doors were not hung. The house seemed high-placed, airy, and perfumed, fit to entertain a travelling god. It was so high, indeed, that all the music, the broken strains, the waifs and accompaniments of tunes, that swept over the ridge of the Caatskills, passed through its aisles. Could not man be man in such an abode? And would he ever find out this grovelling life? It was the very light and atmosphere in which the works of Grecian art were composed, and in which they rest. They have appropriated to themselves a loftier hall than mortals ever occupy, at least on a level with the mountain-brows of the world. There was wanting a little of the glare of the lower vales, and in its place a pure twilight as became the precincts of heaven. Yet so equable and calm was the season there that you could not tell whether it was morning or noon or evening. Always there was the sound of the morning cricket.

July 6. I wish to meet the facts of life — the vital facts, which are the phenomena or actuality the gods meant to show us — face to face, and so I came down here. Life! who knows what it is, what it does? If I am not quite right here, I am less wrong than before; and now let us see what they will have. The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest, at the end of the week, — for Sunday always seemed to me like a fit conclusion of an ill-spent week and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one, — with this one other draggletail and postponed affair of a sermon,

from thirdly to fifteenthly, should teach them with a thundering voice pause and simplicity. “Stop! Avast! Why so fast?” In all studies we go not forward but rather backward with redoubled pauses. We always study *antiques* with silence and reflection. Even time has a depth, and below its surface the waves do not lapse and roar. I wonder men can be so frivolous almost as to attend to the gross form of negro slavery, there are so many keen and subtle masters who subject us both. Self-emancipation in the West Indies of a man’s thinking and imagining provinces, which should be more than his island territory, — one emancipated heart and intellect! It would knock off the fetters from a million slaves.

July 7. I am glad to remember to-night, as I sit by my door, that I too am at least a remote descendant of that heroic race of men of whom there is tradition: I too sit here on the shore of my Ithaca, a fellow-wanderer and survivor of Ulysses. How symbolical, significant of I know not what, the pitch pine stands here before my door! Unlike any glyph I have seen sculptured or painted yet, one of Nature’s later designs, yet perfect as her Grecian art. There it is, a done tree. Who can mend it? And now where is the generation of heroes whose lives are to pass amid these our northern pines, whose exploits shall appear to posterity pictured amid these strong and shaggy forms? Shall there be only arrows and bows to go with these pines on some pipe-stone quarry at length? There is something more respectable than railroads in these simple relics of the Indian race. What hieroglyphs shall we add to the pipe-stone quarry?

If we can forget, we have done somewhat; if we can remember, we have done somewhat. Let us remember this.

The Great Spirit makes indifferent all times and places. The place where he is seen is always the same, and indescribably pleasant to all our senses. We had allowed only neighboring and transient circumstances to make our occasions. They were, in fact, the causes of our distractions. But nearest to all things is that power which fashions their being. Next to us the grandest laws are being enacted and administered. Next to us is not the workman whom we have hired, but ever the workman whose work we are. He is at work, not in my backyard, but inconceivably nearer than that. We are the

subjects of an experiment how singular! Can we not dispense with the society of our gossips a little while under these circumstances?

My auxiliaries are the dews and rains, — to water this dry soil, — and genial fatness in the soil itself, which for the most part is lean and effete. My enemies are worms, cool days, and most of all woodchucks. They have nibbled for me an eighth of an acre clean. I plant in faith, and they reap. This is the tax I pay for ousting johnswort and the rest. But soon the surviving beans will be too tough for woodchucks, and then they will go forward to meet new foes.

July 14. What sweet and tender, the most innocent and divinely encouraging society there is in every natural object, and so in universal nature, even for the poor misanthrope and most melancholy man! There can be no really black melan-choly to him who lives in the midst of nature and has still his senses. There never was yet such a storm but it was Æolian music to the innocent ear. Nothing can compel to a vulgar sadness a simple and brave man. While I enjoy the sweet friendship of the seasons I trust that nothing can make life a burden to me. This rain which is now watering my beans and keeping me in the house waters me too. I needed it as much. And what if most are not hoed! Those who send the rain, whom I chiefly respect, will pardon me.

Sometimes, when I compare myself with other men, methinks I am favored by the gods. They seem to whisper joy to me beyond my deserts, and that I do have a solid warrant and surety at their hands, which my fellows do not. I do not flatter myself, but if it were possible *they* flatter me. I am especially guided and guarded.

What was seen true once, and sanctioned by the flash of Jove, will always be true, and nothing can hinder it. I have the warrant that no fair dream I have had need fail of its fulfillment.

Here I know I am in good company; here is the world, its centre and metropolis, and all the palms of Asia and the laurels of Greece and the firs of the Arctic Zone incline thither. Here I can read Homer, if I would have books, as well as in Ionia, and not wish myself in Boston, or New York, or London, or Rome, or Greece. In such place

as this he wrote or sang. Who should come to my lodge just now but a true Homeric boor, one of those Paphlagonian men? Alek Therien, he called himself; a Canadian now, a woodchopper, a post-maker; makes fifty posts — holes them, *i.e.* — in a day; and who made his last supper on a woodchuck which his dog caught. And he too has heard of Homer, and *if it were not for books, would not know what to do* rainy days. Some priest once, who could read glibly from the Greek itself, taught him reading in a measure —— his verse, at least, in his turn — away by the Trois Rivières, at Nicolet. And now I must read to him, while he holds the book, Achilles' reproof of Patroclus on his sad countenance.

"Why are you in tears, Patroclus, like a young child (girl)?" etc., etc.

"Or have you only heard some news from Phthia?

They say that Menœtius lives yet, son of Actor, And Peleus lives, son of Æacus, among the Myrmidons, Both of whom having died, we should greatly grieve."

He has a neat bundle of white oak bark under his arm for a sick man, gathered this Sunday morning. "I suppose there's no harm in going after such a thing to-day." The simple man. May the gods send him many woodchucks.

And earlier to-day came five Lestrigones, railroad men who take care of the road, some of them at least. They still represent the bodies of men, transmitting arms and legs and bowels downward from those remote days to more remote. They have some got a rude wisdom withal, thanks to their dear experience. And one with them, a handsome younger man, a sailor-like, Greek-like man, says: "Sir, I like your notions. I think I shall live so myself. Only I should like a wilder country, where there is more game. I have been among the Indians near Appalachicola. I have lived with them. I like your kind of life. Good day. I wish you success and happiness."

Therien said this morning (July 16th, Wednesday), "If those beans were mine, I shouldn't like to hoe them till the dew was off." He was going to his woodchopping. "Ah!" said I, "that is one of the notions the farmers have got, but I don't believe it."

“How thick the pigeons are!” said he. “If working every day were not my trade, I could get all the meat I should want by hunting, — pigeons, woodchucks, rabbits, partridges, — by George! I could get all I should want for a week in one day.”

I imagine it to be some advantage to live a primitive and frontier life, though in the midst of an outward civilization. Of course all the improvements of the ages do not carry a man backward nor forward in relation to the great facts of his existence.

Our furniture should be as simple as the Arab’s or the Indian’s. At first the thoughtful, wondering man plucked in haste the fruits which the boughs extended to him, and found in the sticks and stones around him his implements ready to crack the nut, to wound the beast, and build his house with. And he still remembered that he was a sojourner in nature. When he was refreshed with food and sleep he contemplated his journey again. He dwelt in a tent in this world. He was either threading the valleys, or crossing the plains, or climbing the mountain-tops.

Now the best works of art serve comparatively but to dissipate the mind, for they themselves represent transitionary and paroxysmal, not free and absolute, thoughts.

Men have become the tools of their tools. The man who independently plucked the fruits when he was hungry is become a farmer.

There are scores of pitch pines in my field, from one to three inches in diameter, girdled by the mice last winter. A Norwegian winter it was for them, for the snow lay long and deep, and they had to mix much pine meal with their usual diet. Yet these trees have not many of them died, even in midsummer, and laid bare for a foot, but have grown a foot. They seem to do all their gnawing beneath the snow. There is not much danger of the mouse tribe becoming extinct in hard winters, for their granary is a cheap and extensive one.

Here is one has had her nest under my house, and came when I took my luncheon to pick the crumbs at my feet. It had never seen

the race of man before, and so the sooner became familiar. It ran over my shoes and up my pantaloons inside, clinging to my flesh with its sharp claws. It would run up the side of the room by short impulses like a squirrel, which [it] resembles, coming between the house mouse and the former. Its belly is a little reddish, and its ears a little longer. At length, as I leaned my elbow on the bench, it ran over my arm and round the paper which contained my dinner. And when I held it a piece of cheese, it came and nibbled between my fingers, and then cleaned its face and paws like a fly.

There is a memorable interval between the written and the spoken language, the language read and the language heard. The one is transient, a sound, a tongue, a dialect, and all men learn it of their mothers. It is loquacious, fragmentary, — raw material. The other is a reserved, select, matured expression, a deliberate word addressed to the ear of nations and generations. The one is natural and convenient, the other divine and instructive. The clouds flit here below, genial, refreshing with their showers and gratifying with their tints, — alternate sun and shade, a grosser heaven adapted to our trivial wants; but above them repose the blue firmament and the stars. The stars are written words and stereotyped on the blue parchment of the skies; the fickle clouds that hide them from our view, which we on this side need, though heaven does not, these are our daily colloquies, our vaporous, garrulous breath.

Books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written. The herd of men, the generations who speak the Greek and Latin, are not entitled by the accident of birth to read the works of genius, whose mother tongue speaks everywhere, and is learned by every child who hears. The army of the Greeks and Latins are not coætemary, though contemporary, with Homer and Plato, Virgil and Cicero. In the transition ages, nations who loudest spoke the Greek and Latin tongues, whose mother's milk they were, learned not their nobler dialects, but a base and vulgar speech. The men of the Middle Ages who spoke so glibly the language of the Roman and, in the Eastern Empire, of the Athenian mob, prized only a cheap contemporary learning. The classics of both languages were virtually lost and forgotten. When, after the several nations of Europe had acquired in some degree rude and original languages of their own,

sufficient for the arts of life and conversation, then the few scholars beheld with advantage from this more distant standpoint the treasures of antiquity, and a new Latin age commenced, the era of reading. Those works of genius were then first classical. All those millions who had spoken Latin and Greek had not read Latin and Greek. The time had at length arrived for the written word, the *scripture*, to be heard. What the multitude could not *hear*, after the lapse of centuries a few scholars *read.* This is the matured thought which was not spoken in the market-place, unless it be in a market-place where the free genius of mankind resorts to-day. There is something very choice and select in a written word. No wonder Alexander carried his Homer in a precious casket on his expeditions. A word which may be translated into every dialect, and suggests a truth to every mind, is the most perfect work of human art; and as it may be breathed and taken on our lips, and, as it were, become the product of our physical organs, as its sense is of our intellectual, it is the nearest to life itself. It is the simplest and purest channel by which a revelation may be transmitted from age to age. How it subsists itself whole and undiminished till the intelligent reader is born to decipher it! There are the tracks of Zoroaster, of Confucius and Moses, indelible in the sands of the remotest times.

There are no monuments of antiquity comparable to the classics for interest and importance. It does not need that the scholar should be an antiquarian, for these works of art have such an immortality as the works of nature, and are modern at the same time that they are ancient, like the sun and stars, and occupy by right no small share of the present. This palpable beauty is the treasured wealth of the world and the proper inheritance of each generation. Books, the oldest and the best, stand rightfully on the shelves of every cottage. They have not to plead their cause, but they enlighten their readers and it is gained. When the illiterate and scornful rustic earns his imagined leisure and wealth, he turns inevitably at last — he or his children — to these still higher and yet inaccessible circles; and even when his descendant has attained to move in the highest rank of the wise men of his own age and country, he will still be sensible only of the imperfection of his culture and the vanity and inefficiency of his

intellectual wealth, if his genius will not permit him to listen with somewhat of the equanimity of an equal to the fames of godlike men, which yet, as it were, form an invisible upper class in every society. I have carried an apple in my pocket to-night — a sopsivine, they call it — till, now that I take my handkerchief out, it has got so fine a fragrance that it really seems like a friendly trick of some pleasant dæmon to entertain me with. It is redolent of sweet-scented orchards, of innocent, teeming harvests. I realize the existence of a goddess Pomona, and that the gods have really intended that men should feed divinely, like themselves, on their own nectar and ambrosia. They have so painted this fruit, and freighted it with such a fragrance, that it satisfies much more than an animal appetite. Grapes, peaches, berries, nuts, etc., are likewise provided for those who will sit at their sideboard. I have felt, when partaking of this inspiring diet, that my appetite was an indifferent consideration; that eating became a sacrament, a method of communion, an ecstatic exercise, a mingling of bloods, and [a] sitting at the communion table of the world; and so have not only quenched my thirst at the spring but the health of the universe.

The indecent haste and grossness with which our food is swallowed have cast a disgrace on the very act of eating itself. But I do believe that, if this process were rightly conducted, its aspect and effects would be wholly changed, and we should receive our daily life and health, Antæus-like, with an ecstatic delight, and, with upright front, an innocent and graceful behavior, take our strength from day to day. This fragrance of the apple in my pocket has, I confess, deterred me from eating of it. I am more effectually fed by it another way.

It is, indeed, the common notion that this fragrance is the only food of the gods, and inasmuch as we are partially divine we are compelled to respect it.

Tell me, ye wise ones, if ye can,
Whither and whence the race of man.
For I have seen his slender clan
Clinging to hoar hills with their feet,
Threading the forest for their meat.

Moss and lichens, bark and grain
They rake together with might and main,
And they digest them with anxiety and pain.
I meet them in their rags and unwashed hair,
Instructed to eke out their scanty fare —
Brave race — with a yet humbler prayer.
Beggars they are, aye, on the largest scale.
They beg their daily bread at heaven's door,
And if their this year's crop alone should fail,
They neither bread nor begging would know more.
They are the titmen of their race,
And hug the vales with mincing pace
Like Troglodytes, and fight with cranes.
We walk 'mid great relations' feet.
What they let fall alone we eat.
We are only able
To catch the fragments from their table.
These elder brothers of our race,
By us unseen, with larger pace
Walk o'er our heads, and live our lives,
Embody our desires and dreams,
Anticipate our hoped-for gleams.
We grub the earth for our food.
We know not what is good.
Where does the fragrance of our orchards go,
Our vineyards, while we toil below?
A finer race and finer fed
Feast and revel above our head.
The tints and fragrance of the flowers and fruits
Are but the crumbs from off their table,
While we consume the pulp and roots.
Sometimes we do assert our kin,
And stand a moment where once they have been.
We hear their sounds and see their sights,
And we experience their delights.
But for the moment that we stand
Astonished on the Olympian land,

We do discern no traveller's face,
No elder brother of our race,
To lead us to the monarch's court
And represent our case;
But straightway we must journey back,
Retracing slow the arduous track,
Without the privilege to tell,
Even, the sight we know so well.

In my father's house are many mansions.

Who ever explored the mansions of the air? Who knows who his neighbors are? We seem to lead our human lives amid a concentric system of worlds, of realm on realm, close bordering on each other, where dwell the unknown and the imagined races, as various in degree as our own thoughts are, — a system of invisible partitions more infinite in number and more inconceivable in intricacy than the starry one which science has penetrated.

When I play my flute to-night, earnest as if to leap the bounds [of] the narrow fold where human life is penned, and range the surrounding plain, I hear echo from a neighboring wood, a stolen pleasure, occasionally not rightfully heard, much more for other ears than ours, for't is the reverse of sound. It is not our own melody that comes back to us, but an amended strain. And I would only hear myself as I would hear my echo, corrected and repronounced for me. It is as when my friend reads my verse.

The borders of our plot are set with flowers, whose seeds were blown from more Elysian fields adjacent. They are the pot-herbs of the gods, which our laborious feet have never reached, and fairer fruits and unaccustomed fragrance betray another realm's vicinity. There, too, is Echo found, with which we play at evening. There is the abutment of the rainbow's arch.

Aug. 6. Walden. — I have just been reading a book called "The Crescent and the Cross," till now I am somewhat ashamed of myself. Am I sick, or idle, that I can sacrifice my energy, America, and to-day to this man's ill-remembered and indolent story? Carnac and Luxor are but names, and still more desert sand and at length a wave

of the great ocean itself are needed to wash away the filth that attaches to their grandeur.

Carnacî Carnac! this is Camac for me, and I behold the columns of a larger and a purer temple. May our childish and fickle aspirations be divine, while we descend to this mean intercourse. Our reading should be heroic, in an unknown tongue, a dialect always but imperfectly learned, through which we stammer line by line, catching but a glimmering of the sense, and still afterward admiring its unexhausted hieroglyphics, its untranslated columns. Here grow around me nameless trees and shrubs, each morning freshly sculptured, rising new stories day by day, instead of hideous ruins, — their myriad-handed worker uncompelled as uncompelling. This is my Carnac; that its unmeasured dome. The measuring art man has invented flourishes and dies upon this temple's floor, nor ever dreams to reach that ceiling's height. Carnac and Luxor crumble underneath. Their shadowy roofs let in the light once more reflected from the ceiling of the sky.

Behold these flowers! Let us be up with Time, not dreaming of three thousand years ago. Erect ourselves and let those columns lie, not stoop to raise a foil against the sky. Where is the *spirit* of that time but in this present day, this present line? Three thousand years ago are not agone; they are still lingering here this summer morn.

And Memnon's mother sprightly greets us now;
Wears still her youthful blushes on her brow.
And Camac's columns, why stand they on the plain?
T' enjoy our opportunities they would fain remain.
This is my Camac, whose unmeasured dome
Shelters the measuring art and measurer's home,
Whose propylæum is the system high [?]
And sculptured façade the visible sky.

Where there is memory which compelleth Time, the Muses' mother, and the Muses nine, there are all ages, past and future time, — unwearied memory that does not forget the actions of the past, that does not forego to stamp them freshly, that Old Mortality, industrious to retouch the monuments of time, in the world's

cemetery throughout every clime.

The student may read Homer or Æschylus in the original Greek; for to do so implies to emulate their heroes, —— the consecration of morning hours to their pages.

The heroic books, though printed in the character of our mother tongue, are always written in a foreign language, dead to idle and degenerate times, and we must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than the text renders us, at last, out of our own valor and generosity.

A man must find his own occasion in himself. The natural day is very calm, and will hardly reprove our indolence. If there is no elevation in our spirits, the pond will not seem elevated like a mountain tarn, but a low pool, a silent muddy water, a place for fishermen.

I sit here at my window like a priest of Isis, and observe the phenomena of three thousand years ago, yet unimpaired. The tantivy of wild pigeons, an ancient race of birds, gives a voice to the air, flying by twos and threes athwart my view or perching restless on the white pine boughs occasionally; a fish hawk dimples the glassy surface of the pond and brings up a fish; and for the last half-hour I have heard the rattle of railroad cars conveying travellers from Boston to the country.

After the evening train has gone by and left the world to silence and to me, the whip-poor-will chants her vespers for half an hour. And when all is still at night, the owls take up the strain, like mourning women their ancient ululu. Their most dismal scream is truly Ben-Jonsonian. Wise midnight hags! It is no honest and blunt tu-whit tu-who of the poets, but, without jesting, a most solemn graveyard ditty, — but the mutual consolations of suicide lovers remembering the pangs and the delights of supernal love in the infernal groves. And yet I love to hear their wailing, their doleful responses, trilled along the woodside, reminding me sometimes of music and singing birds, as if it were the dark and tearful side of music, the regrets and sighs, that would fain be sung. The spirits, the *low* spirits and melancholy forebodings, of fallen spirits who once in

human shape night-walked the earth and did the deeds of darkness, now expiating with their wailing hymns, threnodiai, their sins in the very scenery of their transgressions. They give me a new sense of the vastness and mystery of that nature which is the common dwelling of us both.

"Oh-o-o-o-o that I never had been bor-or-or-or-om!" sighs one on this side of the pond, and circles in the restlessness of despair to some new perch in the gray oaks. Then, "That I never had been bor-or-or-or-om!" echoes one on the further side, with a tremulous sincerity, and "Bor-or-or-or-orn" comes faintly from far in the Lincoln woods. — .

And then the frogs, bullfrogs; they are the more sturdy spirits of ancient wine-bibbers and wassailers, still unrepentant, trying to sing a catch in their Stygian lakes. They would fain keep up the hilarious good fellowship and all the rules of their old round tables, but they have waxed hoarse and solemnly grave and serious their voices, mocking at mirth, and their wine has lost its flavor and is only liquor to distend their paunches, and never comes sweet intoxication to drown the memory of the past, but mere saturation and water-logged dullness and distension. Still the most aldermanic, with his chin upon a pad, which answers for a napkin to his drooling chaps, under the eastern shore quaffs a deep draught of the once scorned water, and passes round the cup with the ejaculation *tr-r-r-r-r-oonk, tr-r-r-r-r-oonk, tr-r-r-r-oonk I* and straightway comes over the water from some distant cove the selfsame password, where the next in seniority and girth has gulped down to his mark; and when the strain has made the circuit of the shores, then ejaculates the master of ceremonies with satisfaction *tr-r-r-r-oonk!* and each in turn repeats the sound, down to the least distended, leakiest, flabbiest paunched, that there be no mistake; and the bowl goes round again, until the sun dispels the morning mist, and only the patriarch is not under the pond, but vainly bellowing *troonk* from time to time, pausing for a reply.

All nature is classic and akin to art. The sumach and pine and hickory which surround my house remind me of the most graceful sculpture. Sometimes their tops, or a single limb or leaf, seems to

have grown to a distinct expression as if it were a symbol for me to interpret. Poetry, painting, and sculpture claim at once and associate with themselves those perfect specimens of the art of nature, — leaves, vines, acorns, pine cones, etc. The critic must at last stand as mute though contented before a true poem as before an acorn or a vine leaf. The perfect work of art is received again into the bosom of nature whence its material proceeded, and that criticism which can only detect its unnaturalness has no longer any office to fulfill. The choicest maxims that have come down to us are more beautiful or integrally wise than they are wise to our understandings. This wisdom which we are inclined to pluck from their stalk is the point only of a single association. Every natural form — palm leaves and acorns, oak leaves and sumach - and dodder — are *[sic]* untranslatable aphorisms.

Twenty-three years since, when I was five years old, I was brought from Boston to this pond, away in the country, — which was then but another name for the extended world for me, — one of the most ancient scenes stamped on the tablets of my memory, the oriental Asiatic valley of my world, whence so many races and inventions have gone forth in recent times. That woodland vision for a long time made the drapery of my dreams. That sweet solitude my spirit seemed so early to require that I might have room to entertain my thronging guests, and that speaking silence that my ears might distinguish the significant sounds. Somehow or other it at once gave the preference to this recess among the pines, where almost sunshine and shadow were the only inhabitants that varied the scene, over that tumultuous and varied city, as if it had found its proper nursery.

Well, now, to-night my flute awakes the echoes over this very water, but one generation of pines has fallen, and with their stumps I have cooked my supper, and a lusty growth of oaks and pines is rising all around its brim and preparing its wilder aspect for new infant eyes. Almost the same johnswort springs from the same perennial root in this pasture. Even I have at length helped to clothe that fabulous landscape of my imagination, and one result of my presence and influence is seen in these bean leaves and com blades and potato vines.

As difficult to preserve is the tenderness of your nature as the bloom upon a peach.

Most men are so taken up with the cares and rude practice of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them. Literally, the laboring man has not leisure for a strict and lofty integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain the fairest and noblest relations. His labor will depreciate in the market.

How can he remember well his ignorance who has so often to use his knowledge.

Aug. 15. The sounds heard at this hour, 8.30, are the distant rumbling of wagons over bridges, — a sound farthest heard of any human at night, — the baying of dogs, the lowing of cattle in distant yards.

What if we were to obey these fine dictates, these divine suggestions, which are addressed to the mind and not to the body, which are certainly true, — not to eat meat, not to buy, or sell, or barter, etc., etc., etc.?

I will not plant beans another summer, but sincerity, truth, simplicity, faith, trust, innocence, and see if they will not grow in this soil with such manure as I have, I would not forget that I deal with infinite and divine qualities in my fellow. All men, indeed, are divine in their core of light, but that is indistinct and distant to me, like the stars of the least magnitude, or the galaxy itself, but my kindred planets show their round disks and even their attendant moons to my eye.

Even the tired laborers I meet on the road, I really meet as travelling gods, but it is as yet, and must be for a long season, without speech.

Aug. 23. Saturday. I set out this afternoon to go a-fishing for pickerel to eke out my scanty fare of vegetables. From Walden I went through the woods to Fair Haven, but by the way the rain came on again, and my fates compelled me to stand a half-hour under a pine, piling boughs over my head, and wearing my pocket handkerchief for an umbrella; and when at length I had made one cast over the pickerel-weed, the thunder gan romblen in the heven

with that grisly steven that Chaucer tells of. (The gods must be proud, with such forked flashes and such artillery to rout a poor unarmed fisherman.) I made haste to the nearest hut for a shelter. This stood a half a mile off the road, and so much the nearer to the pond. There dwelt a shiftless Irishman, John Field, and his wife, and many children, from the broad-faced boy that ran by his father's side to escape the rain to the wrinkled and sibyl-like, crone-like infant, not knowing whether to take the part of age or infancy, that sat upon its father's knee as in the palaces of nobles, and looked out from its home in the midst of wet and hunger inquisitively upon the stranger, with the privilege of infancy; the young creature not knowing but it might be the last of a line of kings instead of John Field's poor starveling brat, or, I should rather say, still knowing that it was the last of a noble line and the hope and cynosure of the world. An honest, hard-working, but shiftless man plainly was John Field; and his wife, she too was brave to cook so many succeeding dinners in the recesses of that lofty stove; with round, greasy face and bare breast, still thinking to improve her condition one day; with the never absent mop in hand, and yet no effects of it visible anywhere. The chickens, like members of the family, stalked about the room, too much humanized to roast well. They stood and looked in my eye or pecked at my shoe. He told me his story, how hard he worked bogging for a neighbor, at ten dollars an acre and the use of the land with manure for one year, and the little broad-faced son worked cheerfully at his father's side the while, not knowing, alas! how poor a bargain he had made. Living, John Field, alas! without arithmetic; failing to live.

"Do you ever fish?" said I. "Oh yes, I catch a mess when I am lying by; good perch I catch."

"What's your bait?"

"I catch shiners with fishworms, and bait the perch with them."

"You'd better go now, John," said his wife, with glistening, hopeful face. But poor John Field disturbed but a couple of fins, while I was catching a fair string, and he said it was his luck; and when he changed seats luck changed seats too. Thinking to live by some derivative old-country mode in this primitive new country, *e g.* to catch perch with shiners.

I find an instinct in me conducting to a mystic spiritual life, and also another to a primitive savage life.

Toward evening, as the world waxes darker, I am permitted to see the woodchuck stealing across my path, and tempted to seize and devour it. The wildest, most desolate scenes are strangely familiar to me.

Why not live a hard and emphatic life, not to be avoided, full of adventures and work, learn much in it, travel much, though it be only in these woods? I sometimes walk across a field with unexpected expansion and long-missed content, as if there were a field worthy of me. The usual daily boundaries of life are dispersed, and I see in what field I stand.

When on my way this afternoon, Shall I go down this long hill in the rain to fish in the pond? I ask myself. And I say to myself: Yes, roam far, grasp life and conquer it, learn much and live. Your fetters are knocked off; you are really free. Stay till late in the night; be unwise and daring. See many men far and near, in their fields and cottages before the sun sets, though as if many more were to be seen. And yet each *rencontre* shall be so satisfactory and simple that no other shall seem possible. Do not repose every night as villagers do. The noble life is continuous and unintermitting. At least, live with a longer radius. Men come home at night only from the next field or street, where their household echoes haunt, and their life pines and is sickly because it breathes its own breath. Their shadows morning and evening reach farther than their daily steps. But come home from far, from ventures and perils, from enterprise and discovery and crusading, with faith and experience and character. Do not rest much. Dismiss prudence, fear, conformity. Remember only what is promised. Make the day light you, and the night hold a candle, though you be falling from heaven to earth "from mom to dewy eve a summer's day."

For Vulcan's fall occupied a day, but our highest aspirations and performances fill but the interstices of time.

Are we not reminded in our better moments that we have been needlessly husbanding somewhat, perchance our little God-derived capital, or title to capital, guarding it by methods we know? But the

most diffuse prodigality a better wisdom teaches, — that we *hold* nothing. We are not what we were. By usurers' craft, by Jewish methods, we strive to retain and increase the divinity in us, when infinitely the greater part of divinity is out of us.

Most men have forgotten that it was ever morning; but a few serene memories, healthy and wakeful natures, there are who assure us that the sun rose clear, heralded by the singing of birds, — this very day's sun, which rose before Memnon was ready to greet it.

In all the dissertations on language, men forget the language that is, that is really universal, the inexpressible meaning that is in all things and everywhere, with which the morning and evening teem. As if language were especially of the tongue of course. With a more copious learning or understanding of what is published, the present *languages*, and all that they express, will be forgotten.

The rays which streamed through the crevices will be no more remembered when the shadow is wholly removed.

Left house on account of plastering, Wednesday, November 12th, at night; returned Saturday, December 6th.

Though the race is not so degenerated but a man might possibly live in a cave to-day and keep himself warm by furs, yet, as caves and wild beasts are not plenty enough to accommodate all at the present day, it were certainly better to accept the advantages which the invention and industry of mankind offer. In thickly settled civilized communities, boards and shingles, lime and brick, are cheaper and more easily come by than suitable caves, or the whole logs, or bark in sufficient quantity, or even well-tempered clay or flat stones. A tolerable house for a rude and hardy race that lived much out of doors was once made here without any of these last materials. According to the testimony of the first settlers of Boston, an Indian wigwam was as comfortable in winter as an English house with all its wainscotting, and they had advanced so far as to regulate the effect of the wind by a mat suspended over the hole in the roof, which was moved by a string. Such a lodge was, in the first instance, constructed in a day or two and taken down and put up again in a few

hours, and every family had one.

Thus, to try our civilization by a fair test, in the ruder states of society every family owns a shelter as good as the best, and sufficient for its ruder and simpler wants; but in modern civilized society, though the birds of the air have their nests, and woodchucks and foxes their holes, though each one is commonly the owner of his coat and hat though never so poor, yet not more than one man in a thousand owns a shelter, but the nine hundred and ninety-nine pay an annual tax for this outside garment of all, indispensable summer and winter, which would buy a village of Indian wigwams and contributes to keep them poor as long as they live. But, answers one, by simply paying this annual tax the poorest man secures an abode which is a palace compared to the Indian's. An annual rent of from twenty to sixty or seventy dollars entitles him to the benefit of all the improvements of centuries, — Rumford fireplace, back plastering, Venetian blinds, copper pump, spring lock, etc., etc. But while civilization has been improving our houses, she has not equally improved the men who should occupy them. She has created palaces, but it was not so easy to create noblemen and kings. The mason who finishes the cornice of the palace returns at night, perchance, to a hut no better than a wigwam. If she claims to have made a real advance in the welfare of man, she must show how she has produced better dwellings without making them more costly. And the cost of a thing, it will be remembered, is the amount of life it requires to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run. An average house costs perhaps from one thousand to fifteen hundred dollars, and to earn this sum will require from fifteen to twenty years of the day laborer's life, even if he is not incumbered with a family; so that he must spend more than half his life before a wigwam can be earned; and if we suppose he pays a rent instead, this is but a doubtful choice of evils. Would the savage have been wise to exchange his wigwam for a palace on these terms?

When I consider my neighbors, the farmers of Concord, for instance, who are at least as well off as the other classes, what are they about? For the most part I find that they have been toiling ten, twenty, or thirty years to pay for their farms, and we may set down

one half of that toil to the cost of their houses; and commonly they have not yet paid for them. This is the reason they are poor; and for similar reasons we are all poor in respect to a thousand savage comforts, though surrounded by luxuries.

But most men do not know what a house is, and the mass are actually poor all their days because they think they must have such an one as their neighbor's. As if one were to wear any sort of coat the tailor might cut out for him, or, gradually leaving off palm-leaf hat and cap of woodchuck-skin, should complain of hard times because he could not buy him a crown!

It reflects no little dignity on Nature, the fact that the Romans once inhabited her, — that from this same unaltered hill, forsooth, the Roman once looked out upon the sea, as from a signal station. The vestiges of military roads, of houses and tessellated courts and baths, — Nature need not be ashamed of these relics of her children. The hero's cairn, — one doubts at length whether his relations or Nature herself raised the hill. The whole earth is but a hero's caim. How often are the Romans flattered by the historian and antiquary! Their vessels penetrated into this frith and up that river of some remote isle. Their military monuments still remain on the hills and under the sod of the valleys. The oft-repeated Roman stoiy is written in still legible characters in every quarter of the old world, and but today a new coin is dug up whose inscription repeats and confirms their fame. Some " Judæa Capta," with a woman mourning under a palm tree, with silent argument and demonstration puts at rest whole pages of history.

The Earth

Which seems so barren once gave birth
To heroes, who o'er ran her plains,
Who plowed her seas and reaped her grains.

Some make the mythology of the Greeks to have been borrowed from that of the Hebrews, which however is not to be proved by

analogies, — the story of Jupiter dethroning his father Saturn, for instance, from the conduct of Cham towards his father Noah, and the division of the world among the three brothers. But the Hebrew fable will not bear to be compared with the Grecian. The latter is infinitely more sublime and divine. The one is a history of mortals, the other a history of gods and heroes, therefore not so ancient. The one god of the Hebrews is not so much of a gentleman, not so gracious and divine, not so flexible and catholic, does not exert so intimate an influence on nature as many a one of the Greeks. He is not less human, though more absolute and unapproachable. The Grecian were youthful and living gods, but still of godlike or divine race, and had the virtues of gods. The Hebrew had not all of the divinity that is in man, no real love for man, but an inflexible justice. The attribute of the one god has been infinite power, not grace, not humanity, nor love even, — wholly masculine, with no sister Juno, no Apollo, no Venus in him. I might say that the one god was not yet apotheosized, not yet become the current material of poetry.

The wisdom of some of those Greek fables is remarkable. The god Apollo (Wisdom, Wit, Poetry) condemned to serve, keep the sheep of *King* Admetus. So is poetry allied to the state.

To Æacus, Minos, Rhadamanthus, judges in hell, only naked men came to be judged. As Alexander Ross comments, "In this world we must not look for Justice; when we are stript of all, then shall we have it. For here something will be found about us that shall corrupt the Judge." When the island of Ægina was depopulated by sickness at the instance of Æacus, Jupiter turned the ants into men, *i.e.* made men of the inhabitants who lived meanly like ants.

The hidden significance of these fables which has been detected, the ethics running parallel to the poetry and history, is not so remarkable as the readiness with which they may be made to express any truth. They are the skeletons of still older and more universal truths than any whose flesh and blood they are for the time made to wear. It is like striving to make the sun and the wind and the sea signify. What signifies it?

Piety, that carries its father on its shoulders.

Music was of three kinds, — mournful, martial, and effeminate, — Lydian, Doric, and Phrygian. Its inventors Amphion, Thamyris, and Marsyas. Amphion was bred by shepherds. He caused the stones to follow him and built the walls of Thebes by his music. All orderly and harmonious or beautiful structures may be said to be raised to a slow music.

Harmony was begotten of Mars and Venus.

Antæus was the son of Neptune and the Earth. All physical bulk and strength is of the earth and mortal. When it loses this *point d'appui* it is weakness; it cannot soar. And so, *vice versa*, you can interpret this fable to the credit of the earth.

They all provoked or challenged the gods, — Amphion, Apollo and Diana, and was killed by them; Thamyris, the Muses, who conquered him in music, took away his eyesight and melodious voice, and broke his lyre. Marsyas took up the flute which Minerva threw away, challenged Apollo, was flayed alive by him, and his death mourned by Fauns, Satyrs, and Dryads, whose tears produced the river which bears his name.

The fable which is truly and naturally composed, so as to please the imagination of a child, harmonious though strange like a wild-flower, is to the wise man an apothegm and admits his wisest interpretation.

Wrhen we read that Bacchus made the Tyrrhenian mariners mad, so that they leaped into the sea, mistaking it for "a meadow full of flowers," and so became dolphins, we are not concerned about the historical truth of this, but rather a higher, poetical truth. We seem to hear the music of a thought, and care not if our intellect be not gratified. —

The mythologies, those vestiges of ancient poems, the world's inheritance, still reflecting some of their original hues, like the fragments of clouds tinted by the departed sun, the wreck of poems, a retrospect as [of] the loftiest fames, — what survives of oldest fame, — some fragment will still float into the latest summer day and ally this hour to the morning of creation. These are the materials and hints for a history of the rise and progress of the race. How from the condition of ants it arrived at the condition of men, how arts were

invented gradually, — let a thousand surmises shed some light on this story. We will not be confined by historical, even geological, periods, which would allow us to doubt of a progress in human events. If we rise above this wisdom for the day, we shall expect that this morning of the race, in which they have been supplied with the simplest necessaries, — with com and wine and honey and oil and fire and articulate speech and agricultural and other arts, — reared up by degrees from the condition of ants to men, will be succeeded by a day of equally progressive splendor; that, in the lapse of the divine periods, other divine agents and godlike men will assist to elevate the race as much above its present condition.

Aristæus "found out honey and oil."

"He obtained of Jupiter and Neptune, that the pestilential heat of the dog-days, wherein was great mortality, should be mitigated with wind."

Dec. 12. Friday. The pond skimmed over on the night of this day, excepting a strip from the bar to the northwest shore. Flint's Pond has been frozen for some time.

Dec. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. Pond *quite free* from ice, not yet having been frozen quite over.

Dec. 23. *Tuesday.* The pond froze over last night entirely for the first time, yet so as not to be safe to walk upon.

I wish to say something to-night not of and concerning the Chinese and Sandwich-Islanders, but *to* and concerning you who hear me, who are said to live in New England; something about your condition, especially your outward condition or circumstances in this world, in this town; what it is, whether it is necessarily as bad as it is, whether it can't be improved as well as not.

It is generally admitted that some of you are poor, find it hard to get a living, haven't always something in your pockets, haven't paid for all the dinners you've actually eaten, or all your coats and shoes, some of which are already worn out. All this is very well known to all by hearsay and by experience. It is very evident what a mean and

sneaking life you live, always in the hampers, always on the limits, trying to get into business and trying to get out of debt, a very ancient slough, called by the Latins *aes alienum,* another's brass, — some of their coins being made of brass, — and still so many living and dying and buried to-day by another's brass; always promising to pay, promising to pay, with interest, to-morrow perhaps, and die to-day, insolvent; seeking to curry favor, to get custom, lying, flattering, voting, contracting yourselves into a nutshell of civility or dilating into a world of thin and vaporous generosity, that you may persuade your neighbor to let you make his [shoes, or his hat, or his coat, or his carriage, etc.].

There is a civilization going on among brutes as well as men. Foxes are forest dogs. I hear one barking raggedly, wildly, demoniacally in the darkness to-night, seeking expression, laboring with some anxiety, striving to be a dog outright that he may carelessly run in the street, struggling for light. He is but a faint man, before pygmies; an imperfect, burrowing man. He has come up near to my window, attracted by the light, and barked a vulpine curse at me, then retreated.

Reading suggested by Hallam's History of Literature.

1.— "Abelard and Heloise."

2. — Look at Luigi Pulci. His "Morgante Maggiore," published in 1481, "was to the poetical romances of chivalry what Don Quixote was to their brethren in prose."

3. — Leonardo da Vinci. The most remarkable of his writings still in manuscript. For his universality of genius, "the first name of the fifteenth century."

4. — Read Boiardo's "Orlando Innamorato," published between 1491 and 1500, for its influence on Ariosto and its intrinsic merits. Its sounding names repeated by Milton in "Paradise Regained."

Landor's works are: —

A small volume of poems, 1793, out of print.

Poems of "Gebir,"

"Chrysaor," the "Phoceans," etc. The "Gebir" eulogized by

Southey and Coleridge. Wrote verses in Italian and Latin.

The dramas "Andrea of Hungary,"

"Giovanna of Naples," and "Fra Rupert."

"Pericles and Aspasia."

"Poems from the Arabic and Persian," 1800, pretending to be translations.

"A Satire upon Satirists, and Admonition to Detractors," printed 1836, not published.

Letters called "High and Low Life in Italy."

"Imaginary Conversations."

"Pentameron and Pentalogia."

"Examination of William Shakspeare before Sir Thomas Lucy, Knt., touching Deer-stealing."

Vide again Richard's sail in "Richard First and the Abbot."

Phocion's remarks in conclusion of "Eschines and Phocion."

"Demosthenes and Eubulides."

In Milton and Marvel, speaking of the Greek poets, he says, "There is a sort of refreshing odor flying off it perpetually; not enough to oppress or to satiate; nothing is beaten or bruised; nothing smells of the stalk; the flower itself is half-concealed by the Genius of it hovering round."

Pericles and Sophocles.

Marcus Tullius Cicero and his brother Quintus. In this a sentence on Sleep and Death.

Johnson and Tooke, for a criticism on words.

It is worth the while to have lived a primitive wilderness life at some time, to know what are, after all, the necessaries of life and what methods society has taken to supply them. I have looked over the old day-books of the merchants with the same view, — to see what it was shopmen bought. They are the grossest groceries. Salt is perhaps the most important article in such a list, and most commonly bought at the stores, of articles commonly thought to be necessaries, — salt, sugar, molasses, cloth, etc., — by the farmer. You will see why stores or shops exist, not to furnish tea and coffee, but salt, etc. Here's the rub, then.

I see how I could supply myself with every other article which I

need, without using the shops, and to obtain this might be the fit occasion for a visit to the seashore. Yet even salt cannot strictly speaking be called a necessary of human life, since many tribes do not use it.

"Have you seen my hound, sir? I want to know! — what! a lawyer's office? law books? — if you've seen anything of a hound about here. Why, what do you do here?"

"I live here. No, I have n't."

"Haven't you heard one in the woods anywhere?"

"Oh, yes, I heard one this evening."

"What do you do here?"

"But he was some way off."

"Which side did he seem to be?"

"Well, I should think he [was] the other side of the pond."

"This is a large dog; makes a large track. He's been out hunting from Lexington for a week. How long have you lived here?"

"Oh, about a year."

"Somebody said there was a man up here had a camp in the woods somewhere, and he'd got him."

"Well, I don't know of anybody. There's Britton's camp over on the other road. It may be there."

"Isn't there anybody in these woods?"

"Yes, they are chopping right up here behind me."

"How far is it?"

"Only a few steps. Hark a moment. There, don't you hear the sound of their axes?"

Therien, the woodchopper, was here yesterday, and while I was cutting wood, some chickadees hopped near pecking the bark and chips and the potato-skins I had thrown out. "What do you call them," he asked. I told him.

"What do *you* call them," asked I. "*Mezezence* [?]," I think he said. "When I eat my dinner in the woods," said he, "sitting very still, having kindled a fire to warm my coffee, they come and light on my arm and peck at the potato in my fingers. I like to have the little fellers about me." Just then one flew up from the snow and perched on the wood I was holding in my arms, and pecked it, and looked me

familiarly in the face. *Chicadee-dee-dee-dee-dee*, while others were whistling phebe, — *phe-bee*, — in the woods behind the house.

March 26, 1846. The change from foul weather to fair, from dark, sluggish hours to serene, elastic ones, is a memorable crisis which all things proclaim. The change from foulness to serenity is instantaneous. Suddenly an influx of light, though it was late, filled my room. I looked out and saw that the pond was already calm and full of hope as on a summer evening, though the ice was dissolved but yesterday. There seemed to be some intelligence in the pond which responded to the unseen serenity in a distant horizon. I heard a robin in the distance, — the first I had heard this spring, — repeating the assurance. The green pitch [pine] suddenly looked brighter and more erect, as if now entirely washed and cleansed by the rain. I knew it would not rain any more. A serene summer-evening sky seemed darkly reflected in the pond, though the clear sky was nowhere visible overhead. It was no longer the end of a season, but the beginning. The pines and shrub oaks, which had before drooped and cowered the winter through with myself, now recovered their several characters and in the landscape revived the expression of an immortal beauty. Trees seemed all at once to be fitly grouped, to sustain new relations to men and to one another. There was somewhat cosmical in the arrangement of nature. O the evening robin, at the close of a New England day! If I could ever find the twig he sits upon! Where does the minstrel really roost? We perceive it is not the bird of the ornithologist that is heard, — the *Turdus migratorius.*

The signs of fair weather are seen in the bosom of ponds before they are recognized in the heavens. It is easy to tell by looking at any twig of the forest whether its winter is past or not.

We forget how the sun looks on our fields, as on the forests and the prairies, as they reflect or absorb his rays. It matters not whether we stand in Italy or on the prairies of the West, in the eye of the sun the earth is all equally cultivated like a garden, and yields to the wave of an irresistible civilization.

This broad field, which I have looked on so long, looks not to me as the farmer, looks away from me to the sun, and attends to the

harmony of nature. These beans have results which are not harvested in the autumn of the year. They do not mind, if I harvest them, who waters and makes them grow? Our grain-fields make part of a beautiful picture which the sun beholds in his daily course, and it matters little comparatively whether they fill the barns of the husbandman. The true husbandman will cease from anxiety and labor with every day, and relinquish all claim to the produce of his fields.

The avaricious man would fain plant by himself.

A flock of geese has just got in late, now in the dark flying low over the pond. They came on, indulging at last like weary travellers in complaint and consolation, or like some creaking evening mail late lumbering in with regular anserine clangor. I stood at my door and could hear their wings when they suddenly spied my light and, ceasing their noise, wheeled to the east and apparently settled in the pond.

March 27. This morning I saw the geese from the door through the mist sailing about in the middle of the pond, but when I went to the shore they rose and circled round like ducks over my head, so that I counted them, — twenty-nine. I after saw thirteen ducks.

1845-1847

THE small and much mutilated journal which begins here appears to belong to the Walden period (1845-47), but the entries are undated.

THE HERO

What doth he ask?
Some worthy task,
Never to run
Till that be done,
That never done
Under the sun.
Here to begin
All things to win
By his endeavor
Forever and ever.
Happy and well
On this ground to dwell,
This soil subdue,
Plant, and renew.,
By might and main
Health and strength gain,
So to give nerve

To his slenderness;
Yet some mighty pain
He would sustain,
So to preserve
His tenderness.
Not be deceived,
Of suff'ring bereaved,
Not lose his life
By living too well,
Nor escape strife

In his lonely cell,
And so find out heaven
By not knowing hell.
Strength like the rock
To withstand any shock,
Yet some Aaron's rod,
Some smiting by God,
Occasion to gain
To shed human tears
And to entertain
Still demonic fears.

Not once for all, forever, blest,
Still to be cheered out of the west;
Not from his heart to banish all sighs;
Still be encouraged by the sunrise;
Forever to love and to love and to love,
Within him, around him, beneath him, above.
To love is to know, is to feel, is to be;
At once't is his birth and his destiny.
Having sold all,
Something would get,
Furnish his stall
With better yet, —
For earthly pleasures
Celestial pains,
Heavenly losses
For earthly gains.
Still to begin — unheard-of sin
A fallen angel — a risen man
Never returns to where he began.
Some childlike labor
Here to perform,
Some baby-house
To keep out the storm,
And make the sun laugh
While he doth warm,

And the moon cry
To think of her youth,
The months gone by,
And wintering truth.

How long to morning?
Can any tell?
How long since the warning
On our ears fell?
The bridegroom cometh
Know we not well?
Are we not ready,
Our packet made,
Our hearts steady,
Last words said?
Must we still eat
The bread we have spumed?
Must we rekindle
The faggots we've burned?
Must we go out
By the poor man's gate?
Die by degrees,
Not by new fate?
Is there no road
This way, my friend?
Is there no road
Without any end?
Have you not seen
In ancient times
Pilgrims go by here
Toward other climes,
With shining faces
Youthful and strong
Mounting this hill
With speech and with song?
Oh, my good sir,
I know not the ways;

Little my knowledge,
Though many my days.
When I have slumbered,
I have heard sounds
As travellers passing
Over my grounds.
*T was a sweet music
Wafted them by;
I could not tell
If far off or nigh.
Unless I dreamed it,
This was of yore,
But I never told it
To mortal before;
Never remembered
But in my dreams
What to me waking
A miracle seems.
If you will give of your pulse or your grain,
We will rekindle those flames again.
Here will we tarry, still without doubt,
Till a miracle putteth that fire out.

At midnight's hour I raised my head.
The owls were seeking for their bread;
The foxes barked, impatient still
At their wan [?] fate they bear so ill.
I thought me of eternities delayed
And of commands but half obeyed.
The night wind rustled through the glade,
As if a force of men there staid;
The word was whispered through the ranks,
And every hero seized his lance.
The word was whispered through the ranks,
Advance!

To live to a good old age such as the ancients reached, serene and

contented, dignifying the life of man, leading a simple, epic country life in these days of confusion and turmoil, — that is what Wordsworth has done.

Retaining the tastes and the innocence of his youth. There is more wonderful talent, but nothing so cheering and world-famous as this.

The life of man would seem to be going all to wrack and pieces, and no instance of permanence and the ancient natural health, notwithstanding Burns, and Coleridge, and Carlyle. It will not do for men to die young; the greatest genius does not die young. Whom the gods love most do indeed die young, but not till their life is matured, and their years are like those of the oak, for they are the products half of nature and half of God. What should nature do without old men, not children but men?

The life of men, not to become a mockery and a jest, should last a respectable term of years. We cannot spare the age of those old Greek Philosophers. They live long who do not live for a near end, who still forever look to the immeasurable future for their manhood.

All dramas have but one scene. There is but one stage for the peasant and for the actor, and both on the farm and in the theatre the curtain rises to reveal the same majestic scenery. The globe of earth is poised in space for his stage under the foundations of the theatre, and the cope of heaven, out of reach of the scene-shifter, overarches it. It is always to be remembered by the critic that all actions are to be regarded at last as performed from a distance upon some rood of earth and amid the operations of nature.

Rabelais, too, inhabited the soil of France in sunshine and shade in those years; and his life was no “farce” after all.

I seek the present time,
No other clime,
Life in to-day, —
Not to sail another way, —
To Paris or to Rome,
Or farther still from home.
That man, whoe’er he is,
Lives but a moral death

Whose life is not coeval
With his breath.
My feet forever stand
On Concord fields,
And I must live the life
Which their soil yields.
What are deeds done
Away from home?
What the best essay
On the Ruins of Rome?
The love of the new,
The unfathomed blue,
The wind in the wood,
All future good,
The sunlit tree,
The small chickadee,
The dusty highways,
What Scripture says,
This pleasant weather,
And all else together,
The river's meander,
All things, in short,
Forbid me to wander
In deed or in thought.
In cold or in drouth,
Not seek the sunny South,
But make my whole tour
In the sunny present hour.

For here if thou fail,
Where can'st thou prevail?
If you love not
Your own land most,
You'll find nothing lovely
On a distant coast.
If you love not
The latest sunset,

What is there in pictures
Or old gems set?
If no man should travel
Till he had the means,
There'd be little travelling
For kings or for queens.
The means, what are they?
They are the wherewithal
Great expenses to pay,
Life got, and some to spare,
Great works on hand,
And freedom from care,
Plenty of time well spent
To use,
Clothes paid for and no rent
In your shoes,
Something to eat
And something to burn,
And above all no need to return.
Then they who come back,
Say, have they not failed,
Wherever they've ridden,
Or steamed it, or sailed?

All your grass hay'd,
All your debts paid,
All your wills made;
Then you might as well have stay'd,
For are you not dead,
Only not buried?

The way unto "to-day,"
The railroad to "here,"
They never'll grade that way
Nor shorten it, I fear.
There are plenty of depots
All the world o'er,

But not a single station
At a man's door.
If he would get near
To the secret of things,
He'll not have to hear
When the engine bell rings.

Exaggeration! was ever any virtue attributed to a man without exaggeration? was ever any vice, without infinite exaggeration? Do we not exaggerate ourselves to ourselves, or do we often recognize ourselves for the actual men we are? The lightning is an exaggeration of light. We live by exaggeration. Exaggerated history is poetry, and is truth referred to a new standard. To a small man every greater one is an exaggeration. No truth was ever expressed but with this sort of emphasis, so that for the time there was no other truth. The value of what is really valuable can never be exaggerated. You must speak loud to those who are hard of hearing; so you acquire a habit of speaking loud to those who are not. In order to appreciate any, even the humblest, man, you must not only understand, but you must first love him; and there never was such an exaggerator as love. Who are we? Are we not all of us great men? And yet what [are] we actually? Nothing, certainly, to speak of. By an immense exaggeration we appreciate our Greek poetry and philosophy, Egyptian ruins, our Shakespeares and Miltons, our liberty and Christianity. We give importance to this hour over all other hours. We do not live by justice, but [by grace.]

Love never perjures itself, nor is it mistaken.

He is not the great writer, who is afraid to let the world know that he ever committed an impropriety. Does it not know that all men are mortal?

Carlyle told R. W. E. that he first discovered that he was not a jackass on reading "Tristram Shandy" and Rousseau's "Confessions," especially the last. His first essay is an article in *Fraser's Magazine* on two boys quarrelling.

Youth wants something to look up to, to look forward to; as the little boy who inquired of me the other day, "How long do those old-agers live?" and expressed the intention of compassing two hundred summers at least. The old man who cobbles shoes without glasses at a hundred, and cuts a handsome swath at a hundred and five, is indispensable to give dignity and respectability to our life.

From all points of the compass, from the earth beneath and the heavens above, have come these inspirations and been entered duly in the order of their arrival in the journal. Thereafter, when the time arrived, they were winnowed into lectures, and again, in due time, from lectures into essays. And at last they stand, like the cubes of Pythagoras, firmly on either basis; like statues on their pedestals, but the statues rarely take hold of hands. There is only such connection and series as is attainable in the galleries. And this affects their immediate practical and popular influence.

Carlyle, we should say, more conspicuously than any other, though with little enough expressed or even conscious sympathy, represents the Reformer class. In him the universal plaint is most settled and serious. Until the thousand named and nameless grievances are righted, there will be no repose for him in the lap of Nature or the seclusion of science and literature. And all the more for not being the visible acknowledged leader of any class.

All places, all positions — all things in short — are a medium happy or unhappy. Every realm has its centre, and the nearer to that the better while you are in it. Even health is only the happiest of all mediums. There may be excess, or there may be deficiency; in either case there is disease. A man must only be *virtuous* enough.

I had one neighbor within half a mile for a short time when I first went to the woods, Hugh Quoil, an Irishman who had been a soldier at Waterloo, Colonel Quoil, as he was called, — I believe that he had killed a colonel and ridden off his horse, — who lived from hand — sometimes to mouth, — though it was commonly a glass of rum that the hand carried. He and his wife awaited their fate together in an old ruin in Walden woods. What life he got — or what means of death

— he got by ditching.

I never was much acquainted with Hugh Quoil, though sometimes I met him in the path, and now do believe that a solid shank-bone, and skull which no longer aches, lie somewhere, and can still be produced, which once with garment of flesh and broadcloth were called and hired to do work as Hugh Quoil. He was a man of manners and gentlemanlike, as one who had seen the world, and was capable of more civil speech than you could well attend to. At a distance he had seemingly a ruddy face as of biting January, but nearer at hand it was bright carmine. It would have burnt your finger to touch his cheek. He wore a straightbodied snuff-colored coat which had long been familiar with him, and carried a turf-knife in his hand — instead of a sword. He had fought on the English side before, but he fought on the Napoleon side now. Napoleon went to St. Helena; Hugh Quoil came to Walden Pond. I heard that he used to tell travellers who inquired about myself that — and Thoreau owned the *farm* together, but Thoreau lived on the *place* and carried it on.

He was thirstier than I, and drank more, probably, but not out of the pond. That was never the lower for him. Perhaps I ate more than he. The last time I met him, the only time I spoke with him, was at the foot of the hill on the highway as I was crossing to the spring one summer afternoon, the pond water being too warm for me. I was crossing the road with a pail in my hand, when Quoil came down the hill, wearing his snuff-colored coat, as if it were winter, and shaking with delirium tremens. I hailed him and told him that my errand was to get water at a spring close by, only at the foot of the hill over the fence. He answered, with stuttering and parched lips, bloodshot eye, and staggering gesture, he'd like to see it. "Follow me there, then." But I had got my pail full and back before he scaled the fence. And he, drawing his coat about him, to warm him, or to cool him, answered in delirium-tremens, hydrophobia dialect, which is not easy to be written here, he'd heard of it, but had never seen it; and so shivered his way along to town, — to liquor and to oblivion.

On Sundays, brother Irishmen and others, who had gone far astray from steady habits and the village, crossed my bean-field with empty jugs toward Quoil's.

But what for? Did they sell rum there? I asked. “Respectable people they,”

“Know no harm of them,”

“Never heard that they drank too much,” was the answer of all wayfarers. They went by sober, stealthy, silent, skulking (no harm to get elm bark Sundays); returned loquacious, sociable, having long intended to call on you.

At length one afternoon Hugh Quoil, feeling better, perchance, with snuff-colored coat, as usual, paced solitary and soldier-like, thinking [of] Waterloo, along the woodland road to the foot of the hill by the spring; and there the Fates met him, and threw him down in his snuff-colored coat on the gravel, and got ready to cut his thread; but not till travellers passed, who would raise him up, get him perpendicular, then settle, settle quick; but legs, what are they? “Lay me down,” says Hugh hoarsely. “House locked up — key — in pocket —— wife in town.” And the Fates cut, and there he lay by the wayside, five feet ten, and looking taller than in life.

He has gone away; his house here “all tore to pieces.” What kind of fighting or ditching work he finds to do now, how it fares with him, whether his thirst is quenched, whether there is still some semblance of that carmine cheek, struggles still with some liquid demon — perchance on more equal terms — till he swallow him completely, I cannot by any means learn. What his salutation is now, what his January-morning face, what he thinks of Waterloo, what start he has gained or lost, what work still for the ditcher and forester and soldier now, there is no evidence. He was here, the likes of him, for a season, standing light in his shoes like a faded gentleman, with gesture almost learned in drawing-rooms; wore clothes, hat, shoes, cut ditches, felled wood, did farm work for various people, kindled fires, worked enough, ate enough, drank too much. He was one of those unnamed, countless sects of philosophers who founded no school.

Now that he was gone, and his wife was gone too, — for she could not support the solitude, — before it was too late and the house was torn down, I went over to make a call. Now that Irishmen with jugs avoided the old house, I visited it, — an “unlucky castle now,” said they. There lay his old clothes curled up by habit, as if it were

himself, upon his raised plank bed. His pipe lay broken on the hearth; and scattered about were soiled cards — king of diamonds, hearts, spades — on the floor. One black chicken, which they could not catch, still went to roost in the next apartment, stepping silent over the floor, frightened by the sound of its own wings, black as night and as silent, too, not even croaking; awaiting Reynard, its god actually dead. There was the dim outline of a garden which had been planted, but had never received its first hoeing, now overrun with weeds, with burs and cockles, which stick to your clothes; as if in the spring he had contemplated a harvest of com and beans before that strange trembling of the limbs overtook him. Skin of woodchuck fresh-stretched, never to be cured, met once in bean-field by the Waterloo man with uplifted hoe; no cap, no mittens wanted. Pipe on hearth no more to be lighted, best buried with him.

No thirst for glory, only for strong drink.

Only the convalescent are conscious of the health of nature.

In case of an embargo there will be found to be old clothes enough in everybody's garret to last till the millennium. We are fond of news, novelties, new things. The bank-bill that is tom in two will pass if you save the pieces, if you have only got the essential piece with the signatures. Lowell and Manchester and Fall River think you will let go their broadcloth currency when it is tom; but hold on, have an eye to the signature about the back of it, and endorse the man's name from whom you received it, and they will be the first to fail and find nothing at all in their garrets. Every day our garments become more assimilated to the man that wears them, more near and dear to us, and not finally to be laid aside but with such delay and medical appliance and solemnity as our other mortal coil. We know, after all, but few men, a great many coats and breeches. Dress a scarecrow with your last shift, you standing shiftless by, who would not soonest address the scarecrow and salute it?

King James loved his old shoes best. Who does not? Indeed these new clothes are often won and worn only after a most painful birth. At first movable prisons, oyster-shells which the tide only raises, opens, and shuts, washing in what scanty nutriment may be afloat.

How many men walk over the limits, carrying theirlimits with them? In the stocks they stand, not without gaze of multitudes, only without rotten eggs, in torturing boots, the last wedge but one driven. Why should we be startled at death? Life is constant putting off of the mortal coil, — coat, cuticle, flesh and bones, all old clothes.

Not till the prisoner has got some rents in his prison walls, possibility of egress without lock and key some day, — result of steel watch-spring rubbing on iron grate, or whatever friction and wear and tear, — will he rest contented in his prison.

Clothes brought in sewing, a kind of work you may call endless.

A man who has at length found out something important to do will not have to get a new suit to do it in. For him the old will do, lying dusty in the garret for an indefinite period. Old shoes will serve a hero longer than they have served his valet. Bare feet are the oldest of shoes, and he can make them do. Only they who go to legislature and soirées, — they must have new coats, coats to turn as often as the man turns in them. Who ever saw his old shoes, his old coat, actually worn out, returned to their original elements, so that it was not [a] deed [of] charity to bestow them on some poorer boy, and by him to be bestowed on some poorer still, or shall we say on some richer who can do with less?

Over eastward of my bean-field lived Cato Ingraham, slave, born slave, perhaps, of Duncan Ingraham, Esquire, gentleman, of Concord village, who built him a house and gave him permission to live in Walden Woods, for which no doubt he was thanked; and then, on the northeast comer, Zilpha, colored woman of fame; and down the road, on the right hand, Brister, colored man, on Brister's Hill, where grow still those little wild apples he tended, now large trees, but still wild and ciderish to my taste; and farther still you come to Breed's location, and again on the left, by well and roadside, Nutting lived. Farther up the road, at the pond's end, Wyman, the potter, who furnished his townsmen with earthenware, — the squatter.

Now only a dent in the earth marks the site of most of these human dwellings; sometimes the well-dent where a spring oozed, now dry and tearless grass, or covered deep, — not to be discovered till late days by accident, — with a flat stone under the sod. These

dents, like deserted fox-burrows, old holes, where once was the stir and bustle of human life overhead, and man's destiny, "fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," were all by turns discussed.

Still grows the vivacious lilac for a generation after the last vestige else is gone, unfolding still its early sweet-scented blossoms in the spring, to be plucked only by the musing traveller; planted, tended, weeded [?], watered by children's hands in front-yard plot, — now by wall-side in retired pasture, or giving place to a new rising forest. The last of that stirp, sole survivor of that family. Little did the dark children think that that weak slip with its two *eyes* which they watered would root itself so, and outlive them, and house in the rear that shaded it, and grown man's garden and field, and tell their story to the retired wanderer a half-century after they were no more, — blossoming as fair, smelling as sweet, as in that first spring. Its still cheerful, tender, civil lilac colors.

The woodland road, though once more dark and shut in by the forest, resounded with the laugh and gossip of inhabitants, and was notched and dotted here and there with their little dwellings. Though now but a humble rapid passage to neighboring villages or for the woodman's team, it once delayed the traveller longer, and was a lesser village in itself.

You still hear from time to time the whinnering of the raccoon, still living as of old in hollow trees, washing its food before it eats it. The red fox barks at night. The loon comes in the fall to sail and bathe in the pond, making the woods ring with its wild laughter in the early morning, at rumor of whose arrival all Concord sportsmen are on the alert, in gigs, on foot, two by two, three [by three], with patent rifles, patches, conical balls, spyglass or open hole over the barrel. They seem already to hear the loon laugh; come rustling through the woods like October leaves, these on this side, those on that, for the poor loon cannot be omnipresent; if he dive here, must come up somewhere. The October wind rises, rustling the leaves, ruffling the pond water, so that no loon can be seen rippling the surface. Our sportsmen scour, sweep the pond with spy-glass in vain, making the woods ring with rude [?] charges of powder, for the loon went off in that morning rain with one loud, long, hearty laugh, and our sportsmen must beat a retreat to town and stable and daily

routine, shop work, unfinished jobs again.

Or in the gray dawn the sleeper hears the long ducking gun explode over toward Goose Pond, and, hastening to the door, sees the remnant of a flock, black duck or teal, go whistling by with outstretched neck, with broken ranks, but in ranger order. And the silent hunter emerges into the carriage road with ruffled feathers at his belt, from the dark pond-side where he has lain in his bower since the stars went out.

And for a week you hear the circling clamor, clangor, of some solitary goose through the fog, seeking its mate, peopling the woods with a larger life than they can hold.

For hours in fall days you shall watch the ducks cunningly tack and veer and hold the middle of the pond, far from the sportsman on the shore, — tricks they have learned and practiced in far Canada lakes or in Louisiana bayous.

The waves rise and dash, taking sides with all waterfowl.

Then in dark winter mornings, in short winter afternoons, the pack of hounds, threading all woods with hounding cry and yelp, unable to resist the instinct of the chase, and note of hunting-horn at intervals, showing that man too is in the rear. And the woods ring again, and yet no fox bursts forth on to the open level of the pond, and no following pack after their Actæon.

But this small village, germ of something more, why did it fail while Concord grows apace? No natural advantages, no water privilege, only the deep Walden Pond and cool Brister's Spring, — privileges to drink long, healthy, pure draughts, alas, all unimproved by those men but to dilute their glass. Might not the basket-making, stable-broom, mat-making, corn-parching, potters' business have thrived here, making the wilderness to blossom as the rose? Now, all too late for commerce, this waste, depopulated district has its railroad too. And transmitted the names of unborn Bristers, Catos, Hildas, Zilphas to a remote and grateful posterity.

Again Nature will try, with me for a first settler, and my house raised last spring to be the oldest in the settlement.

The sterile soil would have been proof against any lowland degeneracy.

Farmers far and near call it the paradise of beans.

And here, too, on winter days, while yet is cold January, and snow and ice lie thick, comes the prudent, foreseeing landlord or housekeeper (anticipating thirst) from the village, to get ice to cool his summer drink, — a grateful beverage if he should live, if time should endure so long. How few so wise, so industrious, to lay up treasures which neither rust nor melt, "to cool their summer drink" one day!

And cut off the solid pond, the element and air of fishes, held fast with chain and stake like corded wood, all through favoring, willing, kind, permitting winter air to wintery cellar, to underlie the summer there. And cut and saw the cream of the pond, unroof the house of fishes.

And in early mornings come men with fishing-reels and slender lunch, men of real faith, and let down their fine lines and live minnows through the snowy field to hook the pickerel and perch.

With buried well-stones, and strawberries, raspberries, thimble-berries growing on the sunny sward there; some pitchy pine or gnarled oak in the chimney-nook, or the sweet-scented black birch where the doorstone was.

Breed's, — history must not yet tell the tragedies enacted there. Let time intervene to assuage and lend an azure atmospheric tint to them.

There is something pathetic in the sedentary life of men who have travelled. They must naturally die when they leave the road.

What seems so fair and poetic in antiquity — almost fabulous — is realized, too, in Concord life. As poets and historians brought their work to the Grecian games, and genius wrestled there as well as strength of body, so have we seen works of kindred genius read at our Concord games, by their author, in their own Concord amphitheatre. It is virtually repeated by all ages and nations.

Moles nesting in your cellar and nibbling every third potato. A whole rabbit-warren only separated from you by the flooring. To be saluted when you stir in the dawn by the hasty departure of Monsieur, — thump, thump, thump, striking his head against the

floor-timbers. Squirrels and field mice that hold to a community of property in your stock of chestnuts.

The blue jays suffered few chestnuts to reach the ground, resorting to your single tree in flocks in the early morning, and picking them out of the burs at a great advantage.

The crop of blackberries small; berries not yet grown. Ground-nuts not dug.

One wonders how so much, after all, was expressed in the old way, so much here depends upon the emphasis, tone, pronunciation, style, and spirit of the reading. No writer uses so profusely all the aids to intelligibility which the printer's art affords. You wonder how others had contrived to write so many pages without emphatic, italicized words, they are so expressive, so natural and indispensable, here. As if none had ever used the demonstrative pronoun demonstratively. In another's sentences the thought, though immortal, is, as it were, embalmed and does not *strike* you, but here it is so freshly living, not purified by the ordeal of death, that it stirs in the very extremities, the smallest particles and pronouns are all alive with it. — You must not say it, but *it.* It is not simple it, your it or mine, but *it.* His books are solid, workmanlike, like all that England does. They tell of endless labor done, well done, and all the rubbish swept away, like this bright cutlery which glitters in the windows, while the coke and ashes, turnings, filings, borings, dust lie far away at Birmingham, unheard of. The words did not come at the command of grammar but of a tyrannous, inexorable meaning; not like the standing soldiers, by vote of Parliament, but any able-bodied countryman pressed into the service. It is no China war, but a revolution. This style is worth attending to as one of the most important features of the man that we at this distance know.

What are the men of New England about? I have travelled some in New England, especially in Concord, and I found that no enterprise was on foot which it would not disgrace a man to take part in. They seemed to be employed everywhere in shops and offices and fields. They seemed, like the Brahmins of the East, to be doing penance in a thousand curious, unheard-of ways, their endurance surpassing anything I had ever seen or heard of, — Simeon Stylites, Brahmins looking in the face of the sun, standing on one leg,

dwelling at the roots of trees, nothing to it; any of the twelve labors of Hercules to be matched, — the Nemean lion, Lernæan hydra, Œnœan stag, Erymanthian boar, Augean stables, Stymphalian birds, Cretan bull, Diomedes' mares, Amazonian girdle, monster Geryon, Hesperian apples, three-headed Cerberus, nothing at all in comparison, being only twelve and having an end. For I could never see that these men ever slew or captured any of their monsters, or finished any of their labors. They have no "friend Iolaus to burn, with a hot iron, the root" of the hydra's head; for as soon as one head is crushed, two spring up.

Men labor under a mistake; they are laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal. Northern Slavery, or the slavery which includes the Southern, Eastern, Western, and all others.

It is hard to have a Southern overseer; it is worse to have a Northern one; but worst of all when you are yourself the slave-driver. Look at the lonely teamster on the highway, wending to market by day or night; is he a son of the morning, with somewhat of divinity in him, fearless because immortal, going to receive his birthright, greeting the sun as his fellow, bounding with youthful, gigantic strength over his mother earth? See how he cowers and sneaks, how vaguely, indefinitely all the day he fears, not being immortal, not divine, the slave and prisoner of his own opinion of himself, fame which he has earned by his own deeds. Public opinion is a weak tyrant compared with private opinion. What I think of myself, that determines my fate.

I see young men, my equals, who have inherited from their spiritual father a soul, — broad, fertile, uncultivated, — from their earthly father a farm, — with cattle and barns and farming tools, the implements of the picklock and the counterfeiter. Better if they had been born in the open pasture and suckled by a wolf, or perhaps cradled in a manger, that they might have seen with clear eye what was the field they were called to labor in. The young man has got to live a man's life, then, in this world, pushing all these things before him, and get on as well as he can. How many a poor immortal soul I have met, well-nigh crushed and smothered, creeping slowly down the road of life, pushing before it a bam seventy-five by forty feet

and one hundred acres of land, — tillage, pasture, wood-lot! This dull, opaque garment of the flesh is load enough for the strongest spirit, but with such an earthly garment superadded the spiritual life is soon plowed into the soil for compost. It's a fool's life, as they will all find when they get to the end of it. The man that goes on accumulating property when the bare necessaries of life are cared for is a fool and knows better.

There is a stronger desire to be respectable to one's neighbors than to one's self.

However, such distinctions as poet, philosopher, literary man, etc., do not much assist our final estimate. We do not lay much stress on them; "a man's a man for a' that." Any writer who interests us much is all and more than these.

It is not simple dictionary it.

Talent at making books solid, workmanlike, graceful, which may be read.

Some idyllic chapter or chapters are needed.

In the French Revolution are Mirabeau, king of men; Danton, Titan of the Revolution; Camille Desmoulins, poetic editor; Roland, heroic woman; Dumouriez, first efficient general: on the other side, Marat, friend of the people; Robespierre; Tinville, infernal judge; St. Just; etc., etc.

Nutting and Le Gros by the wall-side. The Stratten house and barn where the orchard covered all the slope of Brister's Hill, — now killed out by the pines.

Brister Freeman, a handy negro, slave once of Squire Cummings (?), and Fenda, his hospitable, pleasant wife, large, round, black, who told fortunes, blacker than all the children of night, such a dusky orb as had never risen on Concord before.

Zilpha's little house where "she was spinning linen," making the Walden woods ring with her shrill singing, —— a loud, shrill, remarkable voice, — when once she was away to town, set on fire by English soldiers on parole, in the last war, and cat and dog and hens all burned up. Boiling her witch's dinner, and heard muttering to herself over the gurgling pot by silent traveller, "Ye are all bones, bones."

And Cato, the Guinea negro, — his house and little patch among the walnuts, — who let the trees grow up till he should be old, and Richardson got them.

Where Breed's house stood tradition says a tavern once stood, the well the same, and all a swamp between the woods and town, and road made on logs.

Bread I made pretty well for awhile, while I remembered the rules; for I studied this out methodically, going clear back to the primitive days and first invention of the unleavened kind, and coming gradually down through that lucky accidental souring of the dough which taught men the leavening process, and all the various fermentations thereafter, till you get to "good, sweet, wholesome bread," the staff of life. I went on very well, mixing rye and flour and Indian and potato with success, till one morning I had forgotten the rules, and thereafter scalded the yeast, — killed it out, —— and so, after the lapse of a month, was glad after all to learn that such palatable staff of life could be made out of the dead and scalt creature and risings that lay flat.

I have hardly met with the housewife who has gone so far with this mystery. For all the farmers' wives pause at yeast. Given this and they can make bread.

It is the axiom of the argument. What it is, where it came from, in what era bestowed on man, is wrapped in mystery. It is preserved religiously, like the vestal fire, and its virtue is not yet run out. Some precious bottleful, first brought over in the Mayflower, did the business for America, and its influence is still rising, swelling, spreading like Atlantic billows over the land, — the soul of bread, the spiritus, occupying its cellular tissue.

The way to compare men is to compare their respective ideals. The actual man is too complex to deal with.

Carlyle is an earnest, honest, heroic worker as literary man and sympathizing brother of his race.

Idealize a man, and your notion takes distinctness at once.

Carlyle's talent is perhaps quite equal to his genius.

Striving [?] to live in reality, — not a general critic, philosopher,

or poet.

Wordsworth, with very feeble talent, has not so great and admirable as unquestionable and persevering genius.

Heroism, heroism is his word, — his thing.

He would realize a brave and adequate human life, and die hopefully at last.

Emerson again is a critic, poet, philosopher, with talent not so conspicuous, not so adequate to his task; but his field is still higher, his task more arduous. Lives a far more intense life; seeks to realize a divine life; his affections and intellect equally developed. Has advanced farther, and a new heaven opens to him. Love and Friendship, Religion, Poetry, the Holy are familiar to him. The life of an Artist; more variegated, more observing, finer perception; not so robust, elastic; practical enough in his own field; faithful, a judge of men. There is no such general critic of men and things, no such trustworthy and faithful man. More of the divine realized in him than in any. A poetic critic, reserving the unqualified nouns for the gods.

Alcott is a geometer, a visionary, the Laplace of ethics, more intellect, less of the affections, sight beyond talents, a substratum of practical skill and knowledge unquestionable, but overlaid and concealed by a faith in the unseen and impracticable. Seeks to realize an entire life; a catholic observer; habitually takes in the farthest star and nebula into his scheme. Will be the last man to be disappointed as the ages revolve. His attitude is one of greater faith and expectation than that of any man I know; with little to show; with undue share, for a philosopher, of the weaknesses of humanity. The most hospitable intellect, embracing high and low. For children how much that means, for the insane and vagabond, for the poet and scholar!

Emerson has special talents unequalled. The divine in man has had no more easy, methodically distinct expression. His personal influence upon young per sons greater than any man’s. In his world every man would be a poet, Love would reign, Beauty would take place, Man and Nature would harmonize.

When Alcott's day comes, laws unsuspected by most will take effect, the system will crystallize according to them, all seals and falsehood will slough off, everything will be in its place.

Feb. 22 [no year]. Jean Lapin sat at my door to-day, three paces from me, at first trembling with fear, yet unwilling to move; a poor, wee thing, lean and bony, with ragged ears and sharp nose, scant tail and slender paws. It looked as if nature no longer contained the breed of nobler bloods, the earth stood on its last legs. Is nature, too, unsound at last? I took two steps, and lo, away he scud with elastic spring over the snowy crust into the bushes, a free creature of the forest, still wild and fleet; and such then was his nature, and his motion asserted its vigor and dignity. Its large eye looked at first young and diseased, almost dropsical, unhealthy. But it bouned free, the venison, straightening its body and its limbs into graceful length, and soon put the forest between me and itself.

Emerson does not consider things in respect to their essential utility, but an important partial and relative one, as works of art perhaps. His probes pass one side of their centre of gravity. His exaggeration is of a part, not of the whole.

How many an afternoon has been stolen from more profitable, if not more attractive, industry, — afternoons when a good run of custom might have been expected on the main street, such as tempt the ladies out a-shopping, — spent, I say, by me away in the meadows, in the well-nigh hopeless attempt to set the river on fire or be set on fire by it, with such tinder as I had, with such flint as I was. Trying at least to make it flow with milk and honey, as I had heard of, or liquid gold, and drown myself without getting wet, — a laudable enterprise, though I have not much to show for it.

So many autumn days spent outside the town, trying to hear what was in the wind, to hear it and carry it express. I well-nigh sunk all my capital in it, and lost my own breath into the bargain, by running in the face of it. Depend upon it, if it had concerned either of the parties, it would have appeared in the yeoman's gazette, the *Freeman*, with other earliest intelligence.

For many years I was self-appointed inspector of snow-storms and rain-storms, and did my duty faithfully, though I never received one cent for it.

Surveyor, if not of higher ways, then of forest paths and all across-lot routes, keeping many open ravines bridged and passable at all seasons, where the public heel had testified to the importance of the same, all not only without charge, but even at considerable risk and inconvenience. Many a mower would have forborne to complain had he been aware of the invisible public good that was in jeopardy.

So I went on, I may say without boasting, I trust, faithfully minding my business without a partner, till it became more and more evident that my townsmen would not, after all, admit me into the list of town officers, nor make the place a sinecure with moderate allowance.

I have looked after the wild stock of the town, which pastures in common, and every one knows that these cattle give you a good deal of trouble in the way of leaping fences. I have counted and registered all the eggs I could find at least, and have had an eye to all nooks and corners of the farm, though I didn't always know whether Jonas or Solomon worked in a particular field to-day; that was none of my business. I only knew him for one of the men, and trusted that he was as well employed as I was. I had to make my daily entries in the general farm book, and my duties may sometimes have made me a little stubborn and unyielding.

Many a day spent on the hilltops waiting for the sky to fall, that I might catch something, though I never caught much, only a little, manna-wise, that would dissolve again in the sun.

My accounts, indeed, which I can swear to have been faithfully kept, I have never got audited, still less accepted, still less paid and settled. However, I haven't set my heart upon *that.*

I have watered the red huckleberry and the sand cherry and the hoopwood [?] tree, and the cornel and spoonhunt and yellow violet, which might have withered else in dry seasons. The white grape.

To find the bottom of Walden Pond, and what inlet and outlet it might have.

I found at length that, as they were not likely to offer me any office in the court-house, any curacy or living anywhere else, I must

shift for myself, I must furnish myself with the necessaries of life.

Now watching from the observatory of the Cliffs or Annursnack to telegraph any new arrival, to see if Wachusett, Watatic, or Monadnock had got any nearer. Climbing trees for the same purpose. I have been reporter for many years to one of the journals of no very wide circulation, and, as is too common, got only my pains for my labor. Literary contracts are little binding.

The unlimited anxiety, strain, and care of some persons is one very incurable form of disease. Simple arithmetic might have corrected it; for the life of every man has, after all, an epic integrity, and Nature adapts herself to our weaknesses and deficiencies as well as talents.

No doubt it is indispensable that we should do *our* work between sun and sun, but only a wise man will know what that is. And yet how much work will be left undone, put off to the next day, and yet the system goes on!

We presume commonly to take care of ourselves, and trust as little as possible. Vigilant more or less all our days, we say our prayers at night and commit ourselves to uncertainties, as if in our very days and most vigilant moments the great part were not a necessary trust still. How serenity, anxiety, confidence, fear paint the heavens for us.

All the laws of nature will bend and adapt themselves to the least motion of man.

All change is a miracle to contemplate, but it is a miracle which is taking place unobserved every instant; when all is ready it takes place, and only a miracle could stay it.

We [are] compelled to live so thoroughly and sincerely, reflecting on our steps, reverencing our life, that we never make allowance for the possible changes.

We may waive just so much care of ourselves as we devote of care elsewhere.

1837-1847

THIS section consists of paragraphs (chiefly undated) taken from a large commonplace-book containing transcripts from earlier journals. Thoreau drew largely from this book in writing the "Week," and to a less extent in writing "Walden." Passages used in these volumes (as far as noted), and those duplicating earlier journal entries already printed in the preceding pages, have been omitted. All the matter in the book appears to have been written before 1847.

I was born upon thy bank, river, My blood flows in thy stream, And thou meanderest forever At the bottom of my dream.

This great but silent traveller which had been so long moving past my door at three miles an hour, — might I not trust myself under its escort?

In friendship we worship moral beauty without the formality of religion.

Consider how much the sun and the summer, the buds of spring and the sered leaves of autumn, are related to the cabins of the settlers which we discover on the shore, — how all the rays which paint the landscape radiate from them. The flight of the crow and the gyrations of the hawk have reference to their roofs.

Friends do not interchange their common wealth, but each puts his finger into the private coffer of the other. They will be most familiar, they will be most unfamiliar, for they will be so one and single that common themes will not have to be bandied between them, but in silence they will digest them as one mind; but they will at the same time be so two and double that each will be to the other as admirable and as inaccessible as a star. He will view him as it were through "optic glass,"— "at evening from the top of Fesolé." And after the longest earthly period, he will still be in apogee to him.

It [the boat] had been loaded at the door the evening before, half a mile from the river, and provided with wheels against emergencies, but, with the bulky cargo which we stevedores had stowed in it, it proved but an indifferent land carriage. For water and water-casks there was a plentiful supply of muskmelons from our patch, which had just begun to be ripe, and chests and spare spars and sails and tent and guns and munitions for the galleon. And as we pushed it through the meadows to the river's bank, we stepped as lightly about it as if a portion of our own bulk and burden was stored in its hold. We were amazed to find ourselves outside still, with scarcely independent force enough to push or pull effectually.

The robin is seen flying directly and high in the air at this season, especially over rivers, where in the morning they are constantly passing and repassing in company with the blackbird.

I have never insisted enough on the nakedness and simplicity of friendship, the result of all emotions, their subsidence, a fruit of the temperate zone. The friend is an unrelated man, solitary and of distinct outline.

Must not our whole lives go unexplained, without regard to us, notwithstanding a few flourishes of ours, which themselves need explanation?

Yet a friend does not afford us cheap contrasts or encounters. He forbears to ask explanations, but doubts and surmises with full faith, as we silently ponder our fates. He is vested with full powers, plenipotentiary, all in all.

"Plato gives science sublime counsels, directs her toward the regions of the ideal; Aristotle gives her positive and severe laws, and directs her toward a practical end." — DEGERANDO.

All day the dark blue outline of Crotched mountain in Goffstown skirted the horizon. We took pleasure in beholding its outline, because at this distance our vision could so easily grasp the design of the founder. It was a pretty victory to conquer the distance and dimensions so easily with our eyes, which it would take our feet so long to traverse.

Notwithstanding the unexplained mystery of nature, man still

pursues his studies with confidence, ever ready to grasp the secret, as if the truth were only contained, not withheld; as one of the three circles on the cocoanut is always so soft that it may be pierced with a thorn, and the traveller is grateful for the thick shell which held the liquor so faithfully.

Gracefulness is undulatory like these waves, and perhaps the sailor acquires a superior suppleness and grace through the planks of his ship from the element on which he lives.

The song sparrow, whose voice is one of the first heard in the spring, sings occasionally throughout the season, from a greater depth in the summer, as it were behind the notes of other birds.

As the temperature and density *of* the atmosphere, so the aspects of our life vary.

In this bright and chaste light the world seemed like a pavilion made for holidays and washed in light. The ocean was a summer's lake, and the land a smooth lawn for disport, while in the horizon the sunshine seemed to fall on walled towns and villas, and the course of our lives was seen winding on like a country road over the plain.

When we looked out from under our tent, the trees were seen dimly through the mist, and a cool dew hung upon the grass, and in the damp air we seemed to inhale a solid fragrance.

Communicating with the villas and hills and forests on either hand, by the glances we sent them, or the echoes we awakened. We glanced up many a pleasant ravine with its farmhouse in the distance, where some contributory stream came in; again the site of a sawmill and a few forsaken eel-pots were all that greeted us.

While we sail here we can remember unreservedly those friends who dwell far away on the banks and by the sources of this very river, and people this world for us, without any harsh and unfriendly interruptions.

At noon his horn is heard echoing from shore to shore to give notice of his approach to the farmer's wife with whom he is to take his dinner, frequently in such retired scenes that only muskrats and kingfishers seem to hear.

If ever our idea of a friend is realized it will be in some broad and

generous natural person, as frank as the daylight, in whose presence our behavior will be as simple and unconstrained as the wanderer amid the recesses of these hills.

I who sail now in a boat, have I not sailed in a thought? *Vide* Chaucer.

The hardest material obeys the same law with the most fluid. Trees are but rivers of sap and woody fibre flowing from the atmosphere and emptying into the earth by their trunks, as their roots flow upward to the surface. And in the heavens there are rivers of stars and milky ways. There are rivers of rock on the surface and rivers of ore in the bowels of the earth. And thoughts flow and circulate, and seasons lapse as tributaries of the current year.

Consider the phenomena of morn, or eve, and you will say that Nature has perfected herself by an eternity of practice, — evening stealing over the fields, the stars coming to bathe in retired waters, the shadows of the trees creeping farther and farther into the meadows, and a myriad phenomena beside.

Occasionally we had to muster all our energy to get round a point where the river broke rippling over rocks and the maples trailed their branches in the stream.

The future reader of history will associate this generation with the red man in his thoughts, and give it credit for some sympathy with that race. Our history will have some copper tints and reflections, at least, and be read as through an Indian-summer haze; but such were not our associations. But the Indian is absolutely forgotten but by some persevering poets.

The white man has commenced a new era. What do our anniversaries commemorate but white men's exploits? For Indian deeds there must be an Indian memory; the white man will remember his own only. We have forgotten their hostility as well as friendship. Who can realize that, within the memory of this generation, the remnant of an ancient and dusky race of mortals called the Stockbridge Indians, within the limits of this very State, furnished a company for the war, on condition only that they should not be

expected to fight white man's fashion, or to train, but Indian fashion. And occasionally their wigwams are seen on the banks of this very stream still, solitary and inobvious, like the cabins of the muskrats in the meadows.

They seem like a race who have exhausted the secrets of nature, tanned with age, while this young and still fair Saxon slip, on whom the sun has not long shone, is but commencing its career.

Their memory is in harmony with the russet hue of the fall of the year.

For the Indian there is no safety but in the plow. If he would not be pushed into the Pacific, he must seize hold of a plow-tail and let go his bow and arrow, his fish-spear and rifle. This the only Christianity that will save him.

His fate says sternly to him, "Forsake the hunter's life and enter into the agricultural, the second, state of man. Root yourselves a little deeper in the soil, if you would continue to be the occupants of the country."

But I confess I have no little sympathy with the Indians and hunter men. They seem to me a distinct and equally respectable people, born to wander and to hunt, and not to be inoculated with the twilight civilization of the white man.

Father Le Jeune, a French missionary, affirmed "that the Indians were superior in intellect to the French peasantry of that time," and advised "that laborers should be sent from France in order to work for the Indians."

The Indian population within the present boundaries of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut has been estimated not to have exceeded 40,000 "before the epidemic disease which preceded the landing of the Pilgrims," and it was far more dense here than elsewhere; yet they had no more land than they wanted. The present white population is more than 1,500,000 and two thirds of the land is unimproved.

The Indian, perchance, has not made up his mind to some things which the white man has consented to; he has not, in all respects, stooped so low; and hence, though he too loves food and warmth, he draws his tattered blanket about him and follows his fathers, rather

than barter his birthright. He dies, and no doubt his Genius judges well for him. But he is not worsted in the fight; he is not destroyed. He only migrates beyond the Pacific to more spacious and happier hunting-grounds.

A race of hunters can never withstand the inroads of a race of husbandmen. The latter burrow in the night into their country and undermine them; and [even] if the hunter is brave enough to resist, his game is timid and has already fled. The rifle alone would never exterminate it, but the plow is a more fatal weapon; it wins the country inch by inch and holds all it gets.

What detained the Cherokees so long was the 2923 plows which that people possessed; and if they had grasped their handles more firmly, they would never have been driven beyond the Mississippi. No sense of justice will ever restrain the farmer from plowing up the land which is only hunted over by his neighbors. No hunting-field was ever well fenced and surveyed and its bounds accurately marked, unless it were an English park. It is a property not held by the hunter so much as by the game which roams it, and was never well secured by warranty deeds. The farmer in his treaties says only, or means only, "So far will I plow this summer," for he has not seed corn enough to plant more; but every summer the seed is grown which plants a new strip of the forest.

The African will survive, for he is docile, and is patiently learning his trade and dancing at his labor; but the Indian does not often dance, unless it be the war dance.

In whatever moment we awake to life, as now I this evening, after walking along the bank and hearing the same evening sounds that were heard of yore, it seems to have slumbered just below the surface, as in the spring the new verdure which covers the fields has never retreated far from the winter.

All actions and objects and events lose their *distinct* importance in this hour, in the brightness of the vision, as, when sometimes the pure light that attends the setting sun falls on the trees and houses, the light itself is the phenomenon, and no single object is so distinct to our admiration as the light itself.

If criticism is liable to abuse, it has yet a great and humane apology. When my sentiments aspire to be universal, then my neighbor has an equal interest to see that the expression be just, with myself.

My friends, why should we live?
Life is an idle war, a toilsome peace;
To-day I would not give
One small consent for its securest ease.

Shall we outwear the year
In our pavilions on its dusty plain,
And yet no signal hear
To strike our tents and take the road again?

Or else drag up the slope
The heavy ordnance of religion's train?
Useless, but in the hope
Some far remote and heavenward hill to gain.

The tortoises rapidly dropped into the water, as our boat ruffled the surface amid the willows. We glided along through the transparent water, breaking the reflections of the trees.

Not only are we late to find our friends, but mankind are late, and there is no record of a great success in history.

My friend is not chiefly wise or beautiful or noble. At least it is not for me to know it. He has no visible form nor appreciable character. I can never praise him nor esteem him praiseworthy, for I should sunder him from myself and put a bar between us. Let him not think he can please me by any behavior or even treat me well enough. When he treats, I retreat.

I know of no rule which holds so true as that we are always paid for our suspicion by finding what we suspect. There can be no fairer recompense than this. Our suspicions exercise a demoniacal power over the subject of them. By some obscure law of influence, when we are perhaps unconsciously the subject of another's suspicion, we feel a strong impulse, even when it is contrary to our nature, to do that

which he expects but reprobates.

No man seems to be aware that his influence is the result of his entire character, both that which is subject and that which is superior to his understanding, and what he really means or intends it is not in his power to explain or offer an apology for.

No man was ever party to a secure and settled friendship. It is no more a constant phenomenon than meteors and lightning. It is a war of positions, of silent tactics.

I mark the summer's swift decline;
The springing sward its grave-clothes weaves.

Oh, could I catch the sounds remote!
Could I but tell to human ear
The strains which on the breezes float
And sing the requiem of the dying year!

Sept. 29, 1842. To-day the lark sings again down in the meadow, and the robin peeps, and the bluebirds, old and young, have revisited their box, as if they would fain repeat the summer without the intervention of winter, if Nature would let them.

Beauty is a finer utility whose end we do not see.

Oct. 7, 1842. A little girl has just brought me a purple finch or American linnet. These birds are now moving south. It reminds me of the pine and spruce, and the juniper and cedar on whose berries it feeds. It has the crimson hues of the October evenings, and its plumage still shines as if it had caught and preserved some of their tints (beams?). We know it chiefly as a traveller. It reminds me of many things I had forgotten. Many a serene evening lies snugly packed under its wing.

Gower writes like a man of common sense and good parts who has undertaken with steady, rather than high, purpose to do narrative with rhyme. With little or no invention, following in the track of the old fablers, he employs his leisure and his pen-craft to entertain his readers and speak a good word for the right. He has no fire, or rather

blaze, though occasionally some brand's end peeps out from the ashes, especially if you approach the heap in a dark day, and if you extend your hands over it you experience a slight warmth there more than elsewhere. In fair weather you may see a slight smoke go up here and there. He narrates what Chaucer sometimes sings. He tells his story with a fair understanding of the original, and sometimes it gains a little in blunt plainness and in point in his hands. Unlike the early Saxon and later English, his poetry is but a plainer and directer speech than other men's prose. He might have been a teamster and written his rhymes on his wagon-seat as he went to mill with a load of plaster.

The banks by retired roadsides are covered with asters, hazels, brakes, and huckleberry bushes, emitting a dry, ripe scent.

Facts must be learned directly and personally, but principles may be deduced from information. The collector of facts possesses a perfect physical organization, the philosopher a perfect intellectual one. One can walk, the other sit; one acts, the other thinks. But the poet in some degree does both, and uses and generalizes the results of both; he generalizes the widest deductions of philosophy.

Oct. 21, 1842. The atmosphere is so dry and transparent and, as it were, inflammable at this season that a candle in the grass shines white and dazzling, and purer and brighter the farther off it is. Its heat seems to have been extracted and only its harmless refulgent light left. It is a star dropped down. The ancients were more than poetically true when they called fire Vulcan's flower. Light is somewhat almost moral. The most intense — as the fixed stars and our own sun — has an unquestionable preeminence among the elements. At a certain stage in the generation of all life, no doubt, light as well as heat is developed. It guides to the first rudiments of life. There is a vitality in heat and light.

Men who are felt rather than understood are being most rapidly developed. They stand many deep.

In many parts the Merrimack is as wild and natural as ever, and the shore and surrounding scenery exhibit only the revolutions of nature. The pine stands up erect on its brink, and the alders and willows fringe its edge; only the beaver and the red man have departed.

My friend knows me face to face, but many only venture to meet me under the shield of another's authority, backed by an invisible *corps du réserve* of wise friends and relations. To such I say, "Farewell, we cannot dwell alone in the world." —

Sometimes, by a pleasing, sad wisdom, we find ourselves carried beyond all counsel and sympathy. Our friends' words do not reach us.

The truly noble and settled character of a man is not put forward, as the king or conqueror does not march foremost in a procession.

Among others I have picked up a curious spherical stone, probably an implement of war, like a small paving-stone about the size of a goose egg, with a groove worn quite round it, by which it was probably fastened to a thong or a withe and answered to strike a severe blow like a shotted colt. I have since seen larger ones of the same description.

These arrowheads are of every color and of various forms and materials, though commonly made of a stone which has a conchoidal fracture. Many small ones are found, of white quartz, which are mere equilateral triangles, with one side slightly convex. These were probably small shot for birds and squirrels. The chips which were made in their manufacture are also found in large numbers wherever a lodge stood for any length of time. And these slivers are the surest indication of Indian ground, since the geologists tell us that this stone is not to be found in this vicinity.

The spear-heads are of the same form and material only larger.

Some are found as perfect and sharp as ever, for time has not the effect of blunting them, but when they break they have a ragged and cutting edge. Yet they are so brittle that they can hardly be carried in the pocket without being broken.

It is a matter of wonder how the Indians made even those rude implements without iron or steel tools to work with. It is doubtful whether one of our mechanics, with all the aids of Yankee ingenuity, could soon learn to copy one of the thousands under our feet. It is well known the art of making flints with a cold chisel, as practiced in Austria, requires long practice and knack in the operator, but the arrowhead is of much more irregular form, and, like the flint, such is the nature of the stone, must be struck out by a succession of skillful blows.

An Indian to whom I once exhibited some, but to whom they were objects of as much curiosity as [to] myself, suggested that, as white men have but one blacksmith, so Indians had one arrowhead-maker for many families. But there are the marks of too many forges — unless they were like travelling cobblers — to allow of this.

I have seen some arrowheads from the South Seas which were precisely similar to those from here, so necessary, so little whimsical is this little tool.

So has the steel hatchet its prototype in the stone one of the Indian, as the stone hatchet in the necessities of man.

Venerable are these ancient arts, whose early history is lost in that of the race itself.

Here, too, is the pestle and mortar, — ancient forms and symbols older than the plow or the spade.

The invention of that plow which now turns them up to the surface marks the era of their burial. An era which can never have its history, which is older than history itself. These are relics of an era older than modem civilization, compared with which Greece and Rome and Egypt are modem. And still the savage retreats and the white man advances.

I have the following account of some relics in my possession which were brought from Taunton [?] in Bristol County. A field which had been planted with corn for many years. The sod being broken, the wind began to blow away the soil and then the sand, for several years, until at length it was blown away to the depth of several feet, where it ceased, and the ground appeared strewed with the remains of an Indian village, with regular circles of stones which formed the foundation of their wigwams, and numerous implements

beside.

Commonly we use life sparingly, we husband it as if it were scarce, and admit the right of prudence; but occasionally we see how ample and inexhaustible is the stock from which we so scantily draw, and learn that we need not be prudent, that we may be prodigal, and all expenses will be met.

Am I not as far from those scenes, though I have wandered a different route, as my companion who has finished the voyage of life? Am I not most dead who have not life to die, and cast off my sere leaves?

It seemed the only right way to enter this country, borne on the bosom of the flood which receives the tribute of its innumerable vales. The river was the only key adequate to unlock its maze. We beheld the hills and valleys, the lakes and streams, in their natural order and position.

A state should be a complete epitome of the earth, a natural principality, and by the gradations of its surface and soil conduct the traveller to its principal marts. Nature is stronger than law, and the sure but slow influence of wind and water will balk the efforts of restricting legislatures. Man cannot set up bounds with safety but where the revolutions of nature will confirm and strengthen, not obliterate, them.

Every man's success is in proportion to his *average* ability. The meadow flowers spring and bloom where the waters annually deposit their slime, not where they reach in some freshet only. We seem to do ourselves little credit in our own eyes for our performance, which all know must ever fall short of our aspiration and promise, which only we can know entirely; as a stick will avail to reach further than it will strike effectually, since its greatest momentum is a little short of its extreme end. But we do not disappoint our neighbors. A man is not his hope nor his despair, nor his past deed.

But it is in the order of destiny that whatever is remote shall be

near. Whatever the eyes see, the hands shall touch. The sentinels upon the turret and at the window and on the wall behold successively the approaching traveller whom the host will soon welcome in the hall.

It is not to be forgotten that the poet is innocent; but he is young, he is not yet a parent or a brother to his race. There are a thousand degrees of grace and beauty before absolute humanity and disinterestedness.

The meanest man can easily test the noblest. Is he embraced? Does he find him a brother?

I am sometimes made aware of a kindness which may have long since been shown, which surely memory cannot retain, which reflects its light long after its heat. I realize, my friend, that there have been times, when thy thoughts of me have been of such lofty kindness that they passed over me like the winds of heaven unnoticed, so pure that they presented no object to my eyes, so generous and universal that I did not detect them. Thou hast loved me for what I was not, but for what I aspired to be. We shudder to think of the kindness of our friend which has fallen on us cold, though in some true but tardy hour we have awakened. There has just reached me the kindness of some acts, not to be forgotten, not to be remembered. I wipe off these scores at midnight, at rare intervals, in moments of insight and gratitude.

Far o'er the bow,
Amid the drowsy noon,
Souhegan, creeping slow,
Appeareth soon.

Methinks that by a strict behavior
I could elicit back the brightest star
That hides behind a cloud.

I have rolled near some other spirit's path,
And with a pleased anxiety have felt
Its purer influence on my opaque mass,

But always was I doomed to learn, alas!
I had scarce changed its sidereal time.

Gray sedulously cultivated poetry, but the plant would not thrive. His life seems to have needed some more sincere and ruder experience.

Occasionally we rowed near enough to a cottage to see the sunflowers before the door, and the seed-vessels of the poppy, like small goblets filled with the waters of Lethe, but without disturbing the sluggish household.

Driving the small sandpiper before us.

FOG

Thou drifting meadow of the air,
Where bloom the daisied banks and violets,
And in whose fenny labyrinths
The bittern booms and curlew peeps,
The heron wades and boding rain-crow clucks;
Low-anchored cloud,
Newfoundland air,
Fountain-head and source of rivers,
Ocean branch that flowest to the sun,
Diluvian spirit, or Deucalion shroud,
Dew-cloth, dream drapery,
And napkin spread by fays,
Spirit of lakes and seas and rivers,
Sea-fowl that with the east wind
Seek'st the shore, groping thy way inland,
By whichever name I please to call thee,
Bear only perfumes and the scent
Of healing herbs to just men's fields.

I am amused with the manner in which Quarles and his contemporary poets speak of Nature, — with a sort of gallantry, as a

knight of his lady, — not as lovers, but as having a thorough respect for her and some title to her acquaintance. They speak manfully, and their lips are not closed by affection.

"The pale-faced lady of the black-eyed night."

Nature seems to have held her court then, and all authors were her gentlemen and esquires and had ready an abundance of courtly expressions.

Quarles is never weak or shallow, though coarse and untasteful. He presses able-bodied and strong-backed words into his service, which have a certain rustic fragrance and force, as if now first devoted to literature after having served sincere and stern uses. He has the pronunciation of a poet though he stutters. He certainly speaks the English tongue with a right manly accent. To be sure his poems have the musty odor of a confessional.

How little curious is man,
Who hath not searched his mystery a span,
But dreams of mines of treasure
Which he neglects to measure,
For threescore years and ten
Walks to and fro amid his fellow men
O'er this small tract of continental land,
His fancy bearing no divining wand.
Our uninquiring corpses lie more low
Than our life's curiosity doth go;
Our most ambitious steps climb not so high
As in their hourly sport the sparrows fly.
Yonder cloud's blown farther in a day
Than our most vagrant feet may ever stray.
Surely, O Lord, he hath not greatly erred
Who hath so little from his birthplace stirred.
He wanders through this low and shallow world,
Scarcely his bolder thoughts and hopes unfurled,
Through this low walled world, which his huge sin
Hath hardly room to rest and harbor in.

Bearing his head just o'er some fallow ground,
Some cowslip'd meadows where the bitterns sound,
He wanders round until his end draws nigh,
And then lays down his aged head to die.
And this is life! this is that famous strife!
His head doth court a fathom from the land,
Six feet from where his grovelling feet do stand.

What is called talking is a remarkable though I believe universal phenomenon of human society. The most constant phenomenon when men or women come together is talking. A chemist might try this experiment in his laboratory with certainty, and set down the fact in his journal. This characteristic of the race may be considered as established. No doubt every one can call to mind numerous conclusive instances. Some nations, it is true, are said to articulate more distinctly than others; yet the rule holds with those who have the fewest letters in their alphabet. Men cannot stay long together without talking, according to the rules of polite society. (As all men have two ears and but one tongue, they must spend the extra and unavoidable hours of silence in listening to the whisperings of genius, and this fact it is that makes silence always respectable in my eyes.) Not that they have anything to communicate, or do anything quite natural or important to be done so, but by common consent they fall to using the invention of speech, and make a conversation, good or bad. They say things, first this one and then that. They express their "opinions," as they are called.

By a well-directed silence I have sometimes seen threatening and troublesome people routed. You sit musing as if you were in broad nature again. They cannot stand it. Their position becomes more and more uncomfortable every moment. So much humanity over against one without any disguise, — not even the disguise of speech! They cannot stand it nor sit against it.

Not only must men talk, but for the most part must talk about talk, — even about books, or dead and buried talk. Sometimes my friend expects a few periods from me. Is he exorbitant? He thinks it is my turn now. Sometimes my companion thinks he has said a good thing, but I don't see the difference. He looks just as he did before. Well, it

is no loss. I suppose he has plenty more.

Then I have seen very near and intimate, very old friends introduced by very old strangers, with liberty given to talk. The stranger, who knows only the countersign, says, "Jonas — Eldred," giving those names which will make a title good in a court of law. (It may be presumed that God does not know the Christian names of men.) Then Jonas, like a ready soldier, makes a remark, — a benediction on the weather it may be, — and Eldred swiftly responds, and unburdens his breast, and so the action begins. They bless God and nature many times gratuitously, and part mutually well pleased, leaving their cards. They did not happen to be present at each other's christening.

Sometimes I have listened so attentively and with so much interest to the whole expression of a man that I did not hear one word he was saying, and saying too with the more vivacity observing my attention.

But a man may be an object of interest to me though his tongue is pulled out by the roots.

Men sometimes do as if they could eject themselves like bits of pack-thread from the end of the tongue.

Scholars have for the most part a diseased way of looking at the world. They mean by it a few cities and unfortunate assemblies of men and women, who might all be concealed in the grass of the prairies. They describe this world as old or new, healthy or diseased, according to the state of their libraries, — a little dust more or less on their shelves. When I go abroad from under this shingle or slate roof, I find several things which they have not considered. Their conclusions seem imperfect.

As with two eyes we see and with two ears we hear, with the like advantage is man added to man. Making no complaint, offering no encouragement, one human being is made aware of the neighboring and contemporaneous existence of another. Such is the tenderness of friendship. We never recognize each other as finite and imperfect beings, but with a smile and as strangers. My intercourse with men is governed by the same laws with my intercourse with nature.

Buonaparte said that the three-o'clock-in-the-morning courage was the rarest, but I cannot agree with him. Fear does not awake so early. Few men are so degenerate as to balk nature by not beginning the day well. I hold in my hands a recent volume of essays and poems, in its outward aspect like the thousands which the press sends forth, and, if the gods permitted their own inspiration to be breathed in vain, this might be forgotten in the mass, but the accents of truth are as sure to be heard on earth as in heaven. The more I read it the more I am impressed by its sincerity, its depth and grandeur. It already seems ancient and has lost the traces of its modern birth. It is an evidence of many virtues in the writer. More serenely and humbly confident, this man has listened to the inspiration which all may hear, and with greater fidelity reported it. It is therefore a true prophecy, and shall at length come to pass. It has the grandeur of the Greek tragedy, or rather its Hebrew original, yet it is not necessarily referred to any form of faith. The slumbering, heavy depth of its sentences is perhaps without recent parallel. It lies like the sward in its native pasture, where its roots are never disturbed, and not spread over a sandy embankment.

On fields o'er which the reaper's hand has passed,
Lit by the harvest moon and autumn sun,
My thoughts like stubble floating in the wind
And of such fineness as October airs,
There, after harvest, could I glean my life,
A richer harvest reaping without toil,
And weaving gorgeous fancies at my will,
In subtler webs than finest summer haze.

In October the air is really the fine element the poets describe. The fields emit a dry and temperate odor. There is something in the refined and elastic air which reminds us of a work of art. It is like a verse of Anacreon or a tragedy of Æschylus.

All parts of nature belong to one head, as the curls of a maiden's hair. How beautifully flow the seasons as one year, and all streams as one ocean!

I hate museums; there is nothing so weighs upon my spirits. They are the catacombs of nature. One green bud of spring, one willow catkin, one faint trill from a migrating sparrow would set the world on its legs again. The life that is in a single green weed is of more worth than all this death. They are dead nature collected by dead men. I know not whether I muse most at the bodies stuffed with cotton and sawdust or those stuffed with bowels and fleshy fibre outside the cases.

Where is the proper herbarium, the true cabinet of shells, and museum of skeletons, but in the meadow where the flower bloomed, by the seaside where the tide cast up the fish, and on the hills and in the valleys where the beast laid down its life and the skeleton of the traveller reposes on the grass? What right have mortals to parade these things on their legs again, with their wires, and, when heaven has decreed that they shall return to dust again, to return them to sawdust? Would you have a dried specimen of a world, or a pickled one?

Embalming is a sin against heaven and earth, — against heaven, who has recalled the soul and set free the servile elements, and against the earth, which is thus robbed of her dust. I have had my right-perceiving senses so disturbed in these haunts as to mistake a veritable living man for a stuffed specimen, and surveyed him with dumb wonder as the strangest of the whole collection. For the strangest is that which, being in many particulars most like, is in some essential particular most unlike.

It is one great and rare merit in the old English tragedy that it says something. The words slide away very fast, but toward some conclusion. It has to do with things, and the reader feels as if he were advancing. It does not make much odds what message the author has to deliver at this distance of time, since no message can startle us, but how he delivers it, — that it be done in a downright and manly way. They come to the point and do not waste the time.

They say that Carew was a laborious writer, but his poems do not show it. They are finished, but do not show the marks of the chisel. Drummond was indeed a quiddler, with little fire or fibre, and rather a taste *for* poetry than a taste *of* it.

After all, we draw on very gradually in English literature to Shakespeare, through Peele and Marlowe, to say nothing of Raleigh and Spenser and Sidney. We hear the same great tone already sounding to which Shakespeare added a serener wisdom and clearer expression. Its chief characteristics of reality and unaffected manliness are there. The more we read of the literature of those times, the more does acquaintance divest the genius of Shakespeare of the in some measure false mystery which has thickened around it, and leave it shrouded in the grander mystery of daylight. His critics have for the most part made their [sic] contemporaries less that they might make Shakespeare more.

The distinguished men of those times had a great flow of spirits, a cheerful and elastic wit far removed from the solemn wisdom of later days. What another thing was fame and a name then than now! This is seen in the familiar manner in which they were spoken of by each other and the nation at large, — *Kit* Marlowe, and *George* (Peele), and *Will* Shakespeare, and *Ben* Jonson, — great *fellows*, — *chaps.*

We pass through all degrees of life from the least organic to the most complex. Sometimes we are mere pudding-stone and scoriæ.

The present is the instant work and near process of living, and will be found in the last analysis to be nothing more nor less than digestion. Sometimes, it is true, it is indigestion.

Daniel deserves praise for his moderation, and sometimes has risen into poetry before you know it. Strong sense appears in his epistles, but you have to remember too often in what age he wrote, and yet that Shakespeare was his contemporary. His style is without the tricks of the trade and really in advance of his age. We can well believe that he was a retired scholar, who would keep himself shut up in his house two whole months together.

Donne was not a poet, but a man of strong sense, a sturdy English thinker, full of conceits and whimsicalities, hammering away at his subject, be it eulogy or epitaph, sonnet or satire, with the patience of a day laborer, without taste but with an occasional fine distinction or

poetic phrase. He was rather *Doctor* Donne, than the *poet* Donne. His letters are perhaps best.

Lovelace is what his name expresses, — of slight material to make a poet's fame. His goings and comings are of no great account. His taste is not so much love of excellence as fear of failure, though in one instance he has written fearlessly and memorably.

How wholesome are the natural laws to contemplate, as gravity, heat, light, moisture, dryness. Only let us not interfere. Let the soul withdraw into the chambers of the heart, let the mind reside steadily in the labyrinth of the brain, and not interfere with hands or feet more than with other parts of nature.

Thomson was a true lover of nature and seems to have needed only a deeper human experience to have taken a more vigorous and lofty flight. He is deservedly popular, and has found a place on many shelves and in many cottages. There are great merits in "The Seasons" — and the almanac. In "Autumn:" —

"Attemper'd suns arise,
... while broad and brown, below,
Extensive harvests hang the heavy head.
Rich, silent, deep, they stand."

The moon in "Autumn —

"Her spotted disk,
Where mountains rise, umbrageous dales descend,
... gives all his blaze again,
Void of its flame, and sheds a softer day.
Now through the passing cloud she seems to stoop,
Now up the pure cerulean rides sublime.
The whole air whitens with a boundless tide
Of silver radiance, trembling round the world."

My friend, thou art not of some other race and family of men; — thou art flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone. Has not nature associated us in many ways? Water from the same fountain, lime from the same quarry, grain from the same field compose our bodies.

And perchance our elements but reassert their ancient kindredship. Is it of no significance that I have so long partaken of the same loaf with thee, have breathed the same air summer and winter, have felt the same heat and cold, the same fruits of summer have been pleased to refresh us both, and thou hast never had a thought of different fibre from my own?

Our kindred, of one blood with us. With the favor and not the displeasure of the gods, we have partaken the same bread.

It is hard to know rocks. They are crude and inaccessible to our nature. We have not enough of the stony element in us.

It is hard to know men by rumor only. But to stand near somewhat living and conscious. Who would not sail through mutiny and storm farther than Columbus, to reach the fabulous retreating shores of some continent man?

My friend can only be in any measure my foe, because he is fundamentally my friend; for everything is after all more nearly what it should rightfully be, than that which it is simply by failing to be the other.

It [friendship] cannot be the subject of reconciliation or the theme of conversation ever between friends. The true friend must in some sense disregard all professions of friendship and forget them.

It is as far from pity as from contempt. I should hesitate even to call it the highest sympathy, since the word is of suspicious origin and suggests suffering rather than joy. It was established before religion, for men are not friends in religion, but over and through it; and it records no apostasy or repentance, but there is a certain divine and innocent and perennial health about it.

Its charity is generosity, its virtue nobleness, its religion trust. We come nearer to friendship with flowers and inanimate objects than with merely affectionate and loving men. It is not for the friend to be just even, —— at least he is not to be lost in this attribute, — but to be only a large and free existence, representative of humanity, its general court. Admirable to us as the heavenly bodies, but like them affording rather a summer heat and daylight, — the light and fire of sunshine and stars, — rather than the intense heats and splendors which our weakness and appetite require.

Yesterday I skated after a fox over the ice. Occasionally he sat on his haunches and barked at me like a young wolf. It made me think of the bear and her cubs mentioned by Captain Parry, I think. All brutes seem to have a genius for mystery, an Oriental aptitude for symbols and the language of signs; and this is the origin of Pilpay and Æsop. The fox manifested an almost human suspicion of mystery in my actions. While I skated directly after him, he cantered at the top of his speed; but when I stood still, though his fear was not abated, some strange but inflexible law of his nature caused him to stop also, and sit again on his haunches. While I still stood motionless, he would go slowly a rod to one side, then sit and bark, then a rod to the other side, and sit and bark again, but did not retreat, as if spellbound. When, however, I commenced the pursuit again, he found himself released from his durance.

Plainly the fox belongs to a different order of things from that which reigns in the village. Our courts, though they offer a bounty for his hide, and our pulpits, though they draw many a moral from his cunning, are in few senses contemporary with his free forest life.

To the poet considered as an artist, his words must be as the relation of his oldest and finest memory, and wisdom derived from the remotest experience.

I have thought, when walking in the woods through a certain retired dell, bordered with shrub oaks and pines, far from the village and affording a glimpse only through an opening of the mountains in the horizon, how my life might pass there, simple and true and natural, and how many things would be impossible to be done there. How many books I might not read!

Why avoid my friends and live among strangers? Why not reside in my native country?

Many a book is written which does not necessarily suggest or imply the phenomenon or object to explain which it professes to have been written.

Every child should be encouraged to study not man's system of nature but nature's.

Giles Fletcher knew how to write, and has left English verses behind. He is the most valuable imitator of the Spenserian stanza,

and adds a moral tone of his own.

TO A MARSH HAWK IN SPRING

There is health in thy gray wing,

Health of nature's furnishing.
Say, thou modern-winged antique,
Was thy mistress ever sick?

In each heaving of thy wing
Thou dost health and leisure bring,
Thou dost waive disease and pain
And resume new life again.

Man walks in nature still alone,
And knows no one,
Discovers no lineament nor feature
Of any creature.

Though all the firmament
Is o'er me bent,
Yet still I miss the grace
Of an intelligent and kindred face.

I still must seek the friend
Who does with nature blend.
Who is the person in her mask,
He is the friend I ask;

Who is the expression of her meaning,
Who is the uprightness of her leaning,
Who is the grown child of her weaning.

We twain would walk together
Through every weather,

And see this aged Nature
Go with a bending stature.

The centre of this world,
The face of Nature,

The site of human life,
Some sure foundation
And nucleus of a nation,
At least, a private station.

It is the saddest thought of all, that what we are to others, that we are much more to ourselves, — avaricious, mean, irascible, affected, — we are the victims of these faults. If our pride offends our humble neighbor, much more does it offend ourselves, though our lives are never so private and solitary.

If the Indian is somewhat of a stranger in nature, the gardener is too much a familiar. There is something vulgar and foul in the latter's closeness to his mistress, something noble and cleanly in the former's distance. Yet the hunter seems to have a property in the moon which even the farmer has not. Ah! the poet knows uses of plants which are not easily reported, though he cultivates no parterre. See how the sun smiles on him while he walks in the gardener's aisles, rather than on the gardener.

Not only has the foreground of a picture its glass of transparent crystal spread over it, but the picture itself is a glass or transparent medium to a remoter background. We demand only of all pictures that they be perspicuous, that the laws of perspective have been truly observed. It is not the fringed foreground of the desert nor the intermediate oases that detain the eye and the imagination, but the infinite, level, and roomy horizon, where the sky meets the sand, and heavens and earth, the ideal and actual, are coincident, the background into which leads the path of the pilgrim.

All things are in revolution; it is the one law of nature by which order is preserved, and time itself lapses and is measured. Yet some things men will do from age to age, and some things they will not do.

"Fisherman's Acct. for 1805 [1] Began March 25

		cts.
	D[o] Mr. Sam[l] Potter 2 q[ts] W I 3/ 1 lb sugar 10[d]	80.64
	One Cod line 5/	84
April 8	Q[r] W I 1/6 & 1 lb Sugar 10[d] & Brown Mug	48
9	Q[r] N E rum 1/ 10[th] D[o]. of D[o] 1/	53
13	Q[r] N E rum & 1 lb Sugar 15[th] 2 Q[rs] N E rum 2/	62
17	Q[r] W I 1/6 D[o] N E 1/ lb Sugar 9[d] & Q[r] N E Rum	71
22	Q[r] N E rum 1/ lb sugar 9[d] & Q[r] N E rum 1/	44½
23	Q[r] N E rum 1/ D[o] of D[o] & sugar 5[d]	39
24	Q[r] N E rum 1/ lb sugar 9[d]	28½
29	Q[r] N E rum 1/ & lb sugar 9[d]—30th Rum 1/	44½
May first	Q[r] rum ¼ lb Sugar 1/5[d]	22
	Q[r] N E rum 1/ & ½ lb Loaf Sugar 9[d]	29
4	Q[r] rum 1/ Sugar 5[d]	22
6	Q[r] N E rum 1/ & lb good sugar 11[d]	31
7	Q[r] N E rum 1/ 8[th] Q[r] N E rum 1/ & ½ lb Sugar 5[d].	40
11	Q[r] N E rum 11[d] lb Sugar 10[d]	29
15	Q[r] rum & lb Sugar 1/9 & Q[r] N E rum	44
16	To a Line for the Sceene 3/	0.50
20	To Q[r] N E rum 11[d] lb Sugar 10[d]	0.29
21	To Q[r] N E rum 11[d] & lb Sugar 10[d]	0.29
27	To Q[r] W I 1/6 & lb Sugar 10[d].	0.39
June 5th	1805 Settled this acc[t] by Recev.g Cash in Full	$8.82½

How many young finny contemporaries of various character and destiny, form and habits, we have even in this water! And it will not be forgotten by some memory that we *were* contemporaries. It is of *some* import. We shall be some time friends, I trust, and know each other better. Distrust is too prevalent now. We are so much alike! have so many faculties in common! I have not yet met with the philosopher who could, in a quite conclusive, undoubtful way, show me *the*, and, if not *the*, then how *any*, difference between man and a fish. We are so much alike! How much could a really tolerant, patient, humane, and truly great and natural man make of them, if he should try? For they are to be understood, surely, as all things else, by no other method than that of sympathy. It is easy to say what they

are not to us, *i.e.,* what we are not to them; but what we might and ought to be is another affair.

In the tributaries the brook minnow and the trout. Even in the rills emptying into the river, over which you stride at a step, you may see small trout not so large as your finger glide past or hide under the bank.

The character of this [the homed pout], as indeed of all fishes, depends directly upon that of the water it inhabits, those taken in clear and sandy water being of brighter hue and cleaner and of firmer and sweeter flesh. It makes a peculiar squeaking noise when drawn out, which has given it the name of the minister or preacher.

The bream is the familiar and homely sparrow, which makes her nest everywhere, and is early and late.

The pickerel is the hawk, a fish of prey, hovering over the finny broods.

The pout is the owl, which steals so noiselessly about at evening with its clumsy body.

The shiner is the summer yellowbird, or goldfinch, of the river.

The sucker is the sluggish bittern, or stake-driver.

The minnow is the hummingbird.

The trout is the partridge woodpecker.

The perch is the robin.

We read Marlowe as so much poetical pabulum. It is food for poets, water from the Castalian Spring, some of the atmosphere of Parnassus, raw and crude indeed, and at times breezy, but pure and bracing. Few have so rich a phrase! He had drunk deep of the Pierian Spring, though not deep enough, and had that fine madness, as Drayton says, "Which justly should possess a poet's brain."

We read his "Dr. Faustus,"

"Dido, Queen of Carthage," and "Hero and Leander," especially the last, without being wearied. He had many of the qualities of a great poet, and was in some degree worthy to precede Shakespeare. But he seems to have run to waste for want of seclusion and solitude, as if mere pause and deliberation would have added a new element of greatness to his poetry. In his unquestionably fine, heroic tone it would seem as if he had the rarest part of genius, and education

could have added the rest. The “Hero and Leander” tells better for his character than the anecdotes which survive.

I fain would stretch me by the highway-side,
To thaw and trickle with the melting snow,
That mingled soul and body with the tide
I too might through the pores of Nature flow,

Might help to forward the new spring along,
If it were mine to choose my toil or day,
Scouring the roads with yonder sluice-way throng,
And so work out my tax on *Her* highway.

Yet let us thank the purblind race
Who still have thought it good
With lasting stone to mark the place
Where braver men have stood.
In Concord, town of quiet name
And quiet fame as well,...

I’ve seen ye, sisters, on the mountain-side,
When your green mantles fluttered in the wind;
I Ve seen your footprints on the lake’s smooth shore,
Lesser than man’s, a more ethereal trace;
I have heard of ye as some far-famed race,
Daughters of gods, whom I should one day meet,
Or mothers, I might say, of all our race.
I reverence your natures, so like mine
Yet strangely different, like but still unlike.
Thou only stranger that hast crossed my path,
Accept my hospitality; let me hear
The message which thou bring’st.
Made different from me,
Perchance thou ‘rt made to be
The creature of a different destiny.
I know not who ye are that meekly stand
Thus side by side with man in every land.

When did ye form alliance with our race,
Ye children of the moon, who in mild nights
Vaulted upon the hills and sought this earth?
Reveal that which I fear ye cannot tell,
Wherein ye are not I, wherein ye dwell
Where I can never come.
What boots it that I do regard ye so?
Does it make suns to shine or crops to grow?
What boots [it] that I never should forget
That I have sisters sitting for me yet?
And what are sisters?
The robust man, who can so stoutly strive,
In this bleak world is hardly kept alive.
And who is it protects *ye*, smooths *your* way?

We can afford to lend a willing ear occasionally to those earnest reformers of the age. Let us treat them hospitably. Shall we be charitable only to the poor? What though they are fanatics? Their errors are likely to be generous errors, and these may be they who will put to rest the American Church and the American government, and awaken better ones in their stead.

Let us not meanly seek to maintain our delicate lives in chambers or in legislative halls by a timid watchfulness of the rude mobs that threaten to pull down our baby-houses. Let us not think to raise a revenue which shall maintain our domestic quiet by an impost on the liberty of speech. Let us not think to live by the principle of self-defense. Have we survived our accidents hitherto, think you, by virtue of our good swords, — that three-foot lath that dangles by your side, or those brazenmouthed pieces under the burying hill which the trainers keep to hurrah with in the April and July mornings? Do our protectors burrow under the burying-ground hill, on the edge of the bean-field which you all know, gorging themselves once a year with powder and smoke, and kept bright and in condition by a chafing of oiled rags and rotten stone? Have we resigned the protection of our hearts and civil liberties to that feathered race of wading birds and marching men who drill but once a month? — and I mean no reproach to our Concord train-bands,

who certainly make a handsome appearance —— and dance well. Do we enjoy the sweets of domestic life undisturbed, because the naughty boys are all shut up in that whitewashed "stone-yard," as it is called, and see the Concord meadows only through a grating.

No, let us live amid the free play of the elements. Let the dogs bark, let the cocks crow, and the sun shine, and the winds blow!

Ye do commend me to all virtue ever,
And simple truth, the law by which we live.
Methinks that I can trust your clearer sense
And your immediate knowledge of the truth.
I would obey your influence, one with fate.

There is a true march to the sentence, as if a man or a body of men were actually making progress there step by step, and these are not the mere *disjecta membra*, the dispersed and mutilated members though it were of heroes, which can no longer walk and join themselves to their comrades. They are not perfect nor liberated pieces of art for the galleries, yet they stand on the natural and broad pedestal of the living rock, but have a principle of life and growth in them still, as has that human nature from which they spring.

It is a marvel how the birds contrive to survive in this world. These tender sparrows that flit from bush to bush this evening, though it is so late, do not seem improvident, [but appear] to have found a roost for the night. They must succeed by weakness and reliance, for they are not bold and enterprising, as their mode of life would seem to require, but very weak and tender creatures. I have seen a little chipping sparrow, come too early in the spring, shivering on an apple twig, drawing in its head and striving to warm it in its muffled feathers; and it had no voice to intercede with nature, but peeped as helpless as an infant, and was ready to yield up its spirit and die without any effort. And yet this was no new spring in the revolution of the seasons.

Our offense is rank, it smells to heaven. In the midst of our village, as in most villages, there is a slaughterhouse, and throughout the summer months, day and night, to the distance of half a mile,

which embraces the greater part of the village, the air [is] filled with such scents as we instinctively avoid in a woodland walk; and doubtless, if our senses were once purified and educated by a simpler and truer life, we should not consent to live in such a neighborhood.

George Melvin, our Concord trapper, told me that in going to the spring near his house, where he kept his minnows for bait, he found that they were all gone, and immediately suspected that a mink had got them; so he removed the snow all around and laid open the trail of a mink underneath, which he traced to his hole, where were the fragments of his booty. There he set his trap, and baited it with fresh minnows. Going again soon to the spot, he found one of the mink's fore legs in the trap gnawed off near the body, and, having set it again, he caught the mink with his three legs, the fourth having only a short bare bone sticking out.

When I expressed some surprise at this, and said that I heard of such things but did not know whether to believe them, and was now glad to have the story confirmed, said he: "Oh, the muskrats are the greatest fellows to gnaw their legs off. Why I caught one once that had just gnawed his third leg off, this being the third time he had been trapped; and he lay dead by the trap, for he couldn't run on one leg." Such tragedies are enacted even in this sphere and along our peaceful streams, and dignify at least the hunter's trade. Only courage does anywhere prolong life, whether of man or beast.

When they are caught by the leg and cannot get into the water to drown themselves, they very frequently gnaw the limb off. They are commonly caught under water or close to the edge, and dive immediately with the trap and go to gnawing and are quackled and drowned in a moment, though under other circumstances they will live several minutes under water. They prefer to gnaw off a fore leg to a hind leg, and do not gnaw off their tails. He says the wharf rats are very common on the river and will swim and cross it like a muskrat, and will gnaw their legs and even their tails off in the trap.

These would be times that tried men's souls, if men had souls to be tried; aye, and the souls of brutes, for they must have souls as well as teeth. Even the waterrats lead sleepless nights and live Achillean lives. There are the strong will and the endeavor. Man, even the

hunter, naturally has sympathy with every brave effort, even in his game, to maintain that life it enjoys. The hunter regards with awe his game, and it becomes at last his medicine.

Of Cadew or Case worms there are the Ruff-coats or Cockspurs, whose cases are rough and made of various materials, and the Piper Cadis or Straw-worm, made of reed or rush, and straight and smooth.

Carlyle's works are not to be studied, — hardly reread. Their first impression is the truest and the deepest. There is no reprint. If you look again, you will be disappointed and find nothing answering to the mood they have excited. They are true natural products in this respect. All things are but once, and never repeated. The first faint blushes of the morning gilding the mountain-tops, with the pale phosphorus and saffron-colored clouds, — they verily transport us to the morning of creation; but what avails it to travel eastward, or look again there an hour hence. We should be as far in the day ourselves, mounting toward our meridian. There is no *double entendre* for the alert reader; in fact the work was designed for such complete success that it serves but for a single occasion. It is the luxury of wealth and art when for every deed its own instrument is manufactured. The knife which sliced the bread of Jove ceased to be a knife when that service was rendered.

For every inferior, earthly pleasure we forego, a superior, celestial one is substituted.

To purify our lives requires simply to weed out what is foul and noxious and the sound and innocent is supplied, as nature purifies the blood if we will but reject impurities.

Nature and human life are as various to our several experiences as our constitutions are various. Who shall say what prospect life offers to another? Could a greater miracle take place than if we should look through each other's eyes for an instant? We should live in all the ages of the world in an hour, — aye, in all the worlds of the ages. What I have read of rhapsodists, of the primitive poets, Argonautic expeditions, the life of demigods and heroes, Eleusinian mysteries, etc., suggests nothing so ineffably grand and informing as this would

be.

The phoebe came into my house to find a place for its nest, flying through the windows.

It was a bright thought, that of man's to have bells; no doubt the birds hear them with pleasure.

To compete with the squirrels in the chestnut harvest, picking ofttimes the nuts that bear the mark of their teeth.

I require of any lecturer that he will read me a more or less simple and sincere account of his own life, of what he has done and thought, — not so much what he has read or heard of other men's lives and actions, but some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land, — and if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me, — describing even his outward circumstances and what adventures he has had, as well as his thoughts and feelings about them. He who gives us only the results of other men's lives, though with brilliant temporary success, we may in some measure justly accuse of having defrauded us of our time. We want him to give us that which was most precious to him, — not his life's blood but even that for which his life's blood circulated, what he has got by living. If anything ever yielded him pure pleasure or instruction, let him communicate it. Let the money-getter tell us how much he loves wealth, and what means he takes to accumulate it. He must describe those facts which he knows and loves better than anybody else. He must not write on foreign missions. The mechanic will naturally lecture about his trade, the farmer about his farm, and every man about that which he, compared with other men, knows best. Yet incredible mistakes are made. I have heard an owl lecture with perverse show of learning upon the solar microscope, and chanticleer upon nebulous stars, when both ought to have been sound asleep, the one in a hollow tree, the other on his roost.

After I lectured here before, this winter, I heard that some of my townsmen had expected of me some account of my life at the pond. This I will endeavor to give to-night.

I know a robust and hearty mother who thinks that her son, who died abroad, came to his end by living too low, as she had since learned that he drank only water. Men are not inclined to leave off hanging men to-day, though they will be to-morrow. I heard of a family in Concord this winter which would have starved, if it had not been for potatoes — and tea and coffee.

It has not been my design to live cheaply, but only to live as I could, not devoting much time to getting a living. I made the most of what means were already got.

To determine the character of our life and how adequate it is to its occasion, just try it by any test, as for instance that this same sun is seen in Europe and in America at the same time, that these same stars are visible in twenty-four hours to two thirds the inhabitants of the globe, and who knows how many and various inhabitants of the universe. What farmer in his field lives according even to this somewhat trivial material fact.

I just looked up at a fine twinkling star and thought that a voyager whom I know, now many days' sail from this coast, might possibly be looking up at that same star with me. The stars are the apexes of what triangles! There is always the possibility — the possibility, I say — of being *all,* or remaining a particle, in the universe.

In these days and in this country, a few implements, as the axe, shovel, etc., and, to the studious, light and stationery and access to a few books, will rank next to necessaries, but can all be obtained at a very trifling cost. Under the head of clothing is to be ranked bedding, or night-clothes.

We are very anxious to keep the animal heat in us. What pains we take with our beds! robbing the nests of birds and their breasts, this shelter within a shelter, as the mole has a bed of leaves and grass at the end of its burrow.

In the summer I caught fish occasionally in the pond, but since September have not missed them.

In a man or his work, over all special excellence or failure,

prevails the general authority or value.

Almost any man knows how to earn money, but not one in a million knows how to spend it. If he had known so much as this, he would never have earned it.

All matter, indeed, is capable of entertaining thought.

The complete subjugation of the body to the mind prophesies the sovereignty of the latter over the whole of nature. The instincts are to a certain extent a sort of independent nobility, of equal date with the mind, or crown, — ancient dukes and princes of the regal blood. They are perhaps the mind of our ancestors subsided in us, the experience of the race.

A small sum would really do much good, if the donor spent himself with it and did not merely relinquish it to some distant society whose managers do the good or the evil with it. How much might be done for this town with a hundred dollars! I could provide a select course of lectures for the summer or winter with that sum, which would be an incalculable benefit to every inhabitant. With a thousand dollars I could purchase for this town a more complete and select library than exists in the State out of Cambridge and Boston, perhaps a more available one than any. Men sit palsied and helpless by the side of their buried treasures.

After all those who do most good with money, do it with the least, because they can do better than to acquire it.

March 13, 1846. The song sparrow and blackbird heard to-day. The snow going off. The ice in the pond one foot thick.

Men talk much of cooperation nowadays, of working together to some worthy end; but what little cooperation there is, is as if it were not, being a simple result of which the means are hidden, a harmony inaudible to men. If a man has faith, he will cooperate with equal faith everywhere. If he has not faith he will continue to live like the rest of the world, whatever company he is joined to. To cooperate thoroughly implies to get your living together. I heard it proposed lately that two young men should travel together over the world, the one earning his means as he went, the other carrying a bill of

exchange in his pocket. It was easy to see that they could not long be companions, or cooperate, since one would not operate at all. They would part company at the first and most interesting crisis in their adventures.

1850

May 12, 1850, visited an ancient garrison-house now occupied by Fred. Ayer, who said it was built one hundred and fifty or one hundred and sixty years ago by one Emerson, and that several oxen were killed by lightning while it was building. There was also a pear tree nearly as old as the house. It was built of larger and thicker and harder brick than are used nowadays, and on the whole looked more durable and still likely to stand a hundred years. The hard burnt blue-black ends of some of the bricks were so arranged as to checker the outside. He said it was considered the handsomest house in Haverhill when it was built, and people used to come up from town some two miles to see it. He thought that they were the original doors which we saw. There were but few windows, and most of them were about two feet and a half long and a foot or more wide, only to fire out of. The oven originally projected outside. There were two large fireplaces. I walked into one, by stooping slightly, and looked up at the sky. Ayer said jokingly that some said they were so made to shoot wild geese as they flew over. The chains and hooks were suspended from a wooden bar high in the chimney. The timbers were of immense size.

In all my rambles I have seen no landscape which can make me forget Fair Haven. I still sit on its Cliff in a new spring day, and look over the awakening woods and the river, and hear the new birds sing, with the same delight as ever. It is as sweet a mystery to me as ever, what this world is. Fair Haven Lake in the south, with its pine-covered island and its meadows, the hickories putting out fresh young yellowish leaves, and the oaks light-grayish ones, while the oven-bird thrums his sawyer-like strain, and the chewink rustles through the dry leaves or repeats his jingle on a tree-top, and the wood thrush, the genius of the wood, whistles for the first time his clear and thrilling strain, — it sounds as it did the first time I heard it. The sight of these budding woods intoxicates me, — this diet drink.

The strong-colored pine, the grass of trees, in the midst of which other trees are but as weeds or flowers, — a little exotic.

Humboldt says, “It is still undetermined where life is most abundant: whether on the earth or in the fathomless depths of the

ocean."

As I walked, I was intoxicated with the slight spicy odor of the hickory buds and the bruised bark of the black birch, and, in the fall, the pennyroyal.

The river is higher than it has been at this season for many years.

When the far mountains are invisible, the near ones look the higher.

To-day, May 31st, a red and white cow, being uneasy, broke out of the steam-mill pasture and crossed the bridge and broke into Elijah Wood's grounds. When he endeavored to drive her out by the bars, she boldly took to the water, wading first through the meadows full of ditches, and swam across the river, about forty rods wide at this time, and landed in her own pasture again. She was a buffalo crossing her Mississippi. This exploit conferred some dignity on the herd in my eyes, already dignified, and reflectedly on the river, which I looked on as a kind of Bosphorus.

I love to see the domestic animals reassert their native rights, — any evidence that they have not lost their original wild habits and vigor.

The year has many seasons more than are recognized in the almanac. There is that time about the first of June, the beginning of summer, when the buttercups blossom in the now luxuriant grass and I am first reminded of mowing and of the dairy. Every one will have observed different epochs. There is the time when they begin to drive cows to pasture, — about the 20th of May, — observed by the farmer, but a little arbitrary year by year. Cows spend their winters in barns and cow-yards, their summers in pastures. In summer, therefore, they may low with emphasis, "To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new." I sometimes see a neighbor or two united with their boys and hired men to drive their cattle to some far-off country pasture, fifty or sixty miles distant in New Hampshire, early in the morning, with their sticks and dogs. It is a memorable time with the farmers' boys, and frequently their first journey from home. The herdsman in some mountain pasture is expecting them. And then in the fall, when they go up to drive them back, they speculate as to whether Janet or Brindle will know them. I heard such a boy exclaim on such an occasion, when the calf of the spring returned a heifer, as

he stroked her side, “She knows me, father; she knows me.” Driven up to be the cattle on a thousand hills.

I once set fire to the woods. Having set out, one April day, to go to the sources of Concord River in a boat with a single companion, meaning to camp on the bank at night or seek a lodging in some neighboring country inn or farmhouse, we took fishing tackle with us that we might fitly procure our food from the stream, Indian-like. At the shoemaker’s near the river, we obtained a match, which we had forgotten. Though it was thus early in the spring, the river was low, for there had not been much rain, and we succeeded in catching a mess of fish sufficient for our dinner before we had left the town, and by the shores of Fair Haven Pond we proceeded to cook them. The earth was uncommonly dry, and our fire, kindled far from the woods in a sunny recess in the hillside on the east of the pond, suddenly caught the dry grass of the previous year which grew about the stump on which it was kindled. We sprang to extinguish it at first with our hands and feet, and then we fought it with a board obtained from the boat, but in a few minutes it was beyond our reach; being on the side of a hill, it spread rapidly upward, through the long, dry, wiry grass interspersed with bushes.

“Well, where will this end?” asked my companion. I saw that it might be bounded by Well Meadow Brook on one side, but would, perchance, go to the village side of the brook. “It will go to town,” I answered. While my companion took the boat back down the river, I set out through the woods to inform the owners and to raise the town. The fire had already spread a dozen rods on every side and went leaping and crackling wildly and irreclaimably toward the wood. That way went the flames with wild delight, and we felt that we had no control over the demonic creature to which we had given birth. We had kindled many fires in the woods before, burning a clear space in the grass, without ever kindling such a fire as this.

As I ran toward the town through the woods, I could see the smoke over the woods behind me marking the spot and the progress of the flames. The first farmer whom I met driving a team, after leaving the woods, inquired the cause of the smoke. I told him. “Well,” said he, “it is none of my stuff,” and drove along. The next I met was the owner in his field, with whom I returned at once to the

woods, running all the way. I had already run two miles. When at length we got into the neighborhood of the flames, we met a carpenter who had been hewing timber, an infirm man who had been driven off by the fire, fleeing with his axe. The farmer returned to hasten more assistance. I, who was spent with running, remained. What could I do alone against a front of flame half a mile wide?

I walked slowly through the wood to Fair Haven Cliff, climbed to the highest rock, and sat down upon it to observe the progress of the flames, which were rapidly approaching me, now about a mile distant from the spot where the fire was kindled. Presently I heard the sound of the distant bell giving the alarm, and I knew that the town was on its way to the scene. Hitherto I had felt like a guilty person, — nothing but shame and regret. But now I settled the matter with myself shortly. I said to myself: "Who are these men who are said to be the owners of these woods, and how am I related to them? I have set fire to the forest, but I have done no wrong therein, and now it is as if the lightning had done it. These flames are but consuming their natural food." (It has never troubled me from that day to this more than if the lightning had done it. The trivial fishing was all that disturbed me and disturbs me still.) So shortly I settled it with myself and stood to watch the approaching flames. It was a glorious spectacle and I was the only one there to enjoy it. The fire now reached the base of the cliff and then rushed up its sides. The squirrels ran before it in blind haste, and three pigeons dashed into the midst of the smoke. The flames flashed up the pines to their tops, as if they were powder.

When I found I was about to be surrounded by the fire, I retreated and joined the forces now arriving from the town. It took us several hours to surround the flames with our hoes and shovels and by back fires subdue them. In the midst of all I saw the farmer whom I first met, who had turned indifferently away saying it was none of his stuff, striving earnestly to save his corded wood, his stuff, which the fire had already seized and which it after all consumed.

It burned over a hundred acres or more and destroyed much young wood. When I returned home late in the day, with others of my townsmen, I could not help noticing that the crowd who were so ready to condemn the individual who had kindled the fire did not

sympathize with the owners of the wood, but were in fact highly elate and as it were thankful for the opportunity which had afforded them so much sport; and it was only half a dozen owners, so called, though not all of them, who looked sour or grieved, and I felt that I had a deeper interest in the woods, knew them better and should feel their loss more, than any or all of them. The farmer whom I had first conducted to the woods was obliged to ask me the shortest way back, through his own lot. Why, then, should the half-dozen owners and the individuals who set the fire alone feel sorrow for the loss of the wood, while the rest of the town have their spirits raised? Some of the owners, however, bore their loss like men, but other some declared behind my back that I was a "damned rascal;" and a flibbertigibbet or two, who crowed like the old cock, shouted some reminiscences of "burnt woods" from safe recesses for some years after. I have had nothing to say to any of them. The locomotive engine has since burned over nearly all the same ground and more, and in some measure blotted out the memory of the previous fire. For a long time after I had learned this lesson I marvelled that while matches and tinder were contemporaries the world was not consumed; why the houses that have hearths were not burned before another day; if the flames were not as hungry now as when I waked them. I at once ceased to regard the owners and my own fault, — if fault there was any in the matter, — and attended to the phenomenon before me, determined to make the most of it. To be sure, I felt a little ashamed when I reflected on what a trivial occasion this had happened, that at the time I was no better employed than my townsmen.

That night I watched the fire, where some stumps still flamed at midnight in the midst of the blackened waste, wandering through the woods by myself; and far in the night I threaded my way to the spot where the fire had taken, and discovered the now broiled fish, — which had been dressed, — scattered over the burnt grass.

This has been a cool day, though the first of summer. The prospect of the meadows from Lee's Hill was very fine. I observe that the shadows of the trees are very distinct and heavy in such a day, falling on the fresh grass. They are as obvious as the trees themselves by mid-afternoon. Commonly we do not make much

account of the distinct shadows of objects in the landscape.

To-day, June 4th, I have been tending a burning in the woods.

You must burn against the wind always, and burn slowly. When the fire breaks over the hoed line, a little system and perseverance will accomplish more toward quelling it than any man would believe. When a fire breaks out in the woods, and a man fights it too near and on the side, in the heat of the moment, without the systematic coöperation of others, he is disposed to think it a desperate case, and that this relentless fiend will run through the forest till it is glutted with food; but let the company rest from their labors a moment, and then proceed more deliberately and systematically, giving the fire a wider berth, and the company will be astonished to find how soon and easily they will subdue it. The woods themselves furnish one of the best weapons with which to contend with the fires that destroy them, — a pitch pine bough. It is the best instrument to thrash it with. There are few men who do not love better to give advice than to give assistance.

However large the fire, let a few men go to work deliberately but perseveringly to rake away the leaves and hoe off the surface of the ground at a convenient distance from the fire, while others follow with pine boughs to thrash it with when it reaches the line, and they will finally get round it and subdue it, and will be astonished at their own success.

As I was fighting the fire to-day, in the midst of the roaring and crackling, — for the fire seems to snort like a wild horse, — I heard from time to time the dying strain, the last sigh, the fine, clear, shrill scream of agony, as it were, of the trees breathing their last, probably the heated air or the steam escaping from some chink. At first I thought it was some bird, or a dying squirrel's note of anguish, or steam escaping from the tree. You sometimes hear it on a small scale in the log on the hearth.

Here it is the 8th of June, and the grass is growing apace.

Not till June can the grass be said to be waving in the fields. When the frogs dream, and the grass waves, and the buttercups toss their heads, and the heat disposes to bathe in the ponds and streams, then is summer begun.

June 21. A fire is without doubt an advantage on the whole. It sweeps and ventilates the forest floor, and makes it clear and clean. It is nature's besom. By destroying the punier underwood it gives prominence to the larger and sturdier trees, and makes a wood in which you can go and come. I have often remarked with how much more comfort and pleasure I could walk in woods through which a fire had run the previous year. It will clean the forest floor like a broom perfectly smooth and clear, — no twigs left to crackle underfoot, the dead and rotten wood removed, — and thus in the course of two or three years new huckleberry fields are created for the town, — for birds and men.

When the lightning burns the forest its Director makes no apology to man, and I was but His agent. Perhaps we owe to this accident partly some of the noblest natural parks. It is inspiriting to walk amid the fresh green sprouts of grass and shrubbery pushing upward through the charred surface with more vigorous growth.

Getting into Patchogue late one night in an oyster-boat, there was a drunken Dutchman aboard whose wit reminded me of Shakespeare. We were detained three hours waiting for the tide, and two of the fishermen took an extra dram at the beach house. Then they stretched themselves on the seaweed by the shore in the sun to sleep off the effects. One was an inconceivably broad-faced young Dutch-man, — but oh! of such a peculiar breadth and heavy look, I should not know whether to call it more ridiculous or sublime. You would say that he had humbled himself so much that he was beginning to be exalted. An indescribable mynheerish stupidity. I was less disgusted by their filthiness and vulgarity, because I was compelled to look on them as animals, as swine in their sty. For the whole voyage they lay flat on their backs on the bottom of the boat, in the bilge-water and wet with each bailing, half insensible and wallowing in their vomit. But ever and anon, when aroused by the rude kicks or curses of the skipper, the Dutchman, who never lost his wit nor equanimity, though snoring and rolling in the vomit produced by his debauch, blurted forth some happy repartee like an illuminated swine. It was the earthiest, slimiest wit I ever heard. The countenance was one of a million. It was unmistakable Dutch. In the midst of a million faces of other races it could not be mistaken. It told of Amsterdam. I kept racking

my brains to conceive how he could have been born in America, how lonely he must feel, what he did for fellowship.

There was a cross-eyed fellow used to help me survey, — he was my stake-driver, — and all he said was, at every stake he drove, "There, I should n't like to undertake to pull *that* up with my teeth."

It sticks in my *crop*. That's a good phrase. Many things stick there.

Sept. 19. The trees on the bank of the river have white furrows worn about them, marking the height of the freshets, at what levels the water has stood.

Water is so much more fine and sensitive an element than earth. A single boatman passing up or down unavoidably shakes the whole of a wide river, and disturbs its every reflection.

The air is an element which our voices shake still further than our oars the water.

My companion said he would drink when the boat got under the bridge, because the water would be cooler in the shade, though the stream quickly passes through the piers from shade to sun again. It is something beautiful, the act of drinking, the stooping to imbibe some of this widespread element, in obedience to instinct, without whim. We do not so simply drink in other influences.

It is pleasant to have been to a place by the way a river went.

The forms of trees and groves change with every stroke of the oar.

There is a good echo from that wood to one standing on the side of Fair Haven. It was particularly good to-day. The woodland lungs seemed particularly sound to-day; they echoed your shout with a fuller and rounder voice than it was given in, seeming to *mouth* it. You had to choose the right key or pitch, else the woods would not echo it with any spirit, and so with eloquence. Of what significance is any sound if Nature does not echo it?

I used to strike with a paddle on the side of my boat on Walden Pond, filling the surrounding woods with circling and dilating sound, awaking the woods, "stirring them up," as a keeper of a menagerie his lions and tigers, a growl from all. All melody is a sweet echo. We wake the echo of the place we are in, its slumbering music.

I should think that savages would have made a god of echo.

I will call that Echo Wood.

There was a sawmill once on Nut Meadow Brook, near Jennie's Road. These little brooks have their history. They once turned sawmills. They even used their *influence* to destroy the primitive forests which grew on their banks, and now, for their reward, the sun is let in to dry them up and narrow their channels. Their crime rebounds against themselves.

What does education often do? It makes a straight-cut ditch of a free, meandering brook.

Nov. 11. Now is the time for wild apples. I pluck them as a wild fruit native to this quarter of the earth, fruit of old trees that have been dying ever since I was a boy and are not yet dead. From the appearance of the tree you would expect nothing but lichens to drop from it, but underneath your faith is rewarded by finding the ground strewn with spirited fruit. Frequented only by the woodpecker, deserted now by the farmer, who has not faith enough to look under the boughs. Food for walkers. Sometimes apples red inside, perfused with a beautiful blush, faery food, too beautiful to eat, — apple of the evening sky, of the Hesperides.

This afternoon I heard a single cricket singing, chirruping, in a bank, the only one I have heard for a long time, like a squirrel or a little bird, clear and shrill, — as I fancied, like an evening robin, singing in this evening of the year. A very fine and poetical strain for such a little singer. I had never before heard the cricket so like a bird. It is a remarkable note. The earth-song.

That delicate, waving, feathery dry grass which I saw yesterday is to be remembered with the autumn. The dry grasses are not dead for me. A beautiful form has as much life at one season as another.

The autumnal (?) dandelion is still bright.

I saw an old bone in the woods covered with lichens, which looked like the bone of an old settler, which yet some little animal had recently gnawed, and I plainly saw the marks of its teeth, so indefatigable is Nature to strip the flesh from bones and return it to dust again. No little rambling beast can go by some dry and ancient bone but he must turn aside and try his teeth upon it. An old bone is knocked about till it becomes dust; Nature has no mercy on it. It was

quite too ancient to suggest disagreeable associations. It was like a piece of dry pine root. It survives like the memory of a man. With time all that was personal and offensive wears off.

Nov. 16. I found three good arrowheads to-day behind Dennis's. The season for them began some time ago, as soon as the farmers had sown their winter rye, but the spring, after the melting of the snow, is still better.

In literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dullness is only another name for tameness. It is the untamed, uncivilized, free, and wild thinking in Hamlet, in the Iliad, and in all the scriptures and mythologies that delights us, — not learned in the schools, not refined and polished by art. A truly good book is something as wildly natural and primitive, mysterious and marvellous, ambrosial and fertile, as a fungus or a lichen. Suppose the muskrat or beaver were to turn his views to literature, what fresh views of nature would he present! The fault of our books and other deeds is that they are too humane, I want something speaking in some measure to the condition of muskrats and skunk-cabbage as well as of men, — not merely to a pining and complaining coterie of philanthropists.

I discover again about these times that cranberries are good to eat in small quantities as you are crossing the meadows.

What shall we do with a man who is afraid of the woods, their solitude and darkness? What salvation is there for him? God is silent and mysterious.

Some of our richest days are those in which no sun shines outwardly, but so much the more a sun shines inwardly. I love nature, I love the landscape, because it is so sincere. It never cheats me. It never jests. It is cheerfully, musically earnest. I lie and relie on the earth.

Land where the wood has been cut off and is just beginning to come up again is called sprout land.

The partridge-berry leaves checker the ground on the side of moist hillsides in the woods. Are *they* not properly called *checker*-berries?

My Journal should be the record of my love. I would write in it only of the things I love, my affection for any aspect of the world,

what I love to think of. I have no more distinctness or pointedness in my yearnings than an expanding bud, which does indeed point to flower and fruit, to summer and autumn, but is aware of the warm sun and spring influence only. I feel ripe for something, yet do nothing, can't discover what that thing is. I feel fertile merely. It is seedtime with me. I have lain fallow long enough.

Notwithstanding a sense of unworthiness which possesses me, not without reason, notwithstanding that I regard myself as a good deal of a scamp, yet for the most part the spirit of the universe is unaccountably kind to me, and I enjoy perhaps an unusual share of happiness. Yet I question sometimes if there is not some settlement to come.

Nov. 26. Went to-night to see the Indians, who are still living in tents.

Their spear very serviceable. The inner, pointed part, of a hemlock knot; the side spring pieces, of hickory. Spear salmon, pickerel, trout, chub, etc.; also by birch-bark light at night, using the other end of spear as pole.

Their sled, *jeborgon* or *jebongon* (?), one foot wide, four or five long, of thin wood turned up in front; draw by a strong rope of basswood bark.

Canoe of moose-hide. One hide will hold three or four. Can be taken apart and put together very quickly. Can take out cross-bars and bring the sides together. A very convenient boat to carry and cross streams with. They say they did not make birch canoes till they had edge tools. The birches the lightest. They think our birches the same, only second growth.

Their *kee-nong-gun*, or cradle, has a hoop to prevent the child being hurt when it falls. Can't eat dirt; can be hung up out of way of snakes.

Aboak-henjo , a birch-bark vessel for water. Can boil meat in it with hot stones; takes a long time. Also a vessel of birch bark, shaped like a pan. Both ornamented by scratching the bark, which is wrong side out. Very neatly made. Valued our kettles much.

Did not know use of eye in axe. Put a string through it and wore it round neck. Cut toes.

Did not like gun. Killed one moose; scared all the rest.

A drizzling and misty day this has been, melting the snow. The mist, divided into a thousand ghostly forms, was blowing across Walden. Mr. Emerson's Cliff Hill, seen from the railroad through the mist, looked like a dark, heavy, frowning New Hampshire mountain. I do not understand fully why hills look so much larger at such a time, unless, being the most distant we see and in the horizon, we suppose them farther off and so magnify them. I think there can be no looming about it.

Nov. 28. Thursday. Cold drizzling and misty rains, which have melted the little snow. The farmers are beginning to pick up their dead wood. Within a day or two the walker finds gloves to be comfortable, and begins to think of an outside coat and of boots.

It is remarkable, but nevertheless true, as far as my observation goes, that women, to whom we commonly concede a somewhat finer and more sibylline nature, yield a more implicit obedience even to their animal instincts than men. The nature in them is stronger, the reason weaker. There are, for instance, many young and middle-aged men among my acquaintance — shoemakers, carpenters, farmers, and others — who have scruples about using animal food, but comparatively few girls or women. The latter, even the most refined, are the most intolerant of such reforms. It is, perchance, a part of woman's conformity and easy nature. Her savior must not be too strong, stern, and intellectual.

Dec. 23. Here is an old-fashioned snow-storm. There is not much passing on railroads. The engineer says it is three feet deep above. Walden is frozen, one third of it, though I thought it was all frozen as I stood on the shore on one side only.

I can discern a faint foot or sled path sooner when the ground is covered with snow than when it is bare. The depression caused by the feet or the wheels is more obvious; perhaps the light and shade betray it, but I think it is mainly because the grass and weeds rise above it on each side and leave it blank, and a blank space of snow contrasts more strongly with the woods or grass than bare or beaten ground.

Even the surface of the snow is wont to be in waves like billows of the ocean.

Dec. 24. In walking across the Great Meadows to-day on the snow-crust, I noticed that the fine, dry snow which was blown over the surface of the frozen field, when I looked westward over it or toward the sun, looked precisely like steam curling up from its surface, as sometimes from a wet roof when the sun comes out after a rain.

Saw a shrike pecking to pieces a small bird, apparently a snowbird. At length he took him up in his bill, almost half as big as himself, and flew slowly off with his prey dangling from his beak. I find that I had not associated such actions with my idea of birds. It was not birdlike.

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Feb. 12. Wednesday. A beautiful day, with but little snow or ice on the ground. Though the air is sharp, as the earth is half bare the hens have strayed to some distance from the barns. The hens, standing around their lord and pluming themselves and still fretting a little, strive to fetch the year about.

I find that it is an excellent walk for variety and novelty and wildness, to keep round the edge of the meadow, — the ice not being strong enough to bear and transparent as water, — on the bare ground or snow, just between the highest water mark and the present water line, — a narrow, meandering walk, rich in unexpected views and objects. The line of rubbish which marks the higher tides — withered flags and reeds and twigs and cranberries — is to my eyes a very agreeable and significant line, which Nature traces along the edge of the meadows. It is a strongly marked, enduring natural line, which in summer reminds me that the water has once stood over where I walk. Sometimes the grooved trees tell the same tale. The wrecks of the meadow, which fill a thousand coves, and tell a thousand tales to those who can read them. Our prairial, mediterranean shore.

It is only necessary that man should start a fence that Nature should carry it on and complete it. The farmer cannot plow quite up to the rails or wall which he himself has placed, and hence it often becomes a hedgerow and sometimes a coppice.

There is something more than association at the bottom of the excitement which the roar of a cataract produces. It is allied to the circulation in our veins. We have a waterfall which corresponds even to Niagara somewhere within us.

How, when a man purchases a thing, he is determined to get and get hold of it, using how many expletives and how long a string of synonymous or similar terms signifying possession, in the legal process! What's mine's my own. An old deed of a small piece of swamp land, which I have lately surveyed at the risk of being mired past recovery, says that "the said Spaulding his Heirs and Assigns, shall and may from this (?) time, and at all times forever hereafter, by

force and virtue of these presents, lawfully, peaceably and quietly have, hold, use, occupy, possess and enjoy the said swamp," etc.

May 21. Wednesday. Yesterday I made out the black and the white ashes. A double male white ash in Miles's Swamp, and two black ashes with sessile leaflets. A female white ash near railroad, in Stow's land. The white ashes by Mr. Prichard's have no blossoms, at least as yet.

If I am right, the *black* ash is improperly so called, from the color of its bark being lighter than the white.

The leaves of my new pine on Merriam's or Pine Hill are of intermediate length between those of the yellow pine and the Norway pine. I can find no cone to distinguish the tree by; but, as the leaves are *semicylindrical* and not *hollowed* I think it must be the red or Norway Pine, though it does not look very red, and is *spruce!* answering perhaps to the description of the yellow pine, which is sometimes called spruce pine.

I have heard now within a few days that peculiar dreaming sound of the frogs which belongs to the summer, — their midsummer night's dream.

I think that we are not commonly aware that man is our contemporary, — that in this strange, outlandish world, so barren, so prosaic, fit not to live in but merely to pass through, that even here so divine a creature as man does actually live. Man, the crowning fact, the god we know. While the earth supports so rare an inhabitant, there is somewhat to cheer us. I think that the standing miracle to man is man. Behind the paling yonder, come rain or shine, hope or doubt, there dwells a man, an actual being who can sympathize with our sublimest thoughts.

The frog had eyed the heavens from his marsh, until his mind was filled with visions, and he saw more than belongs to this fenny earth. He mistrusted that he was become a dreamer and visionary. Leaping across the swamp to his fellow, what was his joy and consolation to find that he too had seen the same sights in the heavens, he too had dreamed the same dreams!

From nature we turn astonished to this *near* but supernatural fact.

May 25. A fine, freshening air, a little hazy, that bathes and washes everything, saving the day from extreme heat. Walked to the hills south of Wayland by the road by Deacon Farrar's. First vista just beyond Merron's (?), looking west down a valley, with a verdant-columned elm at the extremity of the vale and the blue hills and horizon beyond. These are the resting-places in a walk. We love to see any part of the earth tinged with blue, cerulean, the color of the sky, the celestial color.

There we found the celandine in blossom. The *Pyrus arbutifolia*, variety *melanocarpa*. Gray makes also the variety *erythrocarpa*. Is this the late red choke-berry of the swamps? and is the former the earlier black one of the swamps?

The marsh-marigold, *Caltha palustris*, improperly called cowslip.

The *Cratægus coccinea* (?), or scarlet-fruited thorn (?).

Thyme-leaved veronica, little bluish-white, streak-petalled flower by road sides. *Silene Pennsylvanica*.

What is the orange-yellow aster-like flower of the meadows now in blossom with a sweet-smelling stem when bruised?

What the delicate pinkish and yellowish flower with hoary-green stem and leaves, of rocky hills.

Now, at 8.30 o'clock P.M., I hear the dreaming of the frogs. So it seems to me, and so significantly passes my life away. It is like the dreaming of frogs in a summer evening.

June 3. I observed the grass waving to-day for the first time, — the swift Camilla on it. It might have been noticed before.

Clover has blossomed.

June 7. My practicalness is not to be trusted to the last. To be sure, I go upon my legs for the most part, but, being hard-pushed and dogged by a superficial common sense which is bound to near objects by beaten paths, I am off the handle, as the phrase is, — I begin to be transcendental and show where my heart is. I am like those guinea-fowl which Charles Darwin saw at the Cape de Verd Islands. He says, "They avoided us like partridges on a rainy day in September, running with their heads cocked up; and if pursued, they readily took to the wing."

It is a certain faeryland where we live. I wonder that I ever get five miles on my way, the walk is so crowded with events and phenomena. How many questions there are which I have not put to the inhabitants!

But how far can you carry *your* practicalness? How far does your knowledge really extend? When I have read in deeds only a hundred years old the words "to enjoy and possess, he and his assigns, *forever*," I have seen how short-sighted is the sense which conducts from day to day. When I read the epitaphs of those who died a century ago, they seem deader even than they expected. A day seems proportionally a long part of your "forever and a day."

One of those gentle, straight-down rainy days, when the rain begins by spotting the cultivated fields as if shaken from a pepper-box; a fishing day, when I see one neighbor after another, having donned his oil-cloth suit, walking or riding past with a fish-pole, having struck work, — a day and an employment to make philosophers of them all.

June 8. Sunday. In F.A. Michaux's, *i.e.* the younger Michaux's, "Voyage à l'ouest des Monts Alléghanys, 1802," printed at Paris, 1808: —

The current of the Ohio is so swift in the spring that it is not necessary to row. Indeed rowing would do more harm than good, since it would tend to turn the ark out of the current on to some isle or sand-bar, where it would be entangled amid floating trees. This has determined the form of the bateaux, which are not the best calculated for swiftness but to obey the current. They are from fifteen to fifty feet long by ten to twelve and fifteen, with square ends, and roof of boards like a house at one end. The sides are about four and a half feet above the water. "I was alone on the shore of the Monongahela, when I perceived, for the first time, in the distance, five or six of these bateaux which were descending this river. I could not conceive what those great square boxes were, which, abandoned to the current, presented alternately their ends, their sides, and even (or also (?), *et même*) their angles. As they came nearer, I heard a confused noise but without distinguishing anything, on account of the elevation of the sides. It was only on ascending the bank of the

river that I perceived, in these bateaux, many families carrying with them their horses, cows, poultry, dismounted carts (*charrettes*), plows, harnesses, beds, agricultural implements, in short all that constitute the movables of a household (*ménage*) and the carrying on (*exploitation*) of a farm." But he was obliged to paddle his log canoe "*sans cesse*" because of the sluggishness of the current of the Ohio in April, 1802.

After travelling more than three thousand miles in North America, he says that no part is to be compared for the "*force végétative des forêts*" to the region of the Ohio between Wheeling and Marietta. Thirty-six miles above the last place he measured a plane tree on the bank of the Ohio which, at four feet from the ground, was forty-seven in circumference. Tulip and plane trees, his father had said, attained the greatest diameter of North American trees.

Gathered the first strawberries to-day.

June 11. Wednesday. Last night a beautiful summer night, not too warm, moon not quite full, after two or three rainy days. Walked to Fair Haven by railroad, returning by Potter's pasture and Sudbury road. I feared at first that there would be too much white light, like the pale remains of daylight, and not a yellow, gloomy, dreamier light; that it would be like a candlelight by day; but when I got away from the town and deeper into the night, it was better. I hear whip-poor-wills, and see a few fireflies in the meadow.

New beings have usurped the air we breathe, rounding Nature, filling her crevices with sound. To sleep where you may hear the whip-poor-will in your dreams!

The woodland paths are never seen to such advantage as in a moonlight night, so embowered, still opening before you almost against expectation as you walk; you are so completely in the woods, and yet your feet meet no obstacles. It is as if it were not a path, but an open, winding passage through the bushes, which your feet find.

Ah, that life that I have known! How hard it is to remember what is most memorable! We remember how we itched, not how our hearts beat. I can sometimes recall to mind the quality, the immortality, of my youthful life, but in memory is the only relation

to it.

I hear the night-warbler breaking out as in his dreams, made so from the first for some mysterious reason.

Our spiritual side takes a more distinct form, like our shadow which we see accompanying us.

I do not know but I feel less vigor at night; my legs will not carry me so far; as if the night were less favorable to muscular exertion, — weakened us, somewhat as darkness turns plants pale. But perhaps my experience is to be referred to being already exhausted by the day, and I have never tried the experiment fairly. Yet sometimes after a hard day's work I have found myself unexpectedly vigorous.

Only the Hunter's and Harvest moons are famous, but I think that each full moon deserves to be and has its own character well marked. One might be called the Midsummer-Night Moon.

By night no flowers, at least no variety of colors. The pinks are no longer pink; they only shine faintly, reflecting more light. Instead of flowers underfoot, stars overhead.

My shadow has the distinctness of a second person, a certain black companion bordering on the imp, and I ask, "Who is this?" which I see dodging behind me as I am about to sit down on a rock.

No one, to my knowledge, has observed the minute differences in the seasons. Hardly two nights are alike. The rocks do not feel warm to-night, for the air is warmest; nor does the sand particularly. A book of the seasons, each page of which should be written in its own season and out-of-doors, or in its own locality wherever it may be.

When you get into the road, though far from the town, and feel the sand under your feet, it is as if you had reached your own gravel walk. You no longer hear the whip-poor-will, nor regard your shadow, for here you expect a fellow-traveller. You catch yourself walking merely. The road leads your steps and thoughts alike to the town. You see only the path, and your thoughts wander from the objects which are presented to your senses. You are no longer in place. It is like conformity, — walking in the ways of men.

In Charles Darwin's "Voyage of a Naturalist round the World," commenced in 1831: —

Hail in Buenos Ayres as large as small apples; killed thirteen deer, beside ostriches, which last also it blinded, etc., etc. Dr. Malcomson

told him of hail in India, in 1831, which "much injured the cattle." Stones flat, one ten inches in circumference; passed through windows, making round holes.

I would like to read Azara's Voyage.

Horses first landed at the La Plata in 1535. Now these, with cattle and sheep, have altered the whole aspect of the country, — vegetation, etc. "The wild pig in some parts probably replaces the peccari; packs of wild dogs may be heard howling on the wooded banks of the less frequented streams; and the common cat, altered into a large and fierce animal, inhabits rocky hills."

The great table-land of southern Mexico makes the division between North and South America with reference to the migration of animals.

Tree ferns in Van Diemen's Land (lat. 45°) six feet in circumference.

JUNE 13. Walked to Walden last night (moon not quite full) by railroad and upland wood-path, returning by Wayland road. Last full moon the elms had not leaved out, — cast no heavy shadows, — and their outlines were less striking and rich in the streets at night.

I noticed night before night before last from Fair Haven how valuable was some water by moonlight, like the river and Fair Haven Pond, though far away, reflecting the light with a faint glimmering sheen, as in the spring of the year. The water shines with an inward light like a heaven on earth. The silent depth and serenity and majesty of water! Strange that men should distinguish gold and diamonds, when these precious elements are so common. I saw a distant river by moonlight, making no noise, yet flowing, as by day, still to the sea, like melted silver reflecting the moonlight. Far away it lay encircling the earth. How far away it may look in the night, and even from a low hill how miles away down in the valley! As far off as paradise and the delectable country! There is a certain glory attends on water by night. By it the heavens are related to the earth, undistinguishable from a sky beneath you. And I forgot to say that after I reached the road by Potter's bars, — or further, by Potter's Brook, — I saw the moon suddenly reflected full from a pool. A puddle from which you may see the moon reflected, and the earth

dissolved under your feet. The magical moon with attendant stars suddenly looking up with mild lustre from a window in the dark earth.

I observed also the same night a halo about my shadow in the moonlight, which I referred to the accidentally lighter color of the surrounding surface; I transferred my shadow to the darkest patches of grass, and saw the halo there equally. It serves to make the outlines of the shadow more distinct.

But now for last night. A few fireflies in the meadow. Do they shine, though invisibly, by day? Is their candle lighted by day? It is not nightfall till the whip-poor-wills begin to sing.

As I entered the Deep Cut, I was affected by beholding the first faint reflection of genuine and unmixed moonlight on the eastern sand-bank while the horizon, yet red with day, was tingeing the western side. What an interval between those two lights! The light of the moon, — in what age of the world does that fall upon the earth? The moonlight was as the earliest and dewy morning light, and the daylight tinge reminded me much more of the night. There were the old and new dynasties opposed, contrasted, and an interval between, which time could not span. Then is night, when the daylight yields to the nightlight. It suggested an interval, a distance not recognized in history. Nations have flourished in that light.

When I had climbed the sand-bank on the left, I felt the warmer current or stratum of air on my cheek, like a blast from a furnace.

The white stems of the pines, which reflected the weak light, standing thick and close together while their lower branches were gone, reminded me that the pines are only larger grasses which rise to a chaffy head, and we the insects that crawl between them. They are particularly grass-like.

How long do the gales retain the heat of the sun? I find them retreated high up the sides of hills, especially on open fields or cleared places. Does, perchance, any of this pregnant air survive the dews of night? Can any of it be found remembering the sun of yesterday even in the morning hours. Does, perchance, some puff, some blast, survive the night on elevated clearings surrounded by the forest?

The bullfrog belongs to summer. The different frogs mark the

seasons pretty well, — the peeping hyla, the dreaming frog, and the bullfrog. I believe that all may be heard at last occasionally together.

I heard partridges drumming to-night as late as 9 o'clock. What singularly space penetrating and filling sound! Why am I never nearer to its source?

We do not commonly live our life out and full; we do not fill all our pores with our blood; we do not inspire and expire fully and entirely enough, so that the wave, the comber, of each inspiration shall break upon our extremest shores, rolling till it meets the sand which bounds us, and the sound of the surf come back to us. Might not a bellows assist us to breathe? That our breathing should create a wind in a calm day! We live but a fraction of our life. Why do we not let on the flood, raise the gates, and set all our wheels in motion? He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Employ your senses.

The newspapers tell us of news not to be named even with that in its own kind which an observing man can pick up in a solitary walk, as if it gained some importance and dignity by its publicness. Do we need to be advertised each day that such is still the routine of life?

The tree-toad's, too, is a summer sound.

I hear, just as the night sets in, faint notes from time to time from some sparrow (?) falling asleep, — a vesper hymn, — and later, in the woods, the chuckling, rattling sound of some unseen bird on the near trees. The nighthawk booms wide awake.

By moonlight we see not distinctly even the surface of the earth, but our daylight experience supplies us with confidence.

As I approached the pond down Hubbard's Path, after coming out of the woods into a warmer air, I saw the shimmering of the moon on its surface, and, in the near, now flooded cove, the water-bugs, darting, circling about, made streaks or curves of light. The moon's inverted pyramid of shimmering light commenced about twenty rods off, like so much micaceous sand. But I was startled to see midway in the dark water a bright flamelike, more than phosphorescent light crowning the crests of the wavelets, which at first I mistook for fireflies, and thought even of cucullos. It had the appearance of a pure, smokeless flame a half-dozen inches long, issuing from the water and bending flickeringly along its surface. I thought of St. Elmo's lights and the like. But, coming near to the shore of the pond

itself, these flames increased, and I saw that even this was so many broken reflections of the moon's disk, though one would have said they were of an intenser light than the moon herself; from contrast with the surrounding water they were. Standing up close to the shore and nearer the rippled surface, I saw the reflections of the moon sliding down the watery concave like so many lustrous burnished coins poured from a bag with inexhaustible lavishness, and the lambent flames on the surface were much multiplied, seeming to slide along a few inches with each wave before they were extinguished; and I saw how farther and farther off they gradually merged in the general sheen, which, in fact, was made up of a myriad little mirrors reflecting the disk of the moon with equal brightness to an eye rightly placed. The pyramid or sheaf of light which we see springing from near where we stand only, in fact, is the outline of that portion of the shimmering surface which an eye takes in. To myriad eyes suitably placed, the whole surface of the pond would be seen to shimmer, or rather it would be seen, as the waves turned up their mirrors, to be covered with those bright flame-like reflections of the moon's disk, like a myriad candles everywhere issuing from the waves; *i.e.* if there were as many eyes as angles presented by the waves, the whole surface would appear as bright as the moon; and these reflections are dispersed in all directions into the atmosphere, flooding it with light. No wonder that water reveals itself so far by night; even further in many states of the atmosphere than by day. I thought at first it some unusual phosphorescence. In some positions these flames were star-like points, brighter than the brightest stars. Suddenly a flame would show itself in a near and dark space, precisely like some inflammable gas on the surface, — as if an inflammable gas made its way up from the bottom.

I heard my old musical, simple-noted owl. The sound of the *dreaming* frogs prevails over the others. Occasionally a bullfrog near me made an obscene noise, a sound like an eructation, near me. I think they must be imbodied eructations. They suggest flatulency.

The pond is higher than ever, so as to hinder fishermen, and I could hardly get to the true shore here on account of the bushes. I pushed out in a boat a little and heard the chopping of the waves under its bow. And on the bottom I saw the moving reflections of the

shining waves, faint streaks of light revealing the shadows of the waves or the opaqueness of the water.

As I climbed the hill again toward my old bean-field, I listened to the ancient, familiar, immortal, dear cricket sound under all others, hearing at first some distinct chirps; but when these ceased I was aware of the general earth-song, which my hearing had not heard, amid which these were only taller flowers in a bed, and I wondered if behind or beneath this there was not some other chant yet more universal. Why do we not hear when this begins in the spring? and when it ceases in the fall? Or is it too gradual?

After I have got into the road I have no thought to record all the way home, — the walk is comparatively barren. The leafy elm sprays seem to droop more by night (??).

June 15. Sunday. Darwin still: — [*3 pages of notes*]

Saw the first wild rose to-day on the west side of the railroad causeway. The whiteweed has suddenly appeared, and the clover gives whole fields a rich and florid appearance, — the rich red and the sweet-scented white. The fields are blushing with the red species as the western sky at evening. The blue-eyed grass, well named, looks up to heaven. And the yarrow, with its persistent dry stalks and heads, is now ready to blossom again. The dry stems and heads of last year's tansy stand high above the new green leaves.

After walking by night several times I now walk by day, but I am not aware of any crowning advantage in it. I see small objects better, but it does not enlighten me any. The day is more trivial.

June 29. There is a great deal of white clover this year. In many fields where there has been no clover seed sown for many years at least, it is more abundant than the red, and the heads are nearly as large. Also pastures which are close cropped, and where I think there was little or no clover last year, are spotted white with a humbler growth. As this is the season for the swarming of bees, and this clover is very attractive to them, it is probably the more difficult to secure them; at any rate it is the more important to secure their services now that they can make honey so fast. It is an interesting inquiry why this year is so favorable to the growth of clover!

The panicled cornel, a low shrub, in blossom by wallsides now.

I thought that one peculiarity of my "Week" was its *hypæthral* character, to use an epithet applied to those Egyptian temples which are open to the heavens above, *under the ether*. I thought that it had little of the atmosphere of the house about it, but might wholly have been written, as in fact it was to a considerable extent, out-of-doors. It was only at a late period in writing it, as it happened, that I used any phrases implying that I lived in a house or led a *domestic* life. I trust it does not smell of the study and library, even of the poet's attic, as of the fields and woods; that it is a hy-pæthral or unroofed book, lying open under the ether and permeated by it, open to all weathers, not easy to be kept on a shelf.

The potatoes are beginning to blossom.

July 2. A traveller! I love his title. A traveller is to be reverenced as such. His profession is the best symbol of our life. Going from —— toward —— ; it is the history of every one of us.

It takes but little distance to make the hills and even the meadows look blue to-day. That principle which gives the air an azure color is more abundant.

To-day the milkweed is blossoming. Some of the raspberries are ripe, the most innocent and simple of fruits, the purest and most ethereal. Cherries are ripe. Strawberries in the gardens have passed their prime.

July 6. There is some advantage in being the humblest, cheapest, least dignified man in the village, so that the very stable boys shall damn you. Methinks I enjoy that advantage to an unusual extent. There is many a coarsely well-meaning fellow, who knows only the skin of me, who addresses me familiarly by my Christian name. I get the whole good of him and lose nothing myself.

The red clover heads are now turned black. It is but a short time that their rich bloom lasts. The white is black or withering also. Whiteweed still looks white in the fields. Blue-eyed grass is now rarely seen. The grass in the fields and meadows is not so fresh and fair as it was a fortnight ago. It is dryer and riper and ready for the mowers. Now June is past. June is the month for grass and flowers.

Now grass is turning to hay, and flowers to fruits. Already I gather ripe blueberries on the hills. The red-topped grass is in its prime, tingeing the fields with red.

Golden senecio.

Corydalis.

Toad

["Cocuyo," a West Indian firefly.]

July 14. Passing over the Great Fields (where I have been surveying a road) this forenoon, where were some early turnips, the county commissioners plucked and pared them with their knives and ate them. I, too, tried hard to chew a mouthful of raw turnip and realize the life of cows and oxen, for it might be a useful habit in extremities. These things occur as the seasons revolve. These are things which travellers will do.

July 16. Wednesday. Methinks my present experience is nothing; my past experience is all in all. I think that no experience which I have to-day comes up to, or is comparable with, the experiences of my boyhood. And not only this is true, but as far back as I can remember I have unconsciously referred to the experiences of a previous state of existence. My life was ecstasy. In youth, before I lost any of my senses, I can remember that I was all alive, and inhabited my body with inexpressible satisfaction; both its weariness and its refreshment were sweet to me. I can remember how I was astonished. I looked in books for some recognition of a kindred experience, but, strange to say, I found none. With all your science can you tell how it is, and whence it is, that light comes into the soul?

Berries are just beginning to ripen, and children are planning expeditions after them. They are important as introducing children to the fields and woods, and as wild fruits of which much account is made. During the berry season the schools have a vacation, and many little fingers are busy picking these small fruits. It is ever a pastime, not a drudgery. I remember how glad I was when I was kept from school a half a day to pick huckleberries on a neighboring hill all by myself to make a pudding for the family dinner. Ah, they got nothing

but the pudding, but I got invaluable experience beside! A half a day of liberty like that was like the promise of life eternal. It was emancipation in New England. O, what a day was there, my countrymen!

Now, at 4 P.M., I hear the pewee in the woods, and the cuckoo reminds me of some silence among the birds I had not noticed. The vireo (red-eyed?) sings like a robin at even, incessantly, — for I have now turned into Conant's woods. The oven-bird helps fill some pauses. The poison sumach shows its green berries, now unconscious of guilt. The heart-leaved loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata*) is seen in low open woods. The breeze displays the white under sides of the oak leaves and gives a fresh and flowing look to the woods. The river is a dark-blue winding stripe amid the green of the meadow. What is the color of the world? Green mixed with yellowish and reddish for hills and ripe grass, and darker green for trees and forests; blue spotted with dark and white for sky and clouds, and dark blue for water. Beyond the old house I hear the squirrel chirp in the wall like a sparrow; so Nature merges her creations into one. I am refreshed by the view of Nobscot and the southwestern vales, from Conantum, seething with the blue element. Here comes a small bird with a ricochet flight and a faint twittering note like a messenger from Elysium. The rush sparrow jingles her small change, pure silver, on the counter of the pasture. From far I see the rye stacked up. A few dead trees impart the effect of wildness to the landscape, though it is a feature rare in an old settled country.

Green apples are now so large as to remind me of coddling and the autumn again. The season of fruits is arrived. The dog's-bane has a pretty, delicate bell-like flower. The Jersey tea abounds. I see the marks of the scythes in the fields, showing the breadth of each swath the mowers cut. Filberts are formed, and you may get the berry stains out of your hands with their husks, if you have any. Nightshade is in blossom. Came through the pine plains behind James Baker's, where late was open pasture. These are among our pleasantest woods, — open, level, with blackberry vines interspersed and flowers, as lady's-slippers, earlier, and pinks on the outskirts. Each tree has room enough. And now I hear the wood thrush from the shade, who loves these pine woods as well as I.

July 18. I might have added to the list of July 16th the *Aralia hispida*, bristling aralia; the heart-leaved loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata*); also the upright loosestrife (*L. racemosa*), with a rounded terminal raceme; the tufted vetch (*Vicia cracca*). Sweet-gale fruit now green.

July 19. Here I am thirty-four years old, and yet my life is almost wholly unexpanded. How much is in the germ! There is such an interval between my ideal and the actual in many instances that I may say I am unborn. There is the instinct for society, but no society. Life is not long enough for one success. Within another thirty-four years that miracle can hardly take place. Methinks my seasons revolve more slowly than those of nature; I am differently timed. I am contented. This rapid revolution of nature, even of nature in me, why should it hurry me? Let a man step to the music which he hears, however measured. Is it important that I should mature as soon as an apple tree? aye, as soon as an oak? May not my life in nature, in proportion as it is supernatural, be only the spring and infantile portion of my spirit's life? Shall I turn my spring to summer? May I not sacrifice a hasty and petty completeness here to entireness there? If my curve is large, why bend it to a smaller circle? My spirit's unfolding observes not the pace of nature. The society which I was made for is not here.

July 22. The season of morning fogs has arrived. I think it is connected with dog-days. Perhaps it is owing to the greater contrast between the night and the day, the nights being nearly as cold, while the days are warmer?

I bathe me in the river. I lie down where it is shallow, amid the weeds over its sandy bottom; but it seems shrunken and parched; I find it difficult to get *wet* through. I would fain be the channel of a mountain brook. I bathe, and in a few hours I bathe again, not remembering that I was wetted before. When I come to the river, I take off my clothes and carry them over, then bathe and wash off the mud and continue my walk. I would fain take rivers in my walks endwise.

July 23. 8 A.M. — A comfortable breeze blowing. Methinks I can write better in the afternoon, for the novelty of it, if I should go abroad this morning. My genius makes distinctions which my understanding cannot, and which my senses do not report. If I should reverse the usual, — go forth and saunter in the fields all the forenoon, then sit down in my chamber in the afternoon, which it is so unusual for me to do, — it would be like a new season to me, and the novelty of it inspire me. The wind has fairly blown me outdoors; the elements were so lively and active, and I so sympathized with them, that I could not sit while the wind went by. Is the literary man to live always or chiefly sitting in a chamber through which nature enters by a window only? What is the use of the summer?

The mind is subject to moods, as the shadows of clouds pass over the earth. Pay not too much heed to them. Let not the traveller stop for them. They consist with the fairest weather. By the mood of my mind, I suddenly felt dissuaded from continuing my walk, but I observed at the same instant that the shadow of a cloud was passing over the spot on which I stood, though it was of small extent, which, if it had no connection with my mood, at any rate suggested how transient and little to be regarded that mood was. I kept on, and in a moment the sun shone on my walk within and without.

The button-bush in blossom. The tobacco-pipe in damp woods. Certain localities only a few rods square in the fields and on the hills, sometimes the other side of a wall, attract me as if they had been the scene of pleasure in another state of existence.

But this habit of close observation, — in Humboldt, Darwin, and others. Is it to be kept up long, this science? Do not tread on the heels of your experience. Be impressed without making a minute of it. Poetry puts an interval between the impression and the expression, — waits till the seed germinates naturally.

July 25. Friday. Started for Clark's Island at 7 A.M.

At 9 A.M. took the Hingham boat and was landed at Hull. There was a pleasure party on board, apparently boys and girls belonging to the South End, going to Hingham. There was a large proportion of ill-dressed and ill-mannered boys of Irish extraction. A sad sight to

behold! Little boys of twelve years, prematurely old, sucking cigars! I felt that if I were their mothers I should whip them and send them to bed. Such children should be dealt with as for stealing or impurity. What right have parents to beget, to bring up, and attempt to *educate* children in a city? I thought of infanticide among the Orientals with complacency. I seemed to hear infant voices lisp, "Give us a fair chance, parents." There is no such squalidness in the country.

July 29. Tuesday. A northeast wind with rain, but the sea is the wilder for it. In the afternoon I sailed to Plymouth, three miles, notwithstanding the drizzling rain, or "drisk," as Uncle Ned called it. We passed round the head of Plymouth beach, which is three miles long. I did not know till afterward that I had landed where the Pilgrims did and passed over the Rock on Hedge's Wharf. Returning, we had more wind and tacking to do.

This sailing on salt water was something new to me. The boat is such a living creature, even this clumsy one sailing within five points of the wind. The sailboat is an admirable invention, by which you compel the wind to transport you even against itself. It is easier to guide than a horse; the slightest pressure on the tiller suffices. I think the inventor must have been greatly surprised, as well as delighted, at the success of his experiment. It is so contrary to expectation, as if the elements were disposed to favor you. This deep, unfordable sea! but this wind ever blowing over it to transport you! At 10 P.M. it was perfectly fair and bright starlight.

July 31. At 11 A.M. set sail to Plymouth.

Mr. Thomas Russell, who cannot be seventy, at whose house on Leyden Street I took tea and spent the evening, told me that he remembered to have seen Ebenezer Cobb, a native of Plymouth, who died in Kingston in 1801, aged one hundred and seven, who remembered to have had personal knowledge of Peregrine White, saw him an old man riding on horseback (he lived to be eighty-three). White was born at Cape Cod Harbor before the Pilgrims got to Plymouth. Pilgrim Hall. They used to crack off pieces of the Forefathers' Rock for visitors with a cold chisel, till the town forbade it. The stone remaining at wharf is about seven feet square.

LEFT Plymouth at 9 A.M., August 1st.

I could make a list of things ill-managed. We Yankees do not deserve our fame. *Viz.*: Why have we not a decent pocket-map of the State of Massachusetts? There is the large map. Why is it not cut into half a dozen sheets and folded into a small cover for the pocket? Are there no travellers to use it? Well, to tell the truth, there are but few, and that's the reason why. Men go by railroad, and State maps hanging in bar-rooms are small enough. The State has been admirably surveyed at a great cost, and yet Dearborn's Pocket-Map is the best one we have!

Aug. 4. As my eye rested on the blossom of the meadow-sweet in a hedge, I heard the note of an autumnal cricket, and was penetrated with the sense of autumn. Was it sound? or was it form? or was it scent? or was it flavor? It is now the royal month of August.

Aug. 5. Ah, what a poor, dry compilation is the "Annual of Scientific Discovery!" I trust that observations are made during the year which are not chronicled there, — that some mortal may have caught a glimpse of Nature in some corner of the earth during the year 1851. One sentence of perennial poetry would make me forget, would atone for, volumes of mere science. The astronomer is as blind to the significant phenomena, or the significance of phenomena, as the wood-sawyer who wears glasses to defend his eyes from sawdust. The question is not what you look at, but what you see.

Aug. 8. 7.30 P.M. — To Conantum.

The moon has not yet quite filled her horns.

Might not this be called the Invalid's Moon, on account of the warmth of the nights? The principal employment of the farmers now seems to be getting their meadow-hay and cradling some oats, etc.

Aug. 17. For a day or two it has been quite cool, a coolness that was felt even when sitting by an open window in a thin coat on the west side of the house in the morning, and you naturally sought the sun at that hour. The coolness concentrated your thought, however. As I could not command a sunny window, I went abroad on the

morning of the 15th and lay in the sun in the fields in my thin coat, though it was rather cool even there. I feel as if this coolness would do me good. If it only makes my life more pensive! Why should pensiveness be akin to sadness? There is a certain fertile sadness which I would not avoid, but rather earnestly seek. It is positively joyful to me. It saves my life from being trivial. My life flows with a deeper current, no longer as a shallow and brawling stream, parched and shrunken by the summer heats. My heart leaps into my mouth at the sound of the wind in the woods. I, whose life was but yesterday so desultory and shallow, suddenly recover my spirits, my spirituality, through my hearing. For joy I could embrace the earth; I shall delight to be buried in it. And then to think of those I love among men, who will know that I love them though I tell them not! I sometimes feel as if I were rewarded merely for expecting better hours. I did not despair of worthier moods, and now I have occasion to be grateful for the flood of life that is flowing over me. I am not so poor: I can smell the ripening apples; the very rills are deep; the autumnal flowers, the *Trichostema dichotomum*, — not only its bright blue flower above the sand, but its strong wormwood scent which belongs to the season, — feed my spirit, endear the earth to me, make me value myself and rejoice; the quivering of pigeons' wings reminds me of the tough fibre of the air which they rend. I thank you, God. I do not deserve anything, I am unworthy of the least regard; and yet I am made to rejoice. I am impure and worthless, and yet the world is gilded for my delight and holidays are prepared for me, and my path is strewn with flowers. It seems to me that I am more rewarded for my expectations than for anything I do or can do. And why should I speak to my friends? for how rarely is it that I am I; and are they, then, they? We will meet, then, far away. Ah, the very brooks seem fuller of reflections than they were! Ah, such provoking sibylline sentences they are! The shallowest is all at once unfathomable. How can that depth be fathomed where a man may see himself reflected? The rill I stopped to drink at I drink in more than I expected. Nut Meadow Brook where it crosses the road beyond Jenny Dugan's that was. I do not drink in vain. I mark that brook as if I had swallowed a water snake that would live in my stomach. I have swallowed something worth the while. The day is

not what it was before I stooped to drink. Ah, I shall hear from that draught! It is not in vain that I have drunk. I have drunk an arrowhead. If flows from where all fountains rise.

How many ova have I swallowed? Who knows what will be hatched within me? There were some seeds of thought, methinks, floating in that water, which are expanding in me. The man must not drink of the running streams, the living waters, who is not prepared to have all nature reborn in him, — to suckle monsters. The snake in my stomach lifts his head to my mouth at the sound of running water. When was it that I swallowed a snake? I have got rid of the snake in my stomach. I drank of stagnant waters once. That accounts for it. I caught him by the throat and drew him out, and had a well day after all. Is there not such a thing as getting rid of the snake which you have swallowed when young, when thoughtless you stooped and drank at stagnant waters, which has worried you in your waking hours and in your sleep ever since, and appropriated the life that was yours? Will he not ascend into your mouth at the sound of running water? Then catch him boldly by the head and draw him out, though you may think his tail be curled about your vitals.

Aug. 19. Clematis Virginiana; calamint; *Lycopus Europeus*, water horehound.

This is a world where there are flowers.

P.M. — To Marlborough Road *via* Clamshell Hill, Jenny Dugan's, Round Pond, Canoe Birch Road (Deacon Dakin's), and White Pond.

The poet must be continually watching the moods of his mind, as the astronomer watches the aspects of the heavens. What might we not expect from a long life faithfully spent in this wise? The humblest observer would see some stars shoot. A faithful description as by a disinterested person of the thoughts which visited a certain mind in threescore years and ten, as when one reports the number and character of the vehicles which pass a particular point. As travellers go round the world and report natural objects and phenomena, so faithfully let another stay at home and report the phenomena of his own life, — catalogue stars, those thoughts whose orbits are as rarely calculated as comets. It matters not whether they

visit my mind or yours, — only that it come from heaven. A meteorological journal of the mind. You shall observe what occurs in your latitude, I in mine.

The grass in the high pastures is almost as dry as hay. The seasons do not cease a moment to revolve, and therefore Nature rests no longer at her culminating point than at any other. If you are not out at the right instant, the summer may go by and you not see it. How much of the year is spring and fall! how little can be called summer! The grass is no sooner grown than it begins to wither.

I do not like to hear the name of particular States given to birds and flowers which are found in all equally, — an Maryland yellow-throat, etc., etc. The *Canadenses* and *Virginicas* may be suffered to pass for the most part, for there is historical as well as natural reason at least for them. Canada is the peculiar country of some and the northern limit of many more plants. And Virginia, which was originally the name for all the Atlantic shore, has some right to stand for the South.

I fear that the character of my knowledge is from year to year becoming more distinct and scientific; that, in exchange for views as wide as heaven's cope, I am being narrowed down to the field of the microscope. I see details, not wholes nor the shadow of the whole. I count some parts, and say, "I know." The cricket's chirp now fills the air in dry fields near pine woods.

Aug. 20. The *Rhexia Virginica* is a showy flower at present.

How copious and precise the botanical language to describe the leaves, as well as the other parts of a plant! Botany is worth studying if only for the precision of its terms, — to learn the value of words and of system. It is wonderful how much pains has been taken to describe a flower's leaf, compared for instance with the care that is taken in describing a psychological fact. Suppose as much ingenuity (perhaps it would be needless) in making a language to express the sentiments! We are armed with language adequate to describe each leaf in the field, or at least to distinguish it from each other, but not to describe a human character.

Aug. 22. It is the fault of some excellent writers — De Quincey's

first impressions on seeing London suggest it to me — that they express themselves with too great fullness and detail. They give the most faithful, natural, and lifelike account of their sensations, mental and physical, but they lack moderation and sententiousness. They do not affect us by an ineffectual earnestness and a reserve of meaning, like a stutterer; they say all they mean. Their sentences are not concentrated and nutty. Sentences which suggest far more than they say, which have an atmosphere about them, which do not merely report an old, but make a new, impression; sentences which suggest as many things and are as durable as a Roman aqueduct; to frame these, that is the *art* of writing. Sentences which are expensive, towards which so many volumes, so much life, went; which lie like boulders on the page, up and down or across; which contain the seed of other sentences, not mere repetition, but creation. If De Quincey had suggested each of his pages in a sentence and passed on, it would have been far more excellent writing.

Aug. 28. The pretty little blue flower in the Heywood Brook, Class V, Order 1. Corolla about one sixth of an inch in diameter, with five rounded segments; stamens and pistil shorter than corolla; calyx with five acute segments and acute sinuses; leaves not opposite, lanceolate, spatulate, blunt, somewhat hairy on upper side with a midrib only, sessile; flowers in a loose raceme on rather long pedicels. Whole plant decumbent, curving upward. Wet ground. Said to be like the forget-me-not.

Raphanus Raphanistrum, or wild radish, in meadows.

Evening. — A new moon visible in the east.

I omit the unusual — the hurricanes and earthquakes — and describe the common. This has the greatest charm and is the true theme of poetry. You may have the extraordinary for your province, if you will let me have the ordinary. Give me the obscure life, the cottage of the poor and humble, the workdays of the world, the barren fields, the smallest share of all things but poetic perception. Give me but the eyes to see the things which you possess.

Aug. 29. The air is filled with mist, yet a transparent mist, a principle in it you might call *flavor*, which ripens fruits. This

haziness seems to confine and concentrate the sunlight, as if you lived in a halo. It is August.

Aug. 31. One of these drooping clusters of potato balls would be as good a symbol, emblem, of the year's fertility as anything, — better surely than a bunch of grapes. Fruit of the strong soil, containing potash (?). The vintage is come; the olive is ripe.

Why not for my coat-of-arms, for device, a drooping cluster of potato balls, — in a *potato* field?

What right has a New England poet to sing of wine, who never saw a vineyard, who obtains his liquor from the grocer. A Yankee singing in praise of wine! It is not sour grapes in this case, it is sweet grapes; the more inaccessible they are the sweeter they are. It seemed to me that the year had nothing so much to brag of as these potato balls. Do they not concern New-Englanders a thousand times more than all her grapes?

Sept. 1. Is not disease the rule of existence? There is not a lily pad floating on the river but has been riddled by insects. Almost every shrub and tree has its gall, often-times esteemed its chief ornament and hardly to be distinguished from the fruit. If misery loves company, misery has company enough. Now, at midsummer, find me a perfect leaf or fruit.

Sept. 2. What affinity is it brings the goldfinch to the sunflower — both yellow — to pick its seeds? Whatever things I perceive with my entire man, those let me record, and it will be poetry.

In a day or two the first message will be conveyed or transmitted over the magnetic telegraph through this town, as a thought traverses space, and no citizen of the town shall be aware of it. The atmosphere is full of telegraphs equally unobserved. We are not confined to Morse's or House's or Bain's line.

Raise some sunflowers to attract the goldfinches, to feed them as well as your hens.

I now begin to pluck wild apples.

Old Cato says well, "*Patremfamilias vendacem, non emacem, esse oportet*." These Latin terminations express better than any English

that I know the greediness, as it were, and tenacity of purpose with which the husbandman and householder is required to be a seller and not a buyer, — with mastiff-like tenacity, — these *lipped* words, which, like the lips of moose and browsing creatures, gather in the herbage and twigs with a certain greed. This termination *cious* adds force to a word, like the lips of browsing creatures, which greedily collect what the jaw holds; as in the word "tenacious" the first half represents the kind of jaw which holds, the last the lips which collect. It can only be pronounced by a certain opening and protruding of the lips; so "avaricious." These words express the sense of their simple roots with the addition, as it were, of a certain lip greediness. Hence "capacious" and "capacity," "emacity." When these expressive words are used, the hearer gets something to chew upon. What is *luscious* is especially enjoyed by the lips. To be edacious and voracious is to be not nibbling and swallowing merely, but eating and swallowing while the lips are greedily collecting more food.

There is a reptile in the throat of the greedy man always thirsting and famishing. It is not his own natural hunger and thirst which he satisfies.

A fire in the sitting-room to-day. Walk in the afternoon by Walden road and railroad to Minn's place, and round it to railroad and home. Carried umbrellas, it mizzling. As in the night, now in the rain, I smell the fragrance of the woods. The prunella leaves have turned a delicate claret or lake color by the roadside. I am interested in these revolutions as much as in those of kingdoms. Is there not tragedy enough in the autumn? Walden seems to be going down at last.

Sept. 3. Why was there never a poem on the cricket? Its creak seems to me to be one of the most prominent and obvious facts in the world, and the least heeded.

2 P.M. — To Hubbard's Swimming-Place and Grove in rain.

As I went under the new telegraph-wire, I heard it vibrating like a harp high overhead. It was as the sound of a far-off glorious life, a supernal life, which came down to us, and vibrated the lattice-work of this life of ours.

The ivy leaves are turning red. Fall dandelions stand thick in the

meadows.

How much the Roman must have been indebted to his agriculture, dealing with the earth, its clods and stubble, its dust and mire. Their farmer consuls were their glory, and they well knew the farm to be the nursery of soldiers. Read Cato to see what kind of legs the Romans stood on.

Walk often in drizzly weather, for then the small weeds (especially if they stand on bare ground), covered with rain-drops like beads, appear more beautiful than ever, — the hypericums, for instance. They are equally beautiful when covered with dew, fresh and adorned, almost spirited away, in a robe of dewdrops.

Identified spotted spurge (*Euphorbia maculata*), apparently out of blossom. Shepherd's-purse and chickweed.

As for walking, the inhabitants of large English towns are confined almost exclusively to their parks and to the highways. The few footpaths in their vicinities "are gradually vanishing," says Wilkinson, "under the encroachments of the proprietors." He proposes that the people's right to them be asserted and defended and that they be kept in a passable state at the public expense. "This," says he, "would be easily done by means of asphalt laid upon a good foundation"!!! So much for walking, and the prospects of walking, in the neighborhood of English large towns.

I should die from mere nervousness at the thought of such confinement. I should hesitate before I were born, if those terms could be made known to me beforehand. Fenced in forever by those green barriers of fields, where gentlemen are seated! Can they be said to be inhabitants of this globe? Will they be content to inhabit heaven thus partially?

Sept. 4. We drink in the meadow at Second Division Brook, then sit awhile to watch its yellowish pebbles and the cress (?) in it and other weeds. The ripples cover its surface like a network and are faithfully reflected on the bottom. In some places, the sun reflected from ripples on a flat stone looks like a golden comb. The whole brook seems as busy as a loom: it is a woof and warp of ripples; fairy fingers are throwing the shuttle at every step, and the long, waving brook is the fine product. The water is wonderfully clear.

In the summer we lay up a stock of experiences for the winter, as the squirrel of nuts, — something for conversation in winter evenings. I love to think then of the more distant walks I took in summer.

At the powder-mills the carbonic acid gas in the road from the building where they were making charcoal made us cough for twenty or thirty rods.

Saw some gray squirrels whirling their cylinder by the roadside. How fitted that cylinder to this animal! “A squirrel is easily taught to turn his cylinder” might be a saying frequently applicable. And as they turned, one leaped over or dodged under another most gracefully and unexpectedly, with interweaving motions. It was the circus and menagerie combined. So human they were, exhibiting themselves.

It is wise to write on many subjects, to try many themes, that so you may find the right and inspiring one. Be greedy of occasions to express your thought. Improve the opportunity to draw analogies. There are innumerable avenues to a perception of the truth. Improve the suggestion of each object however humble, however slight and transient the provocation. What else is there to be improved? Who knows what opportunities he may neglect? It is not in vain that the mind turns aside this way or that: follow its leading; apply it whither it inclines to go. Probe the universe in a myriad points. Be avaricious of these impulses. You must try a thousand themes before you find the right one, as nature makes a thousand acorns to get one oak. He is a wise man and experienced who has taken many views; to whom stones and plants and animals and a myriad objects have each suggested something, contributed something.

And now, methinks, this wider wood-path is not bad, for it admits of society more conveniently. Two can walk side by side in it in the ruts, aye, and one more in the horse-track.

As I looked back up the stream from near the bridge (I suppose on the road from Potter’s house to Stow), I on the railroad, I saw the ripples sparkling in the sun, reminding me of the sparkling icy fleets which I saw last winter; and I saw how one corresponded to the other, ice waves to water ones; the erect ice-flakes were the waves stereotyped. It was the same sight, the reflection of the sun sparkling

from a myriad slanting surfaces at a distance, a rippled water surface or a crystallized frozen one.

Here crossed the river and climbed the high hills on the west side. The walnut trees conformed in their branches to the slope of the hill, being just as high from the ground on the upper side as on the lower.

Saw quite a flock, for the first time, of goldfinches.

On hillside north of river above powder-mills the *Pycnanthemum incanum* (mountain mint, calamint) and the *Lespedeza violacea*.

Sept. 5. Wilkinson's book to some extent realizes what I have dreamed of, — a return to the primitive analogical and derivative senses of words. His ability to trace analogies often leads him to a truer word than more remarkable writers have found; as when, in his chapter on the human skin, he describes the papillary cutis as "an encampment of small conical tents coextensive with the surface of the body." The faith he puts in old and current expressions as having sprung from an instinct wiser than science, and safely to be trusted if they can be interpreted. The man of science discovers no world for the mind of man with all its faculties to inhabit. Wilkinson finds a *home* for the imagination, and it is no longer outcast and homeless. All perception of truth is the detection of an analogy; we reason from our hands to our head.

Sept. 7. We sometimes experience a mere fullness of life, which does not find any channels to flow into. We are stimulated, but to no obvious purpose. I feel myself uncommonly prepared for *some* literary work, but I can select no work. I am prepared not so much for contemplation, as for forceful expression. I am braced both physically and intellectually. It is not so much the music as the marching to the music that I feel. I feel that the juices of the fruits which I have eaten, the melons and apples, have ascended to my brain and are stimulating it. They give me a heady force. Now I can write nervously. Carlyle's writing is for the most part of this character.

Our ecstatic states, which appear to yield so little fruit, have this value at least: though in the seasons when our genius reigns we may be powerless for expression, yet, in calmer seasons, when our talent

is active, the memory of those rarer moods comes to color our picture and is the permanent paint-pot, as it were, into which we dip our brush. Thus no life or experience goes unreported at last; but if it be not solid gold it is gold-leaf, which gilds the furniture of the mind. It is an experience of infinite beauty on which we unfailingly draw, which enables us to exaggerate ever truly. Our moments of inspiration are not lost though we have no particular poem to show for them; for those experiences have left an indelible impression, and we are ever and anon reminded of them. When I despair to sing them, I will remember that they will furnish me with paint with which to adorn and preserve the works of talent one day. They are like a pot of pure ether. It is the difference between our river, now parched and dried up, exposing its unsightly and weedy bottom, and the same when, in the spring, it covers all the meads with a chain of placid lakes, reflecting the forests and the skies.

We are receiving our portion of the infinite. The art of life! I do not remember any page which will tell me how to spend this afternoon. I do not so much wish to know how to economize time as how to spend it.

The scenery, when it is truly seen, reacts on the life of the seer. How to live. How to get the most life. How to extract its honey from the flower of the world. That is my every-day business. I am as busy as a bee about it. I ramble over all fields on that errand, and am never so happy as when I feel myself heavy with honey and wax. I am like a bee searching the livelong day for the sweets of nature. Do I not impregnate and intermix the flowers, produce rare and finer varieties by transferring my eyes from one to another? I do as naturally and as joyfully, with my own humming music, seek honey all the day. With what honeyed thought any experience yields me I take a bee line to my cell. It is with flowers I would deal.

I am convinced that men are not well employed, that this is not the way to spend a day. If by patience, if by watching, I can secure one new ray of light, can feel myself elevated for an instant upon Pisgah, the world which was dead prose to me become living and divine, shall I not watch ever? shall I not be a watchman henceforth? If by watching a whole year on the city's walls I may obtain a communication from heaven, shall I not do well to shut up my shop

and turn a watchman? We are surrounded by a rich and fertile mystery. May we not probe it, pry into it, employ ourselves about it, a little? To devote your life to the discovery of the divinity in nature or to the eating of oysters, would they not be attended with very different results?

I cannot *easily* buy a blank-book to write thoughts in; they are all ruled for dollars and cents.

If the wine, the water, which will nourish me grows on the surface of the moon, I will do the best I can to go to the moon for it.

We all have our states of fullness and of emptiness, but we overflow at different points. One overflows through the sensual outlets, another through his heart, another through his head, and another perchance only through the higher part of his head, or his poetic faculty. It depends on where each is tight and open. We can, perchance, then direct our nutriment to those organs we specially use.

To Conantum *via* fields, Hubbard's Grove, and grain-field, to Tupelo Cliff and Conantum and returning over peak same way. 6 P.M.

Sept. 12. I can hardly believe that there is so great a difference between one year and another as my journal shows. The 11th of this month last year, the river was as high as it commonly is in the spring, over the causeway on the Corner road. It is now quite low. Last year, October 9th, the huckleberries were fresh and abundant on Conantum. They are now already dried up.

On Monday, the 15th, I am going to perambulate the bounds of the town. As I am partial to across-lot routes, this appears to be a very proper duty for me to perform, for certainly no route can well be chosen which shall be more across-lot, since the roads in no case run round the town but ray out from its centre, and my course will lie across each one. It is almost as if I had undertaken to walk round the town at the greatest distance from its centre and at the same time from the surrounding villages. There is no public house near the line. It is a sort of reconnoissance of its frontiers authorized by the central government of the town, which will bring the surveyor in contact with whatever wild inhabitant or wilderness its territory embraces.

This appears to be a very ancient custom, and I find that this word "perambulation" has exactly the same meaning that it has at present in Johnson and Walker's dictionary. A hundred years ago they went round the towns of this State every three years. And the old selectmen tell me that, before the present split stones were set up in 1829, the bounds were marked by a heap of stones, and it was customary for each selectman to add a stone to the heap.

Sept. 14. A great change in the weather from sultry to cold, from one thin coat to a thick coat or two thin ones.

2 P.M. — To Cliffs.

SEPT. 15. MONDAY. Ice in the pail under the pump, and quite a frost.

Commenced perambulating the town bounds. At 7.30 A.M. rode in company with A. A. Kelsey and Mr. Tolman to the bound between Acton and Concord near Paul Dudley's. Mr. Tolman told a story of his wife walking in the fields somewhere, and, to keep the rain off, throwing her gown over her head and holding it in her mouth, and so being poisoned about her mouth from the skirts of her dress having come in contact with poisonous plants. At Dudley's, which house is handsomely situated, with five large elms in front, we met the selectmen of Acton, Ivory Keyes and Luther Conant. Here were five of us. It appeared that we weighed, — Tolman I think about 160, Conant 155, Keyes about 140, Kelsey 130, myself 127. —— described the wall about or at Forest Hills Cemetery in Roxbury as being made of stones upon which they were careful to preserve the moss, so that it cannot be distinguished from a very old wall.

Found one intermediate bound-stone near the powder-mill drying-house on the bank of the river. The workmen there wore shoes without iron tacks. He said that the kernel-house was the most dangerous, the drying-house next, the press-house next. One of the powder-mill buildings in Concord? The potato vines and the beans which were still green are now blackened and flattened by the frost.

SEPT. 16. Met the selectmen of Sudbury, Moore and Haines. I trust that towns will remember that they are supposed to be fairly

represented by their *select* men. From the specimen which Acton sent, I should judge that the inhabitants of that town were made up of a mixture of quiet, respectable, and even gentlemanly farmer people, well to do in the world, with a rather boisterous, coarse, and a little self-willed class; that the inhabitants of Sudbury are farmers almost exclusively, exceedingly rough and countrified and more illiterate than usual, very tenacious of their rights and dignities and difficult to deal with; that the inhabitants of Lincoln yield sooner than usual to the influence of the rising generation, and are a mixture of rather simple but clever with a well-informed and trustworthy people; that the inhabitants of Bedford are mechanics, who aspire to keep up with the age, with some of the polish of society, mingled with substantial and rather intelligent farmers.

Moore of Sudbury thinks the river would be still lower now if it were not for the water in the reservoir pond in Hopkinton running into it.

SEPT. 17. Perambulated the Lincoln line.

Was it the small rough sunflower which I saw this morning at the brook near Lee's Bridge?

Saw at James Baker's a buttonwood tree with a swarm of bees now three years in it, but honey and all inaccessible. John W. Farrar tells of sugar maples behind Miles's in the Corner.

Did I see privet in the swamp at the Bedford stone near Giles's house? Swamp all dry now; could not wash my hands.

SEPT. 18. Perambulated Bedford line.

Sept. 20. 3 P.M. — To Cliffs *via* Bear Hill.

As I go through the fields, endeavoring to recover my tone and sanity and to perceive things truly and simply again, after having been perambulating the bounds of the town all the week, and dealing with the most commonplace and worldly-minded men, and emphatically *trivial* things, I feel as if I had committed suicide in a sense. I am again forcibly struck with the truth of the fable of Apollo serving King Admetus, its universal applicability. A fatal coarseness is the result of mixing in the trivial affairs of men. Though I have

been associating even with the *select* men of this and the surrounding towns, I feel inexpressibly begrimed. My Pegasus has lost his wings; he has turned a reptile and gone on his belly. Such things are compatible only with a cheap and superficial life.

The poet must keep himself unstained and aloof. Let him perambulate the bounds of Imagination's provinces, the realms of faery, and not the insignificant boundaries of towns. The excursions of the imagination are so boundless, the limits of towns are so petty.

Sept. 22. To the Three Friends' Hill over Bear Hill.

Yesterday and to-day the stronger winds of autumn have begun to blow, and the telegraph harp has sounded loudly. I heard it especially in the Deep Cut this afternoon, the tone varying with the tension of different parts of the wire. The sound proceeds from near the posts, where the vibration is apparently more rapid. I put my ear to one of the posts, and it seemed to me as if every pore of the wood was filled with music, labored with the strain, — as if every fibre was affected and being seasoned or timed, rearranged according to a new and more harmonious law. Every swell and change or inflection of tone pervaded and seemed to proceed from the wood, the divine tree or wood, as if its very substance was transmuted. What a recipe for preserving wood, perchance, — to keep it from rotting, — to fill its pores with music!

Shall we not add a tenth Muse to the immortal Nine? And that the invention thus divinely honored and distinguished — on which the Muse has condescended to smile — is this magic medium of communication for mankind!

To read that the ancients stretched a wire round the earth, attaching it to the trees of the forest, by which they sent messages by one named Electricity, father of Lightning and Magnetism, swifter far than Mercury, the stern commands of war and news of peace, and that the winds caused this wire to vibrate so that it emitted a harp-like and æolian music in all the lands through which it passed, as if to express the satisfaction of the gods in this invention. Yet this is fact, and we have yet attributed the invention to no god.

Sept. 23. Notwithstanding the fog, the fences this morning are

covered with so thick a frost that you can write your name anywhere with your nail.

Sept. 24. 8 A.M. — To Lee's Bridge *via* Conantum.

It is a cool and windy morning, and I have donned a thick coat for a walk. The wind is from the north, so that the telegraph harp does not sound where I cross. This windy autumnal weather is very exciting and bracing, clear and cold, after the rain of yesterday, it having cleared off in the night.

What can be handsomer for a picture than our river scenery now? Take this view from the first Conantum Cliff. First this smoothly shorn meadow on the west side of the stream, with all the swaths distinct, sprinkled with apple trees casting heavy shadows black as ink, such as can be seen only in this clear air, this strong light, one cow wandering restlessly about in it and lowing; then the blue river, scarcely darker than and not to be distinguished from the sky, its waves driven southward, or up-stream, by the wind, making it appear to flow that way, bordered by willows and button-bushes; then the narrow meadow beyond, with varied lights and shades from its waving grass, which for some reason has not been cut this year, though so dry, now at length each grass-blade bending south before the wintry blast, as if bending for aid in that direction; then the hill rising sixty feet to a terrace-like plain covered with shrub oaks, maples, etc., now variously tinted, clad all in a livery of gay colors, every bush a feather in its cap; and further in the rear the woodcrowned Cliff some two hundred feet high, where gray rocks here and there project from amidst the bushes, with its orchard on the slope; and to the right of the Cliff the distant Lincoln hills in the horizon. The landscape so handsomely colored, the air so clear and wholesome; and the surface of the earth is so pleasingly varied, that it seems rarely fitted for the abode of man.

In Cohush Swamp the sumach leaves have turned a very deep red, but have not lost their fragrance. I notice wild apples growing luxuriantly in the midst of the swamp, rising red over the colored, painted leaves of the sumach, and reminding me that they were ripened and colored by the same influences, — some green, some yellow, some red, like the leaves.

Fell in with a man whose breath smelled of spirit which he had drunk. How could I but feel that it was his own spirit that I smelt? Behind Miles's, Darius Miles's, that was, I asked an Irishman how many potatoes he could dig in a day, wishing to know how well they yielded. "Well, I don't keep any account," he answered; "I scratch away, and let the day's work praise itself." Aye, there's the difference between the Irishman and the Yankee; the Yankee keeps an account. The simple honesty of the Irish pleases me. A sparrow hawk, hardly so big as a nighthawk, flew over high above my head, — a pretty little graceful fellow, too small and delicate to be rapacious.

Such near hills as Nobscot and Nashoba have lost all their azure in this clear air and plainly belong to earth. Give me clearness nevertheless, though my heavens be moved further off to pay for it.

Get home at noon.

At sundown the wind has all gone down.

Sept. 25. The season of flowers may be considered as past now that the frosts have come. Fires have become comfortable. The evenings are pretty long.

2 P.M. — To bathe in Hubbard's meadow, thence to Cliffs. I find the water suddenly cold, and that the bathing days are over.

I see numerous butterflies still, yellow and small red, though not in fleets. Examined the hornets' nest near Hubbard's Grove, suspended from contiguous huckleberry bushes. The tops of the bushes appearing to grow out of it, little leafy sprigs, had a pleasing effect.

SEPT. 26. Since I perambulated the bounds of the town, I find that I have in some degree confined myself, — my vision and my walks. On whatever side I look off I am reminded of the mean and narrow-minded men whom I have lately met there. What can be uglier than a country occupied by grovelling, coarse, and low-lived men? No scenery will redeem it. What can be more beautiful than any scenery inhabited by heroes? Any landscape would be glorious to me, if I were assured that its sky was arched over a single hero. Hornets, hyenas, and baboons are not so great a curse to a country as men of a

similar character. It is a charmed circle which I have drawn around my abode, having walked not with God but with the devil. I am too well aware when I have crossed this line.

Most New England biographies and journals — John Adams's not excepted — affect me like opening of the tombs.

The prudent and seasonable farmers are already plowing against another year.

Sept. 28. 2 P.M. — To Conantum.

A warm, damp, mistling day, without much wind. The white pines in Hubbard's Grove have now a pretty distinct parti-colored look, — green and yellow mottled, — reminding me of some plants like the milkweed, expanding with maturity and pushing off their downy seeds. They have a singularly soft look. For a week or ten days I have ceased to look for new flowers or carry my botany in my pocket.

I see where the squirrels have carried off the ears of corn more than twenty rods from the corn-field into the woods. A little further on, beyond Hubbard's Brook, I saw a gray squirrel with an ear of yellow corn a foot long sitting on the fence, fifteen rods from the field. He dropped the corn, but continued to sit on the rail, where I could hardly see him, it being of the same color with himself, which I have no doubt he was well aware of. He next took to a red maple, where his policy was to conceal himself behind the stem, hanging perfectly still there till I passed, his fur being exactly the color of the bark. When I struck the tree and tried to frighten him, he knew better than to run to the next tree, there being no continuous row by which he might escape; but he merely fled higher up and put so many leaves between us that it was difficult to discover him. When I threw up a stick to frighten him, he disappeared entirely, though I kept the best watch I could, and stood close to the foot of the tree. They are wonderfully cunning.

Sept. 30. The white ash has got its autumnal mulberry hue. What is the autumnal tint of the black ash? The former contrasts strongly with the other shade-trees on the village street — the elms and buttonwoods — at this season, looking almost black at the first

glance. The different characters of the trees appear more clearly at this season, when their leaves, so to speak, are ripe, than at any other. It is with leaves as with fruits and woods, and animals and men; when they are mature their different characters appear.

Oct. 1. 5 P.M. — Just put a fugitive slave, who has taken the name of Henry Williams, into the cars for Canada. He escaped from Stafford County, Virginia, to Boston last October; has been in Shadrach's place at the Cornhill Coffee-House; had been corresponding through an agent with his master, who is his father, about buying himself, his master asking $600, but he having been able to raise only $500. Heard that there were writs out for two Williamses, fugitives, and was informed by his follow-servants and employer that Augerhole Burns and others of the police had called for him when he was out. Accordingly fled to Concord last night on foot, bringing a letter to our family from Mr. Lovejoy of Cambridge and another which Garrison had formerly given him on another occasion. He lodged with us, and waited in the house till funds were collected with which to forward him. Intended to dispatch him at noon through to Burlington, but when I went to buy his ticket, saw one at the depot who looked and behaved so much like a Boston policeman that I did not venture that time. An intelligent and very well-behaved man, a mulatto.

The slave said he could guide himself by many other stars than the north star, whose rising and setting he knew. They steered for the north star even when it had got round and appeared to them to be in the south. They frequently followed the telegraph when there was no railroad. The slaves bring many superstitions from Africa. The fugitives sometimes superstitiously carry a turf in their hats, thinking that their success depends on it.

These days when the trees have put on their autumnal tints are the gala days of the year, when the very foliage of trees is colored like a blossom. It is a proper time for a yearly festival, an agricultural show.

Oct. 4. Minott used the word "gavel" to describe a parcel of stalks cast on the ground to dry. His are good old English words, and I am

always sure to find them in the dictionary, though I never heard them before in my life.

I was admiring his corn-stalks disposed about the barn to dry, over or astride the braces and the timbers, of such a fresh, clean, and handsome green, retaining their strength and nutritive properties so, unlike the gross and careless husbandry of speculating, money-making farmers, who suffer their stalks to remain out till they are dry and dingy and black as chips.

Minott is, perhaps, the most poetical farmer — who most realizes to me the poetry of the farmer's life — that I know. He does nothing with haste and drudgery, but as if he loved it. He makes the most of his labor, and takes infinite satisfaction in every part of it. He is not looking forward to the sale of his crops or any pecuniary profit, but he is paid by the constant satisfaction which his labor yields him. He has not too much land to trouble him, — too much work to do, — no hired man nor boy, — but simply to amuse himself and live. He cares not so much to raise a large crop as to do his work well. He knows every pin and nail in his barn. If another linter is to be floored, he lets no hired man rob him of that amusement, but he goes slowly to the woods and, at his leisure, selects a pitch pine tree, cuts it, and hauls it or gets it hauled to the mill; and so he knows the history of his barn floor.

He always prophesies a failure of the crops, and yet is satisfied with what he gets. His barn floor is fastened down with oak pins, and he prefers them to iron spikes, which he says will rust and give way. He handles and amuses himself with every ear of his corn crop as much as a child with its playthings, and so his small crop goes a great way. He might well cry if it were carried to market. The seed of weeds is no longer in his soil.

He loves to walk in a swamp in windy weather and hear the wind groan through the pines. He keeps a cat in his barn to catch the mice. He indulges in no luxury of food or dress or furniture, yet he is not penurious but merely simple. If his sister dies before him, he may have to go to the almshouse in his old age; yet he is not poor, for he does not want riches. He gets out of each manipulation in the farmers' operations a fund of entertainment which the speculating drudge hardly knows. With never-failing rheumatism and trembling

hands, he seems yet to enjoy perennial health. Though he never reads a book, — since he has finished the "Naval Monument," — he speaks the best of English.

Oct. 5. Sunday. I noticed on Friday, October 3d, that the willows generally were green and unchanged. The red maples varied from green through yellow to bright red. The black cherry was green inclining to yellow. (I speak of such trees as I chanced to see.) The apple trees, green but shedding their leaves like most of the trees. Elm, a dingy yellow. White ash, from green to dark purple or mulberry. White oak, green inclining to yellow. Tupelo, reddish yellow and red; tree bushed about the head, limbs small and slanting downward. Some maples when ripe are yellow or whitish yellow, others reddish yellow, others bright red, by the accident of the season or position, — the more or less light and sun, being on the edge or in the midst of the wood; just as the fruits are more or less deeply colored. Birches, green and yellow. Swamp white oak, a yellowish green. Black ash, greenish yellow and now sered by frost. Bass, sered yellowish.

Color in the maturity of foliage is as variable and little characteristic as naturalists have found it to be for distinguishing fishes and quadrupeds, etc.

Oct. 6. Monday. 12 M. — To Bedford line to set a stone by river on Bedford line.

7.30 P.M. — To Fair Haven Pond by boat, the moon four-fifths full, not a cloud in the sky; paddling all the way.

In the middle of the pond we tried the echo. As we paddled down the stream with our backs to the moon, we saw the reflection of every wood and hill on both sides distinctly. These answering reflections — shadow to substance — impress the voyager with a sense of harmony and symmetry, as when you fold a blotted paper and produce a regular figure, — a dualism which nature loves. What you commonly see is but half. Home at ten.

[James John Garth Wilkinson, *The Human Body and Its Connection with Man, Illustrated by the Principal Organs*, 1851.]

Probably great bidens.

Oct. 8. By the side of J.P. Brown's grain-field I picked up some white oak acorns in the path by the wood-side, which I found to be unexpectedly sweet and palatable, the bitterness being scarcely perceptible. To my taste they are quite as good as chestnuts. No wonder the first men lived on acorns. Such as these are no mean food, such as they are represented to be. Their sweetness is like the sweetness of bread, and to have discovered this palatableness in this neglected nut, the whole world is to me the sweeter for it. To find that acorns are edible, — it is a greater addition to one's stock of life than would be imagined. I should be at least equally pleased if I were to find that the grass tasted sweet and nutritious. It increases the number of my friends; it diminishes the number of my foes. How easily at this season I could feed myself in the woods!

The farmers are ditching, — redeeming more meadow, — getting corn, collecting their apples, threshing, etc.

This warm day is a godsend to the wasps. The puffballs are split open and rayed out on the sand like five or *ten* (!) fingers. The milkweed seeds must be carried far, for it is only when a strong wind is blowing that they are loosened from their pods. An arrowhead. Filled my pockets with acorns. Found another gouge on Dennis's Hill. To have found the Indian gouges and tasted sweet acorns, — is it not enough for one afternoon?

Oct. 9. Heard two screech owls in the night. Boiled a quart of acorns for breakfast, but found them not so palatable as raw, having acquired a bitterish taste, perchance from being boiled with the shells and skins; yet one would soon get accustomed to this.

2 P.M. — To Conantum.

The witch-hazel here is in full blossom on this magical hillside, while its broad yellow leaves are falling. It is an extremely interesting plant, — October and November's child, and yet reminds me of the very earliest spring. Its blossoms smell like the spring, like the willow catkins; by their color as well as fragrance they belong to the saffron dawn of the year, suggesting amid all these signs of autumn, falling leaves and frost, that the life of Nature, by which she eternally flourishes, is untouched. While its leaves fall, its blossoms

spring. The autumn, then, is indeed a spring. All the year is a spring.

Oct. 10. The air this morning is full of bluebirds, and again it is spring. There are many things to indicate the renewing of spring at this season. The blossoming of spring flowers, — not to mention the witch-hazel, — the notes of spring birds, the springing of grain and grass and other plants.

Plants have two states, certainly, — the green and the dry. The lespedeza and primrose heads, etc., etc., — I look on these with interest, as if they were newly blossoming plants.

Going through Britton's clearing, I find a black snake out enjoying the sun. I perceive his lustrous greenish blackness. He holds up his head and threatens; then dashes off into the woods, making a great rustling among the leaves. This might be called snake summer or snakes' week.

Another warm night.

Oct. 17. Surveying for Loring. A severe frost this morning, which puts us one remove further from summer.

Oct. 23. It is never too late to learn. I observed to-day the Irishman who helped me survey *twisting* the branch of a birch for a withe, and *before* he cut it off; and also, wishing to stick a tall, smooth pole in the ground, cut a notch in the side of it by which to drive it with a hatchet.

Oct. 26. I awoke this morning to infinite regret. In my dream I had been riding, but the horses bit each other and occasioned endless trouble and anxiety, and it was my employment to hold their heads apart. Next I sailed over the sea in a small vessel such as the Northmen used, as it were to the Bay of Fundy, and thence overland I sailed, still over the shallows about the sources of rivers toward the deeper *channel* of a stream which emptied into the Gulf beyond, — the Miramichi, was it? Again I was in my own small pleasure-boat, learning to sail on the sea, and I raised my sail before my anchor, which I dragged far into the sea. I saw the buttons which had come off the coats of drowned men, and suddenly I saw my dog — when I

knew not that I had one — standing in the sea up to his chin, to warm his legs, which had been wet, which the cool wind numbed. And then I was walking in a meadow, where the dry season permitted me to walk further than usual, and there I met Mr. Alcott, and we fell to quoting and referring to grand and pleasing couplets and single lines which we had read in times past; and I quoted one which in my waking hours I have no knowledge of, but in my dream it was familiar enough. I only know that those which I quoted expressed regret, and were like the following, though they were not these, *viz.:* —

"The short parenthesis of life was sweet,"

"The remembrance of youth is a sigh," etc.

It had the word "memory" in it!! And then again the instant that I awoke, methought I was a musical instrument from which I heard a strain die out, — a bugle, or a clarionet, or a flute. My body was the organ and channel of melody, as a flute is of the music that is breathed through it. My flesh sounded and vibrated still to the strain, and my nerves were the chords of the lyre. I awoke, therefore, to an infinite regret, — to find myself, not the thoroughfare of glorious and world-stirring inspirations, but a scuttle full of dirt, such a thoroughfare only as the street and the kennel, where, perchance, the wind may sometimes draw forth a strain of music from a straw.

I can partly account for this. Last evening I was reading Laing's account of the Northmen, and though I did not write in my Journal, I remember feeling a fertile regret, and deriving even an inexpressible satisfaction, as it were, from my ability to feel regret, which made that evening richer than those which had preceded it. I heard the last strain or flourish, as I woke, played on my body as the instrument. Such I knew I had been and might be again, and my regret arose from the consciousness how little like a musical instrument my body was now.

Oct. 27. This morning I wake and find it snowing and the ground covered with snow; quite unexpectedly, for last night it was rainy but not cold.

The obstacles which the heart meets with are like granite blocks which one alone cannot move. She who was as the morning light to me is now neither the morning star nor the evening star. We meet but to find each other further asunder, and the oftener we meet the more rapid our divergence.

The night is oracular. What have been the intimations of the night? I ask. How have you passed the night? Good-night!

The cold numbs my fingers this morning. The strong northwest wind blows the damp snow along almost horizontally. The birds fly about as if seeking shelter.

Winter, with its *inwardness*, is upon us. A man is constrained to sit down, and to think.

Nov. 1. Saturday. Man recognizes laws little enforced, and he condescends to obey them. In the moment that he feels his superiority to them as compulsatory, he, as it were, courteously reënacts them but to obey them.

This on my way to Conantum, 2.30 P.M. It is a bright, clear, warm November day. I feel blessed. I love my life. I warm toward all nature. The woods are now much more open than when I last observed them; the leaves have fallen, and they let in light, and I see the sky through them as through a crow's wing in every direction. For the most part only the pines and oaks (white?) retain their leaves. At a distance, accordingly, the forest is green and reddish. The crickets now sound faintly and from very deep in the sod.

Nov. 9. In our walks C. takes out his note-book sometimes and tries to write as I do, but all in vain. He soon puts it up again, or contents himself with scrawling some sketch of the landscape. Observing me still scribbling, he will say that he confines himself to the ideal, purely ideal remarks; he leaves the facts to me. Sometimes, too, he will say a little petulantly, "*I* am universal; I have nothing to do with the particular and definite." He is the moodiest person, perhaps, that I ever saw. As naturally whimsical as a cow is brindled, both in his tenderness and his roughness he belies himself. He can be incredibly selfish and unexpectedly generous. He is conceited, and yet there is in him far more than usual to ground conceit upon.

I, too, would fain set down something beside facts. Facts should only be as the frame to my pictures; they should be material to the mythology which I am writing; not facts to assist men to make money, farmers to farm profitably, in any common sense; facts to tell who I am, and where I have been or what I have thought: as now the bell rings for evening meeting, and its volumes of sound, like smoke which rises from where a cannon is fired, make the tent in which I dwell. My facts shall be falsehoods to the common sense. I would so state facts that they shall be significant, shall be myths or mythologic. Facts which the mind perceived, thoughts which the body thought.

Nov. 11. 2 P.M. — A bright, but cold day, finger-cold. One must next wear gloves, put his hands in winter quarters.

White Pond is prepared for winter. The view of the southern horizon from the lane this side still attracts me, but not so much as before I had explored those Wayland hills, which look so much fairer, perhaps, than they are. To-day you may write a chapter on the advantages of travelling, and to-morrow you may write another chapter on the advantages of not travelling. The horizon has one kind of beauty and attraction to him who has never explored the hills and mountains in it, and another, I fear a less ethereal and glorious one, to him who has. That blue mountain in the horizon is certainly the most heavenly, the most elysian, which we have not climbed, on which we have not camped for a night. But only our horizon is moved thus further off, and if our whole life should prove thus a failure, the future which is to atone for all, where still there must be some success, will be more glorious still.

"Says I to myself" should be the motto of my journal.

It is fatal to the writer to be too much possessed by his thought. Things must lie a little remote to be described.

Nov. 12. Write often, write upon a thousand themes, rather than long at a time, not trying to turn too many feeble somersets in the air, — and so come down upon your head at last. Antæus-like, be not long absent from the ground. Those sentences are good and well discharged which are like so many little resiliencies from the spring

floor of our life, — a distinct fruit and kernel itself, springing from terra firma. Let there be as many distinct plants as the soil and the light can sustain. Take as many bounds in a day as possible. Sentences uttered with your back to the wall. Those are the admirable bounds when the performer has lately touched the spring-board.

C. is one who will not stoop to rise (to change the subject). He wants something for which he will not pay the going price. He will only learn slowly by failure, — not a noble, but disgraceful, failure. This is not a noble method of learning, to be educated by inevitable suffering, like De Quincey, for instance. Better dive like a muskrat into the mud, and pile up a few weeds to sit on during the floods, a foundation of your own laying, a house of your own building, however cold and cheerless.

Methinks the hawk that soars so loftily and circles so steadily and apparently without effort has earned this power by faithfully creeping on the ground as a reptile in a former state of existence. You must creep before you can run; you must run before you can fly.

Nov. 13. To Fair Haven Hill.

A cold and dark afternoon, the sun being behind clouds in the west. The landscape is barren of objects, the trees being leafless, and so little light in the sky for variety. Such a day as will almost oblige a man to eat his own heart. A day in which you must hold on to life by your teeth. You can hardly ruck up any skin on Nature's bones. The sap is down; she won't peel. Now is the time to cut timber for yokes and ox-bows, leaving the tough bark on, — yokes for your own neck. Finding yourself yoked to Matter and to Time. Truly a hard day, hard times these! Not a mosquito left. Not an insect to hum. Crickets gone into winter quarters. Friends long since gone there, and you left to walk on frozen ground, with your hands in your pockets. Ah, but is not this a glorious time for your deep inward fires? And will not your green hickory and white oak burn clear in this frosty air? No Indian summer have we had this November. I see but few traces of the perennial spring. Now is there nothing, not even the cold beauty of ice crystals and snowy architecture, nothing but the echo of your steps over the frozen ground, no voice of birds nor frogs. You are dry

as a farrow cow. The earth will not admit a spade. All fields lie fallow.

I see snow on the Peterboro hills, reflecting the sun. It is pleasant thus to look from afar into winter. We look at a condition which we have not reached. Notwithstanding the poverty of the immediate landscape, in the horizon it is simplicity and grandeur. I look into valleys white with snow and now lit up by the sun, while all this country is in shade. This accounts for the cold northwest wind.

Just spent a couple of hours (eight to ten) with Miss Mary Emerson at Holbrook's. The wittiest and most vivacious woman that I know, certainly that woman among my acquaintance whom it is most profitable to meet, the least frivolous, who will most surely provoke to good conversation and the expression of what is in you. She is singular, among women at least, in being really and perseveringly interested to know what thinkers think. She relates herself surely to the intellectual where she goes. It is perhaps her greatest praise and peculiarity that she, more surely than any other woman, gives her companion occasion to utter his best thought. In spite of her own biases, she can entertain a large thought with hospitality, and is not prevented by any intellectuality in it, as women commonly are. In short, she is a genius, as woman seldom is, reminding you less often of her sex than any woman whom I know.

The cattle-train came down last night from Vermont with snow nearly a foot thick upon it. It is as if, in the fall of the year, a swift traveller should come out of the north with snow upon his coat. So it snows. Such, some years, may be our first snow.

Nov. 14. *Friday.* Surveying the Ministerial Lot in the southwestern part of the town. Unexpectedly find Hayward's Pond frozen over thinly, it being shallow and coldly placed.

In the evening went to a party. It is a bad place to go to, — thirty or forty persons, mostly young women, in a small room, warm and noisy. Was introduced to two young women. The first one was as lively and loquacious as a chickadee; had been accustomed to the society of watering-places, and therefore could get no refreshment out of such a dry fellow as I. The other was said to be pretty-looking, but I rarely look people in their faces, and, moreover, I could not

hear what she said, there was such a clacking, — could only see the motion of her lips when I looked that way. I could imagine better places for conversation, where there should be a certain degree of silence surrounding you, and less than forty talking at once. Why, this afternoon, even, I did better. There was old Mr. Joseph Hosmer and I ate our luncheon of cracker and cheese together in the woods. I heard all he said, though it was not much, to be sure, and he could hear me. And then he talked out of such a glorious repose, taking a leisurely bite at the cracker and cheese between his words; and so some of him was communicated to me, and some of me to him, I trust.

These parties, I think, are a part of the machinery of modern society, that young people may be brought together to form marriage connections.

What is the use of going to see people whom yet you never see, and who never see you? I begin to suspect that it is not necessary that we should see one another.

Some of my friends make singular blunders. They go out of their way to talk with certain young women of whom they think, or have heard, that they are pretty, and take pains to introduce me to them. That may be a reason why they should look at them, but it is not a reason why they should talk with them. I confess that I am lacking a sense, perchance, in this respect, and I derive no pleasure from talking with a young woman half an hour simply because she has regular features. The society of young women is the most unprofitable I have ever tried. They are so light and flighty that you can never be sure whether they are there or not there. I prefer to talk with the more staid and settled, *settled for life*, in every sense.

I met a man yesterday afternoon in the road who behaved as if he was deaf, and I talked with him in the cold in a loud tone for fifteen minutes, but that uncertainty about his ears, and the necessity I felt to talk loudly, took off the fine edge of what I had to say and prevented my saying anything satisfactory. It is bad enough when your neighbor does not understand you, but if there is any uncertainty as to whether he hears you, so that you are obliged to become your own auditor, you are so much the poorer speaker, and so there is a double failure.

Nov. 15. Here is a rainy day, which keeps me in the house.

I am pleased to read in Stoever's Life of Linnæus (Trapp's translation) that his father, being the first learned man of his family, changed his family name and borrowed that of Linnæus (Linden-tree-man) from a lofty linden tree which stood near his native place, — "a custom," he says, "not unfrequent in Sweden, to take fresh appellations from natural objects." What more fit than that the advent of a new man into a family should acquire for it, and transmit to his posterity, a new patronymic? It is refreshing to get to a man whom you will not be satisfied to call John's son or Johnson's son, but a new name applicable to himself alone, he being the first of his kind. Get yourself therefore a name, and better a nickname than none at all. There was one enterprising boy came to school to me whose name was "Buster," and an honorable name it was. He was the only boy in the school, to my knowledge, who was named.

I think it would be a good discipline for Channing, who writes poetry in a sublimo-slipshod style, to write Latin, for then he would be compelled to say something always, and frequently have recourse to his grammar and dictionary. Methinks that what a man might write in a dead language could be more surely translated into good sense in his own language, than his own language could be translated into good Latin, or the dead language.

Nov. 16. Sunday. If it were not for death and funerals, I think the institution of the Church would not stand longer. The necessity that men be decently buried — our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters and children (notwithstanding the danger that they be buried alive) — will long, if not forever, prevent our laying violent hands on it. If salaries were stopped off, and men walked out of this world bodily at last, the minister and his vocation would be gone. What is the churchyard but a graveyard?

Plenty of ripe checkerberries now. Do they blossom again in the spring?

Nov. 25. That kind of sunset which I witnessed on Saturday and Sunday is perhaps peculiar to the late autumn. The sun is unseen

behind a hill. Only this bright white light like a fire falls on the trembling needles of the pine.

Dec. 12. Ah, dear nature, the mere remembrance, after a short forgetfulness, of the pine woods! I come to it as a hungry man to a crust of bread.

I have been surveying for twenty or thirty days, living coarsely, even as respects my diet, — for I find that that will always alter to suit my employment, — indeed, leading a quite trivial life; and to-night, for the first time, had made a fire in my chamber and endeavored to return to myself. I wished for leisure and quiet to let my life flow in its proper channels, with its proper currents; when I might not waste the days, might establish daily prayer and thanksgiving in my family; might do my own work and not the work of Concord and Carlisle, which would yield me better than money. (How much forbearance, aye, sacrifice and loss, goes to every accomplishment! I am thinking by what long discipline and at what cost a man learns to speak simply at last.)

Dec. 13. Saturday. While surveying to-day, we had one hour of almost Indian summer weather in the middle of the day. I felt the influence of the sun. It melted my stoniness a little. The pines looked like old friends again. Cutting a path through a swamp where was much brittle dogwood, etc., etc., I wanted to know the name of every shrub. This varied employment, to which my necessities compel me, serves instead of foreign travel and the lapse of time. If it makes me forget some things which I ought to remember, it no doubt enables me to forget many things which it is well to forget. By stepping aside from my chosen path so often, I see myself better and am enabled to criticise myself. Of this nature is the only true lapse of time. It seems an age since I took walks and wrote in my journal, and when shall I revisit the glimpses of the moon? To be able to see ourselves, not merely as others see us, but as we are, that service a *variety* of absorbing employments does us.

Dec. 14. The boys have been skating for a week, but I have had no time to skate for surveying. I have hardly realized that there was ice,

though I have walked over it about this business. As for the weather, all seasons are pretty much alike to one who is actively at work in the woods.

There is a beautifully pure greenish-blue sky under the clouds now in the southwest just before sunset. I hear the ice along the edge of the river cracking as the water settles. It has settled about two feet, leaving ice for the most part without water on the meadows, all uneven and cracked over the hummocks, so that you cannot run straight for sliding. The ice takes the least hint of a core to eke out a perfect plant; the wrecks of bulrushes and meadow grass are expanded into palm leaves and other luxuriant foliage. I see delicate-looking green pads frozen into the ice, and, here and there, where some tender and still green weeds from the warm bottom of the river have lately been cast up on to the ice.

There are certain places where the river will always be open, where perchance warmer springs come in. There are such places in every character, genial and open in the coldest seasons.

Dec. 21. Sunday. My difficulties with my friends are such as no frankness will settle. There is no precept in the New Testament that will assist me. My nature, it may be, is secret. Others can confess and explain; I cannot. It is not that I am too proud, but that is not what is wanted.

I feel sometimes as if I could say to my friends, "My friends, I am aware how I have outraged you, how I have seemingly preferred hate to love, seemingly treated others kindly and you unkindly." I can imagine how I might utter something like this in some moment never to be realized. But let me say frankly that at the same time I feel, it may be with too little regret, that I am under an awful necessity to be what I am. If the truth were known, which I do not know, I have no concern with those friends whom I misunderstand or who misunderstand me.

I am of the nature of stone. It takes the summer's sun to warm it.

My acquaintances sometimes imply that I am too cold; but each thing is warm enough of its kind. Is the stone too cold which absorbs the heat of the summer sun and does not part with it during the night? Crystals, though they be of ice, are not too cold to melt, but it was in

melting that they were formed. Cold! I am most sensible of warmth in winter days. It is not the warmth of fire that you would have, but everything is warm and cold according to its nature. It is not that I am too cold, but that our warmth and coldness are not of the same nature; hence when I am absolutely warmest, I may be coldest to you. Crystal does not complain of crystal any more than the dove of its mate. You who complain that I am cold find Nature cold. To me she is warm. My heat is latent to you. Fire itself is cold to whatever is not of a nature to be warmed by it. A cool wind is warmer to a feverish man than the air of a furnace. That I am cold means that I am of another nature.

The dogwood and its berries in the *swamp* by the railroad, just above the red house, pendent on long stems which hang short down as if broken, betwixt yellowish (?) and greenish (?), white, ovoid, pearly (?) or waxen (?) berries. What is the color of them? Ah, give me to walk in the dogwood swamp, with its few coarse branches! Beautiful as Satan.

Dec. 25. *Thursday. Via* spruce swamp on Conantum to hilltop, returning across river over shrub oak plain to Cliffs.

A wind is now blowing the light snow which fell a day or two ago into drifts, especially on the lee, now the south, side of the walls, the outlines of the drifts corresponding to the chinks in the walls and the eddies of the wind. The snow glides, unperceived for the most part, over the open fields without rising into the air (unless the ground is elevated), until it reaches an opposite wall, which it sifts through and is blown over, blowing off from it like steam when seen in the sun. As it passes through the chinks, it does not drive straight onward, but curves gracefully upwards into fantastic shapes, somewhat like the waves which curve as they break upon the shore; that is, as if the snow that passes through a chink were one connected body, detained by the friction of its lower side. It takes the form of saddles and shells and porringers. It builds up a fantastic alabaster wall behind the first, — a snowy sierra. It is wonderful what sharp turrets it builds up, — builds up, *i.e.* by accumulation though seemingly by attrition, though the curves upward to a point like the prows of ancient vessels look like sharp carving, or as if the material had been

held before the blowpipe. So what was blown up into the air gradually sifts down into the road or field, and forms the slope of the sierra. Astonishingly sharp and thin overhanging eaves it builds, even this dry snow, where it has the least suggestion from a wall or bank, — less than a mason ever springs his brick from. This is the architecture of the snow. On high hills exposed to wind and sun, it curls off like the steam from a damp roof in the morning. Such sharply defined forms it takes as if the core had been the flames of gaslights.

I go forth to see the sun set. Who knows how it will set, even half an hour beforehand? whether it will go down in clouds or a clear sky? I feel that it is late when the mountains in the north and northwest have ceased to reflect the sun. The shadow is not partial but universal.

In a winter day the sun is almost all in all.

I witness a beauty in the form or coloring of the clouds which addresses itself to my imagination, for which you account scientifically to my understanding, but do not so account to my imagination. It is what it suggests and is the symbol of that I care for, and if, by any trick of science, you rob it of its symbolicalness, you do me no service and explain nothing. I, standing twenty miles off, see a crimson cloud in the horizon. You tell me it is a mass of vapor which absorbs all other rays and reflects the red, but that is nothing to the purpose, for this red vision excites me, stirs my blood, makes my thoughts flow, and I have new and indescribable fancies, and you have not touched the secret of that influence. If there is not something mystical in your explanation, something unexplainable to the understanding, some elements of mystery, it is quite insufficient. If there is nothing in it which speaks to my imagination, what boots it? What sort of science is that which enriches the understanding, but robs the imagination? not merely robs Peter to pay Paul, but takes from Peter more than it ever gives to Paul? That is simply the way in which it speaks to the understanding, and that is the account which the understanding gives of it; but that is not the way it speaks to the imagination, and that is not the account which the imagination gives of it. Just as inadequate to a pure mechanic would be a poet's account of a steam-engine.

If we knew all things thus mechanically merely, should we know anything really?

It would be a truer discipline for the writer to take the least film of thought that floats in the twilight sky of his mind for his theme, about which he has scarcely one idea (that would be teaching his ideas how to shoot), faintest intimations, shadowiest subjects, make a lecture on this, by assiduity and attention get perchance two views of the same, increase a little the stock of knowledge, clear a new field instead of manuring the old; instead of making a lecture out of such obvious truths, hackneyed to the minds of all thinkers. We seek too soon to ally the perceptions of the mind to the experience of the hand, to prove our gossamer truths practical, to show their connection with our every-day life (better show their distance from our every-day life), to relate them to the cider-mill and the banking institution. Ah, give me pure mind, pure thought! Let me not be in haste to detect the *universal law*; let me see more clearly a particular instance of it! Much finer themes I aspire to, which will yield no satisfaction to the vulgar mind, not one sentence for them. Perchance it may convince such that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy. Dissolve one nebula, and so destroy the nebular system and hypothesis. Do not seek expressions, seek thoughts to be expressed. By perseverance you get two views of the same rare truth.

That way of viewing things you know of, least insisted on by you, however, least remembered, — take that view, adhere to that, insist on that, see all things from that point of view. Will you let these intimations go unattended to and watch the door-bell or knocker? That is your text. Do not speak for other men; speak for yourself. They show you as in a vision the kingdoms of the world, and of all the worlds, but you prefer to look in upon a puppet-show. Though you should only speak to one kindred mind in all time, though you should not speak to one, but only utter aloud, that you may the more completely realize and live in the idea which contains the reason of your life, that you may build yourself up to the height of your conceptions, that you may remember your Creator in the days of your youth and justify His ways to man, that the end of life may not be its amusement, speak — though your thought presupposes the

non-existence of your hearers — thoughts that transcend life and death. What though mortal ears are not fitted to hear absolute truth! Thoughts that blot out the earth are best conceived in the night, when darkness has already blotted it out from sight.

We look upward for inspiration.

Dec. 29. Snow all gone from Minott's hillside. The willow at the red house shines in the sun. The boys have come out under the hill to pitch coppers. Watts sits on his door-step. It is like the first of April. The wind is west. It feels as warm as in summer; you sit on any fence-rail and vegetate in the sun, and realize that the earth may produce peas again. Yet they say that this open and mild weather is unhealthy; that is always the way with them. How admirable it is that we can never foresee the weather, — that that is always novel! Yesterday nobody dreamed of to-day; nobody dreams of tomorrow. Hence the weather is ever the news. What a fine and measureless joy the gods grant us thus, letting us know nothing about the day that is to dawn! This day, yesterday, was as incredible as any other miracle.

Dec. 31. There is a low mist in the woods. It is a good day to study lichens. The view so confined it compels your attention to near objects, and the white background reveals the disks of the lichens distinctly. They appear more loose, flowing, expanded, flattened out, the colors brighter for the damp. The round greenish-yellow lichens on the white pines loom through the mist (or are seen dimly) like shields whose devices you would fain read. The trees appear all at once covered with their crop of lichens and mosses of all kinds, — flat and tearful are some, distended by moisture. This is their solstice, and your eyes run swiftly through the mist to these things only. Nature has a day for each of her creatures, her creations. To-day it is an exhibition of lichens at Forest Hall, the livid green of some, the fruit of others. They eclipse the trees they cover. Ah, beautiful is decay! True, as Thales said, the world was made out of water. That is the principle of all things.

Jan. 1. I have observed that one mood is the natural critic of another. When possessed with a strong feeling on any subject foreign

to the one I may be writing on, I know very well what of good and what of bad I have written on the latter. It looks to me now as it will ten years hence. My life is then earnest and will tolerate no makeshifts nor nonsense. What is tinsel or euphuism or irrelevant is revealed to such a touchstone. I wish to survey my composition for a moment from the least favorable point of view. I wish to be translated to the future, and look at my work as it were at a structure on the plain, to observe what portions have crumbled under the influence of the elements.

McKean has sawed another of the pines under Fair Haven. He says it made eighty-two feet in length of mill-logs, and was so straight that it would have made a first-rate mast eighty feet long.

Jan. 4. To Fair Haven on the ice partially covered with snow.

The cracks in the ice showing a white cleavage. What is their law? Somewhat like foliage, but too rectangular, like the characters of some Oriental language. I feel as if I could get grammar and dictionary and go into it. They are of the form which a thin flake of ice takes in melting, somewhat rectangular with an irregular edge.

The pond is covered, — dappled or sprinkled, — more than half covered, with flat drifts or patches of snow which has lodged, of graceful curving outlines. One would like to skim over it like a hawk, and detect their law.

Jan. 9. The sky shut out by snow-clouds. It spits a little snow and then holds up. Where a path has been shovelled through drifts in the road, and the cakes of snow piled up, I see little azures, little heavens, in the crannies and crevices. The deeper they are, and the larger masses they are surrounded by, the darker-blue they are. Some are a very light blue with a tinge of green. Methinks I oftenest see this when it is snowing. At any rate the atmosphere must be in a peculiar state. Apparently the snow absorbs the other rays and reflects the blue. It has strained the air, and only the blue rays have passed through the sieve. Is, then, the blue water of Walden snow-water? I see the heaven hiding in nooks and crevices in the snow. Into every track which the teamster makes, this elysian, empyrean atmosphere rushes. The blue of my eye sympathizes with this blue in

the snow.

I never saw the pitch pines better snowed up. They look like Chinese pagodas.

Only once.

1852

Jan. 12. Monday. C. says that he studied lichens a little while, but he found that if you pursued that study you must give up man. It was so thin, and there was so little of man in it! Why, the whole of it was n't more than an inch thick.

Jan. 13. Would not snow-drifts be a good study, — their philosophy and poetry? Are they not worthy of a chapter? Are they always built up, or not rather carved out of the heaps of snow by the wind passing through the chinks in the walls? I do not see yet but they are builded. They are a sort of ripple-marks which the atmospheric sea makes on the snow-covered bottom.

Jan. 14. The shrub oaks here have lost their leaves, *i.e.* the small scrubby kind on this hill. I can see at a distance above the level of the snow a few bushes and grasses which mark the edge of the river. They seem to write the word *rivus* there. That is all or most to indicate that there is a river there. It is betrayed by that thin sedgy and willowy line or border marking the snow yonder.

As usual, there was no blueness in the ruts and crevices in the snow to-day. What kind of atmosphere does this require? When I observed it the other day, it was a rather moist air, some snow falling, the sky completely overcast, and the weather not very cold. It is one of the most interesting phenomena of the winter.

Jan. 15. It is a good school the farmers' sons go to these afternoons, loading and hauling great mill-logs bigger than any cannon, — a sort of battle in the forest. I think there must be an excitement derived from their labor such as they cannot tell. After reading of the life and battles of the Northmen in Snorro Sturleson's Chronicle, these labors most remind me of that. How they renew and wear out the paths through the woods! They think I'm loafing. I think they are drudging for gain. But no doubt our employment is more alike than we suspect, and we are each serving the great Master's ends more than our own. I have my work in the woods where I meet

them, though my logs do not go to the same mill.

Jan. 18. To-day, again, I saw some of the *blue* in the crevices of the snow. It is snowing, but not a moist snow. Perhaps the snow in the air, as well as on the ground, takes up the white rays and reflects the blue. There is no blue to be seen overhead, and it has as it were taken refuge in the chinks and crevices in the snow.

Jan. 20. I do not know but it is too much to read one newspaper in a week, for I now take the weekly *Tribune*, and for a few days past, it seems to me, I have not dwelt in Concord; the sun, the clouds, the snow, the trees say not so much to me. You cannot serve two masters. To read of things distant and sounding betrays us into slighting these which are then apparently near and small.

Greeley says of London, "The morning to sleep, the afternoon to business, and the evening to enjoyment, seems the usual routine with the favored classes." They have no morning life then. They are afternoon men. To begin the day at noon!

The days are now sensibly longer, and half past five is as light as five was.

Jan. 21. This winter they are cutting down our woods more seriously than ever, — Fair Haven Hill, Walden, Linnæa Borealis Wood, etc., etc. Thank God, they cannot cut down the clouds!

Jan. 22. To set down such choice experiences that my own writings may inspire me and at last I may make wholes of parts. Certainly it is a distinct profession to rescue from oblivion and to fix the sentiments and thoughts which visit all men more or less generally, that the contemplation of the unfinished picture may suggest its harmonious completion. Associate reverently and as much as you can with your loftiest thoughts. Each thought that is welcomed and recorded is a nest egg, by the side of which more will be laid. Thoughts accidentally thrown together become a frame in which more may be developed and exhibited. Perhaps this is the main value of a habit of writing, of keeping a journal, — that so we remember our best hours and stimulate ourselves. My thoughts are

my company. They have a certain individuality and separate existence, aye, personality. Having by chance recorded a few disconnected thoughts and then brought them into juxtaposition, they suggest a whole new field in which it was possible to labor and to think. Thought begat thought.

I love to look at Ebby Hubbard's oaks and pines on the hillside from Brister's Hill. Am thankful that there is one old miser who will not sell nor cut his woods, though it is said that they are wasting. It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

It is a sharp, cutting cold day, stiffening the face. Thermometers have lately sunk to 20°.

The surface of the snow in the fields is that of pretty large waves on a sea over which a summer breeze is sweeping.

Jan. 24. P.M. — Down the Flint's Pond road and return across.

Even the dry leaves are gregarious, and they collect in little heaps in the hollows in the snow, or even on the plane surfaces, driven in flocks by the wind. How like shrinking maidens wrapping their scarfs about them they flutter along! The oaks are made thus to retain their leaves, that they may play over the snow-crust and add variety to the winter landscape. If you wished to collect leaves, you would only have to make holes in the snow for traps. I see that my tracks are often filled two feet deep with them. They are blown quite across Walden on the wavy snow. Two flitting along together by fits and starts, now one running ahead, then another, remind me of squirrels. Mostly white oak leaves, but the other oaks, *i.e.* especially red oaks, also. There is a certain refinement or cultivation, even femininess, suggested by the rounded lobes, the scalloped edge, of the white oak leaf, compared with the wild, brusque points of the red and black and scarlet and shrub oaks.

These woods! Why do I not feel their being cut more sorely? Does it not affect me nearly? The axe can deprive me of much. Concord is sheared of its pride. I am certainly the less attached to my native town in consequence. One, and a main, link is broken. I shall go to Walden less frequently.

Jan. 26. Men have ever associated the verdure of evergreen trees

— hemlocks, firs, spruces, etc. — with the moisture and coolness of mountains. Our word pine is from the Celtic "*pin* or *pen*, a rock or mountain," from which is derived the name of this genus in many languages. Hence the name "Apennines" (*Alpes pennines*). "*Pinaster* is Pliny's name for the wild pine." (All this from Lindley in Loudon.) But *Pinus* does not include hemlock or larch or fir.

When the thermometer is down to 20°, the streams of thought tinkle underneath like the rivers under the ice. Thought like the ocean is nearly of one temperature. Ideas, — are they the fishes of thought?

Poetry *implies* the whole truth. Philosophy *expresses* a particle of it.

Would you see your mind, look at the sky. Would you know your own moods, be weather-wise. He whom the weather disappoints, disappoints himself.

The word is well naturalized or rooted that can be traced back to a Celtic original. It is like getting out stumps and fat pine roots.

In few countries do they enjoy so fine a contrast of summer and winter. We really have four seasons, each incredible to the other. Winter cannot be mistaken for summer here. Though I see the boat turned up on the shore and half buried under snow, as I walk over the invisible river, summer is far away, with its rustling reeds. It only suggests the want of thrift, the carelessness, of its owner.

Nature never indulges in exclamations, never says Ah! or Alas! She is not of French descent. She is a plain writer, uses few gestures, does not add to her verbs, uses few adverbs, uses no expletives. I find that I use many words for the sake of emphasis which really add nothing to the force of my sentences, and they look relieved the moment I have cancelled these. Words by which I express my mood, my conviction, rather than the simple truth.

Yesterday, though warm, it was clear enough for water and windows to sparkle.

Thaw with his gentle persuasion is more powerful than Thor with his hammer. The one melts, the other but breaks in pieces.

Jan. 27. The snow has been slowly melting, without rain or mist, the last two or three days. It has settled very much, though the eaves have not been heard to run by me. In going across lots, I walk in the

woods, where the snow is not so deep, part having been caught in the trees and dissipated in the air, and a part melted by the warmth of the wood and the reflection.

The poison sumach, with its stems hanging down on every side, is a very agreeable object now, seen against the snow.

I do not know but thoughts written down thus in a journal might be printed in the same form with greater advantage than if the related ones were brought together into separate essays. They are now allied to life, and are seen by the reader not to be far-fetched. It is more simple, less artful. I feel that in the other case I should have no proper frame for my sketches. Mere facts and names and dates communicate more than we suspect. Whether the flower looks better in the nosegay than in the meadow where it grew and we had to wet our feet to get it! Is the scholastic air any advantage?

Jan. 28. Perhaps I can never find so good a setting for my thoughts as I shall thus have taken them out of. The crystal never sparkles more brightly than in the cavern. The world have always loved best the fable with the moral. The children could read the fable alone, the grown-up read both. The truth so told has the best advantages of the most abstract statement, for it is not the less universally applicable. Where else will you ever find the true cement for your thoughts? How will you ever rivet them together without leaving the marks of the file? Yet Plutarch did not so; Montaigne did not so. Men have written travels in this form, but perhaps no man's daily life has been rich enough to be journalized.

It is remarkable that no pains is taken to teach children to distinguish colors. I am myself uncertain about the names of many.

Jan. 30. Friday. One must not complain that his friend is cold, for heat is generated between them.

I doubt if Emerson could trundle a wheelbarrow through the streets, because it would be out of character. One needs to have a comprehensive character.

Do nothing merely out of good resolutions. Discipline yourself only to yield to love; suffer yourself to be attracted. It is in vain to write on chosen themes. We must wait till they have kindled a flame

in our minds. There must be the copulating and generating force of love behind every effort destined to be successful. The cold resolve gives birth to, begets, nothing. The theme that seeks me, not I it. The poet's relation to his theme is the relation of lovers. It is no more to be courted. Obey, report.

Jan. 31. Emerson is too grand for me. He belongs to the nobility and wears their cloak and manners; is attracted to Plato, not to Socrates, I fear partly because the latter's life and associates were too humble. I am a commoner. To me there is something devilish in manners. The best manners is nakedness of manners. I should value E.'s praise more, which is always so discriminating, if there were not some alloy of patronage and hence of flattery about it. In that respect he is like [*erased*]; they flatter you, but themselves more.

Feb. 3. I have been to the libraries (yesterday) at Cambridge and Boston. How happens it that I find not in the country, in the fields and woods, the *works* even of like-minded naturalists and poets. Those who have expressed the purest and deepest love of nature have not recorded it on the bark of the trees with the lichens; they have left no memento of it there; but if I would read their books I must go to the city, — so strange and repulsive both to them and to me, — and deal with men and institutions with whom I have no sympathy. When I have just been there on this errand, it seems too great a price to pay for access even to the works of Homer, or Chaucer, or Linnæus. I have sometimes imagined a library, *i.e.* a collection of the works of true poets, philosophers, naturalists, etc., deposited not in a brick or marble edifice in a crowded and dusty city, guarded by cold-blooded and methodical officials and preyed on by bookworms, in which you own no share, and are not likely to, but rather far away in the depths of a primitive forest, like the ruins of Central America, where you can trace a series of crumbling alcoves, the older books protecting the most modern from the elements, partially buried by the luxuriance of nature, which the heroic student could reach only after adventures in the wilderness amid wild beasts and wild men. That, to my imagination, seems a fitter place for these interesting relics, which owe no small part of their interest to their antiquity, and

whose occasion is nature, than the well-preserved edifice, with its well-preserved officials on the side of a city's square. More terrible than lions and tigers these Cerberuses.

About 6 P.M. walked to Cliffs *via* railroad.

Snow quite deep. The sun had set without a cloud in the sky, — a rare occurrence, but I missed the clouds, which make the glory of evening. The sky must have a few clouds, as the mind a few moods; nor is the evening the less serene for them. There is only a tinge of red along the horizon. The moon is nearly full tonight, and the moment is passed when the light in the east (*i.e.* of the moon) balances the light in the west.

Selenite "is a stone (as is said) in Arabia, wherein is a white, which decreases and increases with the moon" (Dictionary). My summer journal was selenitic in this sense. It had this white spot in it.

Is not the sky unusually blue to-night? dark blue? Is it not always bluer when the ground is covered with snow in the winter than in summer?

The forcible writer stands bodily behind his words with his experience. He does not make books out of books, but he has been *there* in person.

Feb. 4. Heard Professor Blasius lecture on the tornado this evening. He said that nine vessels were wrecked daily in the world on an average; that Professor Dove of Berlin was the best meteorologist in his opinion, but had not studied the effects of wind in the fields so much as some here.

The audience are never tired of hearing how far the wind carried some man, woman, or child, or family Bible, but they are immediately tired if you undertake to give them a scientific account of it.

Feb. 6. Dioscorides, "the second father of Botany," — what a flowery name!

The artificial system has been very properly called the dictionary, and the natural method, the grammar, of the science of botany, by botanists themselves. But are we to have nothing but grammars and dictionaries in this literature? Are there no works written in the

language of the flowers?

I asked a learned and accurate naturalist, who is at the same time the courteous guardian of a public library, to direct me to those works which contained the more particular *popular* account, or *biography*, of particular flowers, from which the botanies I had met with appeared to draw sparingly, — for I trusted that each flower had had many lovers and faithful describers in past times, — but he informed me that I had read all; that no one was acquainted with the flowers, they were only catalogued like his books.

It is still thawy. A mistiness makes the woods look denser, darker, and more imposing. Seen through this veil, they are more grand and primitive.

Feb. 8. Night before last, our first rain for a long time; this afternoon, the first crust to walk on. It is pleasant to walk over the fields raised a foot or more above their summer level, and the prospect is altogether new.

Thoughts of different dates will not cohere.

Feb. 11. Wednesday. When the thermometer is down to 20° in the morning, as last month, I think of the poor dogs who have no masters. If a poor dog has no master, everybody will throw a billet of wood at him. It never rains but it pours.

It now rains, — a drizzling rain mixed with mist, which ever and anon fills the air to the height of fifteen or twenty feet.

Perhaps the best evidence of an amelioration of the climate — at least that the snows are less deep than formerly — is the snow-shoes which still lie about in so many garrets, now useless, though the population of this town has not essentially increased for seventy-five years past, and the travelling within the limits of the town accordingly not much facilitated. No man ever uses them now, yet the old men used them in their youth.

Feb. 15. Perhaps I am descended from that Northman named "Thorer the Dog-footed." Thorer Hund— "he was the most powerful man in the North" — to judge from his name belonged to the same family. Thorer is one of the most, if not the most, common name in

the chronicles of the Northmen.

Feb. 16. Laing says that "the Heimskringla has been hardly used by the learned men of the period in which it was first published. It appeared first in the literary world in 1697, frozen into the Latin of the Swedish antiquary, Peringskiold."

Snorro Sturleson says, "From Thor's name comes Thorer, also Thorarinn." Again: "Earl Rognvald was King Harald's dearest friend, and the king had the greatest regard for him. He was married to Hilda, a daughter of Rolf Naefia, and their sons were Rolf and Thorer... Rolf became a great viking, and was of so stout a growth that no horse could carry him, and wheresoever he went he must go on foot; and therefore he was called Gange-Rolf." (Laing says in a note, what Sturleson also tells in the text, Gange-Rolf, Rolf Ganger, Rolf the Walker, was the conqueror of Normandy.) "Gange-Rolf's son was William, father to Richard, and grandfather to another Richard, who was the father of Richard Longspear, and grandfather of William the Bastard, from whom all the following English kings are descended."

King Harald "set Earl Rognvald's son Thorer over Möre, and gave him his daughter Alof in marriage. Thorer, called the Silent, got the same territory his father Rognvald had possessed." His brother Einar, going into battle to take vengeance on his father's murderers, sang a kind of reproach against his brothers Rollang and Rolf for their slowness and concludes, —

"And silent Thorer sits and dreams
At home, beside the mead-bowl's streams."

So it seems that from one branch of the family were descended the kings of England, and from the other myself.

Feb. 18. Hakon had a daughter *Thora*.

Thorer Klakke was one "who had been long on Viking expeditions."

Thorer Hiort "was quicker on foot than any man."

I have a commonplace-book for facts and another for poetry, but I find it difficult always to preserve the vague distinction which I had in my mind, for the most interesting and beautiful facts are so much

the more poetry and that is their success. They are *translated* from earth to heaven. I see that if my facts were sufficiently vital and significant, — perhaps transmuted more into the substance of the human mind, — I should need but one book of poetry to contain them all.

Feb. 21. "As fat as a hen in the forehead," — a saying which I heard my father use this morning.

Feb. 29. For the past month there has been more sea-room in the day, without so great danger of running aground on one of those two promontories that make it arduous to navigate the winter day, the morning or the evening. It is a narrow pass, and you must go through with the tide. Might not some of my pages be called "The Short Days of Winter"?

MARCH 1. Linnæus, speaking of the necessity of precise and adequate terms in any science, after naming some which he invented for botany, says, "Termini praeservarunt Anatomiam, Mathesin, Chemiam, ab idiotis; Medicinam autem eorum defectus conculcavit." (Terms (well defined) have preserved anatomy, mathematics, and chemistry from idiots; but the want of them has ruined medicine.) But I should say that men generally were not enough interested in the first-mentioned sciences to meddle with and degrade them. There is no interested motive to induce them to listen to the quack in mathematics, as they have to attend to the quack in medicine; yet chemistry has been converted into alchemy, and astronomy into astrology.

However, I can see that there is a certain advantage in these hard and precise terms, such as the lichenist uses, for instance. No one masters them so as to use them in writing on the subject without being far better informed than the rabble about it. New books are not written on chemistry or cryptogamia of as little worth comparatively as are written on the *spiritual* phenomena of the day. No man writes on lichens, using the terms of the science intelligibly, without having something to say, but every one thinks himself competent to write on the relation of the soul to the body, as if that were a *phænogamous*

subject.

After having read various books on various subjects for some months, I take up a report on Farms by a committee of Middlesex Husbandmen, and read of the number of acres of bog that some farmer has redeemed, and the number of rods of stone wall that he has built, and the number of tons of hay he now cuts, or of bushels of corn or potatoes he raises there, and I feel as if I had got my foot down on to the solid and sunny earth, the basis of all philosophy, and poetry, and religion even. I have faith that the man who redeemed some acres of land the past summer redeemed also some parts of his character. I shall not expect to find him ever in the almshouse or the prison. He is, in fact, so far on his way to heaven. When he took the farm there was not a grafted tree on it, and now he realizes something handsome from the sale of fruit. These, in the absence of other facts, are evidence of a certain moral worth.

March 4. It is discouraging to talk with men who will recognize no principles. How little use is made of reason in this world! You argue with a man for an hour, he agrees with you step by step, you are approaching a triumphant conclusion, you think that you have converted him; but ah, no, he has a habit, he takes a pinch of snuff, he remembers that he entertained a different opinion at the commencement of the controversy, and his reverence for the past compels him to reiterate it now. You began at the butt of the pole to curve it, you gradually bent it round according to rule, and planted the other end in the ground, and already in imagination saw the vine curling round this segment of an arbor, under which a new generation was to re-create itself; but when you had done, just when the twig was bent, it sprang back to its former stubborn and unhandsome position like a bit of whalebone.

If I were to paint the short days of winter, I should represent two towering icebergs, approaching each other like promontories, for morning and evening, with cavernous recesses, and a solitary traveller, wrapping his cloak about him and bent forward against a driving storm, just entering the narrow pass. I would paint the light of a taper at midday, seen through a cottage window half buried in snow and frost, and some pale stars in the sky, and the sound of the

woodcutter's axe. The icebergs with cavernous recesses. In the foreground should appear the harvest, and far in the background, through the pass, should be seen the sowers in the fields and other evidences of spring. The icebergs should gradually approach, and on the right and left the heavens should be shaded off from the light of midday to midnight with its stars. The sun low in the sky.

March 9. A warm spring rain in the night.

3 P.M. — Down the railroad.

Cloudy but springlike. When the frost comes out of the ground, there is a corresponding thawing of the man.

Again it rains, and I turn about.

The sound of water falling on rocks and of air falling on trees are very much alike.

Though cloudy, the air excites me. Yesterday all was tight as a stricture on my breast; to-day all is loosened. It is a different element from what it was.

March 10. I see flocks of a dozen bluebirds together. The warble of this bird is innocent and celestial, like its color. A woodchopper tells me he heard a robin this morning. What is the little chick-weed-like plant already springing up on the top of the Cliffs? There are some other plants with bright-green leaves which have either started somewhat or have never suffered from the cold under the snow.

March 14. Sunday. Rain, rain, rain; but even this is fair weather after so much snow.

March 15. This afternoon I throw off my outside coat. A mild spring day. I must hie to the Great Meadows. The air is full of bluebirds. The ground almost entirely bare. The villagers are out in the sun, and every man is happy whose work takes him outdoors. My life partakes of infinity. The air is as deep as our natures. I go forth to make new demands on life. I wish to begin this summer well; to do something in it worthy of it and of me; to transcend my daily routine and that of my townsmen; to have my immortality now, that it be in the *quality* of my daily life; to pay the greatest price, the greatest tax,

of any man in Concord, and enjoy the most!! I will give all I am for *my* nobility. I will pay all my days for *my* success. I pray that the life of this spring and summer may ever lie fair in my memory. May I dare as I have never done! May I persevere as I have never done! I am eager to report the glory of the universe; may I be worthy to do it; to have got through with regarding human values, so as not to be distracted from regarding divine values. It is reasonable that a man should be something worthier at the end of the year than he was at the beginning.

March 16. Before sunrise.

Spent the day in Cambridge Library.

The Library a wilderness of books. The volumes of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries, which lie so near on the shelf, are rarely opened, are effectually forgotten and not implied by our literature and newspapers. When I looked into Purchas's Pilgrims, it affected me like looking into an impassable swamp, ten feet deep with sphagnum, where the monarchs of the forest, covered with mosses and stretched along the ground, were making haste to become peat. Those old books suggested a certain fertility, an Ohio soil, as if they were making a humus for new literatures to spring in. I heard the bellowing of bullfrogs and the hum of mosquitoes reverberating through the thick embossed covers when I had closed the book. Decayed literature makes the richest of all soils.

March 18. This afternoon the woods and walls and the whole face of the country wear once more a wintry aspect, though there is more moisture in the snow and the trunks of the trees are whitened now on a more southerly or southeast side. These slight falls of snow which come and go again so soon when the ground is partly open in the spring, perhaps helping to open and crumble and prepare it for the seed, are called "the poor man's manure." They are, no doubt, more serviceable still to those who are rich enough to have some manure spread on their grass ground, which the melting snow helps dissolve and soak in and carry to the roots of the grass. At any rate, it is all the poor man has got, whether it is good or bad. There is more rain than snow now falling.

March 30. Having occasion to-day to put up a long ladder against the house, I found, from the trembling of my nerves with the exertion, that I had not exercised that part of my system this winter. How much I may have lost! It would do me good to go forth and work hard and sweat. Though the frost is nearly out of the ground, the winter has not broken up in me. It is a backward season with me. Perhaps we grow older and older till we no longer sympathize with the revolution of the seasons, and our winters never break up.

March 31. Intended to get up early this morning and commence a series of spring walks, but clouds and drowsiness prevented.

Perhaps after the thawing of the trees their buds universally swell before they can be said to spring.

Perchance as we grow old we cease to spring with the spring, and we are indifferent to the succession of years, and they go by without epoch as months. Woe be to us when we cease to form new resolutions on the opening of a new year!

A cold, raw day with alternating hail-like snow and rain.

It would be worth the while to tell why a swamp pleases us, what kinds please us, also what weather, etc., etc., — analyze our impressions. Why the moaning of the storm gives me pleasure. I sometimes feel that I need to sit in a far-away cave through a three weeks' storm, cold and wet, to give a tone to my system. The spring has its windy March to usher it in, with many soaking rains reaching into April. Methinks I would share every creature's suffering for the sake of its experience and joy. The song sparrow and the transient fox-colored sparrow, — have they brought me no message this year? Have I heard what this tiny passenger has to say, while it flits thus from tree to tree? I love the birds and beasts because they are mythologically in earnest. I reproach myself because I have regarded with indifference the passage of the birds; I have thought them no better than I.

April 1. Saw the first bee of the season on the railroad causeway, also a small red butterfly and, later, a large dark one with buff-edged wings.

Walden is all white ice, but little melted about the shores. The very sight of it carries my thoughts back at once some weeks toward winter, and a chill comes over them.

We have had a good solid winter, which has put the previous summer far behind us; intense cold, deep and lasting snows, and clear, tense winter sky. It is a good experience to have gone through with.

April 2. 6 A.M. — The sun is up. The air is full of the notes of birds, — song sparrows, red-wings, robins (singing a strain), bluebirds, — and I hear also a lark, — as if all the earth had burst forth into song. A few weeks ago, before the birds had come, there came to my mind in the night the twittering sound of birds in the early dawn of a spring morning, a semiprophecy of it, and last night I attended mentally as if I heard the spray-like dreaming sound of the midsummer frog and realized how glorious and full of revelations it was. Expectation may amount to prophecy. The clouds are *white* watery, not such as we had in the winter.

It appears to me that man is altogether too much insisted on. The poet says the proper study of mankind is man. I say, study to forget all that; take wider views of the universe. That is the egotism of the race. What is this our childish, gossiping, social literature, mainly in the hands of the publishers? Look at our literature. What a poor, puny, social thing, seeking sympathy! The author troubles himself about his readers, — would fain have one before he dies. He stands too near his printer; he corrects the proofs. Not satisfied with defiling one another in this world, we would all go to heaven together.

I do not value any view of the universe into which man and the institutions of man enter very largely and absorb much of the attention. Man is but the place where I stand, and the prospect hence is infinite. It is not a chamber of mirrors which reflect me. When I reflect, I find that there is other than me. The universe is larger than enough for man's abode.

Landed on Tall's Island. On the rocky point, where the wind is felt, the waves are breaking merrily, and now for half an hour our dog has been standing in the water under the small swamp white oaks, and ceaselessly snapping at each wave as it broke, as if it were

a living creature. He, regardless of cold and wet, thrusts his head into each wave to gripe it. A dog snapping at the waves as they break on a rocky shore. He then rolls himself in the leaves for a napkin. We hardly set out to return, when the water looked sober and rainy. There was more appearance of rain in the water than in the sky, — April weather look. And soon we saw the dimples of drops on the surface. I forgot to mention before the cranberries seen on the bottom, as we pushed over the meadows, and the red beds of pitcher-plants.

April 3. It is a clear day with a cold westerly wind, the snow of yesterday being melted. When the sun shines unobstructedly the landscape is full of light, for it is reflected from the withered fawn-colored grass, as it cannot be from the green grass of summer. (On the back of the hill behind Gourgas's.)

The bluebird carries the sky on his back.

April 4. Sunday. I have got to that pass with my friend that our words do not pass with each other for what they are worth. We speak in vain; there is none to hear. He finds fault with me that I walk alone, when I pine for want of a companion; that I commit my thoughts to a diary even on my walks, instead of seeking to share them generously with a friend; curses my practice even. Awful as it is to contemplate, I pray that, if I am the cold intellectual skeptic whom he rebukes, his curse may take effect, and wither and dry up those sources of my life, and my journal no longer yield me pleasure nor life.

April 11. The sight of Nut Meadow Brook in Brown's land reminds me that the attractiveness of a brook depends much on the character of its bottom. I love just now to see one flowing through soft sand like this, where it wears a deep but irregular channel, now wider and shallower with distinct ripple-marks, now shelving off suddenly to indistinct depths, meandering as much up and down as from side to side, deepest where narrowest, and ever gullying under this bank or that, its bottom lifted up to one side or the other, the current inclining to one side. I stop to look at the circular shadows of

the dimples over the yellow sand, and the dark-brown clams on their edges in the sand at the bottom. (I hear the sound of the piano below as I write this, and feel as if the winter in me were at length beginning to thaw, for my spring has been even more backward than nature's. For a month past life has been a thing incredible to me. None but the kind gods can make me sane. If only they will let their south winds blow on me! I ask to be melted. You can only ask of the metals that they be tender to the fire that *melts* them. To naught else can they be tender.) The sweet flags are now starting up under water two inches high, and minnows dart. A pure brook is a very beautiful object to study minutely. It will bear the closest inspection, even to the fine air-bubbles, like minute globules of quicksilver, that lie on its bottom. The minute particles or spangles of golden mica in these sands, when the sun shines on them, remind one of the golden sands we read of. Everything is washed clean and bright, and the water is the best glass through which to see it.

April 12. Saw the first blossoms (bright-yellow stamens or pistils) on the willow catkins to-day. The speckled alders and the maples are earlier then. The yellow blossom appears first on one side of the ament and is the most of bright and sunny color the spring has shown, the most decidedly flower-like that I have seen. It is fit that this almost earliest spring flower should be yellow, the color of the sun.

I am made somewhat sad this afternoon by the coarseness and vulgarity of my companion, because he is one with whom I have made myself intimate. He inclines latterly to speak with coarse jesting of facts which should always be treated with delicacy and reverence. I lose my respect for the man who can make the mystery of sex the subject of a coarse jest, yet, when you speak earnestly and seriously on the subject, is silent. I feel that this is to be truly irreligious. Whatever may befall me, I trust that I may never lose my respect for purity in others. Can I walk with one who by his jests and by his habitual tone reduces the life of men and women to a level with that of cats and dogs? I can have no really serious conversation with my companion. He seems not capable of it.

In the New Forest in Hampshire they had a chief officer called the

Lord Warden and under him two distinct officers, one to preserve the *venison* of the forest, another to preserve its *vert, i.e.* woods, lawns, etc. Does not our Walden need such? The Lord Warden was a person of distinction, as the Duke of Gloucester.

Walden Wood was my forest walk.

The English forests are divided into "walks," with a keeper presiding over each. My "walk" is ten miles from my house every way.

There is, this afternoon and evening, a rather cool April rain. Pleasant to hear its steady dripping.

April 13. A driving snow-storm in the night and still raging; five or six inches deep on a level at 7 A.M. All birds are turned into snowbirds. Trees and houses have put on the aspect of winter. The traveller's carriage wheels, the farmer's wagon, are converted into white disks of snow through which the spokes hardly appear. But it is good now to stay in the house and read and write. We do not now go wandering all abroad and dissipated, but the imprisoning storm condenses our thoughts. I can hear the clock tick as not in pleasant weather. My life is enriched. I love to hear the wind howl. I have a fancy for sitting with my book or paper in some mean and apparently unfavorable place, in the kitchen, for instance, where the work is going on, rather a little cold than comfortable.

April 15. Would it not be a fine office to preserve the *vert* of this forest in which I ramble?

Channing calls our walks along the banks of the river, taking a boat for convenience at some distant point, *riparial* excursions. It is a pleasing epithet, but I mistrust such, even as good as this, in which the mere name is so agreeable, as if it would ring hollow ere long; and rather the thing should make the true name poetic at last. Alcott wished me to name my book *Sylvania!*

April 16. As I turned round the corner of Hubbard's Grove, saw a woodchuck, the first of the season, in the middle of the field, six or seven rods from the fence which bounds the wood, and twenty rods distant. I ran along the fence and cut him off, or rather overtook him,

though he started at the same time. When I was only a rod and a half off, he stopped, and I did the same; then he ran again, and I ran up within three feet of him, when he stopped again, the fence being between us. I squatted down and surveyed him at my leisure. His eyes were dull black and rather inobvious, with a faint chestnut (?) iris, with but little expression and that more of resignation than of anger. The general aspect was a coarse grayish brown, a sort of grisel (?). A lighter brown next the skin, then black or very dark brown and tipped with whitish rather loosely. The head between a squirrel and a bear, flat on the top and dark brown, and darker still or black on the tip of the nose. The whiskers black, two inches long. The ears very small and roundish, set far back and nearly buried in the fur. Black feet, with long and slender claws for digging. It appeared to tremble, or perchance shivered with cold. When I moved, it gritted its teeth quite loud, sometimes striking the under jaw against the other chatteringly, sometimes grinding one jaw on the other, yet as if more from instinct than anger. Whichever way I turned, that way it headed. I took a twig a foot long and touched its snout, at which it started forward and bit the stick, lessening the distance between us to two feet, and still it held all the ground it gained. I played with it tenderly awhile with the stick, trying to open its gritting jaws. Ever its long incisors, two above and two below, were presented. But I thought it would go to sleep if I stayed long enough. It did not sit upright as sometimes, but *standing* on its fore feet with its head down, *i.e.* half sitting, half standing. We sat looking at one another about half an hour, till we began to feel mesmeric influences. When I was tired, I moved away, wishing to see him run, but I could not start him. He would not stir as long as I was looking at him or could see him. I walked round him; he turned as fast and fronted me still. I sat down by his side within a foot. I talked to him *quasi* forest lingo, baby-talk, at any rate in a conciliatory tone, and thought that I had some influence on him. He gritted his teeth less. I chewed checkerberry leaves and presented them to his nose at last without a grit; though I saw that by so much gritting of the teeth he had worn them rapidly and they were covered with a fine white powder, which, if you measured it thus, would have made his anger terrible. He did not mind any noise I might make. With a little stick I lifted one of his

paws to examine it, and held it up at pleasure. I turned him over to see what color he was beneath (darker or more purely brown), though he turned himself back again sooner than I could have wished. His tail was also all brown, though not very dark, rat-tail like, with loose hairs standing out on all sides like a caterpillar brush. He had a rather mild look. I spoke kindly to him. I reached checkerberry leaves to his mouth. I stretched my hands over him, though he turned up his head and still gritted a little. I laid my hand on him, but immediately took it off again, instinct not being wholly overcome. If I had had a few fresh bean leaves, thus in advance of the season, I am sure I should have tamed him completely. Could easily have wrapped him in my handkerchief. He was not fat nor particularly lean. I finally had to leave him without seeing him move from the place. A large, clumsy, burrowing squirrel. *Arctomys*, bearmouse. I respect him as one of the natives. He lies there, by his color and habits so naturalized amid the dry leaves, the withered grass, and the bushes. A sound nap, too, he has enjoyed in his native fields, the past winter. I think I might learn some wisdom of him.

The two states of the meadow are to be remembered: first in a March or April wind, as I have described it; second in a perfectly calm and beautiful mild morning or evening or midday, as lately, at the same season, such as I have also partially described, when there are no gulls circling over it. What different thoughts it suggests! Would it not be worth the while to describe the different states of our meadows which cover so large a portion of the town? It is not as if we had a few acres only of water surface. They answer to moods of the Concord mind. There might be a chapter: The Sudbury Meadows, the Humors of the Town.

April 17. Observed in the second of the chain of ponds between Fair Haven and Walden a large (for the pond) island patch of the dwarf andromeda, I sitting on the east bank; its fine brownish-red color very agreeable and memorable to behold. In the last long pond, looking at it from the south, I saw it filled with a slightly grayish shrub which I took for the sweet-gale, but when I had got round to the east side, chancing to turn round, I was surprised to see that all this pond-hole also was filled with the same warm brownish-red-

colored andromeda. The fact was I was opposite to the sun, but from every other position I saw only the sun reflected from the surface of the andromeda leaves, which gave the whole a grayish-brown hue tinged with red; but from this position alone I saw, as it were, through the leaves which the opposite sun lit up, giving to the whole this charming warm, what I call *Indian*, red color, — the mellowest, the ripest, red imbrowned color; but when I looked to the right or left, *i.e.* north or south, the more the swamp had the mottled light or grayish aspect where the light was reflected from the surfaces of the leaves. And afterward, when I had risen higher up the hill, though still opposite the sun, the light came reflected upward from the surfaces, and I lost that warm, rich red tinge, surpassing cathedral windows. Let me look again at a different hour of the day, and see if it is really so. It is a very interesting piece of magic. It is the autumnal tints in spring, only more subdued and mellow. These leaves are so slow to decay. *Vide* when they fall. Already these ponds are greened with frog-spittle. I see the tracks of muskrats through it. Hear the faint croak of frogs and the still rather faint peeping of hylas. It is about 4.30 P.M.

April 18. The most interesting fact, perhaps, at present is these few tender yellow blossoms, these half-expanded sterile aments of the willow, seen through the rain and cold, — signs of the advancing year, pledges of the sun's return. Anything so delicate, both in structure, in color and in fragrance, contrasts strangely with surrounding nature and feeds the faith of man. The fields are acquiring a greenish tinge.

The birds which I see and hear in the midst of the storm are robins, song sparrows, blackbirds, and crows occasionally.

This is the spring of the year. Birds are migrating northward to their breeding-places; the melted snows are escaping to the sea. We have now the unspeakable rain of the Greek winter. The element of water prevails. The river has far overflowed its channel.

For the first time I perceive this spring that the year is a circle. I see distinctly the spring arc thus far. It is drawn with a firm line. Every incident is a parable of the Great Teacher. The cranberries washed up in the meadows and into the road on the causeways now

yield a pleasant acid.

Why should just these sights and sounds accompany our life? Why should I hear the chattering of blackbirds, why smell the skunk each year? I would fain explore the mysterious relation between myself and these things. I would at least know what these things unavoidably are, make a chart of our life, know how its shores trend, that butterflies reappear and when, know why just this circle of creatures completes the world. Can I not by expectation affect the revolutions of nature, make a day to bring forth something new?

Observe all kinds of coincidences, as what kinds of birds come with what flowers.

An east wind. I hear the clock strike plainly ten or eleven P.M.

April 19. 6 A.M. — Rain still, a fine rain. The birds must live on expectation now. There is nothing in nature to cheer them yet.

That oak by Derby's is a grand object, seen from any side. It stands like an athlete and defies the tempests in every direction. It has not a weak point. It is an agony of strength. Its branches look like stereotyped gray lightning on the sky. But I fear a price is set upon its sturdy trunk and roots for ship-timber, for knees to make stiff the sides of ships against the Atlantic billows. Like an athlete, it shows its well-developed muscles.

How sweet is the perception of a new natural fact! suggesting what worlds remain to be unveiled. That phenomenon of the andromeda seen against the sun cheers me exceedingly. When the phenomenon was not observed, it was not at all. I think that no man ever takes an original or detects a principle, without experiencing an inexpressible, as quite infinite and sane, pleasure, which advertises him of the dignity of that truth he has perceived. The thing that pleases me most within these three days is the discovery of the andromeda phenomenon. It makes all those parts of the country where it grows more attractive and elysian to me. It is a natural magic. These little leaves are the stained windows in the cathedral of my world. At sight of any redness I am excited like a cow.

Scared up three blue herons in the little pond close by, quite near us. It was a grand sight to see them rise, so slow and stately, so long and limber, with an undulating motion from head to foot, undulating

also their large wings, undulating in two directions, and looking warily about them. With this graceful, limber, undulating motion they arose, as if so they got under way, their two legs trailing parallel far behind like an earthy residuum to be left behind. They are large, like birds of Syrian lands, and seemed to oppress the earth, and hush the hillside to silence, as they winged their way over it, looking back toward us. It would affect our thoughts, deepen and perchance darken our reflections, if such huge birds flew in numbers in our sky. The legs hang down like a weight which they raise, to pump up as it were with its wings and convey out of danger.

April 23. The water has risen one and a half inches at six this morning since last night. There is absolutely no passing, in carriages or otherwise, over Hubbard's and the Red Bridge roads, and over *none* of the bridges for foot-travellers. Throughout this part of the country most people do not remember so great a flood, but, judging from some accounts, it was probably as high here thirty-five years ago. I hear this morning, in the pine woods above the railroad bridge, for the first time, that delicious cool-sounding *wetter-wetter-wetter-wetter-wet'* from that small bird (pine warbler?) in the tops of the pines. I associate it with the *cool, moist, evergreen spring* woods.

April 26. P.M. — Rambled amid the shrub oak hills beyond Hayden's.

Lay on the dead grass in a cup-like hollow sprinkled with half-dead low shrub oaks. As I lie flat, looking close in among the roots of the grass, I perceive that its endless ribbon has pushed up about one inch and is green to that extent, — such is the length to which the spring has gone here, — though when you stand up the green is not perceptible. It is a dull, rain dropping and threatening afternoon, inclining to drowsiness. I feel as if I could go to sleep under a hedge. The landscape wears a subdued tone, quite soothing to the feelings; no glaring colors.

Storm begins this morning and continues five days incessantly.

April 28. I scarcely know why I am excited when, in M. Huc's book, I read of the country of the Mongol Tartars as the "Land of

Grass," but I am, as much as if I were a cow.

2.30 P.M. — To Cliffs and Heywood's Brook.

Are not the flowers which appear earliest in the spring the most primitive and simplest? They have been in this town thus far, as I have observed them this spring, putting them down in the order in which I think they should be named, using Gray's names: —

Symplocarpus fœtidus (well advanced Feb. 13th, '51) *Alnus incana* April 11 *Alnus serrulata* 8 *Acer rubrum dasycarpum* April 9 one by Red Bridge *Salix*, willow, earliest 12 *Ulmus Americana* (?) 15 one, Cheney's (others ten days or fourteen later) *Populus tremuloides* 15 *Corylus tremuloides* 16 perhaps before the last *Carex Pennsylvanica* (?) 22 *Caltha palustris* 25 many *Stellaria media* (?) 26 Cheney's garden *Capsella Bursa-pastoris* 26 Cheney's garden *Taraxacum Dens-leonis* 25 one in water (seen by another the 20th) *Equisetum arvense* 25 in water *Gnaphalium purpureum* 27 (about April 16th, '51) *Saxifraga Virginiensis* 27 (April 22d, '51) *Antennaria plantaginifolia* 27 *Ranunculus fascicularis* 28 only two (abundant April 22d, '51) All but the 3d, 8th, 11th, 12th observed in the very best season, and these within a day (?) of their flowering.

I observe that the first six are decidedly water or water-loving plants, and the 10th, 13th, and 14th were found in the water and are equally if not more confined to that element. The 7th and 8th belong to the cooler zones of the earth, the 7th, according to [*George B.*] Emerson, as far north as 64° and comes up (is it this?) on burnt lands first and will grow in dry, cool, dreary places. The 9th on a dry, warm rocky hillside, — the earliest (?) grass to blossom, — also the 18th; the 11th and 12th in cold, damp gardens, like the earth first made dry land; the 15th and 17th on dry (scantily clad with grass) fields and hills, hardy; the 16th, sunny bare rocks, in seams on moss, where also in a day or two the columbine will bloom. The 18th is also indebted to the warmth of the rocks.

This may, perhaps, be nearly the order of the world's creation. Thus we have in the spring of the year the spring of the world represented. — Such were the first localities afforded for plants, — water-bottoms, bare rocks, and scantily clad lands, and land recently

bared of water.

May 1. The little peeping frogs which I got last night resemble the description of the *Hylodes Pickeringii* and in some respects the peeping hyla, but they are probably the former, though every way considerably smaller (*vide* pencil mark in report). Mine are about three quarters of an inch long as they sit, seven eighths if stretched; thigh five sixteenths, leg same; tarsus and toes one half; four-fingered and five-toed with *small* tubercles on the ends of them. Some difference in their color; one is like a pale oak leaf at this season, streaked with brown; two others more ashy. Two have crosses like this on back, of dark brown. On the head thus, with transverse bands on the legs. I keep them in a tumbler. Peep at twilight and evening, occasionally at other times. One that got out in the evening on to the carpet was found soon after by his peeping *on the piano*. They easily ascend the glass of the window; jump eighteen inches and more. When they peep, the loose wrinkled skin of the throat is swelled up into a globular bubble, very large and transparent and quite round, except on the throat side, behind which their little heads are lost, mere protuberances on the side of this sphere; and the peeping wholly absorbs them; their mouths shut, or apparently so. Will sit half a day on the side of a smooth tumbler. Made that trilling note in the house. Remain many hours at the bottom of the water in the tumbler, or sit as long on the leaves above. A pulse in the throat always, except in one for an hour or two apparently asleep. They change their color to a darker or lighter shade, chameleon-like.

May 2. 6 A.M. — Is not the chipping sparrow the commonest heard in the village streets in the mornings now, sitting on an elm or apple tree? Was it the black and white warbler that I saw this morning? It did not stop to creep round the trunks; was very shy. Or was it the myrtle-bird? Might it have been the log-cock woodpecker that I saw yesterday morning? Reptiles must not be omitted, especially frogs; their croaking is the most earthy sound now, a rustling of the scurf of the earth, not to be overlooked in the awakening of the year. It is such an earth-sound.

May 3. 5 A.M. — To Cliffs.

Hear the first brown thrasher, — two of them. Minott says he heard one yesterday, but does he know it from a catbird? They drown all the rest. He says *cherruwit, cherruwit; go ahead, go ahead; give it to him, give it to him;* etc., etc., etc. Plenty of birds in the woods this morning.

P.M. — Cinquefoil or five-finger (*Potentilla Canadensis*). Also the golden saxifrage (what a name!) (*Chrysosplenium Americanum*), in the meadow at Brister's Hill, in the water, in moss-like beds. It may have been in bloom some time; an obscure flower.

Going through the Depot Field, I hear the dream frog at a distance. The little peeping frogs make a background of sound in the horizon, which you do not hear unless you attend. The former is a trembling note, some higher, some lower, along the edge of the earth, an all-pervading sound. Nearer, it is a blubbering or rather bubbling sound, such as children, who stand nearer to nature, can and do often make, — this and many others, remembering the frog state. There is no dew (I have observed none yet). The dream of the frog sounds best at a distance, — most dreamy. The little peeper prefers a pool on the edge of a wood, which mostly dries up at midsummer, whose shore is covered with leaves and where twigs lie in the water, as where choppers have worked.

Summer is coming apace. Within three or four days the birds have come so fast I can hardly keep the run of them, — much faster than the flowers. I did not watch for the *very earliest*, however.

May 4. R. W. E. tells me he does not like Haynes as well as I do. I tell him that he makes better manure than most men.

May 5. Heard the first cricket singing, on a lower level than any bird, observing a lower tone — the sane, wise one — than all the singers. He came not from the south, but from the depths. He has felt the heats at last, — that migrates downward. The smallest of birds. The myrtle-bird again, rather tame. In the small ponds I hear a slight bullfroggy note. The andromeda is now a brownish-green; very little of the redness left. Seen from the sun side, now the sun is getting low, it looks like a large bed of greenish-gray moss, reflecting the

light. What has become of its red leaves? Does it shed them, and the present fresher ones not till next spring?

A fine scarlet sunset. As I sit by my window and see the clouds reflected in the meadow, I think it is important to have water, because it multiplies the heavens.

MAY 6. 3 P.M. — To Conantum.

Heard the first warbling vireo this morning on the elms. This almost makes a summer. Heard also, as I sat at my desk, the unusual low of cows being driven to their country pastures. Sat all day with the window open, for the outer air is the warmest. The balm-of-Gilead was well blossomed out yesterday, and has been for three or four days probably. The woods seen a mile off in the horizon are more indistinct yesterday and today, these two summer-like days (it is a summer heat), the green of the pines being blended with the gray or ash of the deciduous trees; partly, perhaps, because the fine haze in the air is the color of the twigs, and partly because the buds are expanded into leaves on many; but this last cause is hardly admissible. Now the wasps have come.

My dream frog turns out to be a toad. I watched half a dozen a long time at 3.30 this afternoon in Hubbard's Pool, where they were frogging (?) lustily. They sat in the shade, either partly in the water, or on a stick; looked darker and narrower in proportion to their length than toads usually do, and moreover are aquatic. I see them jump into the ditches as I walk. After an interval of silence, one appeared to be gulping the wind into his belly, inflating himself so that he was considerably expanded; then he discharged it all into his throat while his body or belly collapsed suddenly, expanding his throat to a remarkable size. Was nearly a minute inflating itself; then swelled out its sac, which is rounded and reminded me of the bag to a work-table, holding its head up the while. It is whitish specked (the bag) on a dull bluish or slate ground, much bigger than all the rest of the head, and nearly an inch in diameter. It was a ludicrous sight, with their so serious prominent eyes peering over it; and a deafening sound, when several were frogging at once, as I was leaning over them. The mouth [seemed] to be shut always, and perhaps the air was expelled through the nostrils. The strain appeared prolonged as long

as the air lasted, and was sometimes quavered or made intermittent, apparently by closing the orifice, whatever it was, or the blast. One, which I brought home, answers well enough to the description of the common toad (*Bufo Americanus*), though it is hardly so gray. Their piping (?) was evidently connected with their loves. Close by, it is an unmusical monotonous deafening sound, a steady blast, — not a peep nor a croak, but a *kind* of piping, — but, far away, it is a dreamy, lulling sound, and fills well the crevices of nature. Out of its place, as very near, it would be as intolerable as the thrumming of children. The plower yesterday disturbed a toad in the garden, the first I have heard of. I must catch him and compare them. Their heads are well above the water when they pipe.

Saw a striped snake lying by the roadside as if watching for toads, though they must be scarce now, his head just on the edge of the road. The most flexible of creatures, it is so motionless it appears the most rigid, in its waving line.

The yellow willows on the causeways are now fairly leaving out. They are more forward in this respect than that early willow, or any other that I see. The trees are already a mass of green, partly concealing the yellow stems, — a tender, fresh light green. No *trees* look so forward in this respect, and, being in rows, they make the more show, their branches are so thick and numerous, close together. If some have leaves as large, they are much more scattered and make no such show. I did not observe what time the willow bark would strip and make whistles. The female maple is more crimson, the male more scarlet. The horse-chestnut buds are so advanced that they are larger than the leaves of any tree. The elder, the wild cherry, thimble-berries, sweet-briars, cultivated cherry, and early apples, etc., white birches, hazels, aspens, hornbeams, maples, etc., etc., — not quite the hickory and alder, — are opening their buds; the alders are beginning to.

It is pleasant when the road winds along the side of a hill with a thin fringe of wood through which to look into the low land. It furnishes both shade and frame for your pictures, — as this Corner road. The first *Anemone nemorosa*, wind-flower or wood anemone, its petals more slightly tinged with purple than the rue-leaved. See the ferns here at the spring curling up like the proboscis of the sphinx

moth. The first *Viola blanda* (sweet-scented white), in the moist ground, also, by this spring. It is pretty numerous and may have been out a day or two. I think I could not find so many blue ones. It has a rather strong scent like heliotrope (?). The *Convallaria bifolia* budded. Sometimes the toad reminds me of the cricket, its note also proceeding from the ground. See now the woodchuck rollicking across a field toward his hole and tumbling into it. See where he has just dug a new hole. Their claws long and rather weak-looking for digging. The wood-peckers tapping. The first columbine (*Aquilegia Canadensis*) to-day, on Conantum. Shade is grateful, and the walker feels a desire to bathe in some pond or stream for coolness and invigoration.

Cowslips show at a distance in the meadows (Miles's). The new butter is white still, but with these *cows' lips* in the grass it will soon be yellow, I trust. This yellowness in the spring, derived from the sun, affects even the cream in the cow's bag, and flowers in yellow butter at last. Who has not turned pale at the sight of hay butter? These are the cows' lips.

The music of all creatures has to do with their loves, even of toads and frogs. Is it not the same with man?

There are odors enough in nature to remind you of everything, if you had lost every sense but smell. The fever-bush is an apothecary's shop.

The farmers are very busily harrowing and rolling in their grain. The dust flies from their harrows across the field. The tearing, toothed harrow and the ponderous cylinder, which goes creaking and rumbling over the surface, heard afar, and vying with the sphere. The cylinder is a simple machine, and must go into the new symbols. It is an interesting object, seen drawn across a grain-field. The willows are now suddenly of a light, fresh, tender yellowish-green. A green bittern, a gawky bird. As I return over the bridge, shadflies very numerous. Many insects now in the evening sunshine, especially over the water.

Houstonia (*Hedyotis cærulea*), bluets, now just begun. Dewey calls it Venus' Pride. Gray says truly, "a very delicate little herb,... producing in spring a profusion of handsome bright blue blossoms fading to white, with a yellow eye." I should say bluish-white. The

dwarf andromeda (*A. calyculata*) just begun; leaves called evergreen; flowers on "one-sided leafy racemes." Methinks its leaves remain two years, and fall in the spring, the small ones continuing to grow. (?)The ground is now strewn with the old red-brown lower leaves, and only the smaller and fresher green ones remain.

The common toad, with which I compared the dream toad I brought home, has two horn-like dark marks reaching over the eyes. It is not depressed, but rather has a tubercle, on the top of the head between the eyes. It is also much wider in proportion to length, and is triangular, as I have drawn in report. Yet they are probably the same. The garden toad made the same faint chicken-like, musical croak, when I held him in my hand, with the other, and in the same manner swelling his bag. The garden toad was yellowish beneath, the other white with some small spots. The latter turned much lighter-colored, — from brown to a yellowish and light-brown green, or rather greenish-brown, — while I had him. They have a bright eye, with coppery or golden-coppery iris. It is their redeeming feature. But why do I not hear them in the garden? They appear to frequent the water first, and breed there, then hop to the gardens, and turn lighter and grow thicker.

May 7. I would fain see the sun as a moon, more weird. Methinks the birds sing more some mornings than others, when I cannot see the reason.

I think that birds vary their notes considerably with the seasons. When I hear a bird singing, I cannot think of any words that will imitate it. What word can stand in place of a bird's note? You would have to surround it with a *chevaux de frise* of accents, and exhaust the art of the musical composer besides with your different bars, to represent it, and finally get a bird to sing it, to perform it. It has so little relation to words. The wood thrush says *ah-tully-tully* for one strain.

I fear that the dream of the toads will not sound so musical now that I know whence it proceeds. But I will not fear to *know*. They will awaken new and more glorious music for me as I advance, still farther in the horizon, not to be traced to toads and frogs in slimy pools.

P.M. — To Nawshawtuct.

May 9. It is impossible to remember a week ago. A river of Lethe flows with many windings the year through, separating one season from another. The heavens for a few days have been lost. It has been a sort of *paradise* instead.

Saw a green snake, twenty or more inches long, on a bush, hanging over a twig with its head held forward six inches into the air, without support and motionless. What there for? Leaves generally are most beautiful when young and tender, before insects or weather has defaced them.

These are the warm-west-wind, dream-frog, leafing-out, willowy, haze days. Is not this summer, whenever it occurs, the vireo and yellowbird and golden robin being here? The young birch leaves reflect the light in the sun.

Mankind seen in a dream. The gardener asks what kind of beans he shall plant. Nobody is looking up into the sky.

May 10. This Monday the streets are full of cattle being driven up-country, — cows and calves and colts. The rain is making the grass grow apace. It appears to stand upright, — its blades, — and you can almost see it grow. For some reason I now remember the autumn, — the succory and the goldenrod. We remember autumn to best advantage in the spring; the finest aroma of it reaches us then. How closely the flower follows upon, if it does not precede, the leaf! The leaves are but calyx and escort to the flower. Some beds of clover wave.

Some look out only for the main chance, and do not regard appearances nor manners; others — others regard these mainly. It is an immense difference. I feel it frequently. It is a theme I must dwell upon.

May 13. P.M. — To Walden in rain.

A May storm, yesterday and to-day; rather cold. The fields are green now, and the cows find good feed. All these expanding leaves and flower-buds are much more beautiful in the rain, — covered with clear drops. They have lost some of their beauty when I have shaken

the drops off. They who do not walk in the woods in the rain never behold them in their freshest, most radiant and blooming beauty.

May 14. Hastily reviewing this Journal, I find the flowers to have appeared in this order since the 28th of April (perhaps *some note* in my Journal has escaped me): —

Acer rubrum April 28 male; a female 30th; first date is perhaps early enough for both. *Populus grandidentata* 29 *Epigæa repens* 30 (April 25, '51). Sweet-gale 30 probably a *day* or *two* before. *Viola ovata* May 1 (April 25, '51). [*Etc. — 32 more*.] BIRDS SINCE 28TH APRIL Saw the last *Fringilla hyemalis* May 4. First Savannah (?) sparrow May 1 or a day or two before. Ground robin May 1 Catbird 1 Black and white creeper 1 Purple finch 1 Myrtle-bird 2 [*Etc. — 22 more*.] Snow in hollows? April 28 Saw frog spawn 28 Rushes at Second Division one foot high, highest of grasslike herbs 29 A *large* water-bug 29 Heard toad (dreaming) 30 Bull(?)frog (saw him) 30 Flies buzz outdoors Gooseberry leaves (earliest of leaves?) April 30 Sit without fire to-night. Spearing. Chickadee's *tull-a-lull* May 4 First cricket on Cliff 5 Shad-fly 5 Toad in garden 5 Wasps 6 Willows suddenly green 6 Cows going up-country Many trees *just beginning* to expand leaves 6 First fog, very slight Ant-hills 7 Humblebee 7 Partridge drums 7 Stinkpot tortoise 8 How much earlier? Birch leaves, sweet-scented 8 Ground still frozen in some places 8 Barn swallows twitter 8 Apple and cherry trees begin to show green 9 Elms darkened with samaræ A green snake 9 Reduce neck-cloth Clover waves 10 Frogs snore in the river 10 One oak in the gray 13 Pines start 13 A May storm 13 These pages do not contain the earliest phenomena of the spring, for which see the previous journal, as far as observed.

May 26. Wednesday. Surveying the Brooks farm.

The early thalictrum has been in bloom some time. Perceive the rank smell of brakes. Observe the yellow bark of the barberry.

The air is full of the odor of apple blossoms, yet the air is fresh as from the salt water. The meadow smells sweet as you go along low places in the road at sundown. To-night I hear many crickets. They have commenced their song. They bring in the summer.

May 27. My early willow is either the swamp willow or the bog willow of Bigelow. The *Salix nigra*, or black willow, of Gray, in bloom. *Myosotis laxa*, water mouse-ear, by Depot Field Brook. The fruit of the sweet flag is now just fit to eat, and reminds me of childhood, — the critchicrotches. They would help sustain a famished traveller. The inmost tender leaf, also, near the base, is quite palatable, as children know. I love it as well as muskrats(?) The smooth speedwell, the minute pale-blue striated flower by the roadsides and in the short sod of fields common now. I hear but few toads and peepers now. The tall crowfoot out. The fringed polygala near the Corner Spring is a delicate flower, with very fresh tender green leaves and red-purple blossoms; beautiful from the contrast of its clear red-purple flowers with its clear green leaves. The cuckoo. Caught a wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*), the color of a dead leaf. He croaked as I held him, perfectly frog-like. A humblebee is on my bunch of flowers laid down.

May 30. Sunday. Now is the summer come. A breezy, washing day. A day for shadows, even of moving clouds, over fields in which the grass is beginning to wave. Senecio in bloom. A bird's nest in grass, with coffee-colored eggs. Cinquefoil and houstonia cover the ground, mixed with the grass and contrasting with each other. Strong lights and shades now.

June 5. The lupine is now in its glory. It is the more important because it occurs in such extensive patches, even an acre or more together, and of such a pleasing variety of colors, — purple, pink, or lilac, and white, — especially with the sun on it, when the transparency of the flower makes its color changeable. It paints a whole hillside with its blue, making such a field (if not meadow) as Proserpine might have wandered in. Its leaf was made to be covered with dewdrops. I am quite excited by this prospect of blue flowers in

clumps with narrow intervals. Such a profusion of the heavenly, the elysian, color, as if these were the Elysian Fields. They say the seeds look like babies' faces, and hence the flower is so named. No other flowers exhibit so much blue. That is the value of the lupine. The earth is blued with them. Yet a third of a mile distant I do not detect their color on the hillside. Perchance because it is the color of the air.

JUNE 6. *Sunday.* First devil's-needles in the air, and some smaller, bright-green ones on flowers. The earliest blueberries are now forming as greenberries. The wind already injures the just-expanded leaves, tearing them and making them turn black. I see the effects of recent frosts on the young oaks in hollows in the woods. The leaves are turned dry, black, and crisp. The side-flowering sandwort, an inconspicuous white flower like a chickweed.

JUNE 7. Surveying for Sam. Pierce. Found piece of an Indian soapstone pot.

June 9. The season of waving boughs; and the lighter under sides of the new leaves are exposed. This is the first half of June. Already the grass is not so fresh and liquid-velvety a green, having much of it blossomed and some even gone to seed, and it is mixed with reddish ferns and other plants, but the general leafiness, shadiness, and waving of grass and boughs in the breeze characterize the season. The weather is very clear, and the sky bright. The river shines like silver. Methinks this is a traveller's month. The locust in bloom. The waving, undulating rye. The deciduous trees have filled up the intervals between the evergreens, and the woods are bosky now.

Evelyn has collected the fine exaggerations of antiquity respecting the virtues and habits of trees and added some himself. If the oft-repeated glorification of the forest from age to age smacks of religion, is even druidical, Evelyn is as good as several old druids, and his "Silva" is a new kind of prayerbook, a glorifying of the trees and enjoying them forever, which was the chief end of his life.

Evelyn speaks of "mel-dews" attracting bees. Can mildews be corrupted from this? Says that the alder, laid under water, "will harden like a very stone," and speaks of their being used "for the

draining of grounds by placing them...in the trenches," which I have just seen done here under Clamshell Hill.

Evelyn's love of his subject teaches him to use many expressive words, some imported from the Latin, which I wonder how we can do without. He says of the "oziers or aquatic salix," "It likewise yields more limber and flexible twigs for baskets, flaskets, hampers, cages, lattices, cradles,...the bodies of coaches and waggons,...for chairs, hurdles, stays, bands," etc.; "likewise for fish-weirs, and to support the banks of impetuous rivers: In fine, for all wicker and *twiggy* works;

'Viminibus Salices' — VIRG."

Many of his words show a poetic genius.

Evelyn well says "a *sobbing* rain."

He speaks of pines "pearling out into gums." Things raised in a garden he calls "*hortular furniture*." He talks of modifying the air as well as the soil, about plants, "and make the remedy as well regional as topical." This suggests the propriety of Shakespeare's expression the "*region* cloud," region meaning then oftener upper regions relatively to the earth.

He speaks of a "dewie *sperge* or brush," to be used instead of a watering-pot, which "gluts" the earth. He calls the kitchen-garden the "olitory garden." In a dedication of his "Kalendarium Hortense" to Cowley, he inserts two or three good sentences or quotations, *viz.:* "As the philosopher in Seneca desired only bread and herbs to dispute felicity with Jupiter," so of Cowley's simple retired life. "Who would not, like you, *cacher sa vie?*" "Delivered from the gilded impertinences of life."

June 12. How difficult, if not impossible, to do the things we have done! as fishing and camping out. They seem to me a little fabulous now.

Boys are bathing at Hubbard's Bend, playing with a boat (I at the willows). The color of their bodies in the sun at a distance is pleasing, the not often seen flesh-color. I hear the sound of their sport borne over the water. As yet we have not man in nature. What a singular fact for an angel visitant to this earth to carry back in his

notebook, that men were forbidden to expose their bodies under the severest penalties! A pale pink, which the sun would soon tan. White men! There are no white men to contrast with the red and the black; they are of such colors as the weaver gives them.

Hedge-mustard. Some fields are almost wholly covered with sheep's-sorrel, now turned red, — its valves (?). It helps thus agreeably to paint the earth, contrasting even at a distance with the greener fields, blue sky, and dark or downy clouds. It is red, marbled, watered, mottled, or waved with greenish, like waving grain, — three or four acres of it. To the farmer or grazier it is a troublesome weed, but to the landscape-viewer an agreeable red tinge laid on by the painter. I feel well into summer when I see this redness. It appears to be avoided by the cows.

The color of the earth at a distance where a wood has been cut off is a reddish brown. Nature has put no large object on the face of New England so glaringly white as a white house.

June 15. Very warm. Now for a thin coat. This melting weather makes a stage in the year. The drouth begins. The dry z-ing of the locust is heard. Bathing cannot be omitted. The conversation of all boys in the streets is whether they will or not or who will go in a-swimming, and how they will not tell their parents. You lie with open windows and hear the sounds in the streets.

I will note such birds as I observe in this walk, beginning on the railroad causeway in middle of this hot day. The chuckling warble of martins heard over the meadow, from a village box. The lark. The fields are blued with blue-eyed grass, — a slaty blue. The epilobium shows some color in its spikes.

How rapidly new flowers unfold! as if Nature would get through her work too soon. One has as much as he can do to observe how flowers successively unfold. It is a flowery revolution, to which but few attend. Hardly too much attention can be bestowed on flowers. We follow, we march after, the highest color; that is our flag, our standard, our "color." Flowers were made to be seen, not overlooked. Their bright colors imply eyes, spectators.

The oven-bird, chewink, pine warbler (?), thrasher, swallows on the wire, cuckoo, phœbe, red-eye, robin, veery. The maple-leaved

viburnum is opening with a purplish tinge. Wood thrush.

Young robins, dark-speckled, and the pigeon wood-pecker flies up from the ground and darts away. I forget that there are lichens at this season.

On Mt. Misery, panting with heat, looking down the river. Methinks there is a male and female shore to the river, one abrupt, the other flat and meadowy. Have not all streams this contrast more or less, on the one hand eating into the bank, on the other depositing their sediment? The year is in its manhood now. The very river looks warm, and there is none of that light celestial blue seen in far reaches in the spring.

8 P.M. — On river.

No moon. A deafening sound from the toads, and intermittingly from bullfrogs. What I have thought to be frogs prove to be toads, sitting by thousands along the shore and trilling short and loud, — not so long a quaver as in the spring. (I do not know what to think of my midsummer frog now.)

June 19. Saturday. These are the clover days. The light of June is not golden but silvery, not a torrid but somewhat temperate heat. See it reflected from the bent grass and the under sides of leaves.

Grape in bloom; agreeable perfume to many, to me not so.

What subtile differences between one season and another! The warmest weather has, perchance, arrived and the longest days, but not the driest. When I remember gathering ripe blackberries on sandy fields or stones by the roadside, the very berries warmed by the sun, I am convinced of this. The seasons admit of infinite degrees in their revolutions.

June 23. These are very agreeable pastures to me; no house in sight, no cultivation. I sit under a large white oak, upon its swelling instep, which makes an admirable seat, and look forth over these pleasant rocky and bushy pastures, where for the most part there are not even cattle to graze them, but patches of huckleberry bushes, and birches, and pitch pines, and barberry bushes, and creeping juniper in great circles, its edges curving upward, and wild roses spotting the green with red, and numerous tufts of indigo-weed, and, above all,

great gray boulders lying about far and near, with some barberry bush, perchance, growing half-way up them; and, between all, the short sod of the pasture here and there appears.

The beauty and fragrance of the wild rose are wholly agreeable and wholesome and wear well, and I do not wonder much that men have given the preference to this family of flowers, notwithstanding their thorns. It is hardy and more complete in its parts than most flowers, — its color, buds, fragrance, leaves, the whole bush, frequently its stem in particular, and finally its red or scarlet hips. I take the wild rose buds to my chamber and put them in a pitcher of water, and they will open there the next day, and a single flower will perfume a room; and then, after a day, the petals drop off, and new buds open.

I am inclined to think that my hat, whose lining is gathered in midway so as to make a shelf, is about as good a botany-box as I could have and far more convenient, and there is something in the darkness and the vapors that arise from the head — at least if you take a bath — which preserves flowers through a long walk. Flowers will frequently come fresh out of this botany-box at the end of the day, though they have had no sprinkling.

This grassy road now dives into the wood, as if it were entering a cellar or bulkhead, the shadow is so deep. June is the first month for shadows. How is it in July?

The sweet-briar bud which I brought home opened in the night. Is that the habit of roses?

June 25. 8.30 P.M. — To Conantum.

The great story of the night is the moon's adventures with the clouds. What innumerable encounters she has had with them!

June 26. I have not put darkness, duskiness, enough into my night and moonlight walks. Every sentence should contain some twilight or night. At least the light in it should be the yellow or creamy light of the moon or the fine beams of stars, and not the white light of day. The peculiar dusky serenity of the sentences must not allow the reader to forget that it is evening or night, without my saying that it is dark. Otherwise he will, of course, presume a daylight atmosphere.

P.M. — Boated up the Assabet.

The *Nymphæa odorata*, water nymph, sweet water-lily, pond-lily, in bloom. A superb flower, our lotus, queen of the waters. Now is the solstice in still waters. How sweet, innocent, wholesome its fragrance! How pure its white petals, though its root is in the mud! It must answer in my mind for what the Orientals say of the lotus flower. Probably the first a day or two since. To-morrow, then, will be the first Sabbath when the young men, having bathed, will walk slowly and soberly to church in their best clothes, each with a lily in his hand or bosom, — with as long a stem as he could get. At least I used to see them go by and come into church smelling a pond-lily, when I used to go myself. So that the flower is to some extent associated with bathing in Sabbath mornings and going to church, its odor contrasting and atoning for that of the sermon. We now have roses on the land and lilies on the water, — both land and water have done their best, — now *just* after the longest day. Nature says, "You behold the utmost I can do." And the young women carry their finest roses on the other hand. Roses and lilies. The floral days. The highest, intensest color belongs to the land, the purest, perchance, to the water.

June 27. Saw a very large white ash tree, three and a half feet in diameter, in front of the house which White formerly owned, under this hill, which was struck by lightning the 22d, about 4 P.M. The lightning apparently struck the top of the tree and scorched the bark and leaves for ten or fifteen feet downward, then began to strip off the bark and enter the wood, making a ragged narrow furrow or crack, till, reaching one of the upper limbs, it apparently divided, descending on both sides and entering deeper and deeper into the wood. At the first general branching, it had got full possession of the tree in its centre and tossed off the main limbs butt foremost, making holes in the ground where they struck; and so it went down in the midst of the trunk to the earth, where it apparently exploded, rending the trunk into six segments, whose tops, ten or twenty feet long, were rayed out on every side at an angle of about 30° from a perpendicular, leaving the ground bare directly under where the tree had stood, though they were still fastened to the earth by their roots.

The lightning appeared to have gone off through the roots, furrowing them as the branches, and through the earth, making a furrow like a plow, four or five rods in one direction, and in another passing through the cellar of the neighboring house, about thirty feet distant, scorching the tin milk-pans and throwing dirt into the milk, and coming out the back side of the house in a furrow, splitting some planks there. The main body of the tree was completely stripped of bark, which was cast in every direction two hundred feet; and large pieces of the inside of the tree, fifteen feet long, were hurled with tremendous force in various directions, one into the side of a shed, smashing it, another burying itself in a wood-pile. The heart of the tree lay by itself. Probably a piece as large as a man's leg could not have been sawn out of the trunk which would not have had a crack in it, and much of it was very finely splintered. The windows in the house were broken and the inhabitants knocked down by the concussion. All this was accomplished in an instant by a kind of fire out of the heavens called lightning, or a thunderbolt, accompanied by a crashing sound. For what purpose? The ancients called it Jove's bolt, with which he punished the guilty, and we moderns understand it no better.

This is one of those instances in which a man hesitates to refer his safety to his prudence, as the putting up of a lightning-rod. There is no lightning-rod by which the sinner can finally avert the avenging Nemesis. Though I should put up a rod if its utility were satisfactorily demonstrated to me, yet, so mixed are we, I should feel myself safe or in danger quite independently of the senseless rod. Yet there is a degree of faith and righteousness in putting up a rod, as well as trusting without one, though the latter, which is the rarest, I feel to be the most effectual rod of the two. The savage's and the civilized man's instincts are right. Science affirms too much. Science assumes to show *why* the lightning strikes a tree, but it does not show us the moral *why* any better than our instincts did. Why should trees be struck? It is not enough to say because they are in the way. All the phenomena of nature need to be seen from the point of view of wonder and awe, like lightning; and, on the other hand, the lightning itself needs to be regarded with serenity, as the most familiar and innocent phenomena are. Men are probably nearer to the essential

truth in their superstitions than in their science.

June 29. In my experience nothing is so opposed to poetry — not crime — as business. It is a negation of life.

Children bring you the early blueberry to sell now. It is considerably earlier on the tops of hills which have been recently cut off than on the plains or in vales. The girl that has Indian blood in her veins and picks berries for a living will find them out as soon as they turn.

July 1. Thursday. 9.30 A.M. — To Sherman's Bridge by land and water.

A cloudy and slightly showery morning, following a thunder-shower the previous afternoon. One object to see the white lilies in blossom.

Borrowed Brigham the wheelwright's boat at the Corner Bridge. He was quite ready to lend it, and took pains to shave down the handle of a paddle for me, conversing the while on the subject of spiritual knocking, which he asked if I had looked into, — which made him the slower. An obliging man, who understands that I am abroad viewing the works of Nature and not loafing, though he makes the pursuit a semi-religious one, as are all more serious ones to most men. All that is not sporting in the field, as hunting and fishing, is of a religious or else love-cracked character. Another hard-featured but talkative character at the bridge inquired, as I was unlocking the boat, if I knew anything that was good for the rheumatism; but I answered that I had heard of so many and had so little faith in any that I had forgotten them all. (On Conantum I had found *Krigia Virginica*, one of the smallest compound flowers.) The white lilies were in all their splendor, fully open, sometimes their lower petals lying flat on the surface. The largest appeared to grow in the shallower water, where some stood five or six inches out of water, and were five inches in diameter. Two which I examined had twenty-nine petals each.

The freshly opened lilies were a pearly white, and though the water amid the pads was quite unrippled, the passing air gave a slight oscillating, boat-like motion to and fro to the flowers, like boats held

fast by their cables. Some of the lilies had a beautiful rosaceous tinge, most conspicuous in the half-opened flower, extending through the calyx to the second row of petals, on those parts of the petals between the calyx-leaves which were most exposed to the influence of the light. They were tinged with red, as they are very commonly tinged with green, as if there were a gradual transition from the stamens to the petals. Yet these rosaceous ones are chiefly interesting to me for variety, and I am contented that lilies should be white and leave those higher colors to the land. I wished to breathe the atmosphere of lilies, and get the full impression which lilies are fitted to make.

After eating our luncheon at Rice's landing, we observed that every white lily in the river was shut. It would be interesting to observe how instantaneously these lilies close at noon.

July 2. Bigelow tells me that saddlers sometimes use the excrescence, the whitish fungus, on the birch to stick their awls in. Men find a use for everything at last. I saw one nailed up in his shop with an awl in it.

Last night, as I lay awake, I dreamed of the muddy and weedy river on which I had been paddling, and I seemed to derive some vigor from my day's experience, like the lilies which have their roots at the bottom.

I have plucked a white lily bud just ready to expand, and, after keeping it in water for two days, have cut its stem short and placed it in a broad dish of water, where it sailed about under the breath of the beholder with a slight undulatory motion. The breeze of his half-suppressed admiration it was that filled its sail. It was a rare-tinted one.

Nature is reported not by him who goes forth consciously as an observer, but in the fullness of life. To such a one she rushes to make her report. To the full heart she is all but a figure of speech. This is my year of observation, and I fancy that my friends are also more devoted to outward observation than ever before, as if it were an epidemic. At this season, methinks, we do not regard the larger features of the landscape, as in the spring, but are absorbed in details. Then, when the meadows were flooded, I looked far over them to the

distant woods and the outlines of hills, which were more distinct. I should not have so much to say of extensive water or landscapes at this season. You are a little bewildered by the variety of objects. There must be a certain meagreness of details and nakedness for wide views.

July 4. Sunday. 3 A.M. — To Conantum, to see the lilies open.

I hear an occasional crowing of cocks in distant barns, as has been their habit for how many thousand years. It was so when I was young; and it will be so when I am old. I hear the croak of a tree-toad as I am crossing the yard. I am surprised to find the dawn so far advanced. Now, on the Corner road, the hedges are alive with twittering sparrows, a bluebird or two, etc. The daylight now balances the moonlight. How short the nights! The last traces of day have not disappeared much before 10 o'clock, or perchance 9.30, and before 3 A.M. you see them again in the east, — probably 2.30, — leaving about five hours of solid night, the sun so soon coming round again.

July 5. There is a meadow on the Assabet just above Derby's Bridge, — it may contain an acre, — bounded on one side by the river, on the other by alders and a hill, completely covered with small hummocks which have lodged on it in the winter, covering it like the mounds in a graveyard at pretty regular intervals. Their edges are rounded like the latter, and they and the paths between are covered with a firm, short greensward, with here and there hardhacks springing out of them, so that they make excellent seats, especially in the shade of an elm that grows there. They are completely united with the meadow, forming little oblong hillocks from one to ten feet long, flat as a mole to the sward. I am inclined to call it the elfin burial-ground, or perchance it might be called the Indian burial-ground. It is a remarkably firm-swarded meadow, and convenient to walk on. I love to ponder the natural history thus written on the banks of the stream, for every higher freshet and intenser frost is recorded by it. The stream keeps a faithful and a true journal of every event in its experience, whatever race may settle on its banks; and it purls past this natural graveyard with a storied murmur, and no doubt

it could find endless employment for an old mortality in renewing its epitaphs.

The progress of the season is indescribable. It is growing warm again, but the warmth is different from that we have had. We lie in the shade of locust trees. Haymakers go by in a hay-rigging. I am reminded of berrying. I scent the sweet-fern and the dead or dry pine leaves. Cherry-birds alight on a neighboring tree. The warmth is something more normal and steady, ripening fruits. Nature offers fruits now as well as flowers. We have become accustomed to the summer. It has acquired a certain eternity. The earth is dry. Perhaps the sound of the locust expresses the season as well as anything. The farmers say the abundance of the grass depends on wet in June. I might make a separate season of those days when the locust is heard.

I see many devil's-needles zigzagging along the Second Division Brook, some green, some blue, both with black and perhaps velvety wings. They are confined to the brook. How lavishly they are painted! How cheap was the paint! How free the fancy of their creator! I caught a handful of small water-bugs, fifteen or twenty, about as large as apple seeds. Some country people call them apple seeds, it is said, from their scent. I perceived a strong scent, but I am not sure it was like apples. I should rather think they were so called from their shape.

The robin, the red-eye, the veery, the wood thrush, etc., etc.

How fitting to have every day in a vase of water on your table the wild-flowers of the season which are just blossoming! Can any house be said to be furnished without them? Shall we be so forward to pluck the fruits of Nature and neglect her flowers? These are surely her finest influences. So may the season suggest the fine thoughts it is fitted to suggest. Shall we say, "A penny for your thoughts," before we have looked into the face of Nature? Let me know what picture she is painting, what poetry she is writing, what ode composing, now.

The sun has set. We are in Dennis's field. The dew is falling fast. Some fine clouds, which have just escaped being condensed in dew, hang on the skirts of day and make the attraction in our western sky, — that part of day's gross atmosphere which has escaped the clutches of the night and is not enough condensed to fall to earth.

They are remarkably finely divided clouds, a very fine mackerel sky, or, rather, as if one had sprinkled that part of the sky with a brush, the outline of the whole being that of several large sprigs of fan coral. C., as usual, calls it a Mediterranean sky.

July 6. Hosmer is haying, but inclined to talk as usual. I blowed on his horn at supper-time. I asked if I should do any harm if I sounded it. He said no, but I called Mrs. Hosmer back, who was on her way to the village, though I blowed it but poorly. I was surprised to find how much skill and breath it took, depending on the size of the throat. Let blow a horn, says Robin, that good fellowship may us know. Where could a man go to practice on the horn, unless he went round to the farmer's at meal-time?

I am disappointed that Hosmer, the most intelligent farmer in Concord, and perchance in Middlesex, who admits that he has property enough for his use without accumulating more, and talks of leaving off hard work, letting his farm, and spending the rest of his days easier and better, cannot yet think of any method of employing himself but in work with his hands; only he would have a little less of it. Much as he is inclined to speculation in conversation — giving up any work to it for the time — and long-headed as he is, he talks of working for a neighbor for a day now and then and taking his dollar. He "would not like to spend his time sitting on the mill-dam." He has not even planned an essentially better life.

July 8. P.M. — Down river in boat to the Holt.

It is perhaps the warmest day yet.

We held on to the abutments under the red bridge to cool ourselves in the shade. No better place in hot weather, the river rippling away beneath you and the air rippling through beneath the abutments, if only in sympathy with the river, while the planks afford a shade, and you hear all the travel and the travellers' talk without being seen or suspected. The bullfrog it is, methinks, that makes the dumping sound. There is generally a current of air circulating over water, alwavs, methinks, if the water runs swiftly, as if it put the air in motion. There is quite a breeze here this sultry day. Commend me to the sub-pontean, the under-bridge, life.

I found a remarkable moth lying flat on the still water as if asleep (they appear to sleep during the day), as large as the smaller birds. Five and a half inches in alar extent and about three inches long, something like the smaller figure in one position of the wings (with a remarkably narrow lunar-cut tail), of a sea-green color, with four conspicuous spots whitish within, then a red line, then yellowish border below or toward the tail, but brown, brown orange, and black above, toward head; a very robust body, covered with a kind of downy plumage, an inch and a quarter long by five eighths thick. The sight affected me as tropical, and I suppose it is the northern verge of some species. It suggests into what productions Nature would run if all the year were a July. By night it is active, for, though I thought it dying at first, it made a great noise in its prison, a cigar-box, at night. When the day returns, it apparently drops wherever it may be, even into the water, and dozes till evening again. Is it called the emperor moth?

Drive about the 10th of May to Ashburnham.

N.B. Spring of ‘51 ten days or more earlier.

Corylus rostrata when?

N.B. Is the *Hepatica triloba* found here?

The Latin Gray’s. By last of June, ‘51 is apparently three or four days earlier than ‘52.

[“Seringo” in pencil written over “Savannah” and “Baywinged” under.]

[John Evelyn, *Silva: or a Discourse of Forest Trees*.]

Till July 3d.

July 9. Friday. 4 A.M. — To Cliffs.

No dew; no dewy cobwebs. The sky looks mist-like, not clear blue. An aurora fading into a general saffron color. At length the redness travels over, partly from east to west, before sunrise, and there is little color in the east. There is no name for the evening red corresponding to aurora. It is the blushing foam about the prow of the sun’s boat, and at eve the same in its wake.

Morton, in his “Crania Americana,” says, referring to Wilkinson as his authority, that “vessels of porcelain of Chinese manufacture have of late been repeatedly found in the catacombs of Thebes, in

Egypt," some as old as the Pharaonic period, and the inscriptions on them "have been read with ease by Chinese scholars, and in three instances record the following legend: The flower opens, and lo! another year." There is something sublime in the fact that some of the oldest written sentences should thus celebrate the coming in of spring. How many times have the flowers opened and a new year begun! Hardly a more cheering sentence could have come down to us. How old is spring, a phenomenon still so fresh! Do we perceive any decay in Nature? How much evidence is contained in this short and simple sentence respecting the former inhabitants of this globe! It is a sentence to be inscribed on vessels of porcelain. Suggesting that so many years had gone before. An observation as fit then as now.

Bathing is an undescribed luxury. To feel the wind blow on your body, the water flow on you and lave you, is a rare physical enjoyment this hot day. The water is remarkably warm here, especially in the shallows, — warm to the hand, like that which has stood long in a kettle over a fire. The pond water being so warm made the water of the brook feel very cold; and this kept close on the bottom of the pond for a good many rods about the mouth of the brook, as I could feel with my feet; and when I thrust my arm down where it was only two feet deep, my arm was in the warm water of the pond, but my hand in the cold water of the brook.

July 13. A journal, a book that shall contain a record of all your joy, your ecstasy.

July 14. A writer who does not speak out of a full experience uses torpid words, wooden or lifeless words, such words as "humanitary," which have a paralysis in their tails.

Saw to-day for the first time this season fleets of yellow butterflies dispersing before us, we rode along berrying on the Walden road. Their yellow fleets are in the offing. Do I ever see them in numbers off the road? They are a yellow flower that blossoms generally about this time. Like a mackerel fleet, with their small hulls and great sails. Collected now in compact but gorgeous assembly in the road, like schooners in a harbor, a haven; now suddenly dispersing on our

approach and filling the air with yellow snowflakes in their zigzag flight, or as when a fair wind calls those schooners out and disperses them over the broad ocean.

How deep or perhaps slaty sky-blue are those blueberries that grow in the shade! It is an unexpected and thrilling discovery to find such ethereal fruits in dense drooping clusters under the fresh green of oak and hickory sprouts. Those that grow in the sun appear to be the same species, only to have lost their bloom and freshness, and hence are darker.

The youth gets together his materials to build a bridge to the moon, or perchance a palace or temple on the earth, and at length the middle-aged man concludes to build a wood-shed with them.

July 16. The bass on Conantum is a very rich sight now. Its twigs are drooping, weighed down with pendulous flowers, so that, when you stand directly under it and look up, you see one mass of flowers, a flowery canopy. Its conspicuous leaf-like bracts, too, have the effect of flowers. The tree resounds with the hum of bees, — bumblebees and honey-bees; rose-bugs and butterflies, also, are here, — a perfect susurrus, a sound, as C. says, unlike any other in nature,

— not like the wind, as that is like the sea. The bees abound on the flowers of the smooth sumach now. The branches of this tree touch the ground, and it has somewhat the appearance of being weighed down with flowers. The air is full of sweetness. The tree is full of poetry.

I observe the yellow butterflies everywhere in the fields and on the pontederias, which now give a faint blue tinge to the sides of the rivers. I hear the *link link*, fall-like note of the bobolink (?) in the meadows; he has lost the *bobo* off. This is a still, thoughtful day, the air full of vapors which shade the earth, preparing rain for the morrow.

July 17. P.M. — A summer rain. A gentle steady rain, long a-gathering, without thunder or lightning, — such as we have not, and, methinks, could not have had, earlier than this.

I pick raspberries dripping with rain beyond Sleepy Hollow. This weather is rather favorable to thought. On all sides is heard a gentle

dripping of the rain on the leaves, yet it is perfectly warm. It is a day of comparative leisure to many farmers. Some go to the mill-dam and the shops; some go a-fishing.

July 18. Sunday. 8.30 A.M. — To the Sudbury meadows in boat.

I observe that even in these meadows, where no willows nor button-bushes line the shore, there is still a pretty constant difference between the shores. The border of pontederia is rarely of equal depth on both sides at once, but it keeps that side in the meander where the sediment is deposited, the shortest course which will follow the shore, as I have dotted it, crossing from this side to that as the river meanders; for on the longest side the river is active, not passive, wearing into the bank, and runs there more swiftly. This is the longest line of blue that nature paints with flowers in our fields, though the lupines may have been more densely blue within a small compass. Thus by a natural law a river, instead of flowing straight through its meadows, meanders from side to side and fertilizes this side or that, and adorns its banks with flowers. The river has its active and its passive side, its right and left breast.

Every poet has trembled on the verge of science.

Got green grapes to stew.

July 22. We have more of the furnace-like heat to-day, after all. The *Rhus glabra* flowers are covered with bees, *large* yellowish wasps, and butterflies; they are all alive with them. How much account insects make of some flowers! There are other botanists than I. The *Asclepias syriaca* is going to seed. Here is a kingfisher frequenting the Corner Brook Pond. They find out such places. Huckleberrying and blackberrying have commenced.

July 24. The cardinal-flower probably open to-day. The quails are heard whistling this morning near the village.

I sympathize with weeds perhaps more than with the crop they choke, they express so much vigor. They are the truer crop which the earth more willingly bears.

Just after sunrise this morning I noticed Hayden walking beside his team, which was slowly drawing a heavy hewn stone swung

under the axle, surrounded by an atmosphere of industry, his day's work begun. Honest, peaceful industry, conserving the world, which all men respect, which society has consecrated. A reproach to all sluggards and idlers. Honest, manly toil. His brow has commenced to sweat. Honest as the day is long. One of the sacred band doing the needful but irksome drudgery. The day went by, and at evening I passed a rich man's yard, who keeps many servants and foolishly spends much money while he adds nothing to the common stock, and there I saw Hayden's stone lying beside a whimsical structure intended to adorn this Lord Timothy Dexter's mansion, and the dignity forthwith departed from Hayden's labor, in my eyes. How much of the industry of the boor, traced to the end, is found thus to be subserving some rich man's foolish enterprise! There is a coarse, boisterous, money-making fellow in the north part of the town who is going to build a bank wall under the hill along the edge of his meadow. The powers have put this into his head to keep him out of mischief, and he wishes me to spend three weeks digging there with him. The result will be that he will perchance get a little more money to hoard, or leave for his heirs to spend foolishly when he is dead. Now, if I do this, the community will commend me as an industrious and hardworking man; but, as I choose to devote myself to labors which yield more real profit, though but little money, they regard me as a loafer. But, as I do not need this police of meaningless labor to regulate me, and do not see anything absolutely praiseworthy in his undertaking, however amusing it may be to him, I prefer to finish my education at a different school.

July 25. 4 A.M. — To Cliffs.

This early twitter or breathing of chip-birds in the dawn sounds like something organic in the earth. This is a morning celebrated by birds. This morning is all the more glorious for a white fog, which, though not universal, is still very extensive over all lowlands, some fifty feet high or more, though there was none at ten last night. There are white cobwebs on the grass. The battalions of the fog are continually on the move.

When I return this way I find two farmers loading their cart with dirt, and they are so unmanly as to excuse themselves to me for

working this Sunday morning by saying with a serious face that they are burying a cow which died last night after some months of sickness, — which, however, they unthinkingly admit that they killed last night, being the most convenient time for them, and I see that they are now putting more loads of soil over her body to save the manure. How often men will betray their sense of guilt, and hence their actual guilt, by their excuses, where no guilt necessarily was.

July 26. By my intimacy with nature I find myself withdrawn from man. My interest in the sun and the moon, in the morning and the evening, compels me to solitude.

My desire for society is infinitely increased; my fitness for any actual society is diminished.

Went to Cambridge and Boston to-day. Dr. Harris says that my great moth is the *Attacus luna*; may be regarded as one of several emperor moths. They are rarely seen, being very liable to be snapped up by birds. Once, as he was crossing the College Yard, he saw the wings of one coming down, which reached the ground just at his feet. What a tragedy! The wings came down as the only evidence that such a creature had soared, — wings large and splendid, which were designed to bear a precious burthen through the upper air. So most poems, even epics, are like the wings come down to earth, while the poet whose adventurous flight they evidence has been snapped up by the ravenous vulture of this world. If this moth ventures abroad by day, some bird will pick out the precious cargo and let the sails and rigging drift, as when the sailor meets with a floating spar and sail and reports a wreck seen in a certain latitude and longitude. For what were such tender and defenseless organizations made? The wreck of an argosy in the air.

July 30. The fore part of this month was the warmest weather we have had; the last part, sloping toward autumn, has reflected some of its coolness, for we are very forward to anticipate the fall. Perhaps I may say the spring culminated with the commencement of haying, and the summer side of the year in mid-July.

Do not all flowers that blossom after mid-July remind us of the fall? After midsummer we have a belated feeling as if we had all

been idlers, and are forward to see in each sight and hear in each sound some presage of the fall, just as in middle age man anticipates the end of life.

Caught in a thunder-shower, when south of Flint's Pond. Stood under thick trees. I care not how hard it rains, if it does not rain more than fifteen minutes. I can shelter myself effectually in the woods. It is a grand sound, that of the rain on the leaves of the forest a quarter of a mile distant, approaching. But I got wet through, after all, being caught where there were no trees.

Aug. 2. Wachusett from Fair Haven Hill looks like this: — the dotted line being the top of the surrounding forest. Even on the low principle that misery loves company and is relieved by the consciousness that it is shared by many, and therefore is not so insignificant and trivial, after all, this blue mountain outline is valuable. In many moods it is cheering to look across hence to that blue rim of the earth, and be reminded of the invisible towns and communities, for the most part also unremembered, which lie in the further and deeper hollows between me and those hills. Towns of sturdy uplandish fame, where some of the morning and primal vigor still lingers, I trust. Ashburnham, Rindge, Jaffrey, etc., — it is cheering to think that it is with such communities that we survive or perish. Yes, the mountains do thus impart, in the mere prospect of them, some of the New Hampshire vigor. The melancholy man who had come forth to commit suicide on this hill might be saved by being thus reminded how many brave and contented lives are lived between him and the horizon. Those hills extend our plot of earth; they make our native valley or indentation in the earth so much the larger.

Aug. 5. Hearing that one with whom I was acquainted had committed suicide, I said I did not know when I had planted the seed of that fact that I should hear of it.

P.M. — To C. Miles's blueberry swamp.

That is a glorious swamp of Miles's, — an extensive rich moss-like bed, in which you sink three feet to a dry bottom of moss or dead twigs; surrounded all by wild-looking woods, with the wild white

spruce advancing into it and the pitch pine here and there, and high blueberry and tall pyrus and holly and other bushes under their countenance and protection. These are the wildest and richest gardens that we have. Such a depth of verdure into which you sink.

Aug. 6. Gathered some of those large, sometimes pear-shaped, sweet blue huckleberries which grow amid the rubbish where woods have just been cut.

Milkweeds and trumpet-flowers are important now, to contrast with the cool, dark, shaded sides and recesses of moist copses. I see their red under the willows and alders everywhere against a dark ground. Methinks that blue, next to red, attracts us in a flower. Blue vervain is now very attractive to me, and then there is that interesting progressive history in its rising ring of blossoms. It has a story. Next to our blood is our prospect of heaven. Does not the blood in fact show blue in the covered veins and arteries, when distance lends enchantment to the view? The sight of it is more affecting than I can describe or account for.

Methinks there are few new flowers of late. An abundance of small fruits takes their place. Summer gets to be an old story. Birds leave off singing, as flowers blossoming, *i.e.* perhaps in the same proportion.

Aug. 8. I only know myself as a human entity, the scene, so to speak, of thoughts and affections, and am sensible of a certain doubleness by which I can stand as remote from myself as from another. However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me which, as it were, is not a part of me, but spectator, sharing no experience, but taking note of it, and that is no more I than it is you. When the play — it may be the tragedy of life — is over, the spectator goes his way. It was a kind of fiction, a work of the imagination only, so far as he was concerned.

Ambrosia artemisiæfolia. July was a month of dry, torrid heat and drouth, especially the fore part. August, thus far, of gentle rain-storms and fogs, dog-days. Things mildew now. I notice now, along the North River, horse-mint, arrowhead, cardinal-flower, trumpet-weed (just coming out), water parsnip, skull-cap (*lateriflora*),

monkey-flower, etc., etc. Rivers meander most not amid rugged mountains, but through soft level meadows. In some places the ground is covered now with the black umbelled berries of the sarsaparilla. No man ever makes a discovery, ever an observation of the least importance, but he is advertised of the fact by a joy that surprises him. The powers thus celebrate all discovery. The squirrels are now devouring the hazelnuts fast.

Aug. 21. Weeds in potato-fields are now very rank. What should we come to if the season were longer, and the reins were given to vegetation? Young turkeys are straying in the grass, which is alive with grasshoppers.

The bees, wasps, etc., are on the goldenrods, impatient to be interrupted, improving their time before the sun of the year sets. A man killed by lightning would have a good answer ready in the next world to the question "How came *you* here?" which he need not hesitate to give.

The sound of the crickets gradually prevails more and more. I hear the year falling asleep.

Aug. 23. About 8 P.M. — Now I sit on the Cliffs and look abroad over the river and Conantum hills. I live so much in my habitual thoughts, a routine of thought, that I forget there is any outside to the globe, and am surprised when I behold it as now, — yonder hills and river in the moonlight, the monsters. Yet it is salutary to deal with the surface of things. What are these rivers and hills, these hieroglyphics which my eyes behold? There is something invigorating in this air, which I am peculiarly sensible is a real wind, blowing from over the surface of a planet. I look out at my eyes, I come to my window, and I feel and breathe the fresh air. It is a fact equally glorious with the most inward experience. Why have we ever slandered the outward? The perception of surfaces will always have the effect of miracle to a sane sense.

Aug. 24. The year is but a succession of days, and I see that I could assign some office to each day which, summed up, would be the history of the year. Everything is done in season, and there is no

time to spare. The bird gets its brood hatched in season and is off. I looked into the nest where I saw a vireo feeding its young a few days ago, but it is empty; it is fledged and flown.

Sept. 18. The poor student begins now to seek the sun. In the forenoons I move into a chamber on the east side of the house, and so follow the sun round. It is agreeable to stand in a new relation to the sun. They begin to have a fire occasionally below-stairs.

3.30 P.M. — A-barberrying to Flint's Pond.

How much handsomer in fruit for being bent down in wreaths by the weight! The increasing weight of the fruits adds gracefulness to the form of the bush. I get my hands full of thorns, but my basket full of berries.

Sept. 26. Dreamed of purity last night. The thoughts seemed not to originate with me, but I was invested, my thought was tinged, by another's thought. It was not I that originated, but I that *entertained* the thought.

The river is getting to be too cold for bathing.

Sept. 27. Monday. P.M. — The flashing clearness of the atmosphere. More light appears to be reflected from the earth, less absorbed.

The touch-me-not seed-vessels go off like pistols, — shoot their seeds off like bullets. They explode in my hat.

Sept. 30. Thursday. 10 A.M. — To Fair Haven Pond, bee-hunting, — Pratt, Rice, Hastings, and myself, in a wagon.

A fine, clear day after the coolest night and severest frost we have had. The apparatus was, first a simple round tin box about four and a half inches in diameter and one and a half inches deep, containing a piece of empty honeycomb of its own size and form, filling it within a third of an inch of the top; also another, *wooden* box about two and a half inches square every way, with a glass window occupying two thirds the upper side under a slide, with a couple of narrow slits in the wood, each side of the glass, to admit air, but too narrow for the bees to pass; the whole resting on a circular bottom a little larger

than the lid of the tin box, with a sliding door in it. We were earnest to go this week, before the flowers were gone, and we feared the frosty night might make the bees slow to come forth.

After we got to the Baker Farm, to one of the open fields nearest to the tree I had marked, the first thing was to find some flowers and catch some honey-bees. We followed up the bank of the brook for some distance, but the goldenrods were all dried up there, and the asters on which we expected to find them were very scarce. We had no better luck at Clematis Brook. Not a honey-bee could we find, and we concluded that we were too late, — that the weather was too cold.

After eating our lunch, we set out on our return. By the roadside at Walden, on the sunny hillside sloping to the pond, we saw a large mass of goldenrod and aster several rods square and comparatively fresh. Getting out of our wagon, we found it to be resounding with the hum of bees. (It was about 1 o'clock.) There were far more flowers than we had seen elsewhere. Here were bees in great numbers, both bumblebees and honey-bees, as well as butterflies and wasps and flies. So, pouring a mixture of honey and water into the empty comb in the tin box, and holding the lid of the tin box in one hand and the wooden box with the slides shut in the other, we proceeded to catch the honey-bees by shutting them in suddenly between the lid of the tin box and the large circular bottom of the wooden one, cutting off the flower-stem with the edge of the lid at the same time. Then, holding the lid still against the wooden box, we drew the slide in the bottom and also the slide covering the window at the top, that the light might attract the bee to pass up into the wooden box. As soon as he had done so and was buzzing against the glass, the lower slide was closed and the lid with the flower removed, and more bees were caught in the same way. Then, placing the other, tin, box containing the comb filled with honeyed water close under the wooden one, the slide was drawn again, and the upper slide closed, making it dark; and in about a minute they went to feeding, as was ascertained by raising slightly the wooden box. Then the latter was wholly removed, and they were left feeding or sucking up the honey in broad daylight. In from two to three minutes one had loaded himself and commenced leaving the box. He would buzz round it back and forth a foot or more, and then, sometimes, finding that he

was too heavily loaded, alight to empty himself or clean his feet. Then, starting once more, he would begin to circle round irregularly, at first in a small circle only a foot or two in diameter, as if to examine the premises that he might know them again, till, at length, rising higher and higher and circling wider and wider and swifter and swifter, till his orbit was ten or twelve feet in diameter and as much from the ground, — though its centre might be moved to one side, — so that it was very difficult to follow him, especially if you looked against a wood or the hill, and you had to lie low to fetch him against the sky (you must operate in an open space, not in a wood); all this as if to ascertain the course to his nest; then, in a minute or less from his first starting, he darts off in a bee-line, that is, as far as I could see him, which might be eight or ten rods, looking against the sky (and you had to follow his whole career very attentively indeed to see when and where he went off at a tangent), in a waving or sinuous (right and left) line, toward his nest.

We sent forth as many as a dozen bees, which flew in about three directions, but all toward the village, or where we knew there were hives. They did not fly so almost absolutely straight as I had heard, but within three or four feet of the same course for half a dozen rods, or as far as we could see. Those belonging to one hive all had to digress to get round an apple tree. As none flew in the right direction for us, we did not attempt to line them. In less than half an hour the first returned to the box still lying on the wood-pile, — for not one of the bees on the surrounding flowers discovered it, — and so they came back, one after another, loaded themselves and departed; but now they went off with very little preliminary circling, as if assured of their course. We were furnished with little boxes of red, blue, green, yellow, and white paint, in dry powder, and with a stick we sprinkled a little of the red powder on the back of one while he was feeding, — gave him a little dab, — and it settled down amid the fuzz of his back and gave him a distinct red jacket. He went off like most of them toward some hives about three quarters of a mile distant, and we observed by the watch the time of his departure. In just twenty-two minutes red jacket came back, with enough of the powder still on his back to mark him plainly. He may have gone more than three quarters of a mile. At any rate, he had a head wind to

contend with while laden. They fly swiftly and surely to their nests, never resting by the way, and I was surprised — though I had been informed of it — at the distance to which the village bees go for flowers.

The rambler in the most remote woods and pastures little thinks that the bees which are humming so industriously on the rare wild flowers he is plucking for his herbarium, in some out-of-the-way nook, are, like himself, ramblers from the village, perhaps from his own yard, come to get their honey for his hives. All the honey-bees we saw were on the blue-stemmed goldenrod (*Solidago cæsia*), which is late, lasts long, which emitted a sweet agreeable fragrance, not on the asters. I feel the richer for this experience. It taught me that even the insects in my path are not loafers, but have their special errands. Not merely and vaguely in this world, but in this hour, each is about its business. If, then, there are any sweet flowers still lingering on the hillside, it is known to the bees both of the forest and the village. The botanist should make interest with the bees if he would know when the flowers open and when they close. Those I have named were the only common and prevailing flowers at this time to look for them on.

Our red jacket had performed the voyage in safety; no bird had picked him up. Are the kingbirds gone? Now is the time to hunt bees and take them up, when the combs are full of honey and before the flowers are so scarce that they begin to consume the honey they have stored.

Rees's Cyclopædia says that "Philliscus retired into a desert wood, that he might have the opportunity of observing them [bees] to better advantage." Paul Dudley wrote the Royal Society about 1723 that the Indians had no word for bee; called it "Englishman's fly."

OCT. 9. Touch-me-not, self-heal, *Bidens cernua*, ladies'-tresses, cerastium, dwarf tree-primrose, butter-and-eggs (abundant), prenanthes, sium, silvery cinquefoil, mayweed. My rainbow rush must be the *Juncus militaris*, not yet colored.

OCT. 10. Burdock, *Ranunculus acris*, rough hawkweed. A drizzling rain to-day. The air is full of falling leaves. The streets are

strewn with elm leaves. The trees begin to look thin. The butternut is perhaps the first on the street to lose its leaves. Rain, more than wind, makes the leaves fall. Glow-worms in the evening.

Oct. 15. 9 A.M. — The first snow is falling (after not very cool weather), in large flakes, filling the air and obscuring the distant woods and houses, as if the inhabitants above were emptying their pillow-cases. Like a mist it divides the uneven landscape at a little distance into ridges and vales. The ground begins to whiten, and our thoughts begin to prepare for winter. Whiteweed. The snow lasted but half an hour. Ice a week or two ago.

P.M. — Walden.

The rain of the night and morning, together with the wind, had strewn the ground with chestnuts. The burs, generally empty, come down with a loud sound, while I am picking the nuts in the woods. It is a pleasure to detect them in the woods amid the firm, crispy, crackling chestnut leaves. There is somewhat singularly refreshing in the color of this nut, the chestnut color. No wonder it gives a name to a color. One man tells me he has bought a wood-lot in Hollis to cut, and has let out the picking of the chestnuts to women at the halves. As the trees will probably be cut for them, they will make rapid work of it.

Oct. 20. Canada snapdragon, tansy, white goldenrod, blue-stemmed ditto. *Aster undulatus*, autumnal dandelion, tall buttercup, yarrow, mayweed. Picking chestnuts on Pine Hill.

Oct. 25. Monday. P.M. — Down river to Ball's Hill in boat.

Mint is still green and wonderfully recreating to smell. I had put such things behind me. It is hard to remember lilies now.

Oct. 28. Four months of the green leaf make all our summer, if I reckon from June 1st to October 1st, the growing season, and methinks there are about four months when the ground is white with snow. That would leave two months for spring and two for autumn. October the month of ripe or painted leaves; November the month of withered leaves and bare twigs and limbs.

I heard one boy say to another in the street to-day "You don't know much more than a piece of putty."

Nov. 1. Day before yesterday to the Cliffs in the rain, misty rain. In November, a man will eat his heart, if in any month. The birches have almost all lost their leaves. On the river this afternoon, the leaves, now crisp and curled, when the wind blows them on to the water become rude boats which float and sail about awhile conspicuously before they go to the bottom, — oaks, walnuts, etc.

Nov. 4. Autumnal dandelion and yarrow.

Must be out-of-doors enough to get experience of wholesome reality, as a ballast to thought and sentiment. Health requires this relaxation, this aimless life. This life in the present. Let a man have thought what he will of Nature in the house, she will still be novel outdoors. I keep out of doors for the sake of the mineral, vegetable, and animal in me.

My thought is a part of the meaning of the world, and hence I use a part of the world as a symbol to express my thought.

Nov. 18. Measured a stick of round timber, probably white pine, on the cars this afternoon, — ninety-five feet long, nine and ten twelfths in circumference at butt, and six and two twelfths in circumference at small end, quite straight. From Vermont. Yarrow and tansy still. These are cold, gray days.

Nov. 23. There is something genial even in the first snow, and Nature seems to relent a little of her November harshness.

This, then, may be considered the end of the flower season for this year, though this snow will probably soon melt again.

I had a thought in a dream last night which surprised me by its strangeness, as if it were based on an experience in a previous state of existence, and could not be entertained by my waking self. Both the thought and the language were equally novel to me, but I at once perceived it to be true and to coincide with my experience in this state.

Nov. 27. Like many of my contemporaries I had rarely for many years used animal food, or tea or coffee, etc., etc., not so much because of any ill effects which I had traced to them in my own case, though I could theorize extensively in that direction, as because it was not agreeable to my imagination. It appeared more beautiful to live low and fare hard in many respects; and though I never did so, I went just far enough to please my imagination. But now I find myself somewhat less particular in these respects. I carry less religion to the table, ask no blessing, not because I am wiser than I was, but, I am obliged to confess, because, however much it is to be regretted with years I have grown more coarse and indifferent.

Nov. 29, 30, and Dec. 1. The snow which fell the 23d whitened the ground but a day or two. These have been the mildest and pleasantest days since November came in.

Dec. 2. The pleasantest day of all.

Started in boat before 9 A.M. down river to Billerica with W.E.C. Not wind enough for a sail. I do not remember when I have taken a sail or a row on the river in December before. Still no snow.

Dec. 5. P.M. — Rowed over Walden!

A dark, but warm, misty day, completely overcast.

Dec. 7. P.M. — Perhaps the warmest day yet. True Indian summer. The walker perspires. The shepherd's-purse is in full bloom; the andromeda not turned red.

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Jan. 3. The evergreens appear to relieve themselves soonest of the ice, perhaps because of the reflection from their leaves. Those trees, like the maples and hickories, which have most spray and branches make the finest show of ice. This afternoon it snows, the snow lodging on the ice, which still adheres to the trees. The more completely the trees are changed to ice trees, to spirits of trees, the finer. Instead of the minute frostwork on a window, you have whole forests of silver boughs. The "brattling" of the ice. Is not that the word?

I love Nature partly *because* she is not man, but a retreat from him. None of his institutions control or pervade her. There a different kind of right prevails. In her midst I can be glad with an entire gladness. If this world were all man, I could not stretch myself, I should lose all hope. He is constraint, she is freedom to me. He makes me wish for another world. She makes me content with this.

Methinks that these prosers, with their saws and their laws, do not know how glad a man can be. What wisdom, what warning, can prevail against gladness? There is no law so strong which a little gladness may not transgress. I have a room all to myself; it is nature. It is a place beyond the jurisdiction of human governments. There is a prairie beyond your laws. Nature is a prairie for outlaws. There are two worlds, the post-office and nature. I know them both. I continually forget mankind and their institutions, as I do a bank.

Well, now this afternoon the snow is lodging on all this ice. Walden not yet frozen.

The air is thick and darkened with falling snow, and the woods are being draped with it in white wreaths. This is winter. They are putting on their white greatcoats.

Jan. 4. I must call that swamp of E. Hubbard's west of the Hunt Pasture, Yellow Birch Swamp. How pleasing to stand beside a new or rare tree! And few are so handsome as this. The sight of these trees affects me more than California gold. We have the silver and the golden birch. This is like a fair, flaxen-haired sister of the dark-

complexioned black birch, with golden ringlets. How lustily it takes hold of the swampy soil, and braces itself! In an undress, this tree. Ah, time will come when these will be all gone. Among the primitive trees. What sort of dryads haunt these? Blond nymphs.

Jan. 9. As I walked the railroad this springlike day, I heard from time to time the sound of stones and earth falling and rolling down the bank in the cuts. The earth is almost entirely bare. We have not yet had snow more than one inch deep!!!

As I climbed the Cliff, I paused in the sun and sat on a dry rock, dreaming. I thought of those summery hours when time is tinged with eternity, — runs into it and becomes of one stuff with it. How much — how, perhaps, all — that is best in our experience in middle life may be resolved into the memory of our youth! I remember how I expanded. If the genius visits me now I am not quite taken off my feet, but I remember how this experience is like, but less than, that I had long since.

Jan. 14. Snows all day. P.M. — To Walden and Andromeda Ponds.

It is a very light snow, lying like down or feathery scales. Examined closely, the flakes are beautifully regular six-rayed stars or wheels with a centre disk, perfect geometrical figures in thin scales like this: far more perfect than I can draw. These thin crystals are piled about a foot deep all over the country, but as light as bran. The surface of fields, as I look toward the western light, appears waved or watered on a large scale, as if different kinds of flakes drifted together, some glistening scales, others darker; or perhaps the same reflected the light differently from different sides of slight drifts or undulations on the surface. Thus beautiful the snow.

I suppose that the meadow mouse can still pick up chestnuts under the snow. The nuts commonly lie as they fell from the bur, two or three together.

The bones of children soon turn to dust again.

Jan. 16. *Sunday.* Cold, with blustering winds drifting the snow. Yesterday the hounds were heard. It was a hunter's day. All tracks

were fresh, the snow deep and light. I met Melvin with his bag full.

Trench says that "'rivals,' in the primary sense of the word, are those who dwell on the banks of the same stream" or "on opposite banks," but as he says, in many words, since the use of water-rights is a fruitful source of contention between such neighbors, the word has acquired this secondary sense. My friends are my *rivals* on the Concord, in the primitive sense of the word. There is no strife between us respecting the use of the stream. The Concord offers many privileges, but none to quarrel about. It is a peaceful, not a brawling, stream. It has not made *rivals* out of neighbors *that lived on its banks*, but friends. My friends are my *rivals*; we dwell on opposite banks of the stream, but that stream is the Concord, which flows without a ripple or a murmur, without a rapid or a brawl, and offers no petty privileges to quarrel about.

Jan. 21. A fine, still, warm moonlight evening.

I easily read the moral of my dreams. Yesterday I was influenced with the rottenness of human relations. They appeared full of death and decay, and offended the nostrils. In the night I dreamed of delving amid the graves of the dead, and soiled my fingers with their rank mould. It was *sanitarily, morally*, and *physically* true.

Jan. 27. Trench says a wild man is a *willed* man. Well, then, a man of will who does what he wills or wishes, a man of hope and of the future tense, for not only the obstinate is willed, but far more the constant and persevering. The obstinate man, properly speaking, is one who will not. The perseverance of the saints is positive willedness, not a mere passive willingness. The fates are wild, for they *will*; and the Almighty is wild above all, as fate is.

What are our fields but *felds* or *felled* woods. They bear a more recent name than the woods, suggesting that previously the earth was covered with woods. Always in the new country a field is a clearing.

Feb. 11. While surveying on the Hunt farm the other day, behind Simon Brown's house I heard a remarkable echo. In the course of surveying, being obliged to call aloud to my assistant from every side and almost every part of a farm in succession, and at various hours of

a day, I am pretty sure to discover an echo if any exists, and the other day it was encouraging and soothing to hear it. After so many days of comparatively insignificant drudgery with stupid companions, this leisure, this sportiveness, this generosity in nature, sympathizing with the better part of me; somebody I could talk with, — one degree, at least, better than talking with one's self. Some voice of somebody I pined to hear, with whom I could form a community. I did wish, rather, to linger there and call all day to the air and hear my words repeated, but a vulgar necessity dragged me along round the bounds of the farm, to hear only the stale answers of my chain-man shouted back to me.

I am surprised that we make no more ado about echoes. They are almost the only kindred voices that I hear.

It was the memorable event of the day, not anything my companions said, or the travellers whom I met, or my thoughts, for they were all mere repetitions or echoes in the worst sense of what I had heard and thought before many times; but this echo was accompanied with novelty, and by its repetition of my voice it did more than double that. It was a profounder Socratic method of suggesting thoughts unutterable to me the speaker. There was one I heartily loved to talk with. Under such favorable auspices I could converse with myself, could reflect.

Feb. 23. I think myself in a wilder country, and a little nearer to primitive times, when I read in old books which spell the word savages with an *l* (salvages), like John Smith's "General Historie of Virginia, etc.," reminding me of the derivation of the word from *sylva*. There is some of the wild wood and its bristling branches still left in their language. The savages they described are really *salvages*, men of the *woods*.

Feb. 27. A week or two ago I brought home a handsome pitch pine cone which had freshly fallen and was closed perfectly tight. It was put into a table drawer. To-day I am agreeably surprised to find that it has there dried and opened with perfect regularity, filling the drawer, and from a solid, narrow, and sharp cone, has become a broad, rounded, open one, — has, in fact, expanded with the

regularity of a flower's petals into a conical flower of rigid scales, and has shed a remarkable quantity of delicate-winged seeds. Each scale, which is very elaborately and perfectly constructed, is armed with a short spine, pointing downward, as if to protect its seed from squirrels and birds. That hard closed cone, which defied all violent attempts to open it, has thus yielded to the gentle persuasion of warmth and dryness. The expanding of the pine cones, that, too, is a season.

March 5. The secretary of the Association for the Advancement of Science requests me, as he probably has thousands of others, by a printed circular letter from Washington the other day, to fill the blank against certain questions, among which the most important one was what branch of science I was specially interested in, using the term science in the most comprehensive sense possible. Now, though I could state to a select few that department of human inquiry which engages me, and should be rejoiced at an opportunity to do so, I felt that it would be to make myself the laughing-stock of the scientific community to describe or attempt to describe to them that branch of science which specially interests me, inasmuch as they do not believe in a science which deals with the higher law. So I was obliged to speak to their condition and describe to them that poor part of me which alone they can understand. The fact is I am a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot. Now I think of it, I should have told them at once that I was a transcendentalist. That would have been the shortest way of telling them that they would not understand my explanations.

How absurd that, though I probably stand as near to nature as any of them, and am by constitution as good an observer as most, yet a true account of my relation to nature should excite their ridicule only! If it had been the secretary of an association of which Plato or Aristotle was the president, I should not have hesitated to describe my studies at once and particularly.

March 6. Sunday. Last Sunday I plucked some alder (apparently speckled) twigs, some (apparently *tremuloides*) aspen, and some swamp (?) willow, and put them in water in a warm room.

Immediately the alder catkins were relaxed and began to lengthen and open, and by the second day to drop their pollen; like handsome pendants they hung round the pitcher, and at the same time the smaller female flower expanded and brightened. In about four days the aspens began to show their red anthers and feathery scales, being an inch in length and still extending. March 2d, I added the andromeda; March 3d, the rhodora.

March 7. What is the earliest sign of spring? The motion of worms and insects? The flow of sap in trees and the swelling of buds? Do not the insects awake with the flow of the sap? Bluebirds, etc., probably do not come till insects come out. Or are there earlier signs in the water? — the tortoises, frogs, etc.

March 8. Saw two or three hawks sailing. Saw the remains of four cows and a horse that were burned in a barn a month ago. Where the paunch was, a large bag of coarse hay and stalks was seen in the midst of an indistinct circumference of ribs. Saw some very large willow buds expanded (their silk) to thrice the length of their scales, indistinctly carved or waved with darker lines around them. They look more like, are more of, spring than anything I have seen. Heard the *phebe*, or spring note of the chickadee, now, before any spring bird has arrived.

Heard the first flies buzz in the sun on the south side of the house.

[Richard Trench's Emersonian *On the Study of Words*, 1851.]

Bailey, I find, has it: "Rival (*Rivalis* L.q.d. qui juxta eundem rivum pascit)." My friends my rivals are.

March 10. This is the first really spring day. The sun is brightly reflected from all surfaces, and the north side of the street begins to be a little more passable to foot-travellers. You do not think it necessary to button up your coat.

I see many middling-sized black spiders on the edge of the snow, very active. The radical leaves of innumerable plants (as here a dock in and near the water) are evidently affected by the spring influences. Many plants are to some extent evergreen, like the buttercup now beginning to start. Methinks the first obvious evidence of spring is

the pushing out of the swamp willow catkins, then the relaxing of the earlier alder catkins, then the pushing up of skunk-cabbage spathes (and pads at the bottom of water). This is the order I am inclined to, though perhaps any of these may take precedence of all the rest in any particular case.

At Nut Meadow Brook crossing we rest awhile on the rail, gazing into the eddying stream. The ripple-marks on the sandy bottom, where silver spangles shine in the river with black wrecks of caddis-cases lodged under each shelving sand, the shadows of the invisible dimples reflecting prismatic colors on the bottom, the minnows already stemming the current with restless, wiggling tails, ever and anon darting aside, probably to secure some invisible mote in the water, whose shadows we do not at first detect on the sandy bottom, — when detected so much more obvious as well as larger and more interesting than the substance, — in which each fin is distinctly seen, though scarcely to be detected in the substance; these are all very beautiful and exhilarating sights, a sort of diet drink to heal our winter discontent. Have the minnows played thus all winter? The equisetum at the bottom has freshly grown several inches. Then should I not have given the precedence on the last page to this and some other water-plants? I suspect that I should, and the flags appear to be starting.

What was that sound that came on the softened air? It was the warble of the first bluebird from that scraggy apple orchard yonder. When this is heard, then has spring arrived.

It must be that the willow twigs, both the yellow and green, are brighter-colored than before. I cannot be deceived.

March 12. Last night it snowed, a sleety snow again, and now the ground is whitened with it, and where are gone the bluebirds whose warble was wafted to me so lately like a blue wavelet through the air?

The greater part of the alder catkins (as well as the willow) are still in their winter condition, but some have their scales conspicuously loosened and elevated, showing their lighter-colored edges and interstices. They are actually beginning to blossom, certainly in advance of the willows. The sweet-gale is the prettiest

flower which I have found expanded yet.

It is essential that a man confine himself to pursuits — a scholar, for instance, to studies — which lie next to and conduce to his life, which do not go against the grain, either of his will or his imagination. The scholar finds in his experience some studies to be most fertile and radiant with light, others dry, barren, and dark. If he is wise, he will not persevere in the last, as a plant in a cellar will strive toward the light. He will confine the observations of his mind as closely as possible to the experience or life of his senses. His thought must live with and be inspired with the life of the body. Some men endeavor to live a constrained life, to subject their whole lives to their wills, as he who said he would give a sign if he were conscious after his head was cut off, — but he gave no sign. Dwell as near as possible to the channel in which your life flows. A man may associate with such companions, he may pursue such employments, as will darken the day for him. Men choose darkness rather than light.

March 14. P.M. — Repairing my boat.

High winds, growing colder and colder, ground stiffening again. My ears have not been colder the past winter. March is rightly famous for its winds.

March 15. There were few colder nights last winter than the last. The water in the flower-stand containing my pet tortoise froze solid, — completely enveloping him, though I had a fire in my chamber all the evening, — also that in my pail pretty thick. But the tortoise, having been thawed out on the stove, leaving the impression of his back shell in the ice, was even more lively than ever. His efforts at first had been to get under his chip, as if to go into the mud. To-day the weather is severely and remarkably cold. It is not easy to keep warm in my chamber. I have not taken a more blustering walk the past winter than this afternoon.

March 18. P.M. — To Conantum.

I find it unexpectedly mild. It appears to be clearing up but will be wet underfoot.

Now, then, spring is beginning again in earnest after this short check. Is it not always thus? Is there not always an early promise of spring, something answering to the Indian summer, which succeeds the summer, so an Indian or false spring preceding the true spring, — first false promise which merely excites our expectations to disappoint them, followed by a short return of winter? Yet all things appear to have made progress, even during these wintry days, for I cannot believe that they have thus instantaneously taken a start. I no sooner step out of the house than I hear the bluebirds in the air, and far and near, everywhere except in the woods, throughout the town you may hear them, — the blue curls of their warblings, — harbingers of serene and warm weather, little azure rills of melody trickling here and there from out the air, their short warble trilled in the air reminding of so many corkscrews assaulting and thawing the torpid mass of winter, assisting the ice and snow to melt and the streams to flow. Everywhere also, all over the town, within an hour or two have come out little black two-winged gnats with plumed or fuzzy shoulders. When I catch one in my hands, it looks like a bit of black silk ravelling. They have suddenly come forth everywhere.

I came forth expecting to hear new birds, and I am not disappointed. We know well what to count upon. Their coming is more sure than the arrival of the sailing and steaming packets.

It grows more and more fair. Yesterday at this hour it was more raw and blustering than the past winter; to-day it seems more mild and balmy than summer. I have rarely known a greater contrast.

To-day first I smelled the earth.

March 20. (Yesterday I forgot to say I painted my boat. Spanish brown and raw oil were the ingredients. I found the painter had sold me the brown in hard lumps as big as peas, which I could not reduce with a stick; so I passed the whole when mixed through an old coffee-mill, which made a very good paint-mill, catching it in an old coffeepot, whose holes I puttied up, there being a lack of vessels; and then I broke up the coffee-mill and nailed a part over the bows to protect them, the boat is made so flat. I had first filled the seams with some grafting-wax I had, melted.)

It is evident that the English do not enjoy that contrast between

winter and summer that we do, — that there is too much greenness and spring in the winter. There is no such wonderful resurrection of the year. Birds kindred with our first spring ones remain with them all winter, and flowers answering to our earliest spring ones put forth there in January. In one sense they have no winter but such as our spring. Our April is their March; our March, their February; our February, January, and December are not theirs at all under any name or sign.

The peculiarity of to-day is that now first you perceive that dry, warm, summer-presaging scent from dry oak and other leaves, on the sides of hills and ledges. You smell the summer from afar. The warm makes a man young again. There is also some dryness, almost dustiness, in the roads. The mountains are white with snow, and sure as the wind is northwest it is wintry; but now it is more westerly.

March 21. Morning along the river.

Might not my Journal be called "Field Notes?"

I see a honey-bee about my boat, apparently attracted by the beeswax (if there is any) in the grafting-wax with which I have luted it. There are many; one is caught and killed in it.

P.M. — To Kibbe Place.

It is a genial and reassuring day; the mere warmth of the west wind amounts almost to balminess. The softness of the air mollifies our own dry and congealed substance. I sit down by a wall to see if I can muse again. We are affected like the earth, and yield to the elemental tenderness; winter breaks up within us; the frost is coming out of me, and I am heaved like the road; accumulated masses of ice and snow dissolve, and thoughts like a freshet pour down unwonted channels. Roads lead elsewhither than to Carlisle and Sudbury. Our experience does not wear upon us. It is seen to be fabulous or symbolical, and the future is worth expecting. In all my walking I have not reached the top of the earth yet.

March 22. No sap flows from the maples I cut into, except that one in Lincoln. What means it? *Hylodes Pickeringii*, a name that is longer than the frog itself! A description of animals, too, from a dead specimen only, as if, in a work on man, you were to describe a dead

man only, omitting his manners and customs, his institutions and divine faculties, from want of opportunity to observe them, because you do not live in the country. Only dindons and dandies. Nothing is known of his habits. Food: seeds of wheat, beef, pork, and potatoes.

P.M. — To Martial Miles Meadow, by boat to Nut Meadow Brook.

Launched my new boat. It is very steady, too steady for me; does not toss enough and communicate the motion of the waves. Beside, the seats are not well arranged; when there are two in it, it requires a heavy stone in the stern to trim. But it holds its course very well with a side wind from being so flat from stem to stern.

The cranberries now make a show under water, and I always make it a point to taste a few.

March 23. 5 A.M. — I hear the robin sing before I rise.

6 A.M. — Up the North River.

A fresh, cool spring morning.

The cat-tail down puffs and swells in your hand like a mist, or the conjurer's trick of filling a hat with feathers, for when you have rubbed off but a thimbleful, and can close and conceal the wound completely, the expanded down fills your hand to overflowing. Apparently there is a spring to the fine elastic threads which compose the down, which, after having been so long closely packed, on being the least relieved at the base, spring open apace into the form of parachutes to convey the seed afar. Where birds or the winds or ice have assaulted them, this has spread like an eruption. Again, when I rub off the down of its spike with my thumb, I am surprised at the sensation of warmth it imparts to my hand, as it flushes over it magically, at the same time revealing a faint purplish-crimson tinge at the base of the down, as it rolls off and expands. It is a very pleasing experiment to try.

Man cannot afford to be a naturalist, to look at Nature directly, but only with the side of his eye. He must look through and beyond her. To look at her is fatal as to look at the head of Medusa. It turns the man of science to stone. I feel that I am dissipated by so many observations. I should be the magnet in the midst of all this dust and filings. I knock the back of my hand against a rock, and as I smooth

back the skin, I find myself prepared to study lichens there. I look upon man but as a fungus. I have almost a slight, dry headache as the result of all this observing. How to observe is how to behave. O for a little Lethe! To crown all, lichens, which are so thin, are described in the *dry* state, as they are most commonly, not most truly, seen. Truly, they are *dryly* described.

I am surprised as well as delighted when any one wishes to know what I think. It is such a rare use they would make of me, as if they were acquainted with the tool. Commonly, if men want anything of me, it is only to know how many acres I make of their land, or, at most, what trivial news I have burdened myself with. They never will go to law for my meat. They prefer the shell.

March 24. Since the cold snap of the 14th, 15th, etc., have walked for the most part with unbuttoned coat, and for the most part without mittens.

There are very slight but white mists on the river these mornings.

It spits a little snow this afternoon.

The white pine wood, freshly cut, piled by the side of the Charles Miles road, is agreeable to walk beside. I like the smell of it, all ready for the borers, and the rich light-yellow color of the freshly split wood and the purple color of the sap at the ends of the quarters, from which distill perfectly clear and crystalline tears, colorless and brilliant as diamonds, tears shed for the loss of a forest in which is a world of light and purity, its life oozing out. These beautiful accidents that attend on man's works! I am surprised to find that these terebinthine (?) tears have a hard (seemingly soft as water) not film but transparent skin over them. How many curiosities are brought to us with our wood! The trees and the lichens that clothe them, the forest warrior and his shield adhering to him.

March 25. When I saw the fungi in my lamp, I was startled and awed, as if I were stooping too low, and should next be found classifying carbuncles and ulcers. Is there not sense in the mass of men who ignore and confound these things, and never see the cryptogamia on the one side any more than the stars on the other? Underfoot they catch a transient glimpse of what they call toad-

stools, mosses, and frog-spittle, and overhead of the heavens, but they can all read the pillars on a Mexican quarter. They ignore the worlds above and below, keep straight along, and do not run their boots down at the heel as I do. How to keep the heels up I have been obliged to study carefully, turning the nigh foot painfully on side-hills. I find that the shoemakers, to save a few iron heel-pegs, do not complete the rows on the inside by three or four, — the very place in the whole boot where they are most needed, — which has fatal consequences to the buyer. I often see the tracks of them in the paths. It is as if you were to put no under-pinning under one corner of your house. I have managed to cross very wet and miry places dry-shod by moving rapidly on my heels. I always use leather strings tied in a hard knot; they untie but too easily even then.

The various lights in which you may regard the earth, *e.g.* the dry land as sea bottom, or the sea bottom as a dry down.

March 26. Saw about 10 A.M. a gaggle of geese, forty-three in number, in a very perfect harrow flying northeasterly. One side the harrow was a little longer than the other. They appeared to be four or five feet apart. It is remarkable that we commonly see geese go over in the spring about 10 o'clock in the morning, as if they were accustomed to stop for the night at some place southward whence they reached us at that time. Goodwin saw six geese in Walden about the same time.

March 27. The hazel is fully out. The 23d was perhaps full early to date them. It is in some respects the most interesting flower yet, though so minute that only an observer of nature, or one who looked for them, would notice it. It is the highest and richest colored yet, — ten or a dozen little rays at the end of the buds which are the ends and along the sides of the bare stems. Some of the flowers are a light, some a dark crimson. The high color of this minute, unobserved flower, at this cold, leafless, and almost flowerless season! Moreover, they are so tender that I never get one home in good condition. They wilt and turn black.

Tried to see the faint-croaking frogs at J.P. Brown's Pond in the woods. They are remarkably timid and shy; had their noses and eyes

out, croaking, but all ceased, dove, and concealed themselves, before I got within a rod of the shore. Stood perfectly still amid the bushes on the shore, before one showed himself; finally five or six, and all eyed me, gradually approached me within three feet to reconnoitre, and, though I waited about half an hour, would not utter a sound nor take their eyes off me, — were plainly affected by curiosity. Dark brown and some, perhaps, dark green, about two inches long; had their noses and eyes out when they croaked.

March 28. My Aunt Maria asked me to read the life of Dr. Chalmers, which however I did not promise to do. Yesterday, Sunday, she was heard through the partition shouting to my Aunt Jane, who is deaf, "Think of it! He stood half an hour to-day to hear the frogs croak, and he would n't read the life of Chalmers."

6 A.M. — To Cliffs.

I do not now think of a bird that *hops* so distinctly, rapidly, and commonly as the robin, with its head up.

Why is the pollen of flowers commonly yellow?

March 29. 6 A.M. — To Leaning Hemlocks, by boat.

The sun has just risen, but there is only a now clear saffron belt next the east horizon; all the rest of the sky is covered with clouds, broken into lighter and darker shades. An agreeable yellow sunlight falls on the western fields and the banks of the river. Whence this yellow tinge? Probably a different light would be reflected if there were no dark clouds above.

This is one of those days divided against itself, when there is a cool wind but a warm sun, when there is little or no coolness proper to this locality, but it is wafted to us probably from the snow-clad northwest, and hence in sheltered places it is very warm. However, the sun is rapidly prevailing over the wind, and it is already warmer than when I came out.

Four ducks, two by two, are sailing conspicuously on the river. There appear to be two pairs. In each case one two-thirds white and another grayish-brown and, I think, smaller. They are very shy and fly at fifty rods' distance. Are they whistlers? The white are much more white than those I saw the other day and at first thought

summer ducks. Would it not be well to carry a spy-glass in order to watch these shy birds such as ducks and hawks? In some respects, methinks, it would be better than a gun. The latter brings them nearer dead, but the former alive. You can identify the species better by killing the bird, because it was a dead specimen that was so minutely described, but you can study the habits and appearance best in the living specimen.

Walking along near the edge of the meadow under Lupine Hill, I slumped through the sod into a muskrat's nest, for the sod was only two inches thick over it, which was enough when it was frozen. I laid it open with my hands. There were three or four channels or hollowed paths, a rod or more in length, not merely worn but made in the meadow, and centring at the mouth of this burrow. They were three or four inches deep, and finally became indistinct and were lost amid the cranberry vines and grass toward the river. The entrance to the burrow was just at the edge of the upland, here a gently sloping bank, and was probably just beneath the surface of the water six weeks ago. It was about twenty-five rods distant from the true bank of the river. From this a straight gallery, about six inches in diameter every way, sloped upward about eight feet into the bank just beneath the turf, so that the end was about a foot higher than the entrance. There was a somewhat circular enlargement about one foot in horizontal diameter and the same depth with the gallery; and it was nearly a peck of coarse meadow stubble, showing the marks of the scythe, with which was mixed accidentally a very little of the moss which grew with it. Three short galleries, only two feet long, were continued from this centre somewhat like rays toward the high land, as if they had been prepared in order to be ready for a sudden rise of the water, or had been actually made so far under such an emergency. The nest was of course thoroughly wet and, humanly speaking, uncomfortable, though the creature could breathe in it. But it is plain that the muskrat cannot be subject to the toothache. I have no doubt this was made and used last winter, for the grass was as fresh as that in the meadow (except that it was pulled up), and the sand which had been taken out lay partly in a flattened heap in the meadow, and no grass had sprung up through it.

In the course of the above examination I made a very interesting

discovery. When I turned up the thin sod from over the damp cavity of the nest, I was surprised to see at this hour of a pleasant day what I took to be beautiful frost crystals of a rare form, — frost bodkins I was in haste to name them, for around the fine white roots of the grass, apparently the herd's-grass, which were from one to two or more inches long, reaching downward into the dark, damp cavern (though the green blades had scarcely made so much growth above; indeed, the growth was scarcely visible there), appeared to be lingering still into the middle of this warm afternoon rare and beautiful frost crystals exactly in the form of a bodkin, about one sixth of an inch wide at base and tapering evenly to the lower end, sometimes the upper part of the core being naked for half an inch, which last gave them a slight resemblance to feathers, though they were not flat but round, and at the abrupt end of the rootlet (as if cut off) a larger, clear drop. On examining them more closely, feeling and tasting them, I found that it was not frost but a clear, crystalline dew in almost invisible drops, concentrated from the dampness of the cavern, and perhaps melted frost still reserving by its fineness its original color, thus regularly arranged around the delicate white fibre; and, looking again, incredulous, I discerned extremely minute white threads or gossamer standing out on all sides from the main rootlet in this form and affording the core for these drops. Yet on those fibres which had lost their dew, none of these minute threads appeared. There they pointed downward somewhat like stalactites, or very narrow caterpillar brushes. It impressed me as a wonderful piece of chemistry, that the very grass we trample on and esteem so cheap should be thus wonderfully nourished, that this spring greenness was not produced by coarse and cheap means, but in sod, out of sight, the most delicate and magical processes are going on. The half is not shown. The very sod is replete with mechanism far finer than that of a watch, and yet it is cast under our feet to be trampled on. The process that goes on in the sod and the dark, about the minute fibres of the grass, — the chemistry and the mechanics, — before a single green blade can appear above the withered herbage, if it could be adequately described, would supplant all other revelations. We are acquainted with but one side of the sod. I brought home some tufts of the grass in my pocket, but when I took it out I could not at first find

those pearly white fibres and thought that they were lost, for they were shrunk to dry brown threads; and, as for the still finer gossamer which supported the roscid droplets, with few exceptions they were absolutely undiscoverable, — they no longer stood out around the core, — so fine and delicate was their organization. It made me doubt almost if there were not actual, substantial, though invisible cores to the leaflets and veins of the hoar frost. And can these almost invisible and tender fibres penetrate the earth where there is no cavern? Or is what we call the solid earth porous and cavernous enough for them?

The trout glances like a film from side to side and under the bank.

Tried several times to catch a skater. Got my hand close to him; grasped at him as quick as possible; was sure I had got him this time; let the water run out between my fingers; hoped I had not crushed him; opened my hand; and lo! he was not there. I never succeeded in catching one. What are those common snails in the mud in ditches, with their feet out, for some time past?

The early willow will bloom to-morrow. Its catkins have lost many of their scales. The crowded yellow anthers are already bursting out through the silvery down, like the sun of spring through the clouds of winter.

March 30. Now commences the season for fires in the woods. The winter, and now the sun and winds, have dried the old leaves more thoroughly than ever, and there are no green leaves to shade the ground or to check the flames, and these high March winds are the very ones to spread them. The woods look peculiarly dry and russet. There is as yet no new greenness in the landscape. With these thoughts and impressions I had not gone far before I saw the smoke of a fire on Fair Haven Hill. Some boys were going *sassafrasing*, for boys will have some pursuit peculiar to every season. A match came in contact with a marble, nobody knew how, and suddenly the fire flashed up the broad open hillside, consuming the low grass and sweet-fern and leaving a smoking, blackened waste. A few glowing stumps, with spadefuls of fresh earth thrown on them, the white ashes here and there on the black ground, and the not disagreeable scent of smoke and cinders was all that was left when I arrived.

Dry leaves, which I at first mistake for birds, go sailing through

the air in front of the Cliff.

The motions of a hawk correcting the flaws in the wind by raising his shoulder from time to time, are much like those of a leaf yielding to them.

Ah, those youthful days! are they never to return? when the walker does not too curiously observe particulars, but sees, hears, scents, tastes, and feels only himself, — the phenomena that show themselves in him, — his expanding body, his intellect and heart. No worm or insect, quadruped or bird, confined his view, but the unbounded universe was his. A bird is now become a mote in his eye.

March 31. Brown has these birds set up which I may wish to examine: —

Turtle-dove, green heron, *Ardea Herodias*, pileated woodpecker, fox-colored sparrow, young of purple finch, white-eyed vireo, goldfinch, brown creeper, scarlet tanager (male and female), white-breasted nuthatch, solitary vireo, red-eyed vireo, yellow redpoll warbler, hermit thrush (killed here), cardinal grosbeak, pine grosbeak, black-billed cuckoo, mockingbird, woodcock, *Totanus flavipes* (or small yellow-leg), (great ditto ?), Bartram's tatler (or upland plover), golden ditto, *Falco sparverius*, sharp-shinned or slate-colored hawk, or *F. Pennsylvanicus* of Wilson, green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, wood duck (young drakes).

April 3. The last two *Tribunes* I have not looked at. I have no time to read newspapers.

April 6. 6 A.M. — To Cliffs.

How many walks along the brooks I take in the spring! What shall I call them? Lesser riparial excursions? Prairial? rivular?

When I came out there was not a speck of mist in the sky, but the morning without a cloud is not the fairest. Now, 8.30 A.M., it rains. Such is April.

April 7. 10 A.M. — Down river in boat to Bedford, with C.

If you make the least correct observation of nature this year, you

will have occasion to repeat it with illustrations the next, and the season and life itself is prolonged.

May 1. Sunday. The oak leaves on the plain are fallen. The colors are now: light blue above (where is my cyanometer? Saussure invented one, and Humboldt used it in his travels); landscape russet and greenish, spotted with fawn-colored plowed lands, with green pine and gray or reddish oak woods intermixed, and dark-blue or slate-colored water here and there. It is greenest in the meadows and where water has lately stood, and a strong, invigorating scent comes up from the fresh meadows. It is like the greenness of an apple faintly or dimly appearing through the russet.

The columbines have been out some days. How ornamental to these dark-colored perpendicular cliffs, nodding from the clefts and shelves!

May 6. The whole landscape is many shades greener for the rain, almost a blue green.

May 10. 5 A.M. I proceed down the Turnpike. The masses of the golden willow are seen in the distance on either side the way, twice as high as the road is wide, conspicuous against the distant, still half-russet hills and forests, for the green grass hardly yet prevails over the dead stubble, and the woods are but just beginning to gray. The female willow is a shade greener. At this season the traveller passes through a golden gate on causeways where these willows are planted, as if he were approaching the entrance to Fairyland; and there will surely be found the yellowbird, and already from a distance is heard his note, a *tche tche tche tcha tchar tcha*, — ah, willow, willow. And as he passes between the portals, a sweet fragrance is wafted to him; he not only breathes but scents and tastes the air, and he hears the low humming or susurrus of a myriad insects which are feeding on its sweets. It is, apparently, these that attract the yellowbird. The golden gates of the year, the *May*-gate. The traveller cannot pass out of Concord by the highways in any direction without passing between such portals, — graceful, curving, drooping, wand-like twigs, on which leaves and blossoms appear together.

He is the richest who has most use for nature as raw material of tropes and symbols with which to describe his life. If these gates of golden willows affect me, they correspond to the beauty and promise of some experience on which I am entering. If I am overflowing with life, am rich in experience for which I lack expression, then nature will be my language full of poetry, — all nature will *fable*, and every natural phenomenon be a myth.

The hornbeam (*Carpinus*) is just ready to bloom. I was in search of this, and, not observing it at first, and having forgotten it, I sat down on a rock, with the thought that if I sat there quietly a little while I might see some flower or other object about me; unexpectedly, as I cast my eyes upward, over my head stretched a spreading branch of the carpinus full of small catkins with anthers now reddish, spread like a canopy just over my head. As it is best to sit in a grove and let the birds come to you, so, as it were, even the flowers will come to you.

I sit here surrounded by hellebores eighteen inches high or more, with handsome, regular, plaited leaves, regularly arranged around the erect stems, and a multitude of ferns are unrolling themselves, altogether making the impression of a tropical vegetation.

I leave the woods and begin to ascend Smith's Hill along the course of the rill. From the hill, I look westward over the landscape. As you ascend, the near and low hills sink and flatten into the earth; no sky is seen behind them; the distant mountains rise. The truly great are distinguished. You see, not the domes only, but the body, the façade, of these terrene temples. You see that the foundation answers to the superstructure. Moral structures. (The sweet-fern leaves among odors now.) The value of the mountains in the horizon, — would not that be a good theme for a lecture? The text for a discourse on real values, and permanent; a sermon on the mount. They are stepping-stones to heaven, — as the rider has a horse-block at his gate, — by which to mount when we would commence our pilgrimage to heaven — from this bare actual earth, which has so little of the hue of heaven. They make it easier to die and easier to live. They let us off.

They are valuable to mankind as is the iris of the eye to a man. They are the path of the translated. They are the pastures to which we

drive our thoughts on these 20ths of May. (George Baker told me the other day that he had driven cows to Winchendon, forty miles, in one day.)

May 11. The late pipes (*limosum?*), now nearly a foot high, are very handsome, like Oriental work, their encircled columns of some precious wood or gem, or like small bamboos, from Oriental jungles. Very much like art. The gold-thread, apparently for a day or two, though few flowers compared with buds. A high blueberry by Potter's heater piece. A yellow lily.

As I stand by the river in the truly warm sun, I hear the low trump of a bullfrog, but half sounded, — doubting if it be really July, — some bassoon sounds, as it were the tuning that precedes the summer's orchestra; and all is silent again. How the air is saturated with sweetness on causeways these willowy days!

Some grass is seen to wave in the distance on the side of N. Barrett's warm hill, showing the lighter under sides. That is a soft, soothing, June-like impression when the most forward grass is seen to wave and the sorrel looks reddish. The year has the down of youth on its cheek. Now it is too late to retreat from the summer adventure. You have passed the Rubicon, and will spend your summer here.

May 14. Saturday. 9 A.M. — To Wayland by boat. Close under the lee of the button-bushes which skirt the pond, as I look south, there is a narrow smooth strip of water, silvery and contrasting with the darker rippled body of the pond. Its edge, or the separation between this, which I will call the polished silvery border of the pond, and the dark and ruffled body, is not a straight line or film, but an ever-varying, irregularly and finely serrated or fringed border, ever changing as the breeze falls over the bushes at an angle more or less steep, so that this moment it is a road wide, the next not half so much. Every feature is thus fluent in the landscape.

May 15. The golden willow catkins begin to fall; their prime is past. And buttercups and silvery cinquefoil, and the first apple blossoms, and waving grass beginning to be tinged with sorrel, introduce us to a different season. The huckleberry, *resinosa*, its red

flowers are open, in more favorable places several days earlier, probably; and the earliest shrub and red and black oaks in warm exposures may be set down to to-day. A red butterfly goes by. Methinks I have seen them before. The painted-cup is now abundantly and fully out. Six or eight inches high above its spidery leaves, almost like a red flame, it stands on edge of the hill just rising from the meadow, — on the instep of the hill. It tells of July with its fiery color. It promises a heat we have not experienced yet. This is a field which lies nearer to summer. Yellow is the color of spring; red, of midsummer. Through pale golden and green we arrive at the yellow of the buttercup; through scarlet, to the fiery July red, the red lily.

May 16. It has been oppressively warm to-day, the first really warm, sultry-like weather, so that we were prepared for a thunder-storm at evening. At 5 P.M., dark, heavy, wet-looking clouds are seen in the northern horizon, perhaps over the Merrimack Valley. People stand at their doors in the warm evening, listening to the muttering of distant thunder and watching the forked lightning, now descending to the earth, now ascending to the clouds. This the first really warm day and thunder-shower. Nature appears to have passed a crisis. All slimy reptile life is wide awake. We smell the fresher and cooler air from where the storm has passed. And now that it has grown dark, the skirts of the cloud seem to promise us a shower. We look out into the dark, and ever and anon comes a sudden illumination blinding our eyes, like a vast glow-worm, succeeded ere long by the roll of thunder. The first pattering of drops is heard; all west windows are hastily shut. The weak-eyed sit with their backs to windows and close the blinds.

May 21. P.M. — Up Assabet to cress, with Sophia.

May 22. Sunday. It is clear June, the first day of summer. The rye, which, when I last looked, was one foot high, is now three feet high and waving and tossing its heads in the wind. We ride by these bluish-green waving rye-fields in the woods, as if an Indian juggler had made them spring up in a night. Though I walk every day I am

never prepared for this magical growth of the rye. I am advanced by whole months, as it were, into summer. Sorrel reddens the fields. Cows are preparing the milk for June butter.

When yesterday Sophia and I were rowing past Mr. Prichard's land, where the river is bordered by a row of elms and low willows, at 6 P.M., we heard a singular note of distress as it were from a catbird — a loud, vibrating, catbird sort of note, as if the catbird's mew were imitated by a smart vibrating spring. Blackbirds and others were flitting about, apparently attracted by it. At first, thinking it was merely some peevish catbird or red-wing, I was disregarding it, but on second thought turned the bows to the shore, looking into the trees as well as over the shore, thinking some bird might be in distress, caught by a snake or in a forked twig. The hovering birds dispersed at my approach; the note of distress sounded louder and nearer as I approached the shore covered with low osiers. The sound came from the ground, not from the trees. I saw a little black animal making haste to meet the boat under the osiers. A young muskrat? a mink? No, it was a little dot of a kitten. It was scarcely six inches long from the face to the base — or I might as well say the tip — of the tail, for the latter was a short, sharp pyramid, perfectly perpendicular but not swelled in the least. It was a very handsome and very precocious kitten, in perfectly good condition, its breadth being considerably more than one third of its length. Leaving its mewing, it came scrambling over the stones as fast as its weak legs would permit, straight to me. I took it up and dropped it into the boat, but while I was pushing off it ran the length of the boat to Sophia, who held it while we rowed homeward. Evidently it had not been weaned — was smaller than we remembered that kittens ever were — almost infinitely small; yet it had hailed a boat, its life being in danger, and saved itself. Its performance, considering its age and amount of experience, was more wonderful than that of any young mathematician or musician that I have read of. Various were the conjectures as to how the kitten came there, a quarter of a mile from a house. The possible solutions were finally reduced to three: first, it must either have been born there, or, secondly, carried there by its mother, or, thirdly, by human hands. In the first case, it had possibly brothers and sisters, one or both, and its mother had left them to go a-

hunting on her own account and might be expected back. In the second, she might equally be expected to return. At any rate, not having thought of all this till we got home, we found that we had got ourselves into a scrape; for this kitten, though exceedingly interesting, required one nurse to attend it constantly for the present, and, of course, another to spell the first; and, beside, we had already a cat well-nigh grown, who manifested such a disposition toward the young stranger that we had no doubt it would have torn it in pieces in a moment if left alone with it. As nobody made up his or her mind to have it drowned, and still less to drown it, — having once looked into its innocent extremely pale blue eyes (as of milk thrice skimmed) and had his finger or his chin sucked by it, while, its eyes being shut, its little paws played a soothing tune, — it was resolved to keep it till it could be suitably disposed of. It rested nowhere, in no lap, under no covert, but still faintly cried for its mother and its accustomed supper. It ran toward every sound or movement of a human being, and whoever crossed the room it was sure to follow at a rapid pace. It had all the ways of a cat of the maturest years; could purr divinely and raised its back to rub all boots and shoes. When it raised its foot to scratch its ear, which by the way it never hit, it was sure to fall over and roll on the floor. It climbed straight up the sitter, faintly mewing all the way, and sucked his chin. In vain, at first, its head was bent down into saucers of milk which its eyes did not see, and its chin was wetted. But soon it learned to suck a finger that had been dipped in it, and better still a rag; and then at last it slept and rested. The street was explored in vain to find its owner, and at length an Irish family took it into their cradle. Soon after we learned that a neighbor who had heard the mewing of kittens in the partition had sent for a carpenter, taken off a board, and found two the very day at noon that we sailed. That same hour it was first brought to the light a coarse Irish cook had volunteered to drown it, had carried it to the river, and without bag or sinker had cast it in! It saved itself and hailed a boat! What an eventful life! What a precocious kitten! We feared it owed its first plump condition to the water. How strong and effective the instinct of self-preservation!

Our quince blossomed yesterday. Saw many low blackberries in bloom to-day.

May 23. To-day I am surprised by the dark orange-yellow of the senecio. At first we had the lighter, paler spring yellows of willows (cowslips even, for do they not grow a little darker afterward?), dandelion, cinquefoil, then the darker (methinks it is a little darker than the cowslip) and deeper yellow of the buttercup; and then this broad distinction between the buttercup and the krigia and senecio, as the seasons revolve toward July. Every new flower that opens, no doubt, expresses a new mood of the human mind. Have I any dark or ripe orange-yellow thoughts to correspond? The *flavor* of my thoughts begins to correspond. Lupines now for some days, probably about the 19th.

White clover. I see the light purple of the rhodora enlivening the edges of swamps — another color the sun wears. Is it not the most showy *high-colored* flower or shrub? Flowers are the different colors of the sunlight.

An abundance of pure white fringed polygalas, very delicate, by the path at Harrington's mud-hole. Thus many flowers have their nun sisters, dressed in white. At Loring's Wood heard and saw a tanager. That contrast of a *red* bird with the green pines and the blue sky! Even when I have heard his note and look for him and find the bloody fellow, sitting on a dead twig of a pine, I am always startled. (They seem to love the darkest and thickest pines.) That incredible red, with the green and blue, as if these were the trinity we wanted. Yet with his hoarse note he pays for his color. I am transported; these are not the woods I ordinarily walk in. How he enhances the wildness and wealth of the woods! This and the emperor moth make the tropical phenomena of our zone.

May 25. I quarrel with most botanists' description of different species, say of willows. It is a difference without a distinction. No stress is laid upon the peculiarity of the species in question, and it requires a very careful examination and comparison to detect any difference in the description. Having described you one species, he begins again at the beginning when he comes to the next and describes it *absolutely*, wasting time; in fact does not describe the species, but rather the genus or family; as if, in describing the

particular races of men, you should say of each in its turn that it is but dust and to dust it shall return. The object should be to describe not those particulars in which a species resembles its genus, for they are many and that would be but a negative description, but those in which it is peculiar, for they are few and positive.

Steady fisherman's rain, without wind, straight down, flooding the ground and spattering on it, beating off the blossoms of apples and thorns, etc. Within the last week or so the grass and leaves have grown many shades darker, and if we had leaped from last Wednesday to this, we should have been startled by the change — the dark bluish green of rank grass especially. How rapidly the young twigs shoot — the herbs, trees, shrubs no sooner leaf out than they shoot forward surprisingly, as if they had acquired a head by being repressed so long. They do not grow nearly so rapidly at any other season. Many do most of their growing for the year in a week or two at this season. They *shoot* — they *spring* — and the rest of the year they harden and mature, and perhaps have a second spring in the latter part of summer or in the fall.

May 27. 5.30 A.M. — To Island.

A turtle walking is as if a man were to try to walk by sticking his legs and arms merely out the windows.

May 29. Cattle stand in the river by the bridge for coolness. Place my hat lightly on my head that the air may circulate beneath. Fields are whitened with mouse-ear gone to seed — a mass of white fuzz blowing off one side — and also with dandelion globes of seeds. Some plants have already reached their fall. How still the hot noon; people have retired behind blinds. I see men and women through open windows in white undress taking their Sunday-afternoon nap, overcome with heat.

May 31. Some incidents in my life have seemed far more allegorical than actual; they were so significant that they plainly served no other use. That is, I have been more impressed by their allegorical significance and fitness; they have been like myths or passages in a myth, rather than mere incidents or history which have

to wait to become significant. Quite in harmony with my subjective philosophy. This, for instance: that, when I thought I knew the flowers so well, the beautiful purple azalea or pinxter-flower should be shown me by the hunter who found it. Such facts are lifted quite above the level of the actual. They are all just such events as my imagination prepares me for, no matter how incredible. Ever and anon something will occur which my philosophy has not dreamed of. The limits of the actual are set some thoughts further off. That which had seemed a rigid wall of vast thickness unexpectedly proves a thin and undulating drapery. The boundaries of the actual are no more fixed and rigid than the elasticity of our imaginations. The fact that a rare and beautiful flower which we never saw, perhaps never heard, for which therefore there was no place in our thoughts, may at length be found in our immediate neighborhood, is very suggestive.

P.M. — A change in the weather. It is comparatively cool since last night, and the air is very clear accordingly; none of that haze in it occasioned by the late heat. The leaves are now fairly expanded — that has been the work of May — and are of a dark summer greenness. It is surprising to see how many leaves are already attacked by insects, — leafrollers, pincushion galls, one kind of oak-balls, etc., etc.; and many a shrub and tree, black cherry and shrub oak, is no sooner leaved out than it is completely stripped by its caterpillar foes.

I am going in search of the *Azalea nudiflora*. Sophia brought home a single flower without twig or leaf from Mrs. Brooks's last evening. Mrs. Brooks, I find, has a large twig in a vase of water, still pretty fresh, which she says George Melvin gave to her son George. I called at his office. He says that Melvin came in to Mr. Gourgas's office, where he and others were sitting Saturday evening, with his arms full and gave each a sprig, but he does n't know where he got it. Somebody, I heard, had seen it at Captain Jarvis's; so I went there. I found that they had some still pretty fresh in the house. Melvin gave it to them Saturday night, but they did not know where he got it. A young man working at Stedman Buttrick's said it was a secret; there was only one bush in the town; Melvin knew of it and Stedman knew; when asked, Melvin said he got it in the swamp, or from a

bush, etc. The young man thought it grew on the Island across the river on the Wheeler farm. I went on to Melvin's house, though I did not expect to find him at home at this hour, so early in the afternoon. (Saw the wood-sorrel out, a day or two perhaps, by the way.) At length I saw his dog by the door, and knew he was at home.

He was sitting in the shade, bareheaded, at his back door. He had a large pailful of the azalea recently plucked and in the shade behind his house, which he said he was going to carry to town at evening. He had also a sprig set out. He had been out all the forenoon and said he had got seven pickerel — perhaps — apparently he had been drinking and was just getting over it. At first he was a little shy about telling me where the azalea grew, but I saw that I should get it out of him. He dilly-dallied a little; called to his neighbor Farmer, whom he called "Razor," to know if he could tell me where that flower grew. He called it, by the way, the "red honeysuckle." This was to prolong the time and make the most of his secret. I felt pretty sure the plant was to be found on Wheeler's land beyond the river, as the young man had said, for I had remembered how, some weeks before this, when I went up the Assabet after the yellow rocket, I saw Melvin, who had just crossed with his dog, and when I landed to pluck the rocket he appeared out of the woods, said he was after a fish-pole, and asked me the name of my flower. Did n't think it was very handsome,— "not so handsome as the honeysuckle, is it?" And now I knew it was his "red honeysuckle," and not the columbine, he meant. Well, I told him he had better tell me where it was; I was a botanist and ought to know. But he thought I could n't possibly find it by his directions. I told him he'd better tell me and have the glory of it, for I should surely find it if he did n't; I'd got a clue to it, and should n't give it up. I should go over the river for it. I could smell it a good way, you know. He thought I could smell it half a mile, and he wondered that I had n't stumbled on it, or Channing. Channing, he said, came close by it once, when it was in flower. He thought he'd surely find it then; but he did n't, and he said nothing to him.

He told me he found it about ten years ago, and he went to it every year. It blossomed at the old election time, and he thought it "the handsomest flower that grows." Yarrow just out.

In the meanwhile, Farmer, who was hoeing, came up to the wall,

and we fell into a talk about Dodge's Brook, which runs through his farm. A man in Cambridge, he said, had recently written to Mr. Monroe about it, but he did n't know why. All he knew about the brook was that he had seen it dry and then again, after a week of dry weather in which no rain fell, it would be full again, and either the writer or Monroe said there were only two such brooks in all North America. One of its sources — he thought the principal one — was in his land. We all went to it. It was in a meadow, — rather a dry one, once a swamp. He said it never ceased to flow at the head now, since he dug it out, and never froze there. He ran a pole down eight or nine feet into the mud to show me the depth. He had minnows there in a large deep pool, and cast an insect into the water, which they presently rose to and swallowed. Fifteen years ago he dug it out nine feet deep and found spruce logs as big as his leg, which the beavers had gnawed, with the marks of their teeth very distinct upon them; but they soon crumbled away on coming to the air. Melvin, meanwhile, was telling me of a pair of geese he had seen which were breeding in the Bedford Swamp. He had seen them within a day. Last year he got a large brood (11?) of black ducks there.

We went on down the brook, — Melvin and I and his dog, — and crossed the river in his boat, and he conducted me to where the *Azalea nudiflora* grew, — it was a little past its prime, perhaps, — and showed me how near Channing came. ("You won't tell him what I said; will you?" said he.) I offered to pay him for his trouble, but he would n't take anything. He had just as lief I'd know as not. He thought it first came out last Wednesday, on the 25th.

Azalea nudiflora, — purple azalea, pinxter-flower, — but Gray and Bigelow say nothing about its *clamminess*. It is a conspicuously beautiful flowering shrub, with the sweet fragrance of the common swamp-pink, but the flowers are larger and, in this case, a fine lively rosy pink, not so clammy as the other. With a broader, somewhat downy pale-green leaf. Growing in the shade of large wood, like the laurel. Eaton says the *nudiflora* is "not viscous;" names half a dozen varieties and among them *A. partita* (flesh-colored flowers, 5-parted to the base), but then this is viscous. And it cannot be his species *A. nitida*, with glabrous and shining and small leaves. It must be an undescribed variety — a viscous one — of *A. nudiflora*.

There is a little danger of a frost to-night.

June 1. The pincushion galls on young white oaks are now among the most beautiful objects in the woods, coarse woolly white to appearance, spotted with bright red or crimson on the exposed side. It is remarkable that a mere gall, which at first we are inclined to regard as something abnormal, should be made so beautiful, as if it were the *flower* of the tree; that a disease, an excrescence, should prove, perchance, the greatest beauty, — as the tear of the pearl. Beautiful scarlet sins they may be. Through our temptations, — aye, and our falls, — our virtues appear. As in many a character, — many a poet, — we see that beauty exhibited in a gall, which was meant to have bloomed in a flower, unchecked. Such, however, is the accomplishment of the world. The poet cherishes his chagrins and sets his sighs to music. This gall is the tree's "Ode to Dejection."

June 2. 3.30 A.M. — When I awake I hear the low universal chirping or twittering of the chip-birds, like the bursting bead on the surface of the uncorked day. First come, first served! You must taste the first glass of the day's nectar, if you would get all the spirit of it.

4 A.M. — I go to the river in a fog through which I cannot see more than a dozen rods, — three or four times as deep as the houses.

Now I have reached the hilltop above the fog at a quarter to five, about sunrise, and all around me is a sea of fog, level and white, reaching nearly to the top of this hill, only the tops of a few high hills appearing as distant islands in the main. It resembles nothing so much as the ocean. You can get here the impression which the ocean makes, without ever going to the shore. Men — poor simpletons as they are — will go to a panorama by families, to see a Pilgrim's Progress, perchance, who never yet made progress so far as to the top of such a hill as this at the dawn of a foggy morning. All the fog they know is in their brains. The seashore exhibits nothing more grand or on a larger scale. It is as boundless as the view from the highlands of Cape Cod.

Meanwhile my hands are numb with cold and my wet feet ache with it. Now, at 5.15, before this southwest wind, it is already grown thin as gossamer in that direction, and woods and houses are seen

through it, while it is heaped up toward the sun, and finally becomes so thick there that for a short time it appears in one place a dark, low cloud, such as else can only be seen from mountains; and now long, dark ridges of wood appear through it, and now the sun reflected from the river makes a bright glow in the fog, and now, at 5.30, I see the green surface of the meadows and the water through the trees, sparkling with bright reflections.

June 4. Saturday. Looked over the oldest town records at the clerk's office this evening, the old book containing grants of land. Am surprised to find such names as "Walden Pond" and "Fair Haven" as early as 1653, and apparently 1652; also, under the first date at least, "Second Division," the rivers as North and South Rivers (no Assabet at that date), "Swamp bridge," apparently on back road, "Goose Pond," "Mr. Flints Pond," "Nutt Meadow," "Willow Swamp," "Spruce Swamp," etc., etc. "Dongy," "Dung Hole," or what-not, appears to be between Walden and Fair Haven. Is Rocky Hill Mr. Emerson's or the Cliffs? Where are South Brook, Frog Ponds, etc., etc., etc.? It is pleasing to read these evergreen wilderness names, *i.e.* of particular swamps and woods, then applied to now perchance cleared fields and meadows said to be redeemed. The Second Division appears to have been a very large tract between the two rivers.

June 7. P.M. — To Walden.

Visited my nighthawk on her nest. Could hardly believe my eyes when I stood within seven feet and beheld her sitting on her eggs, her head to me. She looked so Saturnian, so one with the earth, so sphinx-like, a relic of the reign of Saturn which Jupiter did not destroy, a riddle that might well cause a man to go dash his head against a stone. It was not an actual living creature, far less a winged creature of the air, but a figure in stone or bronze, a fanciful production of art, like the gryphon or phœnix. It was enough to fill one with awe. All the while, this seemingly sleeping bronze sphinx, as motionless as the earth, was watching me with intense anxiety through those narrow slits in its eyelids. Another step, and it fluttered down the hill close to the ground, with a wabbling motion, as if

touching the ground now with the tip of one wing, now with the other, so ten rods to the water, which it skimmed close over a few rods, then rose and soared in the air above me. Wonderful creature, which sits motionless on its eggs on the barest, most exposed hills, through pelting storms of rain or hail, as if it were a rock or a part of the earth itself, the outside of the globe, with its eyes shut and its wings folded, and, after the two days' storm, when you think it has become a fit symbol of the rheumatism, it suddenly rises into the air a bird, one of the most aerial, supple, and graceful of creatures, without stiffness in its wings or joints! It was a fit prelude to meeting Prometheus bound to his rock on Caucasus.

June 9. I was amused by the account which Mary, the Irish girl who left us the other day, gave of her experience at Joseph Brown, the milkman's, in the north part of the town. She said that twenty-two lodged in the house the first night, including two pig men, that Mr. Brown kept ten men, had six children and a deaf wife, and one of the men had his wife with him, who helped sew, beside taking care of her own child. Also all the cooking and washing for his father and mother, who live in another house and whom he is bound to carry through, is done in his house, and she, Mary, was the only girl they hired; and the workmen were called up at four by an alarm clock which was set a quarter of an hour ahead of the clock downstairs, — and that more than as much ahead of the town clock, — and she was on her feet from that hour till nine at night. Each man had two pairs of overalls in the wash, and the cans to be scalded were countless. Having got through washing the breakfast dishes by a quarter before twelve, Sunday noon, by Brown's time, she left, no more to return. He had told her that the work was easy, that girls had lived with him to recover their health, and then went away to be married. He is regarded as one of the most enterprising and thrifty farmers in the county, and takes the premiums of the Agricultural Society. He probably exacts too much of his hands.

The steam of the engine streaming far behind is regularly divided, as if it were the vertebræ of a serpent, probably by the strokes of the piston. The reddish seeds or glumes of grasses cover my boots now in the dewy or foggy morning. The first white lily bud.

8 A.M. — To Orchis Swamp; Well Meadow.

I have come with a spy-glass to look at the hawks. They have detected me and are already screaming over my head more than half a mile from the nest. I find no difficulty in looking at the young hawk (there appears to be one only, standing on the edge of the nest), resting the glass in the crotch of a young oak. I can see every wink and the color of its iris. It watches me more steadily than I it, now looking straight down at me with both eyes and outstretched neck, now turning its head and looking with one eye. How its eye and its whole head express anger! Its anger is more in its eye than in its beak. It is quite hoary over the eye and on the chin. The mother meanwhile is incessantly circling about and above its charge and me, farther or nearer, sometimes withdrawing a quarter of a mile, but occasionally coming to alight for a moment almost within gunshot, on the top of a tall white pine; but I hardly bring my glass fairly to bear on her, and get sight of her angry eye through the pine-needles, before she circles away again. Thus for an hour that I lay there, screaming every minute or oftener with open bill. Now and then pursued by a kingbird or a blackbird, who appear merely to annoy it by dashing down at its back. Meanwhile the male is soaring, apparently quite undisturbed, at a great height above, evidently not hunting, but amusing or recreating himself in the thinner and cooler air, as if pleased with his own circles, like a geometer, and enjoying the sublime scene. I doubt if he has his eye fixed on any prey, or the earth. He probably descends to hunt.

Prunella out. The meadows are now yellow with the golden senecio, a more orange yellow, mingled with the light glossy yellow of the buttercup. The green fruit of the sweet-fern now. The *Juniperus repens* appears, though now dry and effete, to have blossomed recently.

The tall white *Erigeron annuus* (?), for this is the only one described as white tinged with purple, just out.

June 13. 9 A.M. — To Orchis Swamp.

Find that there are two young hawks; one has left the nest and is perched on a small maple seven or eight rods distant. This one appears much smaller than the former one. I am struck by its large,

naked head, so vulture-like, and large eyes, as if the vulture's were an inferior stage through which the hawk passed. Its feet, too, are large, remarkably developed, by which it holds to its perch securely like an old bird, before its wings can perform their office. It has a buff breast, striped with dark brown. Pratt, when I told him of this nest, said he would like to carry one of his rifles down there. But I told him that I should be sorry to have them killed. I would rather save one of these hawks than have a hundred hens and chickens. It was worth more to see them soar especially now that they are so rare in the landscape. It is easy to buy eggs, but not to buy hen-hawks. My neighbors would not hesitate to shoot the last pair of hen-hawks in the town to save a few of their chickens! But such economy is narrow and grovelling. It is unnecessarily to sacrifice the greater value to the less. I would rather never taste chickens' meat nor hens' eggs than never to see a hawk sailing through the upper air again. This sight is worth incomparably more than a chicken soup or a boiled egg. So we exterminate the deer and substitute the hog. It was amusing to observe the swaying to and fro of the young hawk's head to counterbalance the gentle motion of the bough in the wind.

June 14. C. says he saw a "lurker" yesterday in the woods on the Marlborough road. He heard a distressing noise like a man sneezing but long continued, but at length found it was a man wheezing. He was oldish and grizzled, the stumps of his grizzled beard about an inch long, and his clothes in the worst possible condition, — a wretched-looking creature, an escaped convict hiding in the woods, perhaps. He appeared holding on to his paunch, and wheezing as if it would kill him. He appeared to have come straight through the swamp, and — what was most interesting about him, and proved him to be a lurker of the first class, — one of our party, as C. said, — he kept straight through a field of rye which was fully grown, not regarding it in the least; and, though C. tried to conceal himself on the edge of the rye, fearing to hurt his feelings if the man should mistake him for the proprietor, yet they met, and the lurker, giving him a short bow, disappeared in the woods on the opposite side of the road. He went through everything.

June 15. A great fog this morning.

Clover now in its prime. What more luxuriant than a clover-field? The poorest soil that is covered with it looks incomparably fertile. This is perhaps the most characteristic feature of June, resounding with the hum of insects. It is so massive, such a blush on the fields. The rude health of the sorrel cheek has given place to the blush of clover. Painters are wont, in their pictures of Paradise, to strew the ground too thickly with flowers. There should be moderation in all things. Though we love flowers, we do not want them so thick under our feet that we cannot walk without treading on them. But a clover-field in bloom is some excuse for them.

June 17. Here have been three ultra-reformers, lecturers on Slavery, Temperance, the Church, etc., in and about our house and Mrs. Brooks's the last three or four days, — A.D. Foss, once a Baptist minister in Hopkinton, N.H.; Loring Moody, a sort of travelling pattern-working chaplain; and H.C. Wright, who shocks all the old women with his infidel writings. Though Foss was a stranger to the others, you would have thought them old and familiar cronies. (They happened here together by accident.) They addressed each other constantly by their Christian names, and rubbed you continually with the greasy cheeks of their kindness. They would not keep their distance, but cuddle up and lie spoon-fashion with you, no matter how hot the weather nor how narrow the bed, — chiefly Wright. I was awfully pestered with his benignity; feared I should get greased all over with it past restoration; tried to keep some starch in my clothes. He wrote a book called "A Kiss for a Blow," and he behaved as if there were no alternative between these, or as if I had given him a blow. I would have preferred the blow, but he was bent on giving me the kiss, when there was neither quarrel nor agreement between us. I wanted that he should straighten his back, smooth out those ogling wrinkles of benignity about his eyes, and, with a healthy reserve, pronounce something in a downright manner. It was difficult to keep clear of his slimy benignity, with which he sought to cover you before he swallowed you and took you fairly into his bowels. It would have been far worse than the fate of Jonah. I do not wish to get any nearer to a man's bowels than usual. They lick you as a cow

her calf. They would fain wrap you about with their bowels. W. addressed me as "Henry" within one minute from the time I first laid eyes on him, and when I spoke, he said with drawling, sultry sympathy, "Henry, I know all you would say; I understand you perfectly; you need not explain anything to me;" and to another, "I am going to dive into Henry's inmost depths." I said, "I trust you will not strike your head against the bottom." He could tell in a dark room, with his eyes blinded and in perfect stillness, if there was one there whom he loved. One of the most attractive things about the flowers is their beautiful reserve. The truly beautiful and noble puts its lover, as it were, at an infinite distance, while it attracts him more strongly than ever. I do not like the men who come so near me with their bowels. It is the most disagreeable kind of snare to be caught in. Men's bowels are far more slimy than their brains. They must be ascetics indeed who approach you by this side.

June 18. Saturday. 4 A.M. — By boat to Nawshawtuct; to Azalea Spring, or Pinxter Spring.

As I was going up the hill, I was surprised to see rising above the June-grass, near a walnut, a whitish object, like a stone with a white top, or a skunk erect, for it was black below. It was an enormous toadstool, or fungus, a sharply conical parasol in the form of a sugar loaf, slightly turned up at the edges, which were rent half an inch in every inch or two. The whole height was sixteen inches. The pileus or cap was six inches long by seven in width at the rim, though it appeared longer than wide. There was no veil, and the stem was about one inch in diameter and naked.

It looked much like an old felt hat that is pushed up into a cone and its rim all ragged and with some meal shaken on to it; in fact, it was almost big enough for a child's head. It was so delicate and fragile that its whole cap trembled on the least touch, and, as I could not lay it down without injuring it, I was obliged to carry it home all the way in my hand and erect, while I paddled my boat with one hand. It was a wonder how its soft cone ever broke through the earth. Such growths ally our age to former periods, such as geology reveals. I wondered if it had not some relation to the skunk, though not in odor, yet in its colors and the general impression it made. It suggests

a vegetative force which may almost make man tremble for his dominion. It carries me back to the era of the formation of the coal-measures — the age of the saurus and pleiosaurus and when bullfrogs were as big as bulls. Its stem had something massy about it like an oak, large in proportion to the weight it had to support (though not perhaps to the size of the cap), like the vast hollow columns under some piazzas, whose caps have hardly weight enough to hold their tops together. It made you think of parasols of Chinese mandarins; or it might have been used by the great fossil bullfrog in his walks. What part does it play in the economy of the world?

I have just been out (7.30 A.M.) to show my fungus. The milkman and the butcher followed me to inquire what it was, and children and young ladies addressed me in the street who never spoke to me before. It is so fragile I was obliged to walk at a funereal pace for fear of jarring it. It is so delicately balanced on its stem that it falls to one side across it on the least inclination; falls about like an umbrella that has lost its stays. It is rapidly curling up on the edge, and the rents increasing, until it is completely fringed, and is an inch wider there. It is melting in the sun and light, and black drops and streams falling on my hand and fragments of the black fringed rim falling on the sidewalk. Evidently such a plant can only be seen in perfection in the early morning. It is a creature of the night, like the great moths. They wish me to send it to the first of a series of exhibitions of flowers and fruits to be held at the court-house this afternoon, which I promise to do if it is presentable then. Perhaps it might be placed in the court-house cellar and the company be invited at last to walk down and examine it. Think of placing this giant parasol fungus in the midst of all their roses; yet they admit that it would overshadow and eclipse them all. It is to be remarked that this grew, not in low and damp soil, but high up on the open side of a dry hill, about two rods from a walnut and one from a wall, in the midst of and rising above the thin June-grass. The last night was warm; the earth was very dry, and there was a slight sprinkling of rain.

I believe the 14th was the first day I began to wear my single thin sack in my walk and at night sleep with both windows open; say, when the swamp-pink opens.

I think the blossom of the sweet-briar, now in prime, — eglantine,

— is more delicate and interesting than that of the common roses, though smaller and paler and without their spicy fragrance; but its fragrance is in its leaves all summer, and the form of the bush is handsomer, curving over from a considerable height in wreaths sprinkled with numerous flowers. They open out flat soon after sunrise. Flowers whitish in middle, then pinkish-rose inclining to purple toward the edges.

I put the parasol fungus in the cellar to preserve it, but it went on rapidly melting and wasting away from the edges upward, spreading as it dissolved, till it was shaped like a dish cover. By night, though kept in the cellar all the day, there was not more than two of the six inches of the height of the cap left, and the barrel-head beneath it and its own stem looked as if a large bottle of ink had been broken there. It defiled all it touched. Probably one night produced it, and in one day, with all our pains, it wasted away. Is it not a giant mildew or mould? The Pyramids and other monuments of Egypt are a vast mildew or toadstools which have met with no light of day sufficient to waste them away. Slavery is such a mould, and superstition, — which are most rank in the warm and humid portions of the globe. Luxor sprang up one night out of the slime of the Nile. The humblest, puniest weed that can endure the sun is thus superior to the largest fungus, as is the peasant's cabin to those foul temples. It is a temple consecrated to Apis. All things flower, both vices and virtues, but the one is essentially foul, the other fair. In hell, toadstools should be represented as overshadowing men.

At the Flower Exhibition, saw the rhododendron plucked yesterday in Fitzwilliam, N.H. It was the earliest to be found there, and only one bud yet fully open. They say it is in perfection there the 4th of July, nearer Monadnock than the town.

This unexpected display of flowers culled from the gardens of the village suggests how many virtues also are cultivated by the villagers, more than meet the eye.

It would be an interesting subject, — the materials with which different birds line their nests, or, more generally, *construct* them. The hickory catkins, etc., of the cuckoo, the hypnum and large nest of the phœbe.

8.30 P.M. — To Cliffs.

Moon not quite full. There is no motion nor sound in the woods (Hubbard's Grove) along which I am walking. The trees stand like great screens against the sky. The distant village sounds are the barking of dogs, that animal with which man has allied himself, and the rattling of wagons, for the farmers have gone into town a-shopping this Saturday night. The dog is the tamed wolf, as the villager is the tamed savage. But near, the crickets are heard in the grass, chirping from everlasting to everlasting, a mosquito sings near my ear, and the humming of a dor-bug drowns all the noise of the village, so roomy is the universe. The moon comes out of the mackerel cloud, and the traveller rejoices. How can a man write the same thoughts by the light of the moon, resting his book on a rail by the side of a remote potato-field, that he does by the light of the sun, on his study table? The light is but a luminousness. My pencil seems to move through a creamy, mystic medium. The moonlight is rich and somewhat opaque, like cream, but the daylight is thin and blue, like skimmed milk. I am less conscious than in the presence of the sun; my instincts have more influence.

June 21.

The warmest day yet. For the last two days I have worn nothing about my neck. This change or putting off of clothing is, methinks, as good an evidence of the increasing warmth of the weather as meteorological instruments. I thought it was hot weather perchance, when, a month ago, I slept with a window wide open and laid aside a comfortable, but by and by I found that I had got two windows open, and to-night two windows and the door are far from enough.

At sunset to Island.

Between the heavy masses of clouds, mouse-colored, with dark-blue bases, the patches of clear sky are a glorious cobalt blue, as Sophia calls it. How happens it that the sky never appears so intensely, brightly, memorably blue as when seen between clouds and, it may be, as now in the south at sunset? This, too, is like the blue in snow. For the last two or three days it has taken me all the forenoon to wake up.

June 24. There were piles of dried heart-leaf on shore at the

bathing-place, a foot high and more. Were they torn up and driven ashore by the wind? I suspect it is the wind in both cases. As storms at sea tear up and cast ashore the seaweeds from the rocks. These are our seaweeds cast ashore in storms, but I see only the eel-grass and the heart-leaf thus served. Our most common in the river appears to be between the *Potamogeton natans* and *pulcher*; it answers to neither, but can be no other described. All these have a strong fresh-water marsh smell, rather agreeable sometimes as a bottle of salts, like the salt marsh and seaweeds, invigorating to my imagination. In our great stream of distilled water going slowly down to ocean to be salted. There are the heart-leaf ponds, but I cannot say the potamogeton rivers on account of the tautology, and, beside, I do not like this last name, which signifies that it grows in the neighborhood of rivers, when it is not a neighbor but an indweller. You might as well describe the seaweeds as growing in the neighborhood of the sea.

June 25. Great orange lily beyond stone bridge. Found in the Glade (?) Meadows an unusual quantity of amelanchier berries now in their prime. These are the first berries after strawberries, or the first, and I think the sweetest, *bush* berries. Somewhat like high blueberries, but not so hard. Much eaten by insects, worms, etc. As big as the largest blueberries or peas. These are the "service-berries" which the Indians of the north and the Canadians use. *La poire* of the latter (*vide* Indian books, No. 6, p. 13). I felt all the while I was picking them, in the low, light, wavy shrubby wood they make, as if I were in a foreign country. Several old farmers say, "Well, though I have lived seventy years, I never saw nor heard of them." I think them a delicious berry, and no doubt they require only to be more abundant every year to be appreciated.

JUNE 28. Nettle out a few days. Pepper-grass, a week or more. Catnep, also, a few days. We have warmer weather now again.

July 1. I am surveying the Bedford road these days, and have no time for my Journal. Saw one of those great pea-green emperor moths, like a bird, fluttering over the top of the woods this forenoon,

10 A.M., near Beck Stow's. Gathered the early red blackberry in the swamp or meadow this side of Pedrick's, where I ran a pole down nine feet.

July 12. White vervain. Checkerberry, maybe some days. Spikenard, not quite yet. The green-flowered lanceolate-leafed orchis at Azalea Brook will soon flower. Wood horse-tail very large and handsome there.

July 21. 2 P.M. — Went, in pursuit of boys who had stolen my boat-seat, to Fair Haven.

July 24. With or without reason, I find myself associating with the idea of summer a certain cellar-like coolness, resulting from the depth of shadows and the luxuriance of foliage. I think that after this date the crops never suffer so severely from drought as in June, because of their foliage shading the ground and producing dews. We had fog this morning, and no doubt often the last three weeks, which my surveying has prevented my getting up to see.

How far behind the spring seems now, — farther off, perhaps, then ever, for this heat and dryness is most opposed to spring. Where most I sought for flowers in April and May I do not think to go now; it is either drought and barrenness or fall there now. The reign of moisture is long since over. For a long time the year feels the influence of the snows of winter and the long rains of spring, but now how changed! It is like another and a fabulous age to look back on, when earth's veins were full of moisture, and violets burst out on every hillside. Spring is the reign of water; summer, of heat and dryness; winter, of cold. Summer is one long drought. Rain is the exception. All the signs of it fail, for it is dry weather. Though it may seem so, the current year is not peculiar in this respect.

The shaggy hazelnuts now greet the eye, always an agreeable sight to me, with which when a boy I used to take the stains of berries out of my hands and mouth. These and green grapes are found at berry time.

July 25. I have for years had a great deal of trouble with my shoe-

strings, because they get untied continually. They are leather, rolled and tied in a hard knot. But some days I could hardly go twenty rods before I was obliged to stop and stoop to tie my shoes. My companion and I speculated on the distance to which one tying would carry you, — the length of a shoe-tie, — and we thought it nearly as appreciable and certainly a more simple and natural measure of distance than a stadium, or league, or mile. Ever and anon we raised our feet on whatever fence or wall or rock or stump we chanced to be passing, and drew the strings once more, pulling as hard as we could. It was very vexatious, when passing through low scrubby bushes, to become conscious that the strings were already getting loose again before we had fairly started. What should we have done if pursued by a tribe of Indians? My companion sometimes went without strings altogether, but that loose way of proceeding was not to be thought of by me. One shoemaker sold us shoe-strings made of the hide of a South American jackass, which he recommended; or rather he gave them to us and added their price to that of the shoes we bought of him. But I could not see that these were any better than the old. I wondered if anybody had exhibited a better article at the World's Fair, and whether England did not bear the palm from America in this respect. I thought of strings with recurved prickles and various other remedies myself. At last the other day it occurred to me that I would try an experiment, and, instead of tying two simple knots one over the other the same way, putting the end which fell to the right over each time, that I would reverse the process, and put it under the other. Greatly to my satisfaction, the experiment was perfectly successful, and from that time my shoe-strings have given me no trouble, except sometimes in untying them at night.

On telling this to others I learned that I had been all the while tying what is called a granny's knot, for I had never been taught to tie any other, as sailors' children are; but now I had blundered into a square knot, I think they called it, or two running slip-nooses. Should not all children be taught this accomplishment, and an hour, perchance, of their childhood be devoted to instruction in tying knots?

Aug. 6. More dog-days.

I see the sunflower's broad disk now in gardens, probably a few days, — a true sun among flowers, monarch of August. Do not the flowers of August and September generally resemble suns and stars? — sunflowers and asters and the single flowers of the goldenrod. I once saw one as big as a milk-pan, in which a mouse had its nest.

I have seen some red leaves on the low choke-berry. Now begins the vintage of their juices. Nature is now a Bacchanal, drunk with the wines of a thousand plants and berries.

Aug. 7. I think that within a week I have heard the alder cricket, — a clearer and shriller sound from the leaves in low grounds, a clear shrilling out of a cool moist shade, an autumnal sound. The year is in the grasp of the crickets, and they are hurling it round swiftly on its axle. Some wasps (I am not sure there's more than one) are building a nest in my room, of mud, these days, buzzing loudly while at work, but at no other time.

Now for the herbs, — the various mints. The pennyroyal is out abundantly on the hills. I do not scent these things enough. Would it not be worth the while to devote a day to collecting the mountain mint, and another to the peppermint?

How trivial and uninteresting and wearisome and unsatisfactory are all employments for which men will pay you money! The ways by which you may get money all lead downward. To have done anything by which you earned money merely is to have been truly idle. If the laborer gets no more than the wages his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself. Those services which the world will most readily pay for, it is most disagreeable to render. You are paid for being something less than a man. The state will pay a genius only for some service which it is offensive to him to render. Even the poet-laureate would rather not have to celebrate the accidents of royalty.

Dangle-berries have begun.

It is worth the while to walk in wet weather; the earth and leaves are strewn with pearls.

As I was walking along a hillside the other day, I smelled pennyroyal, but it was only after a considerable search that I discovered a

single minute plant, which I had trodden on, the only one near. When, yesterday, a boy spilled his huckleberries in the pasture, I saw that Nature was making use of him to disperse her berries, and I might have advised him to pick another dishful. The three kinds of epilobium grow rankly where Hubbard burned his swamp this year, also erechthites. I think that I have observed that this last is a true fireweed.

Is it not as language that all natural objects affect the poet? He sees a flower or other object, and it is beautiful or affecting to him because it is a symbol of his thought, and what he indistinctly feels or perceives is matured in some other organization. The objects I behold correspond to my mood.

The past has been a remarkably wet week, and now the earth is strewn with fungi. The earth itself is mouldy. I see a white mould in the path.

I was struck by the perfect neatness, as well as elaborateness and delicacy, of a lady's dress the other day. She wore some worked lace or gauze over her bosom, and I thought it was beautiful, if it indicated an equal inward purity and delicacy, — if it was the soul she dressed and treated thus delicately.

Aug. 10. Alcott spent the day with me yesterday. He spent the day before with Emerson. He observed that he had got his wine and now he had come after his venison. Such was the compliment he paid me. The question of a livelihood was troubling him. He knew of nothing which he could do for which men would pay him. He could not compete with the Irish in cradling grain. His early education had not fitted him for a clerkship. He had offered his services to the Abolition Society, to go about the country and speak for freedom as their agent, but they declined him. This is very much to their discredit; they should have been forward to secure him. Such a connection with him would confer unexpected dignity on their enterprise. But they cannot tolerate a man who stands by a head above them. They are as bad — Garrison and Phillips, etc. — as the overseers and faculty of Harvard College. They require a man who will train well *under* them.

Aug. 11. Evening draws on while I am gathering bundles of

penny-royal on the further Conantum height. I find it amid the stubble mixed with blue-curls and, as fast as I get my hand full, tie it into a fragrant bundle. Evening draws on, smoothing the waters and lengthening the shadows, now half an hour or more before sundown. What constitutes the charm of this hour of the day? Is it the condensing of dews in the air just beginning, or the grateful increase of shadows in the landscape?

What shall we name this season? — this very late afternoon, or very early evening, this severe and placid season of the day.

Aug. 12. 9 A.M. — To Conantum by boat, berrying, with three ladies.

Carried watermelons for drink. What more refreshing and convenient! This richest wine in a convenient cask, and so easily kept cool! No foreign wines could be so grateful. The first muskmelon to-day. If you would cool a watermelon, do not put it in water, which keeps the heat in, but cut it open and set it in a cellar or in the shade. If you have carriage, carry these green bottles of wine.

Aug. 14. In the low woodland paths full of rank weeds, there are countless great fungi of various forms and colors, the produce of the warm rains and muggy weather of a week ago, now rapidly dissolving. One great one, more than a foot in diameter, with a stem 2½+ inches through and 5 inches high, and which has sprung up since I passed here on the 10th, is already sinking like lead into that portion already melted. The ground is covered with foul spots where they have dissolved, and for *most* of my *walk* the air is tainted with a musty, carrion-like odor, in some places very offensive, so that I at first suspected a dead horse or cow. They impress me like humors or pimples on the face of the earth, toddy-blossoms, by which it gets rid of its corrupt blood. A sort of excrement they are. It never occurred to me before to-day that those different forms belong to one species.

Aug. 17. Rain, rain, rain again! Good for grass and apples; said to be bad for potatoes, making them rot; makes the fruit now ripening decay, — apples, etc.

Aug. 18. Rain again.

Now again I am caught in a heavy shower in Moore's pitch pines on edge of Great Fields, and am obliged to stand crouching under my umbrella till the drops turn to streams, which find their way through my umbrella, and the path up the hillside is all afloat, a succession of puddles at different levels, each bounded by a ridge of dead pine-needles.

What means this sense of lateness that so comes over one now, — as if the rest of the year were down-hill, and if we had not performed anything before, we should not now? The season of flowers or of promise may be said to be over, and now is the season of fruits; but where is our fruit? The night of the year is approaching. What have we done with our talent? All nature prompts and reproves us. How early in the year it begins to be late! It matters not by how little we have fallen behind; it seems irretrievably late. The year is full of warnings of its shortness, as is life.

Vide next page.

Vide amount of seed in *Tribune*, Mar. 16, 1860.

These were either mergansers or the golden-eye; I think the former, *i.e. Mergus serrator*, or red-breasted merganser (?), or sheldrake.

Does next morning in pitcher.

I think it is *strigosus*, but tinged with purple sometimes.

[From Greek: *potamo* = river; *geiton* = neighbor.]

["Then there were huckleberrying parties. These were under the guidance of Thoreau, because he alone knew the precise locality of every variety of the berry. I recall an occasion when little Edward Emerson, carrying a basket of fine huckleberries, had a fall and spilt them all. Great was his distress, and our offers of berries could not console him for the loss of those gathered by himself. But Thoreau came, put his arm around the troubled child, and explained to him that if the crop of huckleberries was to continue it was necessary that some should be scattered. Nature had provided that little boys should now and then stumble and sow the berries. We shall have a grand lot of bushes and berries in this spot, and we shall owe them to you. Edward began to smile." — Moncure Daniel Conway, *Autobiography*, Boston, 1904, vol. I, p. 148.]

Or in a draught.

Aug. 19. Friday. 9 A.M. — To Sudbury by boat with W.E.C.

Cooler weather. Last Sunday we were sweltering here and one hundred died of the heat in New York; to-day they have fires in this village. After more rain, with wind in the night, it is now clearing up cool. A considerable wind wafts us along with our one sail and two umbrellas, sitting in thick coats. I was going to sit and write or mope all day in the house, but it seems wise to cultivate animal spirits, to embark in enterprises which employ and recreate the whole body.

We landed at the first cedar hills above the causeway and ate our dinner and watermelon on them. A great reddish-brown marsh hawk circling over the meadow there. How freshly, beautifully green the landscape after all these rains! The poke-berry ripe.

Aug. 23. Observing the blackness of the foliage, especially between me and the light, I am reminded that it begins in the spring, the dewy dawn of the year, with a silvery hoary downiness, changing to a yellowish or light green, — the saffron-robed morn, — then to a pure, spotless, glossy green with light under sides reflecting the light, — the forenoon, — and now the dark green, or early afternoon, when shadows begin to increase, and next it will turn yellow or red, — the sunset sky, — and finally sere brown and black, when the night of the year sets in.

I am again struck by the perfect correspondence of a day — say an August day — and the year. I think that a perfect parallel may be drawn between the seasons of the day and of the year. Perhaps after middle age man ceases to be interested in the morning and in the spring.

Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink, taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influences of each. In August live on berries, not dried meats and pemmican, as if you were on shipboard making your way through a waste ocean, or in a northern desert. Be blown on by all the winds. Open all your pores and bathe in all the tides of Nature, in all her streams and oceans, at all seasons. Why, “nature” is but another name for health, and the seasons are but different states of health.

Aug. 26. Saw the comet in the west to-night. It made me think of those imperfect white seeds in a watermelon, — an immature, ineffectual meteor.

Aug. 27. September is at hand; the first month (after the summer heat) with a *burr* to it, month of early frosts; but December will be tenfold rougher. January relents for a season at the time of its thaw, and hence that liquid *r* in its name.

Aug. 29. The 25th and 26th I was surveying Tuttle's farm. The northeast side bounds on the Mill Brook and its tributary and is very irregular. I find, after surveying accurately the windings of several brooks and of the river, that their meanders are not such regular serpentine curves as is commonly supposed, or at least represented. They flow as much in a zigzag as serpentine manner. The eye is very much deceived when standing on the brink, and one who had only surveyed a brook so would be inclined to draw a succession of pretty regular serpentine curves. But, accurately plotted, the regularity disappears, and there are found to be many straight lines and sharp turns. I want no better proof of the inaccuracy of some maps than the regular curving meanders of the streams, made evidently by a sweep of the pen. No, the Meander no doubt flowed in a very crooked channel, but depend upon it, it was as much zigzag as serpentine. This last brook I observed was doubly zigzag, or compoundly zigzag; *i.e.*, there was a zigzag on a large scale including the lesser. To the eye this meadow is perfectly level. Probably all streams are (generally speaking) far more meandering in low and level and soft ground near their mouths, where they flow slowly, than in high and rugged ground which offers more obstacles. The meadow being so level for long distances, no doubt as high in one direction as another, how, I asked myself, did the feeble brook, with all its meandering, ever find its way to the distant lower end? What kind of instinct conducted it forward in the right direction? How unless it is the relict of a lake which once stood high over all these banks, and knew the different levels of its distant shores? How unless a flow which commenced above its level first wore its channel for it? Thus, in

regard to most rivers, did not lakes first find their mouths for them, just as the tide now keeps open the mouths of sluggish rivers? And who knows to what extent the sea originally channelled the submerged globe?

Sept. 1. The character of the past month, as I remember, has been, at first, very thick and sultry, dogdayish, the height of summer, and throughout very rainy, followed by crops of toadstools, and latterly, after the dogdays and most copious of the rains, autumnal, somewhat cooler, with signs of decaying or ripening foliage. The month of green corn and melons and plums and the earliest apples, — and now peaches, — of rank weeds. As July, perchance, has its spring side, so August has its autumnal side.

Sept. 2. P.M. — Collected and brought home in a pail of water this afternoon the following asters and diplopappi, going by Turnpike and Hubbard's Close to Saw Mill Brook, and returning by Goose Pond: (1) *A. Tradescanti*, now well under way, most densely flowered, by low roadsides; (2) *dumosus*, perhaps the most prevalent of the small whitish ones, especially in wood-paths; [*etc. — ten more*].

These twelve placed side by side, Sophia and I decided that, regarding only individual flowers, the handsomest was —

1st, *A. patens*, deep bluish-purple ("deep blue-purple" are Gray's very words), large!

2d, *lævis* bright lilac-purple, large.

3d, perhaps *Radula*, pale bluish-purple, turning white, large! [*Etc. for all 12.*]

The first (*patens*) has broader rays than the second, paler within toward the large handsome yellow disk. Its rough leaves are not so handsome.

The *lævis* is more open and slender-rayed than the last, with a rather smaller disk, but, including its stem and leaves, it is altogether the most delicate and graceful, and I should incline to put it before the last. [*Etc. for all 12.*]

Sept. 7. Yesterday and to-day and day before yesterday, some

hours of very warm weather, as oppressive as any in the year, one's thermometer at 93°.

Sept. 11. Sunday. Cool weather. Sit with windows shut, and many by fires. A great change since the 6th, when the heat was so oppressive. The air has got an autumnal coolness which it will not get rid of again.

Signs of frost last night in M. Miles's cleared swamp. Potato vines black. How much farther it is back to frost from the greatest heat of summer, *i.e.* from the 6th back to the 1st of June, three months, than forward to it, four days!

OCT. 12. To-day I have had the experience of borrowing money for a poor Irishman who wishes to get his family to this country. One will never know his neighbors till he has carried a subscription paper among them. Ah! it reveals many and sad facts to stand in this relation to them. To hear the selfish and cowardly excuses some make, — that *if* they help any they must help the Irishman who lives with them, — and him they are sure never to help! Others, with whom public opinion weighs, will think of it, trusting you never will raise the sum and so they will not be called on again; who give stingily after all. What a satire in the fact that you are much more inclined to call on a certain slighted and so-called crazy woman in moderate circumstances rather than on the president of the bank! But some are generous and save the town from the distinction which threatened it, and *some* even who do not lend, plainly would if they could.

Oct. 20. How pleasant to walk over beds of these fresh, crisp, and rustling fallen leaves, — young hyson, green tea, clean, crisp, and wholesome! How beautiful they go to their graves! how gently lay themselves down and turn to mould! — painted of a thousand hues and fit to make the beds of us living. So they troop to their graves, light and frisky. They put on no weeds.

Oct. 22. A week or more of fairest Indian summer ended last night, for to-day it rains. It was so warm day before yesterday, I

worked in my shirt-sleeves in the woods.

I cannot easily dismiss the subject of the fallen leaves. How densely they cover and conceal the water for several feet in width, under and amid the alders and button-bushes and maples along the shore of the river, — still light, tight, and dry boats, dense cities of boats, their fibres not relaxed by the waters, undulating and rustling with every wave, of such various pure and delicate, though fading, tints, — of hues that might make the fame of teas, — dried on great Nature's coppers. And then see this great fleet of scattered leaf boats, still tight and dry, each one curled up on every side by the sun's skill, like boats of hide, scarcely moving in the sluggish current, — like the great fleets with which you mingle on entering some great mart, some New York which we are all approaching together.

Consider what a vast crop is thus annually shed upon the earth. This, more than any mere grain or seed, is the great harvest of the year. This annual decay and death, this dying by inches, before the whole tree at last lies down and turns to soil. As trees shed their leaves, so deer their horns, and men their hair or nails. The year's great crop. They teach us how to die. How many flutterings before they rest quietly in their graves! By what subtle chemistry they will mount up again, climbing by the sap in the trees.

For beautiful variety can any crop be compared with them?

Yesterday, toward night, gave Sophia and mother a sail as far as the Battle-Ground. One-eyed John Goodwin, the fisherman, was loading into a hand-cart and conveying home the piles of driftwood which of late he had collected with his boat. It was a beautiful evening, and a clear amber sunset lit up all the eastern shores; and that man's employment, so simple and direct, — though he is regarded by most as a vicious character, — whose whole motive was so easy to fathom, — thus to obtain his winter's wood, — charmed me unspeakably. So much do we love actions that are simple. They are all poetic. We, too, would fain be so employed. So unlike the pursuits of most men, so artificial or complicated. Consider how the broker collects his winter's wood, what sport he makes of it, what is his boat and hand-cart! Postponing instant life, he makes haste to Boston in the cars, and there deals in stocks, not quite relishing his employment, — and so earns the money with which he buys his fuel.

And when, by chance, I meet him about this indirect and complicated business, I am not struck with the beauty of his employment. It does not harmonize with the sunset. How much more the former consults his genius, some genius at any rate!

No *trade* is simple, but artificial and complex. It postpones life and substitutes death. It goes against the grain. The oldest, wisest politician grows not more human so, but is merely a gray wharf rat at last. He makes a habit of disregarding the moral right and wrong for the legal or political, commits a slow suicide, and thinks to recover by retiring on to a farm at last. This simplicity it is, and the vigor it imparts, that enables the simple vagabond, though he does get drunk and is sent to the house of correction so often, to hold up his head among men.

Oct. 23. Sunday. I find my clothes all bristling as with a *chevaux-de-frise* of beggar-ticks, which hold on for many days. A storm of arrows these weeds have showered on me, as I went through their moats. How irksome the task to rid one's self of them! We are fain to let some adhere. Through thick and thin I wear some; hold on many days. In an instant a thousand seeds of the bidens fastened themselves firmly to my clothes, and I carried them for miles, planting one here and another there. They are as thick on my clothes as the teeth of a comb.

It is the season of fuzzy seeds, — goldenrods, everlasting, senecio, asters, epilobium, etc., etc. *Viburnum Lentago*, with ripe berries and dull-glossy red leaves; young black cherry, fresh green or yellow; mayweed. The chestnuts have mostly fallen. One *Diplopappus linariifolius* in bloom, its leaves all yellow or red. This and *A. undulatus* the asters seen to-day.

The red oak now red, perhaps inclining to scarlet; the white, with that peculiar ingrained redness; the shrub oak, a clear thick leather-color; some dry black oak, darker brown; chestnut, light brown; hickory, yellow, turning brown. These the colors of some leaves I brought home.

Oct. 24. It has rained all day, filling the streams. Just after dark, high southerly winds arise, but very warm, blowing the rain against

the windows and roof and shaking the house. It is very dark withal, so that I can hardly find my way to a neighbor's. We think of vessels on the coast, and shipwrecks, and how this will bring down the remaining leaves and to-morrow morning the street will be strewn with rotten limbs of the elms amid the leaves and puddles, and some loose chimney or crazy building will have fallen. Some fear to go to bed, lest the roof be blown off.

Oct. 26. I well remember the time this year when I first heard the dream of the toads. I was laying out house-lots on Little River in Haverhill. We had had some raw, cold and wet weather. But this day was remarkably warm and pleasant, and I had thrown off my outside coat. I was going home to dinner, past a shallow pool, which was green with springing grass, and where a new house was about being erected, when it occurred to me that I heard the dream of the toad. It rang through and filled all the air, though I had not heard it once. And I turned my companion's attention to it, but he did not appear to perceive it as a new sound in the air. Loud and prevailing as it is, most men do not notice it at all. It is to them, perchance, a sort of simmering or seething of all nature. That afternoon the dream of the toads rang through the elms by Little River and affected the thoughts of men, though they were not conscious that they heard it.

How watchful we must be to keep the crystal well that we were made, clear! — that it be not made turbid by our contact with the world, so that it will not reflect objects. What other liberty is there worth having, if we have not freedom and peace in our minds, — if our inmost and most private man is but a sour and turbid pool? Often we are so jarred by chagrins in dealing with the world, that we cannot reflect.

Ah! the world is too much with us, and our whole soul is stained by what it works in, like the dyer's hand. A man had better starve at once than lose his innocence in the process of getting his bread.

It is surprising how any reminiscence of a different season of the year affects us. When I meet with any such in my Journal, it affects me as poetry, and I appreciate that other season and that particular phenomenon more than at the time. The world so seen is all one spring, and full of beauty. You only need to make a faithful record of

an average summer day's experience and summer mood, and read it in the winter, and it will carry you back to more than that summer day alone could show. Only the rarest flower, the purest melody, of the season thus comes down to us.

When, after feeling dissatisfied with my life, I aspire to something better, am more scrupulous, more reserved and continent, as if expecting somewhat, suddenly I find myself full of life as a nut of meat, — am overflowing with a quiet, genial mirthfulness. I think to myself, I must attend to my diet; I must get up earlier and take a morning walk; I must have done with luxuries and devote myself to my muse. So I dam up my stream, and my waters gather to a head. I am freighted with thought.

Oct. 27. Some less obvious and commonly unobserved signs of the progress of the seasons interest me most, like the loose, dangling catkins of the hop-hornbeam or of the black or yellow birch. I can recall distinctly to my mind the image of these things, and that time in which they flourished is glorious as if it were before the fall of man. I see all nature for the time under this aspect. These features are particularly prominent; as if the first object I saw on approaching this planet in the spring was the catkins of the hop-hornbeam on the hillsides. As I sailed by, I saw the yellowish waving sprays.

Oct. 28. Rain in the night and this morning, preparing for winter.

For a year or two past, my *publisher*, falsely so called, has been writing from time to time to ask what disposition should be made of the copies of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers" still on hand, and at last suggesting that he had use for the room they occupied in his cellar. So I had them all sent to me here, and they have arrived to-day by express, filling the man's wagon, — 706 copies out of an edition of 1000 which I bought of Munroe four years ago and have been ever since paying for, and have not quite paid for yet. The wares are sent to me at last, and I have an opportunity to examine my purchase. They are something more substantial than fame, as my back knows, which has borne them up two flights of stairs to a place similar to that to which they trace their origin. Of the remaining two hundred and ninety and odd, seventy-five were given

away, the rest sold. I have now a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself. Is it not well that the author should behold the fruits of his labor? My works are piled up on one side of my chamber half as high as my head, my *opera omnia*. This is authorship; these are the work of my brain. There was just one piece of good luck in the venture. The unbound were tied up by the printer four years ago in stout paper wrappers, and inscribed, —

H.D. Thoreau's

Concord River

50 cops.

So Munroe had only to cross out "River" and write "Mass." and deliver them to the expressman at once. I can see now what I write for, the result of my labors.

Nevertheless, in spite of this result, sitting beside the inert mass of my works, I take up my pen to-night to record what thought or experience I may have had, with as much satisfaction as ever. Indeed, I believe that this result is more inspiring and better for me than if a thousand had bought my wares. It affects my privacy less and leaves me freer.

Oct. 31. 7 A.M. — By river to Nawshawtuct.

The flood and wind have washed up great quantities of cranberries loosened by the rake, which now line the shore, mixed with the wrecked grass and weeds. We gathered five quarts, partly frost-bitten.

I slowly discover that this is a gossamer day. I first see the fine lines stretching from one weed or grass stem or rush to another, sometimes seven or eight feet distant, horizontally and only four or five inches above the water. When I look further, I find that they are everywhere and on everything, sometimes forming conspicuous fine white gossamer webs on the heads of grasses, or suggesting an Indian bat. They are so abundant that they seem to have been suddenly produced in the atmosphere by some chemistry, — spun

out of air, — I know not for what purpose. These gossamer lines are not visible unless between you and the sun. We pass some black willows, now of course quite leafless, and when they are between us and the sun they are so completely covered with these fine cobwebs or lines, mainly parallel to one another, that they make one solid woof, a misty woof, against the sun. They are not drawn taut, but curved downward in the middle, like the rigging of vessels, — the ropes which stretch from mast to mast, — as if the fleets of a thousand Lilliputian nations were collected one behind another under bare poles. But when we have floated a few feet further, and thrown the willow out of the sun's range, not a thread can be seen on it.

I am at a loss to say what purpose they serve, and am inclined to think that they are to some extent attached to objects as they float through the atmosphere; for I noticed, before I had gone far, that my grape-vines in a basket in the boat had got similar lines stretching from one twig to another, a foot or two, having undoubtedly caught them as we paddled along. It might well be an electric phenomenon. The air appeared crowded with them. It was a wonder they did not get into the mouth and nostrils, or that we did not feel them on our faces, or continually going and coming amid them did not whiten our clothes more. And yet one with his back to the sun, walking the other way, would observe nothing of all this. Only stand so as to bring the south side of any tree, bush, fence, or other object between you and the sun. Methinks it is only on these very finest days late in autumn that this phenomenon is seen, as if that fine vapor of the morning were spun into these webs.

According to Kirby and Spence, "in Germany these flights of gossamer appear so constantly in autumn that they are there metaphorically called 'Der fliegender Sommer' (the flying or departing summer)." What can possess these spiders thus to run all at once to every the least elevation, and let off this wonderful stream? Sophia thought that thus at last they emptied themselves and wound up, or, I suggested, unwound, themselves, — cast off their mortal coil. It looks like a mere frolic spending and wasting of themselves, of their vigor, now that there is no further use for it, their prey, perchance, being killed or banished by the frost.

Nov. 1. 6.30 A.M. — To Hubbard's Bridge to see the gossamer.

About three weeks ago my indignation was roused by hearing that one of my townsmen, notorious for meanness, was endeavoring to get and keep a premium of four dollars which a poor Irish laborer whom he hired had gained by fifteen minutes' spading at our Agricultural Fair. To-night a free colored woman is lodging at our house, whose errand to the North is to get money to buy her husband, who is a slave to one Moore in Norfolk, Virginia. She persuaded Moore, though not a kind master, to buy him that he might not be sold further South. Moore paid six hundred dollars for him, but asks her eight hundred. My most natural reflection was that he was even meaner than my townsman. As mean as a slaveholder!

Nov. 3. Heard a bluebird about a week ago.

There are very few phenomena which can be described indifferently as occurring at different seasons of the year, for they will occur with some essential difference.

A warm westerly wind, the sky concealed and a storm gathering. A sober, cloudy afternoon. To-day I see yarrow, very bright; red clover; autumnal dandelion; the silvery potentilla, and one *Canadensis*; and the *Norvegica*; and a dandelion; *Veronica arvensis*; and gnawel; one *Aster lævis* (!) by the Hosmer Ditch; and, to my surprise, that solidago of September 11th, still showing some fresh yellow petals and a very fresh stem and leaves.

I make it my business to extract from Nature whatever nutriment she can furnish me, though at the risk of endless iteration. I milk the sky and the earth.

Nov. 6. Still the Canada snapdragon, yarrow, autumnal dandelion, tansy, shepherd's-purse, silvery cinquefoil, witch-hazel.

The witch-hazel spray is peculiar and interesting, with little knubs at short intervals, zigzag, crinkle-crankle. How happens it? Did the leaves grow so close? The bud is long against the stem, with a neck to it.

Nov. 8. 10 A.M. — Our first snow, the wind southerly, the air chilly and moist; a very fine snow, looking like a mist toward the

woods or horizon, which at 2 o'clock has not whitened the ground. The children greet it with a shout when they come out at recess.

Nov. 12. I cannot but regard it as a kindness in those who have the steering of me that, by the want of pecuniary wealth, I have been nailed down to this my native region so long and steadily, and made to study and love this spot of earth more and more. What would signify in comparison a thin and diffused love and knowledge of the whole earth instead, got by wandering? The traveller's is but a barren and comfortless condition. It is insignificant, and a merely negative good fortune, to be provided with thick garments against cold and wet, an unprofitable, weak, and defensive condition, compared with being able to extract some exhilaration, some warmth even, out of cold and wet themselves, and to clothe them with our sympathy. The rich man buys woollens and furs, and sits naked and shivering still in spirit, besieged by cold and wet. But the poor Lord of Creation, cold and wet he makes to warm him, and be his garments.

Tasted to-day a black walnut, a spherical and corrugated nut with a large meat, but of a strong oily taste.

Nov. 13. Rain all day.

Nov. 15. After having some business dealings with men, I am occasionally chagrined, and feel as if I had done some wrong, and it is hard to forget the ugly circumstance. I see that such intercourse long continued would make one thoroughly prosaic, hard, and coarse. But the longest intercourse with Nature, though in her rudest moods, does not thus harden and make coarse. A hard, insensible man whom we liken to a rock is indeed much harder than a rock. From hard, coarse, insensible men with whom I have no sympathy, I go to commune with the rocks, whose hearts are comparatively soft.

Together with the barberry, I dug up a brake root by chance. This, too, should have gone into the witches' caldron. It is large and black, almost like a cinder without, and within curiously black and white in parallel fibres, with a sort of mildewiness as if it were rotting; yet fresh shoots are ready for the spring with a cottony point.

This afternoon has wanted no condition to make it a gossamer

day, it seems to me, but a calm atmosphere. Plainly the spiders cannot be abroad on the water unless it is smooth. The one I witnessed this fall was at time of flood. May it be that they are driven out of their retreats like muskrats and snow-fleas, and spin these lines for their support?

I see many cranberries on the vines at the bottom, making a great show. It might be worth the while, where possible, to flood a cranberry meadow as soon as they are ripe and before the frosts, and so preserve them plump and sound till spring.

Nov. 18. Conchologists call those shells "which are fished up from the depths of the ocean" and are never seen on the shore, which are the rarest and most beautiful, *Pelagii*, but those which are cast on shore and are never so delicate and beautiful as the former, on account of exposure and abrasion, *Littorales*. So it is with the thoughts of poets: some are fresh from the deep sea, radiant with unimagined beauty, — *Pelagii*; but others are comparatively worn, having been tossed by many a tide, — *Littorales*, — scaled off, abraded, and eaten by worms.

Nov. 19. What is the peculiarity of the Indian summer? From the 14th to the 21st October inclusive, this year, was perfect Indian summer; and this day the next? Methinks that any particularly pleasant and warmer weather after the middle of October is thus called. Has it not fine, calm spring days answering to it? Autumnal dandelion quite fresh. Tansy very fresh yesterday.

Nov. 20. What enhances my interest in dew — I am thinking of the summer — is the fact that it is so distinct from rain, formed most abundantly after bright, starlit nights, a product especially of the clear, serene air. That nightly rain called dew, which gathers and falls in so low a stratum that our heads tower above it like mountains in an ordinary shower. A writer in *Harper's Magazine* (vol. vii, page 505) says that the mist at evening does not rise, "but gradually forms higher up in the air." He calls it the moisture of the air become visible. Says there is most dew in clear nights, because clouds prevent the cooling down of the air; they radiate the heat of the earth

back to it; and that a strong wind, by keeping the air in motion, prevents its heat from passing off. Therefore, I proceed, for a plentiful dew it must not only be clear but calm. The above writer says bad conductors of heat have always most dew on them, and that wool or swan's-down is "good for experimenting on the quantity of dew falling," — weight before and after. Thinks it not safe to walk in clear nights, especially after midnight, when the dew is most abundantly forming; better in cloudy nights, which are drier. Also thinks it not prudent to venture out until the sun begins to rise and warms the air. But methinks this prudence begets a tenderness that will catch more cold at noonday than the opposite hardiness at midnight.

Nov. 22. I see still, here and there, a few deep-sunk yellow and decayed pads, the bleared, dulled, drowned eyes of summer.

I was just thinking it would be fine to get a specimen leaf from each changing tree and shrub and plant in autumn, in September and October, when it had got its brightest characteristic color, the intermediate ripeness in its transition from the green to the russet or brown state, outline and copy its color exactly with paint in a book, — a book which should be a memorial of October, be entitled October Hues or Autumnal Tints. I remember especially the beautiful yellow of the *Populus grandidentata* and the tint of the scarlet maple. What a memento such a book would be, beginning with the earliest reddening of the leaves, woodbine and ivy, etc., etc., and the lake of radical leaves, down to the latest oaks! I might get the impression of their veins and outlines in the summer with lampblack, and after color them.

Nov. 24. At noon, after a drizzling forenoon, the weather suddenly changed to clear and wintry, freezing cold with strong wind from a northerly quarter. It seems like the beginning of winter. Ice forms in my boat at 5 P.M., and what was mud in the street is fast becoming a rigid roughness.

Nov. 27. Now a man will eat his heart, if ever, now while the earth is bare, barren and cheerless, and we have the coldness of winter

without the variety of ice and snow; but methinks the variety and compensation are in the stars now. How bright they are now by contrast with the dark earth! The days are short enough now. The sun is already setting before I have reached the ordinary limit of my walk, but the 21st of next month the day will be shorter still by about twenty-five minutes.

It is too cold to-day to use a paddle; the water freezes on the handle and numbs my fingers.

Dec. 5. P.M. — Got my boat in. The river frozen over thinly in most places and whitened with snow, which was sprinkled on it this noon.

It is a startling thought that the Assyrian king who with so much pains recorded his exploits in stone at Nineveh, that the story might come down to a distant generation, has indeed succeeded by those means which he used. All was not vanity, quite.

DEC. 10. Another still more glorious day, if possible; Indian-summery even. These are among the finest days in the year, on account of the wholesome bracing coolness and clearness.

Paddled Cheney's boat up Assabet.

Passed in some places between shooting ice-crystals, extending from both sides of the stream. Upon the thinnest black ice-crystals, just cemented, was the appearance of broad fern leaves, or ostrich-plumes, or flat fir trees with branches bent down. The surface was far from even, rather in sharp-edged plaits or folds. The form of the crystals was oftenest that of low, flattish, three-sided pyramids; when the base was very broad the apex was imperfect, with many irregular rosettes of small and perfect pyramids, the largest with bases equal to two or three inches. All this appeared to advantage only while the ice (one twelfth of an inch thick, perhaps) rested on the black water.

What I write about at home I understand so well, comparatively! and I write with such repose and freedom from exaggeration.

Dec. 22. Surveying the last three days. They have not yielded much that I am aware of. All I find is old bound-marks, and the slowness and dullness of farmers reconfirmed. They even complain

that I walk too fast for them. This coarse and hurried outdoor work compels me to live grossly or be inattentive to my diet; that is the worst of it. Like work, like diet; that, I find, is the rule. Left to my chosen pursuits, I should never drink tea nor coffee, nor eat meat. The diet of any class or generation is the natural result of its employment and locality. It is remarkable how unprofitable it is for the most part to talk with farmers. They commonly stand on their good behavior and attempt to moralize or philosophize in a serious conversation. Sportsmen and loafers are better company. For society a man must not be too *good* or well-disposed, to spoil his natural disposition. The bad are frequently good enough to let you see how bad they are, but the good as frequently endeavor to get between you and themselves.

I have dined out five times and tea'd once within a week. Four times there was tea on the dinner-table, always meat, but once baked beans, always pie, but no puddings. I suspect tea has taken the place of cider with farmers. I am reminded of Haydon the painter's experience when he went about painting the nobility. I go about to the houses of the farmers and squires in like manner. This is my portrait-painting, — when I would fain be employed on higher subjects. I have offered myself much more earnestly as a lecturer than a surveyor. Yet I do not get any employment as a lecturer; was not invited to lecture once last winter, and only once (without pay) this winter. But I can get surveying enough, which a hundred others in this county can do as well as I, though it is not boasting much to say that a hundred others in New England cannot lecture as well as I on my themes. But they who do not make the highest demand on you shall rue it. It is because they make a low demand on themselves. All the while that they use only your humbler faculties, your higher unemployed faculties, like an invisible cimetar, are cutting them in twain. Woe be to the generation that lets any higher faculty in its midst go unemployed! That is to deny God and know him not, and he, accordingly, will know not of them.

DEC. 27. High wind with more snow in the night. The snow is damp and covers the panes, darkening the room. At first I did not know that more snow had fallen, it was so drifted. Snowy ridges

cross the village street and make it look as wild and bleak as a pass of the Rocky Mountains or the Sierra Nevada.

P.M. — To Fair Haven Pond up meadows and river.

The snow blows like spray, fifteen feet high, across the fields, while the wind roars in the trees as in the rigging of a vessel. It is altogether like the ocean in a storm. The wind, eddying through and over the wall, is scooping it out in fantastic forms, — shells and troughs and glyphs of all kinds. Sometimes the drift is pierced with many holes as big as one's fist, where the fine snow-drift is passing through like steam. As it flows over, it builds out eaves to the bank of razor sharpness.

It is surprising what things the snow betrays. I had not seen a meadow mouse all summer, but no sooner does the snow come and spread its mantle over the earth than it is printed with the tracks of countless mice and larger animals. I see where the mouse has dived into a little hole in the snow, not larger than my thumb, by the side of a weed, and a yard further reappeared again, and so on alternately above and beneath. A snug life it lives. The crows come nearer to the houses, alight on trees by the roadside, apparently being put to it for food. I saw them yesterday also.

The wind has now shaken the snow from the trees, and it lies in irregular little heaps on the snow beneath, except that there is a white ridge up and down their trunks on the northwest side, showing which side the storm came from, which, better than the moss, would enable one to find his way in the night. It is a true winter sunset, almost cloudless, clear, cold indigo-y along the horizon. The evening (?) star is seen shining brightly, before the twilight has begun. A rosy tint suffuses the eastern horizon. The outline of the mountains is wonderfully distinct and hard, and they are a dark blue and very near. Wachusett looks like a right whale over our bow, plowing the continent, with his flukes well down. He has a vicious look, as if he had a harpoon in him.

I wish that I could buy at the shops some kind of india-rubber that would rub out at once all that in my writing which it now costs me so many perusals, so many months if not years, and so much reluctance, to erase.

Dec. 29. All day a driving snow-storm, imprisoning most, stopping the cars, blocking up the roads. No school to-day. I cannot see a house fifty rods off from my window through; yet in midst of all I see a bird, probably a tree sparrow, partly blown, partly flying, over the house to alight in a field. The snow penetrates through the smallest crevices under doors and side of windows.

P.M. — Tried my snow-shoes. They sink deeper than I expected, and I throw the snow upon my back. When I returned, twenty minutes after, my great tracks were not to be seen. It is the worst snow-storm to bear that I remember. The strong wind from the north blows the snow almost horizontally, and, beside freezing you, almost takes your breath away. The driving snow blinds you, and where you are protected, you can see but little way, it is so thick. Yet in spite, or on account, of all, I see the first flock of arctic snowbirds (*Emberiza nivalis*) near the depot, white and black, with a sharp, whistle-like note. An hour after I discovered half a pint of snow in each pocket of my greatcoat.

What a contrast between the village street now and last summer! The leafy elms then resounding with the warbling vireo, robins, bluebirds, and the fiery hangbird, etc., to which the villagers, kept indoors by the heat, listen through open lattices. Now it is like a street in Nova Zembla, — if they were to have any there. I wade to the post-office as solitary a traveller as ordinarily in a wood-path in winter. The snow is mid-leg deep, while drifts as high as one's head are heaped against the houses and fences, and here and there range across the street like snowy mountains. There is not a track leading from any door to indicate that the inhabitants have been forth to-day, any more than there is track of any quadruped by the wood-paths. It is all pure untrodden snow, banked up against the houses now at 4 P.M., and no evidence that a villager has been abroad to-day. In one place the drift covers the front-yard fence and stretches thence upward to the top of the front door, shutting all in, and frequently the snow lies banked up three or four feet high against the front doors, and the windows are all snowed up, and there is a drift over each window, and the clapboards are all hoary with it. It is as if the inhabitants were all frozen to death, and now you threaded the desolate streets weeks after that calamity. Yet they are warmer,

merrier than ever there within. At the post-office they ask each traveller news of the cars,— “Is there any train up or down?” — or how deep the snow is on a level.

The thoughts and associations of summer and autumn are now as completely departed from our minds as the leaves are blown from the trees. Some withered deciduous ones are left to rustle, and our cold immortal evergreens. Some lichenous thoughts still adhere to us.

Dec. 31. Walden froze completely over last night. It is, however, all snow ice, as it froze while it was snowing hard, and it looks like frozen yeast somewhat. I waded about in the woods through the snow, which certainly averaged considerably more than two feet deep where I went. It stuck to my clothes and melted, and so was more inconvenient than yesterday. Saw probably an otter’s track, very broad and deep, as if a log had been drawn along. It was nearly as obvious as a man’s track. It was made before last night’s snow fell. The creature from time to time went beneath the snow for a few feet, to the leaves. This animal probably I should never see the least trace of, were it not for the snow, the great revealer.

1854

Jan. 1. The drifts mark the standstill or equilibrium between the currents of air or particular winds. In our greatest snow-storms, the wind being northerly, the greatest drifts are on the south sides of the houses and fences and accordingly on the left-hand side of the street going down it. I notice that in the angle made by our house and shed, a southwest exposure, the snow-drift does not lie close about the pump, but is a foot off, forming a circular bowl, showing that there was an eddy about it. It shows where the wind has been, the form of the wind. The snow is like a mould, showing the form of the eddying currents of air which have been impressed on it, while the drift and all the rest is that which fell between the currents or where they counterbalanced each other. These boundary lines are mountain barriers.

The snow is the great betrayer. It not only shows the tracks of mice, otters, etc., etc., which else we should rarely if ever see, but the tree sparrows are more plainly seen against its white ground, and they in turn are attracted by the dark weeds which it reveals. It also drives the crows and other birds out of the woods to the villages for food. If one could detect the meaning of the snow, would he not be on the trail of some higher life that has been abroad in the night? Are there not hunters who seek for something higher than foxes? Is the great snow of use to the hunter only, and not to the saint, or him who is earnestly building up a life? Do the Indian and hunter only need snow-shoes, while the saint sits indoors in embroidered slippers?

The Indians might have imagined a large snow bunting to be the genius of the storm.

This morning it is snowing again fast, and about six inches has already fallen by 10 A.M., of a moist and heavy snow.

I would fain be a fisherman, hunter, farmer, preacher, etc., but fish, hunt, farm, preach other things than usual.

Jan. 2. I noticed yesterday that the damp snow, falling gently without wind on the top of front-yard posts, had quite changed the style of their architecture, — to the dome style of the East, a four-

sided base becoming a dome at top. I observe other revelations made by the snow. The team and driver have long since gone by, but I see the marks of his whip-lash on the snow, — its recoil, — but alas! these are not a complete tally of the strokes which fell upon the oxen's back. The unmerciful driver thought perchance that no one saw him, but unwittingly he recorded each blow on the unspotted snow behind his back as in the book of life. To more searching eyes the marks of his lash are in the air.

Jan. 9. P.M. — To Heywood's Pond with Tappan.

T. has a singularly elastic step. He will run through the snow, lifting his knees like a child who enjoys the motion. When he slumped once through to water and called my attention to it, with an indescribable flash of his eye, he reminded me forcibly of Hawthorne's little son Julian. He used the greatest economy in speech of any man I know. Speaks low, beside, and without emphasis; in monosyllables. I cannot guess what the word was for a long time.

Jan. 10. When we were walking last evening, Tappan admired the soft rippling of the Assabet under Tarbell's bank. One could have lain all night under the oaks there listening to it. Westward forty rods, the surface of the stream reflected a silvery whiteness, but gradually darkened thence eastward, till beneath us it was almost quite black.

What you can recall of a walk on the second day will differ from what you remember on the first day, as the mountain chain differs in appearance, looking back the next day, from the aspect it wore when you were at its base, or generally, as any view changes to one who is journeying amid mountains when he has increased the distance.

With Tappan, his speech is frequently so frugal and reserved, in monosyllables not fairly uttered clear of his thought, that I doubt if he did not cough merely, or let it pass for such, instead of asking what he said or meant, for fear it might turn out that he coughed merely.

I mistook the creaking of a tree in the woods the other day for the scream of a hawk. How numerous the resemblances of the animate to

the inanimate!

Jan. 11. The north side of all stubble, weeds, and trees, and the whole forest is covered with a hoar frost a quarter to a half inch deep. It is easily shaken off. The air is still full of mist. No snow has fallen, but, as it were, the vapor has been caught by the trees like a cobweb. The trees are bright hoary forms, the ghosts of trees. In fact, the warm breath of the earth is frozen on its beard. Closely examined or at a distance, it is just like the sheaf-like forms of vegetation and the diverging crystals on the window-panes. Even birds' nests have a white beard.

Birches, especially, are the trees for these hoar frosts and also for glazes. They are so thickly twigged and of such graceful forms and attitudes. I can distinguish a birch now further off than ever. As I stand by its north side (Hubbard's Grove), almost the whole forest is concealed by the hoar frost. It is as if the mist had been caught on an invisible net spread in the air. Yet the white is tinged with the ground color of reddish oak leaves and even green pine-needles. Nature is now gone into her winter palace.

The humblest weed is indescribably beautiful, of purest white and richest form. The hogweed becomes a fairy's wand. The blue-curls, rising from bare gray sand, is perhaps particularly beautiful. Every part of the plant is concealed. Its expression is changed or greatly enriched by this exaggeration or thickening of the mere linear original. It is an exquisitely delicate frost plant, trembling like swan's-down. As if Nature had sprinkled her breast with down this cold season. The character of each tree and weed is rendered with spirit, — the pine plumes and the cedar spires. All this you see going from north to south; but, going the other way (*perchance?*), you might not be struck with the aspect of the woods.

Jan. 13. I saw yesterday my snow-shoe tracks quite distinct, though made January 2d. Though they pressed the snow down four or five inches, they consolidated it, and it now endures and is two or three inches above the general level there, and more white.

Jan. 14. Cato makes the vineyard of first importance to a farm;

second, a well-watered garden; third, a willow plantation (*salictum*); fourth, an olive-yard (*oletum*); fifth, a meadow or grass ground (?) (*pratum*); sixth, a grain-field ortillage (?) (*campus frumentarius*); seventh, a copsewood (?) for fuel (?) (*silva caedua*) (Varro speaks of planting and cultivating this); eighth, an arbustum (Columella says it is a plantation of elms, etc., for vines to rest on) (*arbustum*); ninth, a wood that yields mast (*glandaria silva*). He says elsewhere the *arbustum* yields *ligna et virgae*.

He says: "In earliest manhood the master of a family must study to plant his ground; as for building he must think a long time about it (*diu cogitare*); he must not think about planting, but do it. When he gets to be thirty-six years old, then let him build, if he has his ground planted. So build, that the villa may not have to seek the farm, nor the farm the villa." This contains sound advice, as pertinent now as ever.

"If you have done one thing late, you will do all your work late," says Cato to the farmer.

Jan. 22. Once or twice of late I have seen the mother-o'-pearl tints and rainbow flocks in the western sky. The usual time is when the air is clear and pretty cool, about an hour before sundown. Yesterday I saw a very permanent specimen, like a long knife-handle of mother-of-pearl, very pale with an interior blue and rosaceous tinges. Methinks the summer sky never exhibits this so finely.

When I was at C.'s the other evening, he punched his cat with the poker because she purred too loud for him.

No second snow-storm in the winter can be so fair and interesting as the first. Last night was very windy, and to-day I see the dry oak leaves collected in thick beds in the little hollows of the snow-crust. These later falls of the leaf.

Jan. 27. I have an old account-book, found in Deacon R. Brown's garret since his death. The first leaf or two is gone. Its cover is brown paper, on which, amid many marks and scribblings, I find written: —

"Mr. Ephraim Jones

His Wast Book

Anno Domini

1742”

It extends from November 8th, 1742, to June 20th, 1743 (inclusive). It appears without doubt from the contents of this book that he is the one of whom Shattuck writes in his history that he “married Mary Hayward, 1728, and died November 29th, 1756, aged 51; having been captain, town-clerk, and otherwise distinguished.” His father’s name was Ephraim, and he had a son Ephraim. The entries are made apparently by himself, or a boy, or his wife, or some other when he was out. The book is filled with familiar Concord names, the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of the present generation. Dr. Hartshorn — he lived to be ninety-two — and Dr. Temple send to the store once or twice. It is more important now what was bought than who bought it.

The articles most commonly bought were mohair (commonly with buttons) (a kind of twist to sew on buttons with), rum (often only a gill to drink at the store), — more of these than anything; salt, molasses, shalloon, fish, calico, some sugar, a castor hat, almanac, psalter (and sometimes primer and testament), paper, knee-buckles and shoe-buckles, garters and spurs by the pair, deer skins, a fan, a cart whip, various kinds of cloth and trimmings, — as half-thick, osnaburg, a very little silk, ferret, quality, serge for breeches, etc., etc., — gloves, a spring knife, an ink-horn, a gun, cap, spice, a pocket case, timber, iron, etc., earthenware; no tea (?) (I am in doubt about one or perhaps two entries), nor coffee, nor meal, nor flour. Of the last two they probably raised all they wanted. Credit is frequently given for timber and once for cloth brought to the store.

On the whole, it is remarkable how little provision was sold at the store. The inhabitants raised almost everything for themselves. Chocolate is sold once. Rum, salt, molasses, fish, a biscuit with their drink, a little spice, and the like are all that commonly come under this head that I remember.

On a loose piece of paper is a bill for “todey,” “a bowl of punch,” etc., and on another piece is Jonathan Dwight’s (innholder’s?) bill

against the Estate of Capt. Ephraim Jones for entertainment, etc., etc. (apparently he treated his company) at divers times for half a dozen years, amounting to over £146. One entry is "Dea Brown to flip & rum."

The people apparently made their own cloth and even thread, and hence for the most part bought only buttons and mohair and a few trimmings.

Feb. 1, 1742. "Town of Concord Dr to sundry for the funerel of Widow Williams daughter to 5 pr gloves @ 1/9 1 DP. @ 2/1 ½ 0– 10–10½ " Jan. 10, 1742 (3). "Jona Edes to 3 Raccoon skins @ 2/9 2 minks @ 1/6 4 musquash @ / 3½ 0–12– 5 " Jan. 18, 1742 (3). "John Melven Cr by 1 Grey fox 0– 2– 3 " Feb. 14, 1742 (3). "Aaron Parker Cr by 100 squirell skins 0– 6– 3 " Deer skins were sold at from ten to seventeen shillings. Sometimes it is written "old" or "new tenor."

Many of the customers came from as far as Harvard, or much farther.

A fan, a jack-knife, or a pair of garters are much more important relatively to the other goods sold than now.

No butter, nor rice, nor oil, nor candles are sold. They must have made their own butter and done without rice. There is no more authentic history of those days than this "Wast Book" contains, and, being money matters, it is more explicit than almost any other statement; something *must* be said. Each line contains and states explicitly a fact. It is the best of evidence of several facts. It tells distinctly and authoritatively who sold, who bought, the article, amount, and value, and the date. You could not easily crowd more facts into one line. You are warned when the doctor or deacon had a new suit of clothes, by the charge for mohair, buttons, and trimmings, or a castor hat; and here also is entered the rum which ran down their very throats.

Jan. 29. A very cold morning. Thermometer, or mercury, 18° below zero.

The village is the place to which the roads tend, a sort of expansion of the highway, as a lake of a river, the thoroughfare and ordinary of travellers, a trivial or quadrivial place. It is the body of

which roads are the arms and legs. It is from the Latin *villa*, which, together with *via* (a way), or more anciently *vea* and *vella*, Varro derives from *veho* (to carry), because the villa is the place to and from which things are carried. And whence the Latin *vilis* and our word *villain* (?). The inhabitants are way-worn by the travel that goes by and over them without travelling themselves.

Jan. 30. This morning, though not so cold by a degree or two as yesterday morning, the cold has got more into the house, and the frost visits nooks never known to be visited before. The sheets are frozen about the sleeper's face; the teamster's beard is white with ice. Last night I felt it stinging cold as I came up the street at 9 o'clock; it bit my ears and face, but the stars shone all the brighter. The windows are all closed up with frost, as if they were ground glass.

The winter, cold and bound out as it is, is thrown to us like a bone to a famishing dog, and we are expected to get the marrow out of it. While the milkmen in the outskirts are milking so many scores of cows before sunrise these winter mornings, it is our task to milk the winter itself. It is true it is like a cow that is dry, and our fingers are numb, and there is none to wake us up. But the winter was not given to us for no purpose. We must thaw its cold with our genialness. If it is a cold and hard season, its fruit, no doubt, is the more concentrated and nutty.

Shall we take refuge in cities in November? Shall the nut fall green from the tree? Let not the year be disappointed of its crop. I knew a crazy man who walked into an empty pulpit one Sunday and, taking up a hymn-book, remarked: "We have had a good fall for getting in corn and potatoes. Let us sing Winter." So I say, "Let us sing winter." What else can we sing, and our voices be in harmony with the season?

Jan. 31. The wind is more southerly, and now the warmth of the sun prevails, and is felt on the back. The snow softens and melts. It is a beautiful clear and mild winter day. Our washwoman says she is proud of it. But I do not melt; there is no thaw in me; I am bound out still.

Feb. 2. Up river on ice to Clematis Brook.

Another warm, melting day, like yesterday. You can see some softening and relenting in the sky.

Already we begin to anticipate spring, and this is an important difference between this time and a month ago. We begin to say that the day is springlike.

Is not January the hardest month to get through? When you have weathered that, you get into the gulf-stream of winter, nearer the shores of spring.

Feb. 9. My ink was frozen last month, and is now pale.

Is not January alone pure winter? December belongs to the fall; is a wintry November: February, to the spring; it is a snowy March.

Feb. 12. Another cold morning. The snow-fleas look like little patches of rust on the ice.

At first, in clear cold weather, we may be walking on dry snow, which we cronch with squeaking sound under our feet. Then comes a thaw, and we slump about in slosh half a foot deep. Then, in a single night, the surface of the earth is all dried and stiffened, and we stagger over the rough, frozen ground and ice on which it is torture to walk. It becomes quite a study how a man will shoe himself for a winter. For outdoor life in winter, I use three kinds of shoes or boots: first and chiefly, for the ordinary dry snows or bare ground, cowhide boots; secondly, for shallow thaws, half-shoe depth, and spring weather, light boots and india-rubbers; third, for the worst sloshy weather, about a week in the year, india-rubber boots.

P.M. — Skate to Pantry Brook.

I was not aware till I came out how pleasant a day it was. It was very cold this morning, and I have been putting on wood in vain to warm my chamber, and lo! I come forth, and am surprised to find it warm and pleasant. There is very little wind, here under Fair Haven especially. I begin to dream of summer even. I take off my mittens.

To make a perfect winter day like this, you must have a clear, sparkling air, with a sheen from the snow, sufficient cold, little or no wind; and the warmth must come directly from the sun. It must not

be a thawing warmth. The tension of nature must not be relaxed.

The sun being low, I see as I skate, reflected from the surface of the ice, flakes of rainbow somewhat like cobwebs, where the great slopes of the crystallization fall at the right angle, six inches or a foot across, but at so small an angle with the horizon that they had seemed absolutely flat and level before. Think of this kind of mosaic and tessellation for your floor! A floor made up of surfaces not absolutely level, — though level to the touch of the feet and to the noonday eye, — composed of crystals variously set, but just enough inclined to reflect the colors of the rainbow when the sun gets low.

In an ordinary snow-storm, when snowing fast, Jan. 1st, '54, I can see E. Wood's house, or about a mile.

Feb. 16. Saw two large hawks circling over the woods by Walden, hunting, — the first I have seen since December 15th. That Indian trail on the hillside about Walden was revealed with remarkable distinctness to me standing on the middle of the pond, by the slight snow which had lodged on it forming a clear white line unobscured by weeds and twigs. (For snow is a great revealer not only of tracks made in itself, but even in the earth before it fell.) It was quite distinct in many places where you would not have noticed it before. A light snow will often reveal a faint foot or cart track in a field which was hardly discernible before, for it reprints it, as it were, in clear white type, alto-relievo.

Feb. 18. The last part of January and all February thus far have been alternate thaw and freeze and snow. It has more thaws, even as the running "r" (root of =°v) occurs twice in it and but once in January. It does not take so much fuel to keep us warm of late. I begin to think that my wood will last. We begin to have days precursors of spring.

I read some of the speeches in Congress about the Nebraska Bill, — a thing the like of which I have not done for a year. What trifling upon a serious subject!

De Quincey says that "the ancients had no experimental knowledge of severe climates." Neither have the English at home as compared with us of New England, nor we, compared with the

Esquimaux.

This is a common form of the birch scale, — black, I think, — not white, at any rate.

Feb. 19. For several weeks the fall has seemed far behind, spring comparatively near. Yet I cannot say that there is any positive sign of spring yet; only we feel that we are sloping toward it. The sky has sometimes a warmth in its colors more like summer. A few birds have possibly strayed northward further than they have wintered.

The large moths apparently love the neighborhood of water, and are wont to suspend their cocoons over the edge of the meadow and river, places more or less inaccessible, to men at least. I saw the light ash-colored cocoons of the *A. Promethea*, four or five, with the completely withered and faded leaves wrapped around them, and so artfully and admirably secured to the twigs by fine silk wound round the leaf-stalk and the twig, — which last add nothing to its strength, being deciduous, but aid its deception, — they are taken at a little distance for a few curled and withered leaves left on. Each and all such disguises and other resources remind us that not some poor worm's instinct merely, as we call it, but the mind of the universe rather, which we share, has been intended upon each particular object. All the wit in the world was brought to bear on each case to secure its end. It was long ago, in a full senate of all intellects, determined how cocoons had best be suspended, — kindred mind with mine that admires and approves decided it so.

Feb. 20. We have had but one (and that I think was the first) of those gentle moist snows which lodge perfectly on the trees and make perhaps the most beautiful sight of any. Much more common is what we have now, *i.e.* —

Feb. 21. A.M. — A fine, driving snow-storm. Have seen no good samples of the blue in snow this winter. At noon clears up.

Feb. 27. Morning. — Rain over; water in great part run off; wind rising; river risen and meadows flooded.

It looks as if Nature had a good deal of work on her hands

between now and April, to break up and melt twenty-one inches of ice on the ponds, — beside melting all the snow, — and before planting-time to thaw from one to two and a half or three feet of frozen ground.

March 5. Sunday. Channing, talking with Minott the other day about his health, said, "I suppose you'd like to die now." "No," said Minott, "I've toughed it through the winter, and I want to stay and hear the bluebirds once more."

March 8. I wrote a letter for an Irishman night before last, sending for his wife in Ireland to come to this country. One sentence which he dictated was, "Don't mind the rocking of the vessel, but take care of the children that they be not lost overboard."

Lightning this evening, after a day of successive rains.

March 10. Misty rain, rain, — the third day of more or less rain.

It occurs to me that heavy rains and sudden meltings of the snow, such as we had a fortnight ago (February 26th), before the ground is thawed, so that all the water, instead of being soaked up by the ground, flows rapidly into the streams and ponds, is necessary to swell and break them up. If we waited for the direct influence of the sun on the ice and the influence of such water as would reach the river under other circumstances, the spring would be very much delayed. In the violent freshet there is a mechanic force added to the chemic. Saw a skunk in the Corner road, which I followed sixty rods or more. Out now about 4 P.M., — partly because it is a dark, foul day. It is a slender black (and white) animal, with its back remarkably arched, standing high behind and carrying its head low; runs, even when undisturbed, with a singular teeter or undulation, like the walking of a Chinese lady. Very slow; I hardly have to run to keep up with it. It has a long tail, which it regularly erects when I come too near and prepares to discharge its liquid. It has a remarkably long, narrow, pointed head and snout, which enable it to make those deep narrow holes in the earth by which it probes for insects. Its eyes have an innocent, childlike, bluish-black expression. It made a singular loud patting sound repeatedly, on the frozen

ground under the wall, undoubtedly with its fore feet (I saw only the upper part of the animal), which reminded me of what I have heard about your stopping and stamping in order to stop the skunk. Probably it has to do with its getting its food, — patting the earth to get the insects or worms. Though why it did so then I know not.

March 13. To Boston.

Bought a telescope to-day for eight dollars.

P.M. — To Great Meadows.

Counted over forty robins with my glass in the meadow north of Sleepy Hollow, in the grass and on the snow. A large company of fox-colored sparrows in Heywood's maple swamp close by.

March 30. 6 A.M. — To Island.

First still hour since the afternoon of the 17th. March truly came in like a lamb and went out like a lion this year. Remarkably and continuously pleasant weather from the very first day till the 18th. Apparently an early spring, — buds and birds well advanced, — then suddenly very severe cold and high winds cold enough to skim the river over in broad places at night, and commencing with the greatest and most destructive gale for many a year, felt far and wide; and it has never ceased to blow since till this morning. Vegetation is accordingly put back.

April 1. April has begun like itself. It is warm and showery, while I sail away with a light southwest wind toward the Rock. Sometimes the sun seems just ready to burst out, yet I know it will not. The meadow resounds with the sprayey notes of blackbirds. The birds sing this warm, showery day after a fortnight's cold (yesterday was wet too), with a universal burst and flood of melody. The lines of sawdust from Barrett's mill at different heights on the steep, wet bank under the hemlocks rather enhance the impression of freshness and wildness, as if it were a new country.

April 5. These days, when a soft west or southwest wind blows and it is truly warm, and an outside coat is oppressive, — these bring out the butterflies and the frogs, and the marsh hawks which prey on

the last. Just so simple is every year. Whatever year it may be, I am surveying, perhaps, in the woods; I have taken off my outside coat, perhaps for the first time, and hung it on a tree; the zephyr is positively agreeable on my cheek; I am thinking what an elysian day it is, and how I seem always to be keeping the flocks of Admetus such days — that is my luck; when I hear a single, short, well-known stertorous croak from some pool half filled with dry leaves.

April 8. At Nut Meadow Brook saw, or rather heard, a muskrat plunge into the brook before me, and saw him endeavoring in vain to bury himself in the sandy bottom, looking like an amphibious animal. I stooped and, taking him by his tail, which projected, tossed him ashore. He did not lose the points of compass, but turned directly to the brook again, though it was toward me, and, plunging in, buried himself in the mud, and that was the last I saw of him.

Hazel, the very first male, open.

I find that I can criticise my composition best when I stand at a little distance from it, — when I do not see it, for instance. I make a little chapter of contents which enables me to recall it page by page to my mind, and judge it more impartially when my manuscript is out of the way. The distraction of surveying enables me rapidly to take new points of view. A day or two surveying is equal to a journey.

April 10. April rain. How sure a rain is to bring the tree sparrows into the yard, to sing sweetly, canary-like!

I bought me a spy-glass some weeks since. I buy but few things, and those not till long after I begin to want them, so that when I do get them I am prepared to make a perfect use of them and extract their whole sweet.

April 13. The golden-brown tassels of the alder are very rich now. The poplar (*tremuloides*) by Miles's Swamp has been out — *the earliest catkins* — maybe two or three days. On the evening of the 5th the body of a man was found in the river between Fair Haven Pond and Lee's, much wasted. How these events disturb our associations and tarnish the landscape! It is a serious injury done to a

stream. One or two crowfoots on Lee's Cliff, fully out, surprise me like a flame bursting from the russet ground. The saxifrage is pretty common, ahead of the crowfoot now.

April 15. Morning. — Snow and snowing; four inches deep. Yesterday was very cold. Now, I trust, it will come down and out of the air. Many birds must be hard put to it.

April 17. Snows again.

It is remarkable how the American mind runs to statistics. Consider the number of meteorological observers and other annual phenomena. The Smithsonian Institution is a truly national institution. Every shopkeeper makes a record of the arrival of the first martin or bluebird to his box. Dodd, the broker, told me last spring that he knew when the first bluebird came to his boxes, he made a memorandum of it: John Brown, merchant, tells me this morning that the martins first came to his box on the 13th, he "made a minute of it." Beside so many entries in their day-books and ledgers, they record these things.

April 19. Do I ever see the marsh hawk? Is it not the sharp-shinned which I have mistaken for it? A man came to me yesterday to offer me as a naturalist a two-headed calf which his cow had brought forth, but I felt nothing but disgust at the idea and began to ask myself what enormity I had committed to have such an offer made to me. I am not interested in mere phenomena, though it were the explosion of a planet, only as it may have lain in the experience of a human being.

April 20. I find some advantage in describing the experience of a day on the day following. At this distance it is more ideal, like the landscape seen with the head inverted, or reflections in water.

April 23. Saw my white-headed eagle again, first at the same place, the outlet of Fair Haven Pond. It was a fine sight, he is mainly — *i.e.* his wings and body — so black against the sky, and they contrast so strongly with his white head and tail. Lying on the ground

with my glass, I could watch him very easily, and by turns he gave me all possible views of himself. When I observed him edgewise I noticed that the tips of his wings curved upward slightly the more, like a stereotyped undulation. He rose very high at last, till I almost lost him in the clouds, circling or rather *looping* along westward, high over river and wood and farm, effectually concealed in the sky. We who live this plodding life here below never know how many eagles fly over us. They are concealed in the empyrean. I think I have got the worth of my glass now that it has revealed to me the white-headed eagle. Now I see him edgewise like a black ripple in the air, his white head still as ever turned to earth, and now he turns his under side to me, and I behold the full breadth of his broad black wings, somewhat ragged at the edges.

May 6. P.M. — To epigæa *via* Clamshell Hill.

There is no such thing as pure *objective* observation. Your observation, to be interesting, *i.e.* to be significant, must be *subjective*. The sum of what the writer of whatever class has to report is simply some human experience, whether he be poet or philosopher or man of science. The man of most science is the man most alive, whose life is the greatest event. Senses that take cognizance of outward things merely are of no avail. It matters not where or how far you travel, — the farther commonly the worse, — but how much alive you are. If it is possible to conceive of an event outside to humanity, it is not of the slightest significance, though it were the explosion of a planet. No mere willful activity whatever, whether in writing verses or collecting statistics, will produce true poetry or science. If you are really a sick man, it is indeed to be regretted, for you cannot accomplish so much as if you were well. All that a man has to say or do that can possibly concern mankind, is in some shape or other to tell the story of his love, — to sing; and, if he is fortunate and keeps alive, he will be forever in love. This alone is to be alive to the extremities. It is a pity that this divine creature should ever suffer from cold feet; a still greater pity that the coldness so often reaches to his heart. I look over the report of the doings of a scientific association and am surprised that there is so little life to be reported; I am put off with a parcel of dry technical terms. Anything living is

easily and naturally expressed in popular language. I cannot help suspecting that the life of these learned professors has been almost as inhuman and wooden as a rain-gauge or self-registering magnetic machine. They communicate no fact which rises to the temperature of blood-heat. It does n't all amount to one rhyme.

Dandelions, perhaps the first, yesterday. This flower makes a great show, — a sun itself in the grass. How emphatic it is! You cannot but observe it set in the liquid green grass even at a distance. I am surprised that the sight of it does not affect me more, but I look at it as unmoved as if but a day had elapsed since I saw it in the fall.

May 7. Flowers, *e.g.* willow and hazel catkins, are self-registering indicators of *fair* weather. I remember how I waited for the hazel catkins to become relaxed and shed their pollen, but they delayed, till at last there came a pleasanter and warmer day and I took off my greatcoat while surveying in the woods, and then, when I went to dinner at noon, hazel catkins in full flower were dangling from the banks by the roadside and yellowed my clothes with their pollen. If man is thankful for the serene and warm day, much more are the flowers.

May 8. P.M. — By boat to Fair Haven.

It is long since I have sailed on so broad a tide. How dead would the globe seem, especially at this season, if it were not for these water surfaces! We are slow to realize water, — the beauty and magic of it. It is interestingly strange to us forever. Immortal water, alive even in the superficies, restlessly heaving now and tossing me and my boat, and sparkling with life! I look round with a thrill on this bright fluctuating surface on which no man can walk, whereon is no trace of footstep, unstained as glass. When I got off this end of the Hollowell place I found myself in quite a sea with a smacking wind directly aft. I felt no little exhilaration, mingled with a slight awe, as I drove before this strong wind over the great black-backed waves I judged to be at least twenty inches or two feet high, cutting through them, and heard their surging and felt them toss me. I was even obliged to head across them and not get into their troughs, for then I could hardly keep my legs. They were crested with a dirty-white

foam and were ten or twelve feet from crest to crest. They were so black, — as no sea I have seen, — large and powerful, and made such a roaring around me, that I could not but regard them as gambolling monsters of the deep. They were *melainai* — what is the Greek for waves? This is our black sea. You see a *perfectly black* mass about two feet high and perhaps four or five feet thick and of indefinite length, round-backed, or perhaps forming a sharp ridge with a dirty-white crest, tumbling like a whale unceasingly before you. Only one of the epithets which the poets have applied to the color of the sea will apply to this water, — *melaina*, m°laina yãlassa. I was delighted to find that our usually peaceful river could toss me so. How much more exciting than to be planting potatoes with those men in the field! What a different world!

May 13. The portion of the peach trees in bloom in our garden shows the height of the snow-drifts in the winter.

May 15. Have just been looking at Nuttall's "North American Sylva." Much research, fine plates and print and paper, and unobjectionable periods, but no turpentine, or balsam, or quercitron, or salicin, or birch wine, or the aroma of the balm-of-Gilead, no gallic, or ulmic, or even malic acid. The plates are greener and higher-colored than the words, etc., etc. It is sapless, if not leafless.

May 16. On Hubbard's meadow, saw a motion in the water as if a pickerel had darted away; approached and saw a middle-sized snapping turtle on the bottom; managed at last, after stripping off my coat and rolling up my shirt-sleeve, by thrusting in my arm to the shoulder, to get him by the tail and lift him aboard. He tried to get under the boat. He snapped at my shoe and got the toe in his mouth. His back was covered with green moss (?), or the like, mostly concealing the scales. In this were small leeches. Great, rough, but not hard, scales on his legs. He made a pretty loud hissing like a cross dog, by his breathing. It was wonderful how suddenly this sluggish creature would snap at anything. As he lay under the seat, I scratched his back, and, filling himself with air and rage, his head would suddenly fly upward, his shell striking the seat, just as a steel

trap goes off, and though I was prepared for it, it never failed to startle me, it was so swift and sudden. He slowly inflated himself, and then suddenly went off like a percussion lock snapping the air. Thus undoubtedly he catches fishes, as a toad catches flies. His laminated tail and great triangular points in the rear edge of his shell. Nature does not forget beauty of outline even in a mud turtle's shell.

May 17. 5.30 A.M. — To Island.

I found a large snapping turtle on the bottom. He appeared of a dirty brown there, very nearly the color of the bottom at present. With his great head, as big as an infant's, and his vigilant eyes as he paddled about on the bottom in his attempts to escape, he looked not merely repulsive, but to some extent terrible even as a crocodile. At length, after thrusting my arm in up to the shoulder two or three times, I succeeded in getting him into the boat, where I secured him with a lever under a seat. I could get him from the landing to the house only by turning him over and drawing him by the tail, the hard crests of which afforded a good hold; for he was so heavy that I could not hold him off so far as to prevent his snapping at my legs. He weighed thirty and a half pounds.

Extreme length of shell 15½ inches Length of shell in middle 15 inches Greatest width of shell (This was toward the rear.) 12½ inches Tail (beyond shell) 11½ inches His head and neck it was not easy to measure, but, judging from the proportions of one described by Storer, they must have been 10 inches long at least, which makes the whole length 37 inches. Width of head 4½ inches; with the skin of the neck, more than 5. He had a very ugly and spiteful face (with a vigilant gray eye, which was never shut in any position of the head), surrounded by the thick and ample folds of the skin about his neck. His shell was comparatively smooth and free from moss, — a dirty black. He was a *dirty* or speckled white beneath. He made the most remarkable and awkward appearance when walking. The edge of his shell was lifted about eight inches from the ground, tilting now to this side, then to that, his great scaly legs or flippers hanging with flesh and loose skin, — slowly and gravely (?) hissing the while. His walking was perfectly elephantine. Thus he stalked along, — a low conical mountain, — dragging his tail, with his head turned upward

with the ugliest and most venomous look, on his flippers, half leg half fin. But he did not proceed far before he sank down to rest. If he could support a world on his back when lying down, he certainly could not stand up under it. All said that he walked like an elephant. When lying on his back, showing his *dirty* white and warty under side, with his tail curved round, he reminded you forcibly of pictures of the dragon. He could not easily turn himself back; tried many times in vain, resting betweenwhiles. Would inflate himself and convulsively spring with head and all upward, so as to lift his shell from the ground, and he would strike his head on the ground lift up his shell, and catch at the earth with his claws.

The turtle was very sluggish, though capable of putting forth great strength. He would just squeeze into a flour barrel and would not quite lie flat in it when his head and tail were drawn in. I hear of a man who injured his back seriously for many years by carrying one some distance at arm's length to prevent his biting him. They are frequently seen fighting and their shells heard striking together.

The turtle's snapping impressed me as something mechanical, like a spring, as if there were no volition about it. Its very suddenness seemed too great for a conscious movement. Perhaps in these cold-blooded and sluggish animals there is a near approach to the purely material and mechanical. Their very tenacity of life seems to be owing to their insensibility or small amount of life, — indeed, to be an irritation of the muscles. One man tells me of a turtle's head which, the day after it was cut off, snapped at a dog's tail and made him run off yelping, and I have witnessed something similar myself. I can think of nothing but a merely animated jaw, as it were a piece of mechanism.

Observed a rill emptying in above the stone-heaps, and afterward saw where it ran out of June-berry Meadow, and I considered how surely it would have conducted me to the meadow, if I had traced it up. I was impressed as it were by the intelligence of the brook, which for ages in the wildest regions, before science is born, knows so well the level of the ground and through whatever woods or other obstacles finds its way. Who shall distinguish between the *law* by which a brook finds its river, the *instinct* by which a bird performs its migrations, and the *knowledge* by which a man steers his ship round

the globe? The globe is the richer for the variety of its inhabitants.

Saw a large gray squirrel near the split rock in the Assabet. He went skipping up the limb of one tree and down the limb of another, his great gray rudder undulating through the air, and occasionally hid himself behind the main stem. The *Salix nigra* will open to-morrow.

May 23. We soon get through with Nature. She excites an expectation which she cannot satisfy. The merest child which has rambled into a copsewood dreams of a wilderness so wild and strange and inexhaustible as Nature can never show him. I expected a fauna more infinite and various, birds of more dazzling colors and more celestial song. How many springs shall I continue to see the common sucker (*Catostomus Bostoniensis*) floating dead on our river! Will not Nature select her types from a new fount? This earth which is spread out like a map around me is but the lining of my inmost soul exposed. In me is the sucker that I see. No wholly extraneous object can compel me to recognize it. I am guilty of suckers. I go about to look at flowers and listen to the birds. There was a time when the beauty and the music were all within, and I sat and listened to my thoughts, and there was a song in them. I sat for hours on rocks and wrestled with the melody which possessed me. When you walked with a joy which knew not its own origin. Man *should be* the harp articulate. When your cords were tense.

May 29. These days it is left to one Mr. Loring to say whether a citizen of Massachusetts is a slave or not. Does any one think that Justice or God awaits Mr. Loring's decision? Such a man's existence in this capacity under these circumstances is as impertinent as the gnat that settles on my paper. We do not ask him to make up his mind, but to make up his pack. Why, the United States Government never performed an act of justice in its life!

It is really the trial of Massachusetts. Every moment that she hesitates to set this man free, she is convicted. The Commissioner on her case is God. Perhaps the most saddening aspect of the matter is the tone of almost all the Boston papers, connected with the fact that they are and have been of course sustained by a majority of their readers. They are feeble indeed, but only as sin compared with

righteousness and truth. They are eminently time-serving. I never look at them except at such a time as this. Their life is abject even as that of the marines. Will mankind never learn that policy is not morality, that it never secures any moral right, but always considers merely what is "expedient," — chooses the available candidate, who, when moral right is concerned, is always the devil? Witness the President of the United States. I do not vote at the polls. I wish to record my vote here. The majority of the men of the North, and of the South and East and West, are not men of principle. If they vote, they do not send men to Congress on errands of humanity; but, while their brothers and sisters are being scourged and hung for loving liberty, while (insert here all the inhumanities that pandemonium can conceive of), it is the mismanagement of wood and iron and stone and gold which concerns them. Do what you will, O Government, with my mother and brother, my father and sister, I will obey your command to the letter. It will, indeed, grieve me if you hurt them, if you deliver them to overseers to be hunted by hounds, and to be whipped to death; but, nevertheless, I will peaceably pursue my chosen calling on this fair earth, until, perhaps, one day I shall have persuaded you to relent. Such is the attitude, such are the words of Massachusetts. Rather than thus consent to establish hell upon earth, — to be a party to this establishment, — I would touch a match to blow up earth and hell together. As I love my life, I would side with the Light and let the Dark Earth roll from under me, calling my mother and my brother to follow me.

June 5. 6 P.M. — To Cliffs.

Large yellow butterflies with black spots since the 3d. Carrion-flower, maybe a day. Dangle-berry, probably June 3d at Trillium Woods. Now, just before sundown, a nighthawk is circling, imp-like, with undulating, irregular flight over the sprout-land on the Cliff Hill, with an occasional squeak and showing the spots on his wings. He does not circle away from this place, and I associate him with two gray eggs somewhere on the ground beneath and a mate there sitting. I have come to this hill to see the sun go down, to recover sanity and put myself again in relation with Nature. I would fain drink a draft of Nature's serenity. I love to sit here and look off into the broad deep

vale in which the shades of night are beginning to prevail. When the sun has set, the river becomes more white and distinct in the landscape. The caterpillars are and have been very numerous this year. I see large trees (wild cherry and apple) completely stripped of leaves. Some of the latter, twenty or thirty feet high, are full of blossoms without a single leaf. I return by moonlight.

June 9. The mosquitoes encircle my head and torment me, and I see a great moth go fluttering over the tree-tops and the water, black against the sky, like a bat. A full moon.

While the whole military force of the State, if need be, is at the service of a slaveholder, to enable him to carry back a slave, not a soldier is offered to save a citizen of Massachusetts from being kidnapped. Is this what all these arms, all this "training," has been for these seventy-eight years past? What is wanted is men of principle, who recognize a higher law than the decision of the majority. The marines and the militia whose bodies were used lately were not men of sense nor of principle; in a high moral sense they were not *men* at all.

June 15. 5.30 A.M. — To Island and Hill.

A young painted tortoise on the surface of the water, as big as a quarter of a dollar, with a reddish or orange sternum. Found a nest of tortoise eggs, apparently buried last night, which I brought home, ten in all, — one lying wholly on the surface, — and buried in the garden.

7 P.M. — To Cliff by railroad.

Cranberry. Methinks the birds sing a little feebler nowadays. The sun has set, or is at least concealed in a low mist.

June 16. Heart-leaf. *Nymphæa odorata*. Again I scent the white water-lily, and a season I had waited for is arrived. How indispensable all these experiences to make up the summer! It is the emblem of purity, and its scent suggests it. Growing in stagnant and muddy water, it bursts up so pure and fair to the eye and so sweet to the scent, as if to show us what purity and sweetness reside in, and can be extracted from, the slime and muck of earth. I think I have

plucked the first one that has opened for a mile at least. What confirmation of our hopes is in the fragrance of the water-lily! I shall not so soon despair of the world for it, notwithstanding slavery, and the cowardice and want of principle of the North. It suggests that the time may come when man's deeds will smell as sweet. Such, then, is the odor our planet emits. It reminds me that Nature has been partner to no Missouri compromise. So behave that the odor of your actions may enhance the general sweetness of the atmosphere, that, when I behold or scent a flower, I may not be reminded how inconsistent are your actions with it; for all odor is but one form of advertisement of a moral quality.

The effect of a good government is to make life more valuable, — of a bad government, to make it less valuable. Every man in New England capable of the sentiment of patriotism must have lived the last three weeks with the sense of having suffered a vast, indefinite loss. I had never respected this government, but I had foolishly thought that I might manage to live here, attending to my private affairs, and forget it. For my part, my old and worthiest pursuits have lost I cannot say how much of their attraction, and I feel that my investment in life here is worth many per cent. less since Massachusetts last deliberately and forcibly restored an innocent man, Anthony Burns, to slavery. I dwelt before in the illusion that my life passed somewhere only *between* heaven and hell, but now I cannot persuade myself that I do not dwell wholly within hell. The sight of that political organization called Massachusetts is to me morally covered with scoriæ and volcanic cinders, such as Milton imagined. If there is any hell more unprincipled than our rulers and our people, I feel curious to visit it. Life itself being worthless, all things with it, that feed it, are worthless. Suppose you have a small library, with pictures to adorn the walls, — a garden laid out around, — and contemplate scientific and literary pursuits, etc., etc., and discover suddenly that your villa, with all its contents, is located in hell, and that the justice of the peace is one of the devil's angels, has a cloven foot and a forked tail, — do not these things suddenly lose their value in your eyes? Are you not disposed to sell at a great sacrifice?

Autumnal dandelion, some time, in Emerson's meadow pasture.

Potentilla Norvegica, a day or two, in low ground; very abundant at Baker Ditch with other weeds, on a cleared and ditched swamp. Veiny-leaved hawkweed at Heywood Peak appears shut up at midday, — also the autumnal dandelion.

There is a cool east wind, — and has been afternoons for several days, — which has produced a very thick haze or a fog. I find a tortoise egg on this peak at least sixty feet above the pond. There is a fine ripple and sparkle on the pond, seen through the mist. But what signifies the beauty of nature when men are base? We walk to lakes to see our serenity reflected in them. When we are not serene, we go not to them. Who can be serene in a country where both rulers and ruled are without principle? The remembrance of the baseness of politicians spoils my walks. My thoughts are murder to the State; I endeavor in vain to observe nature; my thoughts involuntarily go plotting against the State. I trust that all just men will conspire.

It is eight days since I plucked the great orchis; one is perfectly fresh still in my pitcher. It may be plucked when the spike is only half opened, and will open completely and keep perfectly fresh in a pitcher more than a week. Do I not live in a garden, — in paradise? I can go out each morning before breakfast — I do — and gather these flowers with which to perfume my chamber where I read and write, all day. The note of the cherry-bird is fine and ringing, but peculiar and very noticeable. With its crest it is a resolute and combative-looking bird.

June 19. Men may talk about measures till all is blue and smells of brimstone, and then go home and sit down and expect their measures to do their duty for them. The only measure is integrity and manhood.

JULY 4. A sultry night the last; bear no covering; all windows open.

8 A.M. — To Framingham.

Great orange-yellow lily, some days, wild yellow lily, drooping, well out. *Asclepias obtusifolia*, also day or two. Some chestnut trees show at distance as if blossoming. Buckwheat, how long? I probably saw *Asclepias purpurascens* (??) over the walls. A very hot day.

July 10. Monday. Took up one of the small tortoise eggs which I had buried June 15th. The eye was remarkable, developed in the colorless and almost formless head, one or two large dark circles of the full diameter; a very distinct pulsation where the heart should be and along the neck was perceptible; but there seemed to be no body but a mass of yellow yolk.

The following are the birds I chanced to hear in this walk (did not attend much): The seringos on fences, *link* of bobolink, crow, oven-bird, tanager, chewink, huckleberry-bird (pretty often and loud), flicker cackle, wood thrush, robin (?), before 3 P.M.; then red-eye, veery trill, catbird rigmarole, etc., etc.

The singing birds at present are: —

Villageous: Robin, chip-bird, warbling vireo, swallows.

Rural: Song sparrow, seringos, flicker, kingbird, goldfinch, *link* of bobolink, cherry-bird.

Sylvan: Red-eye, tanager, wood thrush, chewink, veery, oven-bird, — all even at midday. Catbird full strain, whip-poor-will, crows.

July 14. Friday. Awake to day of gentle rain, — very much needed; none to speak of for nearly a month, methinks. The cooler and stiller day has a valuable effect on my spirits.

It holds up from time to time, and then a fine, misty rain falls. It lies on the fine reddish tops of some grasses, thick and whitish like morning cobwebs. The stillness is very soothing. This is a summer rain. The earth is being bedewed. There is no storm or violence to it. Health is a sound relation to nature.

July 17. 11 A.M. — By river to Fair Haven.

I go to observe the lilies. I see a rail lodged in the weeds with seven tortoises on it, another with ten, another with eleven, all in a row sunning now at midday, hot as it is. They are mostly the painted tortoise. Apparently no weather is too hot for them thus to bask in the sun. The pontederia is in its prime, alive with butterflies, yellow and others. I see its tall blue spikes reflected beneath the edge of the pads on each side, pointing down to a heaven beneath as well as above.

Earth appears but a thin crust or pellicle.

I am surprised to see crossing my course in middle of Fair Haven Pond great yellowish devil's-needles, flying from shore to shore, from Island to Baker's Farm and back, about a foot above the water, some against a head wind; also yellow butterflies; suggesting that these insects see the distant shore and resolve to visit it. In fact, they move much faster than I can toward it, yet as if they were conscious that they were on a journey, flying for the most part straight forward. It shows more enterprise and a wider range than I had suspected. It looks very bold. If devil's-needles cross Fair Haven, then man may cross the Atlantic.

July 18. We have very few bass trees in Concord, but walk near them at this season and they will be betrayed, though several rods off, by the wonderful susurrus of the bees, etc., which their flowers attract. It is worth going a long way to hear. I was warned that I was passing one in two instances on the river, — the only two I passed, — by this remarkable sound. At a little distance it is like the sound of a waterfall or of the cars; close at hand like a factory full of looms. They were chiefly humblebees, and the great globose tree was all alive with them. I heard the murmur distinctly fifteen rods off. You will know if you pass within a few rods of a bass tree at this season in any part of the town, by this loud murmur, like a waterfall, which proceeds from it.

July 22. The hottest night, — the last.

It was almost impossible to pursue any work out-of-doors yesterday. There were but few men to be seen out. You were prompted often, if working in the sun, to step into the shade to avoid a sunstroke. At length a shower passing in the west slightly cooled the air. The domestic animals suffer much. Saw a dog which had crawled into a corner and was apparently dying of heat.

July 26. To-day I see in various parts of the town the yellow butterflies in fleets in the road, on bare damp sand (not dung), twenty or more collected within a diameter of five or six inches in many places. They are a greenish golden, sitting still near together, and

apparently headed one way if the wind blows. At first, perhaps, you do not notice them, but, as you pass along, you disturb them, and the air is suddenly all alive with them fluttering over the road, and, when you are past, they soon settle down in a new place. How pretty these little greenish-golden spangles! Some are a very pale greenish yellow. I do not know what attracts them thus to sit near together, like a fleet in a haven; why they collect in groups. I see many small red ones elsewhere on the sericocarpus, etc., etc.

JULY 28. *Friday.* Clethra. Methinks the season culminated about the middle of this month, — that the year was of indefinite promise before, but that, after the first intense heats, we postponed the fulfillment of many of our hopes for this year, and, having as it were attained the ridge of the summer, commenced to descend the long slope toward winter, the afternoon and down-hill of the year. Last evening it was much cooler, and I heard a decided fall sound of crickets.

Partridges begin to go off in packs.
Lark still sings, and robin.
Small sparrows still heard.
Kingbird lively.
Veery and wood thrush (?) not very lately, nor oven-bird.
Red-eye and chewink common.
Night-warbler and evergreen-forest note not lately.
Cherry-bird common.
Turtle dove seen.

July 30. Opened one of the snapping turtle's eggs at Dugan Desert, laid June 7th. There is a little mud turtle squirming in it, apparently perfect in outline, shell and all, but all *soft* and of one consistency, — a bluish white, with a mass of yellowish yolk (?) attached. Perhaps it will be a month more before it is hatched.

Aug. 2. Wednesday.
Surveyed east part of Lincoln.
5 P.M. — To Conantum on foot.
My attic chamber has compelled me to sit below with the family

at evening for a month. I feel the necessity of deepening the stream of my life; I must cultivate privacy. It is very dissipating to be with people too much. As C. says, it takes the edge off a man's thoughts to have been much in society. I cannot spare my moonlight and my mountains for the best of man I am likely to get in exchange.

I am inclined now for a pensive evening walk. Methinks we think of spring mornings and autumn evenings. July has been to me a trivial month. It began hot and continued drying, then rained some toward the middle, bringing anticipations of the fall, and then was hot again about the 20th. It has been a month of haying, heat, low water, and weeds.

As I go up the hill, surrounded by its shadow, while the sun is setting, I am soothed by the delicious stillness of the evening, save that on the hills the wind blows. I was surprised by the sound of my own voice. For the first time for a month, at least, I am reminded that thought is possible. The din of trivialness is silenced. I float over or through the deeps of silence. It is the first silence I have heard for a month. My life had been a River Platte, tinkling over its sands but useless for all great navigation, but now it suddenly became a fathomless ocean. It shelved off to unimagined depths.

The surface of the forest on the east of the river presents a singularly cool and wild appearance, — cool as a pot of green paint, — stretches of green light and shade, reminding me of some lonely mountainside. A few fireflies in the meadows. I am uncertain whether that so large and bright and high was a firefly or a shooting star. Shooting stars are but fireflies of the firmament. The crickets on the causeway make a *steady* creak, on the dry pasture-tops an *interrupted* one. I was compelled to stand to write where a soft, faint light from the western sky came in between two willows.

Fields to-day sends me a specimen copy of my "Walden." It is to be published on the 12th.

Aug. 5. I find that we are now in the midst of the meadow-haying season, and almost every meadow or section of a meadow has its band of half a dozen mowers and rakers, either bending to their manly work with regular and graceful motion or resting in the shade, while the boys are turning the grass to the sun. I passed as many as

sixty or a hundred men thus at work to-day. They stick up a twig with the leaves on, on the river's brink, as a guide for the mowers, that they may not exceed the owner's bounds. I hear their scythes cronching the coarse weeds by the river's brink as I row near. In one place I see one sturdy mower stretched on the ground amid his oxen in the shade of an oak, trying to sleep; or I see one wending far inland with a jug to some well-known spring.

There is very little air stirring to-day.

Aug. 7. It is inspiriting at last to hear the wind whistle and moan about my attic, after so much trivial summer weather, and to feel cool in my thin pants.

Do you not feel the fruit of your spring and summer beginning to ripen, to harden its seed within you? Do not your thoughts begin to acquire consistency as well as flavor and ripeness? How can we expect a harvest of thought who have not had a seed-time of character?

P.M. — To Peter's, Beck Stow's, and Walden.

Still autumnal, breezy with a cool vein in the wind; so that, passing from the cool and breezy into the sunny and warm places, you begin to love the heat of summer. It is the contrast of the cool wind with the warm sun. I walk over the pinweed-field. It is just cool enough in my thin clothes. There is a light on the earth and leaves, as if they were burnished. It is the glistening autumnal side of summer. I feel a cool vein in the breeze, which braces my thought, and I pass with pleasure over sheltered and sunny portions of the sand where the summer's heat is undiminished, and I realize what a friend I am losing. This off side of summer glistens like a burnished shield. Tansy is apparently now in its prime, and the early goldenrods have acquired a brighter yellow. From this off side of the year, this imbricated slope, with alternating burnished surfaces and shady ledges, much more light and heat are reflected (less absorbed), methinks, than from the springward side. In mid-summer we are of the earth, — confounded with it, — and covered with its dust. Now we begin to erect ourselves somewhat and walk upon its surface. I am not so much reminded of former years, as of existence prior to years.

A wasp stung me at one high blueberry bush on the forefinger of my left hand, just above the second joint. It was very venomous; a white spot with the red mark of the sting in the centre, while all the rest of the finger was red, soon showed where I was stung, and the finger soon swelled much below the joint, so that I could not completely close the finger, and the next finger sympathized so much with it that at first there was a *little* doubt which was stung. These insects are effectively weaponed. But there was not enough venom to prevail further than the finger.

AUG. 9. *Wednesday.* — To Boston.
"Walden" published. Elder-berries. Waxwork yellowing.

Aug. 12. The wind is autumnal and at length compels me to put on my coat. I bathe at Hubbard's. The water is rather cool, comparatively. As I look down-stream from southwest to northeast, I see the red under sides of the white lily pads about half exposed, turned up by the wind to an angle of 45° or more. These hemispherical red shields are so numerous as to produce a striking effect on the eye, as of an endless array of forces with shields advanced; sometimes four or five rods in width.

On Conantum saw a cow looking steadily up into the sky for a minute. It gave to her face an unusual almost human or wood-god, faun-like expression, and reminded me of some frontispieces to Virgil's Bucolics. She was gazing upward steadily at an angle of about 45°. There were only some downy clouds in that direction. It was so unusual a sight that any one would notice it. It suggested adoration.

Aug. 18. A great drought now for several weeks. The haymakers have been remarkably uninterrupted this year by rain. Corn and potatoes are nearly spoiled. Our melons suffer the more because there was no drought in June and they ran to vine, which now they cannot support. Hence there is little fruit formed, and that small and dying ripe. Almost everywhere, if you dig into the earth, you find it all dusty. Even wild black cherries and choke-cherries are drying before fairly ripe, all shrivelled. Many are digging potatoes half grown.

Trees and shrubs recently set out, and many old ones, are dying. A good time to visit swamps and meadows.

Aug. 19. The near meadow is very beautiful now, seen from the railroad through this dog-day haze, which softens to velvet its fresh green of so many various shades, blending them harmoniously, — darker and lighter patches of grass and the very light yellowish-green of the sensitive fern which the mowers have left. It has an indescribable beauty to my eye now, which it could not have in a clear day. The haze has the effect both of a wash or varnish and of a harmonizing tint. It destroys the idea of definite distance which distinctness suggests. It is as if you had painted a meadow of fresh grass springing up after the mower, — here a dark green, there lighter, and there again the yellowish onoclea, — then washed it over with some gum like a map and tinted the paper of a fine misty blue. This is an effect of the dog-days.

Aug. 22. P.M. — To Great Meadows on foot along bank into Bedford meadows; thence to Beck Stow's and Gowing's Swamp.

Walking may be a science, so far as the direction of a walk is concerned. I go again to the Great Meadows, to improve this remarkably dry season and walk where in ordinary times I cannot go. There is, no doubt, a particular season of the year when each place may be visited with most profit and pleasure, and it may be worth the while to consider what that season is in each case.

This was a prairial walk. I went along the river and meadows from the first.

At the lower end of these meadows, between the river and the firm land, are a number of shallow muddy pools or pond-holes, where the yellow lily and pontederia, etc., grow, where apparently the surface of the meadow was floated off some spring and so a permanent pond-hole was formed in which, even in this dry season, there is considerable water left.

In these shallow muddy pools, but a few inches deep and few feet in diameter, I was surprised to observe the undulations produced by pretty large fishes endeavoring to conceal themselves. In one little muddy basin where there was hardly a quart of water, caught half a

dozen little breams and pickerel, only an inch long, as perfectly distinct as full grown, and in another place, where there was little else than mud left, breams two or three inches long still alive. In many dry hollows were dozens of small breams, pickerel, and pouts, quite dead and dry. Hundreds, if not thousands, of fishes had here perished on account of the drought.

Saw a blue heron — apparently a young bird, of a brownish blue — fly up from one of these pools, and a stake-driver from another, and also saw their great tracks on the mud, and the feathers they had shed, — some of the long, narrow white neck-feathers of the heron. The tracks of the heron were about six inches long. Here was a rare chance for the herons to transfix the imprisoned fish. It is a wonder that any have escaped. I was surprised that any dead were left on the mud, but I judge from what the book says that they do not touch dead fish. To these remote shallow and muddy pools, usually surrounded by reeds and sedge, far amid the wet meadows, — to these, then, the blue heron resorts for its food. Here, too, is an abundance of the yellow lily, on whose seeds they are said to feed. There, too, are the paths of muskrats.

I find at length a pitcher-plant with a spoonful of water in it. It must be last night's dew. It is wonderful that in all this drought it has not evaporated.

Aug. 25. I think I never saw the haze so thick as now, at 11 A.M., looking from my attic window. I cannot quite distinguish J. Hosmer's house, only the dark outline of the woods behind it.

Aug. 26. Opened one of my snapping turtle's eggs. The egg was not warm to the touch. The young is now larger and darker-colored, shell and all, more than a hemisphere, and the yolk which maintains it is much reduced. Its shell, very deep, hemispherical, fitting close to the shell of the egg, and, if you had not just opened the egg, you would say it could not contain so much. Its shell is considerably hardened, its feet and claws developed, and also its great head, though held in for want of room. Its eyes are open. It puts out its head, stretches forth its claws, and liberates its tail, though all were enveloped in a gelatinous fluid. With its great head it has already the

ugliness of the full-grown, and is already a hieroglyphic of snappishness. It may take a fortnight longer to hatch it.

How much lies quietly buried in the ground that we wot not of! We unconsciously step over the eggs of snapping turtles slowly hatching the summer through. Not only was the surface perfectly dry and trackless there, but blackberry vines had run over the spot where these eggs were buried and weeds had sprung up above. If Iliads are not composed in our day, snapping turtles are hatched and arrive at maturity. It already thrusts forth its tremendous head, — for the first time in this sphere, — and slowly moves from side to side, — opening its small glistening eyes for the first time to the light, — expressive of dull rage, as if it had endured the trials of this world for a century. When I behold this monster thus steadily advancing toward maturity, all nature abetting, I am convinced that there must be an irresistible necessity for mud turtles. With what tenacity Nature sticks to her idea!

Grapes ripe, owing to the hot dry weather.

Passing by M. Miles's, he told me he had a mud turtle in a box in his brook, where it had lain since the last of April, and he had given it nothing to eat. He wished he had known that I caught some in the spring and let them go. He would have bought them of me. He is very fond of them. He bought one of the two which Ed. Garfield caught on Fair Haven in the spring; paid him seventy-five cents for it. Garfield was out in his boat and saw two fighting on the pond. Approached carefully and succeeded in catching both and getting them into the boat. He got them both home by first carrying one along a piece, then putting him down and, while he was crawling off, going back for the other. One weighed forty-three or forty-four pounds and the other forty-seven. Miles gave me the shell of the one he bought, which weighed forty-three or forty-four. It is fifteen and six eighths inches long by fourteen and a half broad, of a roundish form, broadest backward. The upper shell is more than four and a half inches deep and would make a good dish to bail out a boat with. He said he had no trouble in killing them. It was of no great use to cut off their heads. He thrust his knife through the soft thin place in their sternum and killed them at once. Told of one Artemas (?) Wheeler of Sudbury who used to keep fifteen or twenty in a box in a

pond-hole, and fat them and eat them from time to time, having a great appetite for them. Some years ago, in a January thaw, many came out on the Sudbury meadows, and, a cold snap suddenly succeeding, a great many were killed. One man counted eighty or more dead, some of which would weigh eighty to a hundred pounds. Miles himself found two shells on his river meadow of very large ones. Since then they have been scarce. It increases my respect for our river to see these great products of it. No wonder the Indians made much of them. Such great shells must have made convenient household utensils for them.

Even the hinder part of a mud turtle's shell is scalloped, one would say rather for beauty than use.

Hear by telegraph that it rains in Portland and New York.

In the evening, some lightning in the horizon, and soon after a *little* gentle rain, which —

(*Aug. 27*) I find next day has moistened the ground about an inch down only. But now it is about as dry as ever.

Many red oak acorns have fallen. The great green acorns in broad, shallow cups. How attractive these forms! No wonder they are imitated on pumps, fence and bed posts. Is not this a reason that the pigeons are about? The yellow birch is yellowed a good deal, the leaves spotted with green. The dogsbane a clear yellow. On the Walden road some maples are yellow and some chestnuts brownish-yellow and also sere. From Heywood's Peak I am surprised to see the top of Pine Hill wearing its October aspect, — yellow with changed maples and here and there faintly blushing with changed red maples. This is the effect of the drought. Among other effects of the drought I forgot to mention the fine dust, which enters the house and settles everywhere and also adds to the thickness of the atmosphere. Fences and roadside plants are thickly coated with it.

When I awake in the morning, I remember what I have seen and heard of snapping turtles, and am in doubt whether it was dream or reality. I slowly raise my head and peeping over the bedside see my great mud turtle shell lying bottom up under the table, showing its prominent ribs, and realize into what world I have awaked. Before I was in doubt how much prominence my good Genius would give to that fact. That the first object you see on awakening should be an

empty mud turtle's shell!! Will it not make me of the earth earthy? Or does it not indicate that I am of the earth earthy? What life, what character, this has shielded, which is now at liberty to be turned bottom upward! I can put specimens of all our other turtles into this cavity. This too was once an infant in its egg. When I see this, then I am sure that I am not dreaming, but am awake to this world. I do not know any more terrene fact. It still carries the earth on its back. Its life is between the animal and vegetable; like a seed it is planted deep in the ground and is all summer germinating. Does it not possess as much the life of the vegetable as the animal?

Would it not be well to describe some of those rough all-day walks across lots? — as that of the 15th, picking our way over quaking meadows and swamps and occasionally slipping into the muddy batter midleg deep; jumping or fording ditches and brooks; forcing our way through dense blueberry swamps, where there is water beneath and bushes above; then brushing through extensive birch forests all covered with green lice, which cover our clothes and face; then, relieved, under larger wood, more open beneath, steering for some more conspicuous trunk; now along a rocky hillside where the sweet-fern grows for a mile, then over a recent cutting, finding our uncertain footing on the cracking tops and trimmings of trees left by the choppers; now taking a step or two of smooth walking across a highway; now through a dense pine wood, descending into a rank, dry swamp, where the cinnamon fern rises above your head, with isles of poison-dogwood; now up a scraggy hill covered with shrub oak, stooping and winding one's way for half a mile, tearing one's clothes in many places and putting out one's eyes, and find at last that it has no bare brow, but another slope of the same character; now through a corn-field diagonally with the rows; now coming upon the hidden melon-patch; seeing the back side of familiar hills and not knowing them, — the nearest house to home, which you do not know, seeming further off than the farthest which you do know; — in the spring defiled with the froth on various bushes, etc., etc., etc.; now reaching on higher land some open pigeon-place, a breathing-place for us.

Aug. 28. The meadow is drier than ever, and new pools are dried

up. The breams, from one to two and a half inches long, lying on the sides and quirking from time to time, a dozen together where there is but a pint of water on the mud, are a handsome but sad sight, — pretty green jewels, dying in the sun. I saved a dozen or more by putting them in deeper pools. Saw a whole school of little pouts, hundreds of them one and a half inches long, many dead, all apparently fated to die, and some full-grown fishes. The muddy bottom of these pools dried up is cracked into a sort of regular crystals. In the soft mud, the tracks of the great bittern and the blue heron. Scared up one of the former and saw a small dipper on the river.

In my experience, at least *of late years*, all that depresses a man's spirits is the sense of remissness, — duties neglected, unfaithfulness, — or shamming, impurity, falsehood, selfishness, inhumanity, and the like.

Aug. 29. Early for several mornings I have heard the sound of a flail. It leads me to ask if I have spent as industrious a spring and summer as the farmer, and gathered as rich a crop of experience. If so, the sound of my flail will be heard by those who have ears to hear, separating the kernel from the chaff all the fall and winter, and a sound no less cheering it will be. If the drought has destroyed the corn, let not all harvests fail. Have you commenced to thresh your grain? The lecturer must commence his threshing as early as August, that his fine flour may be ready for his winter customers.

Aug. 30. The clearness of the air which began with the cool morning of the 28th makes it delicious to gaze in any direction. *Though there has been no rain*, the valleys are emptied of haze, and I see with new pleasure to distant hillsides and farmhouses and a river-reach shining in the sun, and to the mountains in the horizon. Coolness and clarity go together. Was not that a meadow-hen which I scared up in two places by the riverside, — of a dark brown like a small woodcock, though it flew *straight* and low? I go along the flat Hosmer shore to Clamshell Hill. The sparganium seed balls begin to brown and come off in the hand. Are they not young hen-hawks which I have seen sailing for a week past, without red tails?

Sept. 2. The second still, misty, mizzling and rainy day. We all lie abed late. Now many more sparrows in the yard, larger than chip-birds and showing ashy under sides as they fly.

P.M. — By boat to Purple Utricularia Shore.

To my great surprise I find this morning (September 3d) that the little unhatched turtle, which I thought was sickly and dying, and left out on the grass in the rain yesterday morn, thinking it would be quite dead in a few minutes — I find the shell alone and the turtle a foot or two off vigorously crawling, with neck outstretched (holding up its head and looking round like an old one) and feet surmounting every obstacle. It climbs up the nearly perpendicular side of a basket with the yolk attached. They thus not only continue to live after they are dead, but begin to live before they are alive!

[*Noted on the inside back cover:*] My faults are: —

Paradoxes, — saying just the opposite, — a style which may be imitated.

Ingenious.

Playing with words, — getting the laugh, — not always simple, strong, and broad.

Using current phrases and maxims, when I should speak for myself.

Not always earnest.

"In short," "in fact," "alas!" etc.

Want of conciseness.

Walden published, Wednesday, Aug. 9th, '54.

Sent Fields 12 copies of the *Week*, Oct. 18th, '54.

No more this winter.

I think the early large hawk was it.

[On May 24, the fugitive slave Anthony Burns was arrested in Boston; under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 he had to be returned to his master in Virginia. This law made the north more obviously complicit in the slave system, and the Burns case radicalized many northerners into abolitionists. Edward G. Loring was the judge in the case. Cf. July 4, below.]

[There, at an antislavery rally where William Lloyd Garrison burned a copy of the Constitution, Thoreau gave his passionate

lecture “Slavery in Massachusetts.”]
Were they not cast down?

Sept. 3. Woodbine berries purple. Even at this season I see some fleets of yellow butterflies in the damp road after the rain, as earlier. Close to the left-hand side of bridle-road, about a hundred rods south of the oak, a bayberry bush without fruit, probably a male one. It made me realize that this was only a more distant and elevated sea-beach and that we were within reach of marine influences. My thoughts suffered a sea-turn.

Sept. 4. Monday. I have provided my little snapping turtle with a tub of water and mud, and it is surprising how fast he learns to use his limbs and this world. He actually runs, with the yolk still trailing from him, as if he had got new vigor from contact with the mud. The insensibility and toughness of his infancy make our life, with its disease and low spirits, ridiculous. He impresses me as the rudiment of a man worthy to inhabit the earth. He is born with a shell. That is symbolical of his toughness. His shell being so rounded and sharp on the back at this age, he can turn over without trouble.

Sept. 6. My little turtle, taken out of the shell September 2d, has a shell one and seven fortieths inches long, or four fortieths longer than the diameter of the egg-shell, to say nothing of head and tail. Warm weather again, and sultry nights the last two. The last a splendid moonlight and quite warm.

Sept. 8. I have brought home a half-bushel of grapes to scent my chamber with. It is impossible to get them home in a basket with all their rich bloom on them, which, no less than the form of the clusters, makes their beauty. As I paddled home with my basket of grapes in the bow, every now and then their perfume was wafted to me in the stern, and I thought that I was passing a richly laden vine on shore. Some goldfinches twitter over, while I am pulling down the vines from the birchtops.

Sept. 9. This morning I find a little hole, three quarters of an inch

or an inch over, above my small tortoise eggs, and find a young tortoise coming out (apparently in the rainy night) just beneath. It is the *Sternothærus odoratus* — already has the strong scent — and now has drawn in its head and legs. I see no traces of the yolk, or what-not, attached. It may have been out of the egg some days. *Only one* as yet. I buried them in the garden June 15th.

I am affected by the thought that the earth nurses these eggs. They are planted in the earth, and the earth takes care of them; she is genial to them and does not kill them. It suggests a certain vitality and intelligence in the earth, which I had not realized. This mother is not merely inanimate and inorganic. Though the immediate mother turtle abandons her offspring, the earth and sun are kind to them. The old turtle on which the earth rests takes care of them while the other waddles off. Earth was not made poisonous and deadly to them. The earth has some virtue in it; when seeds are put into it, they germinate; when turtles' eggs, they hatch in due time. Though the mother turtle remained and brooded them, it would still nevertheless be the universal world turtle which, through her, cared for them as now. Thus the earth is the mother of all creatures.

Sept. 10. Yesterday and to-day the first regular rain-storm, bringing down more leaves, — elms, button woods, and apple tree, — and decidedly raising the river and brooks. Already the grass both in meadows and on hills looks greener, and the whole landscape, this overcast rainy day, darker and more verdurous. Hills which have been russet and tawny begin to show some greenness.

On account of the drought one crop has almost entirely failed this year thus far, which the papers have not spoken of. Last year, for the last three weeks of August, the woods were filled with the strong musty scent of decaying fungi, but this year I have seen very few fungi and have not noticed that odor at all, — a failure more perceptible to frogs and toads, but no doubt serious to those whom it concerns.

As for birds: —

About *ten* days ago *especially* I saw many large hawks, probably hen-hawks and young, about.

Within a week several of the small slate-colored

and black-tipped hawks.
August 20th, saw a sucker which I suppose must
have been caught by a fish hawk.
Hear screech owls and hooting owls these evenings.
Have not noticed blue jays of late.
Bats common.
[*Etc. — 40 more.*]

Sept. 11. Measured to-day the little *Sternothærus odoratus* which came out the ground in the garden September 9th. Its shell is thirty-two fortieths of an inch long, by twenty-five fortieths wide. It has a distinct dorsal ridge, and its head and flippers are remarkably developed. Its raised back and dorsal ridge, as in the case of the mud turtle, enable it to turn over very easily. It may have been hatched some time before it came out, for not only there was no trace of the *yolk* (?), but its shell was much wider than the egg, when it first came out of the ground. I put it into the tub on the edge of the mud. It seems that it does not have to learn to walk, but walks at once. It seems to have no infancy such as birds have. It is surprising how much cunning it already exhibits. It is defended both by its form and color and its instincts. As it lay on the mud, its color made it very inobvious, but, besides, it kept its head and legs drawn in and perfectly still, as if feigning death; but this was not sluggishness. At a little distance I watched it for ten minutes or more. At length it put its head out far enough to see if the coast was clear, then, with its flippers, it turned itself toward the water (which element it had never seen before), and suddenly and with rapidity launched itself into it and dove to the bottom. Its whole behavior was calculated to enable it to reach its proper element safely and without attracting attention. Not only was it made of a color and form (like a bit of coal) which alone almost effectually concealed it, but it was made, infant as it was, to be perfectly still as if inanimate and then to move with rapidity when unobserved. The oldest turtle does not show more, if so much, cunning. I think I may truly say that it uses cunning and meditates how it may reach the water in safety. When I first took it out of its hole on the morning of the 9th, it shrunk into its shell and was motionless, feigning death. That this was not sluggishness, I

have proved. When to-day it lay within half an inch of the water's edge, it knew it for a friendly element and, without deliberation or experiment, but at last, when it thought me and all foes unobservant of its motions, with remarkable precipitation it committed itself to it as if realizing a long-cherished idea. Plainly all its motions were as much the result of what is called instinct as is the act of sucking in infants. Our own subtlest is likewise but another kind of instinct. The wise man is a wise infant obeying his finest and never-failing instincts. It does not so much impress me as an infantile beginning of life as an epitome of all the past of turtledom and of the earth. I think of it as the result of all the turtles that have been.

The little snapping turtle lies almost constantly on the mud with its snout out of water. It does not keep under water long. Yesterday in the cold rain, however, it lay buried in the mud all day!

This is a *cold* evening with a white twilight, and threatens frost, the first in *these respects* decidedly autumnal evening. It makes us think of wood for the winter. For a week or so the evenings have been sensibly longer, and I am beginning to throw off my summer idleness. This twilight is succeeded by a brighter starlight than heretofore.

Sept. 14. 8 A.M. — To opposite Pelham's Pond by boat.

Quite cool, with some wind from east and southeast. Took a watermelon for drink. Now, instead of haying, they are raking cranberries all along the river. The raker moves slowly along with a basket before him, into which he rakes (hauling) the berries, and his wagon stands one side. It is now the middle of the cranberry season.

We see half a dozen herons in this voyage. Their wings are so long in proportion to their bodies that there seems to be more than one undulation to a wing as they are disappearing in the distance, and so you can distinguish them. You see another begin before the first has ended. It is remarkable how common these birds are about our sluggish and marshy river. We must attract them from a wide section of country. It abounds in those fenny districts and meadow pond-holes in which they delight. A flock of thirteen telltales, great yellow-legs, start up with their shrill whistle from the midst of the great Sudbury meadow, and away they *sail in a flock, — a sailing* (or

skimming) *flock*, that is something rare methinks, — showing their white tails, to alight in a more distant place. The great bittern, too, rises from time to time, slowly flapping his way along at no great height above the meadow.

Sept. 16. Sophia and mother returned from Wachusett. S. saw much bayberry in Princeton.

Another little sternothærus has come out of the ground since eight this morning (it is now 11 A.M.). The first sternothærus has remained buried in the mud in the tub from the first, and the snapping turtle also for the last few days.

Sept. 19. Thinking this afternoon of the prospect of my writing lectures and going abroad to read them the next winter, I realized how incomparably great the advantages of obscurity and poverty which I have enjoyed so long (and may still perhaps enjoy). I thought with what more than princely, with what poetical, leisure I had spent my years hitherto, without care or engagement, fancy-free. I have given myself up to nature; I have lived so many springs and summers and autumns and winters as if I had nothing else to do but *live* them, and imbibe whatever nutriment they had for me; I have spent a couple of years, for instance, with the flowers chiefly, having none other so binding engagement as to observe when they opened; I could have afforded to spend a whole fall observing the changing tints of the foliage. Ah, how I have thriven on solitude and poverty! I cannot overstate this advantage. I do not see how I could have enjoyed it, if the public had been expecting as much of me as there is danger now that they will. If I go abroad lecturing, how shall I ever recover the lost winter?

It has been my vacation, my season of growth and expansion, a prolonged youth.

An upland plover goes off from Conantum top (though with a white belly), uttering a sharp *white, tu white*.

That drought was so severe that a *few* trees here and there — birch, maple, chestnut, apple, oak — have lost nearly all their leaves.

Sept. 21. Thursday. P.M. — To Flint's Pond.

The first frost in our yard last night, the grass white and stiff in the morning. The muskmelon vines are now blackened in the sun. There have been some frosts in low grounds about a week. The forenoon is cold, and I have a fire, but it is a fine clear day, as I find when I come forth to walk in the afternoon, a fine grained air with a seething or shimmering in it, as I look over the fields, — days which remind me of the Indian summer that is to come. Do not these days always succeed the first frosty mornings?

I sometimes seem to myself to owe all my little success, all for which men commend me, to my vices. I am perhaps more willful than others and make enormous sacrifices, even of others' happiness, it may be, to gain my ends. It would seem even as if nothing good could be accomplished without some vice to aid in it.

Sept. 24. Sunday. 6 A.M. — To Hill.

Low fog-like veil on meadows.

Man identifies himself with earth or the material, just as he who has the least tinge of African blood in his veins regards himself as a negro and is identified with that race. Spirit is strange to him; he is afraid of ghosts.

What name of a natural object is most poetic? That which he has given for convenience whose life is most nearly related to it, who has known it longest and best.

Sept. 26. Took my last bath the 24th. Probably shall not bathe again this year. It was chilling cold. It is a warm and very pleasant afternoon, and I walk along the riverside in Merrick's pasture.

Sept. 30. The clear bright-scarlet leaves of the smooth sumach in many places are curled and drooping, hanging straight down, so as to make a funereal impression, reminding me of a red sash and a soldier's funeral. They impress me quite as black crape similarly arranged, the bloody plants.

The conventional acorn of art is of course of no particular species, but the artist might find it worth his while to study Nature's varieties again.

Oct. 7. Went to Plymouth to lecture and survey Watson's grounds. Returned the 15th.

Nov. 11. Minott heard geese go over night before last, about 8 P.M. Therien, too, heard them "yelling like anything" over Walden, where he is cutting, the same evening. He cut down a tree with a flying squirrel on it; often sees them. Receive this evening a letter in French and three "ouvrages" from the Abbé Rougette in Louisiana.

Nov. 20. To Philadelphia. 7 A.M., to Boston; 9 A.M., Boston to New York, by express train, land route.

See the reddish soil (red sandstone?) all through Connecticut. Pleasantest part of the whole route between Springfield and Hartford, along the river; perhaps include the hilly region this side of Springfield. Reached Canal Street at 5 P.M., or candle-light.

Started for Philadelphia from foot of Liberty Street at 6 P.M. Saw only the glossy panelling of the cars reflected out into the dark, like the magnificent lit façade of a row of edifices reaching all the way to Philadelphia, except when we stopped and a lanthorn or two showed us a ragged boy and the dark buildings of some New Jersey town. Arrive at 10 P.M.; time, four hours from New York, thirteen from Boston, fifteen from Concord. Put up at Jones's Exchange Hotel, 77 Dock Street; lodgings thirty-seven and a half cents per night, meals separate.

Nov. 21. Looked from the cupola of the State-House, where the Declaration of Independence was declared. The best view of the city I got. Was interested in the squirrels, gray and black, in Independence and Washington Squares. Heard that they have, or have had, deer in Logan Square. The squirrels are fed, and live in boxes in the trees in the winter.

In the narrow market-houses in the middle of the streets, was struck by the neat-looking women marketers with full cheeks. There was a mosquito about my head at night.

Nov. 22. Left at 7.30 A.M. for New York. Went to Crystal Palace; admired the houses on Fifth Avenue, the specimens of coal at the

Palace, one fifty feet thick as it was cut from the mine, in the form of a square column, iron and copper ore, etc. Saw sculptures and paintings innumerable, and armor from the Tower of London, some of the Eighth Century. Saw Greeley; Snow, the commercial editor of the *Tribune*; Solon Robinson; Fry, the musical critic, etc.; and others. Greeley carried me to the new opera-house, where I heard Grisi and her troupe. First, at Barnum's Museum, I saw the camelopards, said to be one eighteen the other sixteen feet high. I should say the highest stood about fifteen feet high at most (twelve or thirteen ordinarily). The body was only about five feet long. Why has it horns, but for ornament? Looked through his diorama, and found the houses all over the world much alike. Greeley appeared to know and be known by everybody; was admitted free to the opera, and we were led by a page to various parts of the house at different times.

Dec. 6. To Providence to lecture.

I see thick ice and boys skating all the way to Providence, but know not when it froze, I have been so busy writing my lecture; probably the night of the 4th.

Was struck with the Providence depot, its towers and great length of brick. Lectured in it.

After lecturing twice this winter I feel that I am in danger of cheapening myself by trying to become a successful lecturer, *i.e.*, to interest my audiences. I am disappointed to find that most that I am and value myself for is lost, or worse than lost, on my audience. I fail to get even the attention of the mass. I should suit them better if I suited myself less. I feel that the public demand an average man, — average thoughts and manners, — not originality, nor even absolute excellence. You cannot interest them except as you are like them and sympathize with them. I would rather that my audience come to me than that I should go to them, and so they be sifted; *i.e.*, I would rather write books than lectures. That is fine, this coarse. To read to a promiscuous audience who are at your mercy the fine thoughts you solaced yourself with far away is as violent as to fatten geese by cramming, and in this case they do not get fatter.

Dec. 8. Winter has come unnoticed by me, I have been so busy

writing. This is the life most lead in respect to Nature. How different from my habitual one! It is hasty, coarse, and trivial, as if you were a spindle in a factory. The other is leisurely, fine, and glorious, like a flower. In the first case you are merely getting your living; in the second you live as you go along. You travel only on roads of the proper grade without jar or running off the track, and sweep round the hills by beautiful curves.

Dec. 20. 7 A.M. — To Hill.

Said to be the coldest morning as yet. The river appears to be frozen everywhere. Where was water last night is a firm bridge of ice this morning. The snow which has blown on to the ice has taken the form of regular star-shaped crystals, an inch in diameter. Sometimes these are arranged in a spear three feet long quite straight. The woodchoppers are making haste to their work far off, walking fast to keep warm, before the sun has risen, their ears and hands well covered, the dry, cold snow squeaking under their feet. They will be warmer after they have been at work an hour.

P.M. — Skated to Fair Haven with C.

C.'s skates are not the best, and beside he is far from an easy skater, so that, as he said, it was killing work for him. Time and again the perspiration actually dropped from his forehead on to the ice, and it froze in long icicles on his beard. Yet he kept up his spirits and his fun, said he had seen much more suffering than I, etc., etc.

It has been a glorious winter day, its elements so simple, — the sharp clear air, the white snow everywhere covering the earth, and the polished ice. Cold as it is, the sun seems warmer on my back even than in summer, as if its rays met with less obstruction. And then the air is so beautifully still; there is not an insect in the air, and hardly a leaf to rustle. I am surprised to find how fast the dog can run in a straight line on the ice. I am not sure that I can beat him on skates, but I can turn much shorter. It is very fine skating for the most part.

Dec. 21. What a grovelling appetite for profitless jest and amusement our countrymen have! Next to a good dinner, at least, they love a good joke, — to have their sides tickled, to laugh

sociably, as in the East they bathe and are shampooed. Curators of lyceums write to me: —

DEAR SIR, — I hear that you have a lecture of some humor. Will you do us the favor to read it before the Bungtown Institute?

Dec. 26. At Ricketson's [*in New Bedford on the coast*].

I do not remember to have ever seen such a day as this in Concord. There is no snow here (though there has been excellent sleighing at Concord since the 5th), but it is very muddy, the frost coming out of the ground as in spring with us. I went to walk in the woods with R. It was wonderfully warm and pleasant, and the cockerels crowed just as in a spring day at home. I felt the winter breaking up in me, and if I had been at home I should have tried to write poetry. They told me that this was not a rare day there, that they had little or no winter such as we have, and it was owing to the influence of the Gulf Stream, which was only sixty miles from Nantucket at the nearest, or one hundred and twenty miles from them. In midwinter, when the wind was southeast or even southwest, they frequently had days as warm and debilitating as in summer. There is a difference of about a degree in latitude between Concord and New Bedford, but far more in climate.

The American holly is quite common there, with its red berries still holding on, and is now their Christmas evergreen. I heard the larks sing strong and sweet, and saw robins. There is a Quaker meeting-house there. Such an ugly shed, without a tree or bush about it, which they call their meeting-house (without steeple, of course) is altogether repulsive to me, like a powder-house or grave. And even the quietness and perhaps unworldliness of an aged Quaker has something ghostly and saddening about it, as it were a mere preparation for the grave.

Dec. 28. Visited the museum at the Athenæum. Various South Sea implements, etc., etc., brought home by whalers.

The last Indian, not of pure blood, died this very month, and I saw his picture with a basket of huckleberries in his hand.

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Jan. 4. To Worcester to lecture.

Visited the Antiquarian Library of twenty-two or twenty-three thousand volumes. It is richer in pamphlets and newspapers than Harvard. One alcove contains Cotton Mather's library, chiefly theological works, reading which exclusively you might live in his days and believe in witchcraft. Old leather-bound tomes, many of them as black externally as if they had been charred with fire. Time and fire have the same effect. Haven said that the Rev. Mr. Somebody had spent almost every day the past year in that alcove.

Saw after my lecture a young negro who introduced himself as a native of Africa, Leo L. Lloyd, who lectures on "Young Africa"!! I never heard of anything but old Africa before.

Jan. 5. At Quinsigamond Village, a Mr. Washburn showed me the wire rolling and drawing mill in which he is concerned. All sorts of scrap iron is first heated to a welding heat in masses of about two hundredweight, then rolled between vast iron rollers in successive grooves till it is reduced to long rods little more than an inch in diameter. These are cut up by powerful shears into lengths of about three feet, heated again, and rolled between other rollers in grooves successively of various forms, — square, oval, round, diamond, etc., which part of the work only one man in the concern fully understood and kept secret. It was here rolled and reduced to a large-sized wire maybe three eighths of an inch in diameter, of which screws are made. At this stage, first, it begins to be *drawn*, though it must be heated again in the course of the drawing to restore its ductility. Make a great deal of telegraph-wire, and for pail-bails, etc. About twenty miles of telegraph-wire in a day, of the best Swedish iron for strength. Cannot make so good iron in this country, because we cannot afford to work it over so much, labor being higher. I saw a part of the glowing mass which had been heated to a welding heat, ready to be rolled, but had dropped on its way. I could still trace the outlines of the various scraps which composed it, — screws, bolts, bar iron, an old axe curiously twisted, etc., etc., — all which by mere

pressure would have been rolled into a homogeneous mass. It was now in the condition of many a piece of composition, which, however, mere compression would weld together into a homogeneous mass or a continuous rod. Washburn said the workmen were like sailors; their work was exciting and they drank more spirit than other laborers. In hot weather would sometimes drink two quarts of water an hour and sweat as much. If they could not sweat, left off work. Showed me a peculiar coarse yellow sand which they imported from the shore of Long Island, whose quartz, examined by a microscope, was seen to be perfect crystals. This they used on the floor of their furnace to repair and level it when their iron bars had furrowed it. In the cavernous furnace I saw the roof *dripping* with dark stalactites from the mortar and bricks.

Higginson showed me a new translation of the Vishnu Sarma. Spoke of the autobiography of a felon older than Stephen Burroughs, one Fitch of Revolutionary days.

R.W.E. told of Mr. Hill, his classmate, of Bangor, who was much interested in my "Walden," but relished it merely as a capital satire and joke, and even thought that the survey and map of the pond were not real, but a caricature of the Coast Surveys. Also of Mr. Frost, the botanist, of Brattleboro, who has found five or six new species of lichens thereabouts.

Jan. 7. Sunday. Cloudy and misty. On opening the door I feel a very warm southwesterly wind, contrasting with the cooler air of the house, and find it unexpectedly wet in the street, and the manure is being washed off the ice into the gutter. It is, in fact, a January thaw. The channel of the river is quite open in many places, and in others I remark that the ice and water alternate like waves and the hollow between them. I hear the pleasant sound of running water.

The delicious soft, spring-suggesting air, — how it fills my veins with life! Life becomes again credible to me. A certain dormant life awakes in me, and I begin to love nature again. Here is my Italy, my heaven, my New England. I understand why the Indians hereabouts placed heaven in the southwest, — the soft south.

The bank is tinged with a most delicate pink or bright flesh-color — where the *Bæomyces roseus* grows. It is a lichen day. How full of

life and of eyes is the damp bark! It would not be worth the while to die and leave all this life behind one.

Jan. 9. P.M. — To Conantum.

A cloudy day, threatening snow; wet under foot. How pretty the evergreen radical shoots of the St. John's-wort now exposed, partly red or lake, various species of it. Have they not grown since fall? I put a stone at the end of one to try it. A little wreath of green and red lying along on the muddy ground amid the melting snows. I am attracted at this season by the fine bright-red buds of the privet andromeda, sleeping couchant along the slender light-brown twigs. They look brightest against a dark ground.

This winter I hear the axe in almost every wood of any consequence left standing in the township.

What a strong and hearty but reckless, hit-or-miss style had some of the early writers of New England, like Josselyn and William Wood and others elsewhere in those days; as if they spoke with a relish, smacking their lips like a coach-whip, caring more to speak heartily than scientifically true. They are not to be caught napping by the wonders of Nature in a new country, and perhaps are often more ready to appreciate them than she is to exhibit them. They give you one piece of nature, at any rate, and that is themselves. (Cotton Mather, too, has a rich phrase.) They use a strong, coarse, homely speech which cannot always be found in the dictionary, nor sometimes be heard in polite society, but which brings you very near to the thing itself described. The strong new soil speaks through them. I have just been reading some in Wood's "New England's Prospect." He speaks a good word for New England, indeed will come very near lying for her, and when he doubts the justness of his praise, he brings it out not the less roundly; as who cares if it is not so? we love her not the less for all that. Certainly that generation stood nearer to nature, nearer to the facts, than this, and hence their books have more life in them.

They speak like men who have backs and stomachs and bowels, with all the advantages and disadvantages that attach to them. Ready to find lions here, some having "heard such terrible roarings," "which

must be either Devils or Lions; there being no other creatures which use to roar." What a gormandizing faith (or belief) he has, ready to swallow all kinds of portents and prodigies!

Jan. 11. P.M. — Skated to Lee's Bridge and Farrar's Swamp — call it Otter Swamp.

A fine snow had just begun to fall, so we made haste to improve the skating before it was too late. Our skates made tracks often nearly an inch broad in the slight snow which soon covered the ice. All along the shores and about the islets the water had broadly overflowed the ice of the meadows, and frequently we had to skate through it, making it fly. The snow soon showed where the water was. It was a pleasant time to skate, so still, and the air so thick with snowflakes that the outline of near hills was seen against it and not against the more distant and higher hills. Single pines stood out distinctly against it in the near horizon.

Jan. 12. Where are the shiners now, and the trout? I see none in the brook. Have the former descended to the deep water of the river? Ah, may I be there to see when they go down! Why can they not tell me? Or gone into the mud? There are few or no insects for them now.

The strong scent of this red oak, just split and corded, is a slight compensation for the loss of the tree.

How cheering the sight of the evergreens now, on the forest floor, fresh as in summer!

What is that mint whose seed-vessels rubbed are so spicy to smell — minty — at the further end of the pond by the Gourgas wood-lot?

Well may the tender buds attract us at this season, no less than partridges, for they are the hope of the year, the spring rolled up. The summer is all packed in them.

Observed this afternoon the following oak leaves: —

1st, the white oak, the most withered and faded and curled; many spotted with black dot lichens.

2d, the bear scrub, the most firm and fresh-colored and flat. [*Etc. — 5 more.*]

For color, perhaps all may be called brown, and vary into each

other more or less.

The 1st, as both sides are seen, pale-brown with a salmon tinge beneath.

2d, clear reddish-brown, leather-like, above, often paler, whitish or very light beneath, silveryish. [*Etc.*]

The oak leaves now resemble the different kinds of calf, sheep, Russia leather, and Morocco (a few scarlet oaks), of different ages.

Jan. 14. Skated to Baker Farm with a rapidity which astonished myself, before the wind, feeling the rise and fall, — the water having settled in the suddenly cold night, — which I had not time to see. A man feels like a new creature, a deer, perhaps, moving at this rate. He takes new possession of nature in the name of his own majesty. There was I, and there, and there, as Mercury went down the Idæan Mountains.

Jan. 15. P.M. — Skated to Bedford.

It had just been snowing, and this lay in shallow drifts or waves on the Great Meadows, alternate snow and ice. Skated into a crack, and slid on my side twenty-five feet.

The river-channel dark and rough with fragments of old ice, — polygons of various forms, — cemented together, not strong.

Jan. 19. 7 A.M. — Yesterday it rained hard all day, washing off the little snow that was left down to the ice, the gutters being good-sized mill-brooks and the water over shoes in the middle of the road.

In the night it turned to snow, which still falls, and now covers the wet ground three or four inches deep. It is a very damp snow or sleet, perhaps mixed with rain, which the strong northwest wind plasters to that side of the trees and houses. I never saw the blue in snow so bright as this damp, dark, stormy morning at 7 A.M., as I was coming down the railroad. I did not have to make a hole in it, but I saw it some rods off in the deep, narrow ravines of the drifts and under their edges or eaves, like the serenest blue of heaven, though the sky was, of course, wholly concealed by the driving snow-storm; suggesting that in darkest storms we may still have the hue of heaven in us.

P.M. — The damp snow still drives from the northwest nearly horizontally over the fields, while I go with C. toward the Cliffs and Walden. Though considerable snow has fallen, it lies chiefly in drifts under the walls. It was worth the while to see what a burden of damp snow lay on the trees notwithstanding the wind. Pitch pines were bowed to the ground with it, and birches also, and white oaks. I saw one of the last, at least twenty-five feet high, splintered near the ground past recovery. The snow, a little damp, had lodged not only on the oak leaves and the evergreens, but on every twig and branch, and stood in upright walls or ruffs five or six inches high, like miniature Chinese walls, zigzag over hill and dale, making more conspicuous than ever the arrangement and the multitude of the twigs and branches; and the trunks also being plastered with snow, a peculiar soft light was diffused around, very unlike the ordinary darkness of the forest, as if you were inside a drift or snow house. This even when you stood on the windward side. In most directions you could not see more than four or five rods into this labyrinth or maze of white arms. This is to be insisted on. They were so thick that they left no crevice through which the eye could penetrate further. The path was for the most part blocked up with the trees bent to the ground, which we were obliged to go round by zigzag paths in the woods, or carefully creep under at the risk of getting our necks filled with an avalanche of snow. Often we touched a tree with our foot or shook it with our hand, and so relieved it of a part of its burden, and, rising a little, it made room for us to pass beneath. Often singular portals and winding passages were left between the pitch pines, through which, stooping and grazing the touchy walls, we made our way. Where the path was open in the midst of the woods, the snow was about seven or eight inches deep. The trunks of the trees so uniformly covered on the northerly side, as happens frequently every winter, and sometimes continuing so for weeks, suggested that this might be a principal reason why the lichens watered by the melting snow flourished there most. The snow lay in great continuous masses on the pitch pines and the white, not only like napkins, but great white table-spreads and counter panes, when you looked off at the wood from a little distance. Some white pine boughs hung down like fans or the webbed feet of birds. On some pitch pines it lay in fruit-

like balls as big as one's head, like cocoanuts. Where the various oaks were bent down, the contrast of colors of the snow and oak leaves and the softened tints through the transparent snow — often a delicate fawn-color — were very agreeable.

As we returned over the Walden road the damp, driving snowflakes, when we turned partly round and faced them, hurt our eyeballs as if they had been dry scales.

It may be that the linarias come into the gardens now not only because all nature is a wilderness to-day, but because the woods where the wind has not free play are so snowed up, the twigs are so deeply covered, that they cannot readily come at their food. We saw only one indistinct, snow-covered trail of an animal. Where are the crows now? I never see them at such a time. The channel ice is lifted up by the freshet, and there is dry white snow, but on each side are broad dirty or yellowish green strips of slosh. Whence comes this green color?

The houses have that peculiarly wintry aspect now on the west side, being all plastered over with snow adhering to the clapboards and half concealing the doors and windows.

You would not have believed there were so many twigs and branches in a wood as were revealed by the snow resting on them; perfect walls of snow; no place for a bird to perch.

Jan. 20. You can tell by the ridges of the drifts on the south side of the walls which way the wind was. They all run from north to south; *i.e.*, the common drift is divided into ridges or plaits in this direction, frequently down to the ground between; which separate drifts are of graceful outlines somewhat like fishes, with a sharp ridge or fin gracefully curved, both as you look from one side and down on them, their sides curving like waves about to break. The thin edge of some of these drifts at the wall end, where the air has come through the wall and made an eddy, are remarkably curved, like some shells, even thus, more than once round: I would not have believed it.

T. admired much the addition to the red house, with its steep bevelled roof. Thought he should send Mr. Upjohn to see it. The whole house, methought, was well planted, rested solidly on the

earth, with its great bank (green in summer) and few stately elms before, it so much simpler and more attractive than a front yard with its knickknacks. To contrast with this pleasing structure, which is painted a wholesome red, was a modern addition in the rear, perhaps no uglier than usual, only by contrast, — such an outline alone as our carpenters have learned to produce. I see that I cannot draw anything so bad as the reality. So you will often see an ugly new barn beside a pleasing old house.

I doubt if I can convey an idea of the appearance of the woods yesterday, as you stood in their midst and looked round on their boughs and twigs laden with snow. It seemed as if there could have been none left to reach the ground. These countless zigzag white arms crossing each other at every possible angle completely closed up the view, like a light drift within three or four rods on every side. The wintriest prospect imaginable. That snow which sifted down into the wood-path was much drier and lighter than elsewhere.

Jan. 24. I am reading William Wood's "New England's Prospect." He left New England August 15th, 1633, and the last English edition referred to in this American one of 1764 is that of London, 1639.

The wild meadow-grasses appear to have grown more rankly in those days. He describes them as "thick and long, as high as a man's middle; some as high as the shoulders." (*Vide* Indian book.) Strawberries too were more abundant and large before they were so cornered up by cultivation, "some being two inches about; one may gather half a bushel in a forenoon;" and no doubt many other berries were far more abundant, as gooseberries, raspberries, and especially currants, which last so many old writers speak of, but so few moderns find wild. We can perhaps imagine how the primitive wood looked from the sample still left in Maine. "Here no doubt might be good done with saw mills; for I have seene of these stately high grown trees [he is speaking of pines particularly] ten miles together close by the river [probably Charles River] side." He says at first "fir and pine," as if the fir once grew in this part of the State abundantly, as now in Maine and further west. Of the oaks he says, "These trees afford much mast for hogs, especially every third year." Does not this

imply many more of them than now? “The hornbound tree is a tough kind of wood, that requires so much pains in riving as is almost incredible, being the best to make bowls and dishes, not being subject to crack or leak,” and he speaks, both in prose and verse, of the vines being particularly inclined to run over this tree. If this is the true hornbeam it was probably larger then, but I am inclined to think it the tupelo, and that it was both larger and more abundant than commonly now, for he says it was good for bowls, and it has been so used since. Of the plums of the country he says, “They be black and yellow, about the bigness of damsons, of a reasonable good taste.” Yet Emerson has not found the yellow plum, *i.e.* Canada, growing wild in Massachusetts.

Of quadrupeds no longer found in Concord, he names the lion, — that Cape Ann Lion “which some affirm that they have seen,” which may have been a cougar, for he adds, “Plimouth men have traded for Lions skins in former times,” — bear, moose, deer, porcupines, “the grim-fac’d Ounce, and rav’nous howling Wolf,” and beaver. Martens.

For moose and deer see Indian book.

Complains of the wolf as the great devourer of bear, moose, and deer, which kept them from multiplying more.

For porcupine and raccoon *vide* Indian book.

Gray squirrels were evidently more numerous than now.

I do not know whether his ounce or wild cat is the Canada lynx or wolverine. He calls it wild cat and does not describe the little wildcat. (*Vide* Indian book.) Says they are accounted “very good meat. Their skins be a very deep kind of fur, spotted white and black on the belly.” Audubon and Bachman make the *Lynx rufus* black and white beneath.

Says the beaver are so cunning the English “seldom or never kill any of them, being not patient to lay a long siege” and not having experience.

Eagles are probably less common; pigeons of course (*vide* Indian book); heath cocks all gone (price “four pence”); and turkeys (good cock, “four shillings”). Probably more owls then, and cormorants, etc., etc., sea-fowl generally (of humilities he “killed twelve score at two shots”), and swans. Of the crane, “almost as tall as a man,”

probably blue heron, — possibly the whooping crane or else the sandhill, — he says, "I have seen many of these fowls, yet did I never see one that was fat, though very sleaky;" neither did I. "There be likewise many Swans, which frequent the fresh ponds and rivers, seldom consorting themselves with ducks and geese; these be very good meat, the price of one is six shillings." Think of that!

Sturgeon were taken at Cape Cod and in the Merrimack especially, "pickled and brought to England, some of these be 12, 14, and 18 feet long." An abundance of salmon, shad, and bass, —

"The stately Bass old Neptune's fleeting post,

That tides it out and in from sea to coast;"

"one of the best fish in the country," taken "sometimes two or three thousand at a set," "some four foot long," left on the sand behind the seine; sometimes used for manure. "Alewives...in the latter end of April come up to the fresh rivers to spawn, in such multitudes as is almost incredible, pressing up in such shallow waters as will scarce permit them to swim, having likewise such longing desire after the fresh water ponds, that no beatings with poles, or forcive agitations by other devices, will cause them to return to the sea, till they have cast their spawn."

"The Oysters be great ones in form of a shoe-horn, some be a foot long; these breed on certain banks that are bare every spring tide. This fish without the shell is so big, that it must admit of a division before you can well get it into your mouth." For lobsters, "their plenty makes them little esteemed and seldom eaten." Speaks of "a great oyster bank" in the middle of Back Bay, just off the true mouth of the Charles, and of another in the Mistick. These obstructed the navigation of both rivers. *Vide* book of facts.

P.M. — To Walden and Andromeda Ponds.

I was surprised to find the ice in the middle of the last pond a beautiful delicate rose-color for two or three rods, deeper in spots. It reminded me of red snow, and may be the same. I tried to think it the blood of wounded muskrats, but it could not be. It extended several inches into the ice, at least, and had been spread by the flowing water recently. As for vegetable pigments, there were button-bushes in and

about it. It was quite conspicuous fifteen rods off, and the color of spring-cranberry juice. This beautiful blushing ice! What are we coming to?

Was surprised to see oak-balls on a bear scrub oak. Have them, then, on black, scarlet, red, and bear scrub.

Saw a young (apparently) red oak (it did not taste bitter) ten feet high, the ends of whose twigs looked at first sight as if they had been twisted off by some hungry browsing bird, leaving the fibres streaming. These I found were the strong woody fibres of last year's leaf-stalk, standing out white, in some cases two inches in all directions, from the ends of the twigs, in others rolled together like strong twine; sometimes four or five leaf-stalks' fibres, with wonderful regularity, as if braided, — like braided horse-tails. It was wonderful how they could have become so wonderfully knotted or braided together, but Nature had made up in assiduity for want of skill. I think it must be that these leaves died (perhaps in the great drought of last year) while their fibres were still strongly united with their twigs and so preserving their flexibility without losing their connection, and so the wind flapping the leaves, which hang short down, has twisted them together and commonly worn out the leaves entirely, without loosening or breaking the tough leaf-stalk. Here is self-registered the flutterings of a leaf in this twisted, knotted, and braided twine. So fickle and unpredictable, not to say insignificant, a motion does yet get permanently recorded in some sort. Not a leaf flutters, summer or winter, but its variation and dip and intensity are registered in THE BOOK.

Jan. 25. I have come with basket and hatchet to get a specimen of the rose-colored ice. It is covered with snow. I push it away with my hands and feet. At first I detect no rose tint, and suspect it may have disappeared, — faded or bleached out, — or it was a dream. But the surrounding snow and the little body of the ice I had laid bare was what hindered. At length I detect a faint tinge; I cut down a young white oak and sweep bare a larger space; I then cut out a cake. The redness is all about an inch below the surface, the little bubbles in the ice there for half an inch vertically being coated interruptedly within or without with what looks like a minute red dust when seen through

a microscope, as if it had dried on. Little balloons, with some old paint almost scaled off their spheres. It has no beauty nor brightness thus seen, more than brick-dust. And this it is which gave the ice so delicate a tinge, seen through that inch of clear white ice. What is it? Can it be blood?

Jan. 26. I am afraid I have not described vividly enough the aspect of that Lodging Snow of the 19th and to-day partly. Imagine the innumerable twigs and boughs of the forest (as you stand in its still midst), crossing each other at every conceivable angle on every side from the ground to thirty feet in height, with each its zigzag wall of snow four or five inches high, so innumerable at different distances one behind another that they completely close up the view like a loose-woven downy screen, into which, however, stooping and winding, you ceaselessly advance. The wintriest scene, — which perhaps can only be seen in perfection while the snow is yet falling, before wind and thaw begin. Else you miss, you lose, the delicate touch of the master. A coarse woof and warp of snowy batting, leaving no space for a bird to perch.

In many places where you knew there was a thrifty young wood, there appears to be none, for all is bent down and almost completely buried in the snow, and you are stepping over them. The pitch pines are most round-headed, and the young white oaks are most leaved at top, and hence suffer most.

What changes in the aspect of the earth! one day russet hills, and muddy ice, and yellow and greenish pools in the fields; the next all painted white, the fields and woods and roofs laid on thick. The great sloshy pools in the fields, freezing as they dried away, look like bread that has spewed in the baking, the fungi of a night, an acre in extent; but trust not your feet on it, for the under side is not done; there the principle of water still prevails.

Jan. 27. P.M. — Up meadow to Cliffs and Walden road.

I came upon a fox's track under the north end of the Cliffs and followed it. It was made last night, after the sleet and probably the rain was over, before it froze; it must have been at midnight or after. The tracks were commonly ten or twelve inches apart and each one

and three quarters or two inches wide. Sometimes there was a longer interval and two feet fell nearer together, as if in a canter. It did not wind round the prominent rocks, but leaped upon them as if to reconnoitre. At length, after going perhaps half a mile, it turned as if to descend a dozen rods beyond the juniper, and suddenly came to end. Looking closely I found the entrance (apparently) to its hole, under a prominent rock which seemed to lie loose on the top of the ledge and about two feet from the nearest track. By stooping it had probably squeezed under this and passed into its den beneath. I could find no track leading from it.

Their tracks are larger than you would expect, as large as those of a much heavier dog, I should think. What a life is theirs, venturing forth only at night for their prey, ranging a great distance, trusting to pick up a sleeping partridge or a hare, and at home again before morning! With what relish they must relate their midnight adventures to one another there in their dens by day, if they have society! I had never associated that rock with a fox's den, though perhaps I had sat on it many a time. There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, etc., etc. They are the only outlaws, the only Robin Hoods, here nowadays. Do they not stand for gypsies and all outlaws? Wild dogs, as Indians are wild men.

Jan. 31. Wednesday. A clear, cold, beautiful day. Fine skating. An unprecedented expanse of ice.

As I skated near the shore under Lee's cliff, I saw what I took to be some scrags or knotty stubs of a dead limb lying on the bank beneath a white oak, close by me. Yet while I looked directly at them I could not but admire their close resemblance to partridges. I had come along with a rapid whir and suddenly halted right against them, only two rods distant, and, as my eyes watered a little from skating against the wind, I was not convinced that they were birds till I had pulled out my glass and deliberately examined them. They sat and stood, three of them, perfectly still with their heads erect, some darker feathers like ears, methinks, increasing their resemblance to scrabs, as where a small limb is broken off. I was much surprised at the remarkable stillness they preserved, instinctively relying on the resemblance to the ground for their protection, *i.e.* withered grass,

dry oak leaves, dead scrags, and broken twigs. I thought at first that it was a dead oak limb with a few stub ends or scrabbs sticking up, and it was not till I brought my glass to bear on them and saw their eyes distinctly, steadily glaring on me, their necks and every muscle tense with anxiety, that I was convinced. At length, on some signal which I did not perceive, they went with a whir, as if shot, off over the bushes.

It was quite an adventure getting over the bridgeways or causeways, for on every shore there was either water or thin ice which would not bear. Returning, I saw a large hawk flapping and sailing low over the meadow. There was some dark color to its wings.

You were often liable to be thrown when skating fast, by the shallow puddles on the ice formed in the middle of the day and not easy to be distinguished. These detained your feet while your unimpeded body fell forward.

Feb. 2. Snowed again half an inch more in the evening, after which, at ten o'clock, the moon still obscured, I skated on the river and meadows. Our skates make but little sound in this coating of snow about an inch thick, as if we had on woollen skates, and we can easily see our tracks in the night. We seem thus to go faster than before by day, not only because we do not see (but feel and imagine) our rapidity, but because of the impression which the mysterious muffled sound of our feet makes. Now and then we skated into some chippy, crackling white ice, where a superficial puddle had run dry before freezing hard, and got a tumble.

Feb. 3. This morning it is snowing again. This will deserve to be called the winter of skating.

Skated up the river with Tappan in spite of the snow and wind. It was a novel experience, this skating through snow, sometimes a mile without a bare spot, this blustering day. In many places a crack ran across our course where the water had oozed out, and the driving snow catching in it had formed a thick batter with a stiffish crust in which we were tripped up and measured our lengths on the ice. The

few thin places were concealed, and we avoided them by our knowledge of the localities. Sometimes a thicker drift, too, threw us, or a sudden unevenness in the concealed ice; but on the whole the snow was but a slight obstruction. We skated with much more facility than I had anticipated, and I would not have missed the experience for a good deal.

We went up the Pantry Meadow above the old William Wheeler house, and came down this meadow again with the wind and snow dust, spreading our coat-tails, like birds, though somewhat at the risk of our necks if we had struck a foul place. I found that I could sail on a tack pretty well, trimming with my skirts. Sometimes we had to jump suddenly over some obstacle which the snow had concealed before, to save our necks. It was worth the while for one to look back against the sun and wind and see the other sixty rods off coming, floating down like a graceful demon in the midst of the broad meadow all covered and lit with the curling snow-steam, between which you saw the ice in dark, waving streaks, like a mighty river Orellana braided of a myriad steaming currents, — like the demon of the storm driving his flocks and herds before him. In the midst of this tide of curling snow-steam, he sweeps and surges this way and that and comes on like the spirit of the whirlwind.

At Lee's Cliff we made a fire, kindling with white pine cones, after oak leaves and twigs, — else we had lost it; these saved us, for there is a resinous drop at the point of each scale, — and then we forgot that we were outdoors in a blustering winter day.

Some little boys ten years old are as handsome skaters as I know. They sweep along with a graceful floating motion, leaning now to this side, then to that, like a marsh hawk beating the bush.

I still recur in my mind to that skate of the 31st. I was thus enabled to get a bird's-eye view of the river, — to survey its length and breadth within a few hours, connect one part (one shore) with another in my mind, and realize what was going on upon it from end to end, — to know the whole as I ordinarily knew a few miles of it only. I connected the chestnut-tree house, near the shore in Wayland, with the chimney house in Billerica, Pelham's Pond with Nutting's Pond in Billerica. There is good skating from the mouth to Saxonville, measuring in a straight line some twenty-two miles, by

the river say thirty now, Concord midway. It is all the way of one character, — a meadow river, or dead stream, — Musketicook, — the abode of muskrats, pickerel, etc., crossed by some twenty low wooden bridges, *sublicii pontes*, connected with the mainland by willowy causeways. Thus the long, shallow lakes divided into reaches. These long causeways all under water and ice now, only the bridges peeping out from time to time like a dry eyelid.

Feb. 5. It was quite cold last evening, and I saw the scuttle window reflecting the lamp from a myriad brilliant points when I went up to bed. It sparkled as if we lived inside of a cave, but this morning it has moderated considerably and is snowing. Already one inch of snow has fallen.

According to Webster, in Welsh a hare is "furze or gorse-cat." Also, "Chuk, a word used in calling swine. It is the original name of that animal, which our ancestors brought with them from Persia, where it is still in use. Pers. *chuk*," etc. "Sans. *sugara*. Our ancestors while in England adopted the Welsh *hwc*, hog; but *chuck* is retained in our popular name of woodchuck, that is, wood hog."

In a journal it is important in a few words to describe the weather, or character of the day, as it affects our feelings. That which was so important at the time cannot be unimportant to remember.

Feb. 6. The coldest morning this winter. Our thermometer stands at –14° at 9 A.M.; others, we hear, at 6 A.M. stood at –18°, at Gorham, N.H., –30°. There are no loiterers in the street, and the wheels of wood wagons squeak as they have not for a long time, — actually shriek. Frostwork keeps its place on the window within three feet of the stove *all day* in my chamber. At 4 P.M. the thermometer is at –10°; at six it is at –14°.

I was walking at five, and found it stinging cold. It stung the face. The setting sun no sooner leaves our west windows than a solid but beautiful crystallization coats them, except perhaps a triangularish bare spot at one corner, which perhaps the sun has warmed and dried. (I believe the saying is that by the 1st of February the meal and grain for a horse are half out.)

Feb. 7. The coldest night for a long, long time was last. Sheets froze stiff about the faces. Cat mewed to have the door opened, but was at first disinclined to go out. When she came in at nine she smelt of meadow hay. We all took her up and smelled of her, it was so fragrant. Had cuddled in some barn. People dreaded to go to bed. The ground cracked in the night as if a powder-mill had blown up, and the timbers of the house also. My pail of water was frozen in the morning so that I could not break it. Must leave many buttons unbuttoned, owing to numb fingers. Iron was like fire in the hands. Thermometer at about 7.30 A.M. gone into the bulb, –19° at least. The cold has stopped the clock. Every bearded man in the street is a graybeard. Bread, meat, milk, cheese, etc., etc., all frozen. Pity the poor who have not a large wood-pile. The latches are white with frost, and every nail-head in entries, etc., has a white cap. The chopper hesitates to go to the woods. Yet I see S. Wetherbee stumping past, three quarters of a mile, for his morning's dram. Neighbor Smith's thermometer stood at –26° early this morning. But this day is at length more moderate than yesterday.

This, *i.e.* yesterday, the 6th, will be remembered as the cold Tuesday. The old folks still refer to the Cold Friday, when they sat before great fires of wood four feet long, with a fence of blankets behind them, and water froze on the mantelpiece. But they say this is as cold as that was.

Feb. 15. All day a steady, warm, imprisoning rain carrying off the snow, not unmusical on my roof. It is a rare time for the student and reader who cannot go abroad in the afternoon, provided he can keep awake, for we are wont to be drowsy as cats in such weather. Without, it is not walking but wading. The fire needs no replenishing, and we save our fuel. It seems like a distant forerunner of spring.

Feb. 18. After a thaw old tracks in the snow, from *basso*, become *alto relievo*. The snow which was originally compressed and hardened beneath the feet, — also, perhaps, by the influence of the sun and maybe rain, — being the last to melt, becomes protuberant, the highest part and most lasting. The track becomes a raised almost icy type. How enduring these trails! How nature clings to these

types. The track even of small animals like a skunk will outlast a considerable thaw.

Feb. 21. A clear air, with a northwesterly, March-like wind, as yesterday. What is the peculiarity in the air that both the invalid in the chamber and the traveller on the highway say these are perfect March days?

A warmth begins to be reflected from the partially dried ground here and there in the sun in sheltered places, very cheering to invalids who have weak lungs, who think they may weather it till summer now.

Mar. 1. The last day for skating. It is a very pleasant and warm day, the finest yet, with considerable coolness in the air, however, — winter still. The dusty banks of snow by the railroad reflect a wonderfully dazzling white from their pure crannies, being melted into an uneven, sharp, wavy surface. This more dazzling white must be due to the higher sun.

Examined again the ice and meadow-crust deposited just south of Derby's Bridge.

I think the meadow is lifted in this wise: First, you have a considerable freshet in midwinter, succeeded by severe cold before the water has run off much. Then, as the water goes down, the ice for a certain width on each side the river meadows rests on the ground, which freezes to it. Then comes another freshet, which rises a little higher than the former. This gently lifts up the river ice, and that meadow ice on each side of it which still has water under it, without breaking them, but overflows the ice which is frozen to the bottom. Then, after some days of thaw and wind, the latter ice is broken up and rises in cakes, larger or smaller with or without the meadow-crust beneath it, and is floated off before the wind and current till it grounds somewhere, or melts and so sinks, frequently three cakes one upon another, on some swell in the meadow or the edge of the upland. The ice is thus with us a wonderful agent in changing the aspect of the surface of the river-valley. I think that there has been more meadow than usual moved this year, because we had so great a freshet in midwinter succeeded by severe cold, and that by another still greater freshet before the cold weather was past.

I did well to walk in the forenoon, the fresh and inspiring half of this bright day, for now, at midafternoon, its brightness is dulled, and a fine stratus is spread over the sky.

March 4. Sunday. We go over the Cliffs. At the Bee Hill-side, a striped squirrel, which quickly dives into his hole at our approach. May not this season of springlike weather between the first decidedly springlike day and the first blue-bird, already fourteen days long, be called the *striped squirrel spring*? In which we go listening for the blue-bird, but hear him not.

March 6. Our woods are now so reduced that the chopping of this winter has been a cutting to the quick. At least we walkers feel it as such. There is hardly a wood lot of any consequence left but the chopper's axe has been heard in it this season. They have even infringed fatally on White Pond, on the south of Fair Haven Pond, shaved off the topknot of the Cliffs, the Colburn farm, Beck Stow's, etc., etc.

March 7. We were walking along the sunny hillside on the south of Fair Haven Pond (on the 4th), which the choppers had just laid bare, when, in a sheltered and warmer place, we heard a rustling amid the dry leaves on the hillside and saw a striped squirrel eying us from its resting-place on the bare ground. It sat still till we were within a rod, then suddenly dived into its hole, which was at its feet, and disappeared. The first pleasant days of spring come out like a squirrel and go in again.

March 10. I am not aware of growth in any plant yet, unless it be the further peeping out of willow catkins. They have crept out further from under their scales, and, looking closely into them, I detect a little redness along the twigs even now. You are always surprised by the sight of the first spring bird or insect; they seem premature, and there is no such evidence of spring as themselves, so that they literally *fetch* the year about. It is thus when I hear the first robin or bluebird or, looking along the brooks, see the first water-bugs out circling. But you think, They have come, and Nature cannot recede.

March 11. On Abel Hosmer's pasture, just southeast of the stone bridge, I see where the sod was lifted up over a great space in the flood of the 17th of February. The sod carried off is from four to six inches thick commonly. Pieces of this crust are resting within ten or twenty rods. One has sunk against the causeway bridge, being too wide to go through. I see one piece of crust, twelve feet by six, turned completely topsyturvy with its ice beneath it. This has prevented the ice from melting, and on examining it I find that the ice did not settle down on to the grass after the water went down and then freeze to it, for the blades of grass penetrate one inch into the ice, showing that, the water being shallow, the whole froze, and the grass was frozen in, and thus, when the water rose again, was lifted up.

Saw a cake of recent ice very handsomely marked as it decayed, with darker marks for the original crystals centred with the original white. It would be a rare pattern for a carpet, because it contains a variety of figures agreeable to the eye without regularity.

March 13. Northern lights last night. Rainbow in east this morning.

March 20. A flurry of snow at 7 A.M. I go to turn my boat up. Four or five song sparrows are flitting along amid the willows by the waterside. Probably they came yesterday with the bluebirds.

It is remarkable by what a gradation of days which we *call* pleasant and warm, beginning in the last of February, we come at last to real summer warmth. At first a sunny, calm, serene winter day is pronounced spring, or reminds us of it; and even the first pleasant spring day perhaps we walk with our greatcoat buttoned up and gloves on.

Trying the other day to imitate the honking of geese, I found myself flapping my sides with my elbows, as with wings, and uttering something like the syllables *mow-ack* with a nasal twang and twist in my head; and I produced their note so perfectly in the opinion of the hearers that I thought I might possibly draw a flock down.

March 22. I hear a song sparrow on an alder-top sing *ozit ozit oze-e-e* | (quick) *tchip tchip tchip tchip tchay* | *te tchip ter che ter tchay*; also the same shortened and *very much* varied. Heard one sing uninterruptedly, *i.e.* without a pause, almost a minute. I crossed Fair Haven Pond, including the river, on the ice, and probably can for three or four days yet.

Going along the steep side-hill on the south of the pond about 4 P.M., on the edge of the little patch of wood which the choppers have not yet levelled, — though they have felled many an acre around it this winter, — I observed a rotten and hollow hemlock stump about two feet high and six inches in diameter, and instinctively approached with my right hand ready to cover it. I found a flying squirrel in it, which, as my left hand had covered a small hole at the bottom, ran directly into my right hand. It struggled and bit not a little, but my cotton glove protected me, and I felt its teeth only once or twice. It also uttered three or four dry shrieks at first, something like *cr-r-rack cr-r-r-ack cr-r-r-ack*. I rolled it up in my handkerchief and, holding the ends tight, carried it home in my hand, some three miles. It struggled more or less all the way, especially when my feet made any unusual or louder noise going through leaves or bushes. I could count its claws as they appeared through the handkerchief, and once it got its head out a hole. It even bit through the handkerchief.

Color, as I remember, above a chestnut ash, inclining to fawn or cream color (?), slightly browned; beneath white, the under edge of its wings (?) tinged yellow, the upper dark, perhaps black, making a dark stripe. Audubon and Bachman do not speak of any such stripe! It was a very cunning little animal, reminding me of a mouse in the room. Its very large and prominent black eyes gave it an interesting innocent look. Its very neat flat, fawn-colored, distichous tail was a great ornament. Its "sails" were not very obvious when it was at rest, merely giving it a flat appearance beneath. It would leap off and upward into the air two or three feet from a table, spreading its "sails," and fall to the floor in vain; perhaps strike the side of the room in its upward spring and endeavor to cling to it. It would run up the window by the sash, but evidently found the furniture and walls and floor too hard and smooth for it and after some falls became

quiet. In a few moments it allowed me to stroke it, though far from confident.

I put it in a barrel and covered it for the night. It was quite busy all the evening gnawing out, clinging for this purpose and gnawing at the upper edge of a sound oak barrel, and then dropping to rest from time to time. It had defaced the barrel considerably by morning, and would probably have escaped if I had not placed a piece of iron against the gnawed part. I had left in the barrel some bread, apple, shagbarks, and cheese. It ate some of the apple and one shagbark, cutting it quite in two transversely.

In the morning it was quiet, and *squatted* somewhat curled up amid the straw, with its tail passing under it and the end curled over its head very prettily, as if to shield it from the light and keep it warm. I always found it in this position by day when I raised the lid.

MARCH 23. P.M. — To Fair Haven Pond.

Carried my flying squirrel back to the woods in my handkerchief. I placed it, about 3.30 P.M., on the very stump I had taken it from. It immediately ran about a rod over the leaves and up a slender maple sapling about ten feet, then after a moment's pause sprang off and skimmed downward toward a large maple nine feet distant, whose trunk it struck three or four feet from the ground. This it rapidly ascended, on the opposite side from me, nearly thirty feet, and there clung to the main stem with its head downward, eying me. After two or three minutes' pause I saw that it was preparing for another spring by raising its head and looking off, and away it went in admirable style, more like a bird than any quadruped I had dreamed of and far surpassing the impression I had received from naturalists' accounts. I marked the spot it started from and the place where it struck, and measured the height and distance carefully. It sprang off from the maple at the height of twenty-eight and a half feet, and struck the ground at the foot of a tree fifty and a half feet distant, measured horizontally. Its flight was not a *regular* descent; it varied from a direct line both horizontally and vertically. Indeed it skimmed much like a hawk and part of its flight was nearly horizontal, and it diverged from a right line eight or ten feet to the right, making a curve in that direction. There were six trees from six inches to a foot

in diameter, one a hemlock, in a direct line between the two termini, and these it skimmed partly round, and passed through their thinner limbs; did not as I could perceive touch a twig. It skimmed its way like a hawk between and around the trees. Though it was a windy day, this was on a steep hillside away from the wind and covered with wood, so it was not aided by that. As the ground rose about, two feet, the distance was to the absolute height as fifty and a half to twenty-six and a half, or it advanced about two feet for every one foot of descent. After its vain attempts in the house, I was not prepared for this exhibition. It did not fall heavily as in the house, but struck the ground gently enough, and I cannot believe that the mere extension of the skin enabled it to skim so far. It must be still further aided by its organization. Perhaps it fills itself with air first. Perhaps I had a fairer view than common of its flight, now at 3.30 P.M. Audubon and Bachman say *he* saw it skim "about fifty yards," curving upwards at the end and alighting on the trunk of a tree. This in a meadow in which were scattered oaks and beeches. This near Philadelphia. Wesson says he has seen them fly five or six rods.

Kicking over the hemlock stump, which was a mere shell with holes below, and a poor refuge, I was surprised to find a little nest at the bottom, open above just like a bird's nest, a mere bed. It was composed of leaves, shreds of bark, and dead pine-needles. As I remember, it was not more than an inch and a half broad when at rest, but when skimming through the air I should say it was four inches broad. This is the impression I now have. Captain John Smith says it is said to fly thirty or forty yards. Audubon and Bachman quote one Gideon B. Smith, M.D., of Baltimore, who has had much to do with these squirrels and speaks of their curving upward at the end of their flight to alight on a tree-trunk and of their "flying" into his windows. In order to perform all these flights, — to strike a tree at such a distance, etc., etc., — it is evident it must be able to steer. I should say that mine steered as a hawk that moves without flapping its wings, never being able, however, to get a new impetus after the first spring.

C. saw geese to-night.

March 24. Passing up the Assabet, by the Hemlocks, where there

has been a slide and some rocks have slid down into the river, I think I see how rocks come to be found in the midst of rivers. Rivers are continually changing their channels, — eating into one bank and adding their sediment to the other, — so that frequently where there is a great bend you see a high and steep bank or hill on one side, which the river washes, and a broad meadow on the other. As the river eats into the hill, especially in freshets, it undermines the rocks, large and small, and they slide down, alone or with the sand and soil, to the water's edge. The river continues to eat into the hill, carrying away all the lighter parts of the sand and soil, to add to its meadows or islands somewhere, but leaves the rocks where they rested, and thus in course of time they occupy the middle of the stream and, later still, the middle of the meadow, perchance, though it may be buried under the mud. But this does not explain how so many rocks lying in streams have been split in the direction of the current. Again, rivers appear to have travelled back and worn into the meadows of their creating, and then they become more meandering than ever. Thus in the course of ages the rivers wriggle in their beds, till it feels comfortable under them. Time is cheap and rather insignificant. It matters not whether it is a river which changes from side to side in a geological period or an eel that wriggles past in an instant.

The last four days, including this, have been very cold and blustering. We have had several flurries of snow, when we hoped it would snow in earnest and the weather be warmer for it. It is too cold to think of those signs of spring which I find recorded under this date last year.

March 26. P.M. — Sail down to the Great Meadows. A strong wind with snow driving from the west and thickening the air. The farmers pause to see me scud before it.

March 28. I run about these cold and blustering days, on the whole perhaps the worst to bear in the year, — partly because they disappoint expectation, — looking almost in vain for some animal or vegetable life stirring. The warmest springs hardly allow me the glimpse of a frog's heel as he settles himself in the mud, and I think I am lucky if I see one winter-defying hawk or a hardy duck or two at

a distance on the water. As for the singing of birds, — the few that have come to us, — it is too cold for them to sing and for me to hear. The bluebird's warble comes feeble and frozen to my ear. We still walk on frozen ground, though in the garden I can thrust a spade in about six inches.

March 30. He must have a great deal of life in him to draw upon, who can pick up a subsistence in November and March. Man comes out of his winter quarters this month as lean as a woodchuck. Except for science, do not travel in such a climate as this in November and March. I tried if a fish would take the bait to-day; but in vain; I did not get a nibble. Where are they?

March 31. I see through the window that it is a very fine day, the first really warm one. I did not know the whole till I came out at 3 P.M. and walked to the Cliffs.

The fuzzy gnats are in the air, and bluebirds, whose warble is thawed out. I am uncomfortably warm, gradually unbutton both my coats, and wish that I had left the outside one at home.

It is suddenly warm, and this amelioration of the weather is incomparably the most important fact in this vicinity. It is incredible what a revolution in our feelings and in the aspect of nature this warmer air alone has produced. Yesterday the earth was simple to barrenness, and dead, — *bound out*. Out-of-doors there was nothing but the wind and the withered grass and the cold though sparkling blue water, and you were driven in upon yourself. Now you would think that there was a sudden awakening in the very crust of the earth, as if flowers were expanding and leaves putting forth; but not so; I listen in vain to hear a frog or a new bird as yet; only the frozen ground is melting a little deeper, and the water is trickling down the hills in some places. No, the change is mainly in us. We feel as if we had obtained a new lease of life. Some juniper (*repens*) berries are blue now. Looking from the Cliffs I see that Walden is open to-day first, and Fair Haven Pond will open by day after to-morrow.

April 1. The month comes in true to its reputation. We wake, though late, to hear the sound of a strong, steady, and rather warm

rain on the roof, and see the puddles shining in the road.

When I look out the window I see that the grass on the bank on the south side of the house is already much greener than it was yesterday. As it cannot have grown so suddenly, how shall I account for it? I suspect that the reason is that the few green blades are not merely washed bright by the rain, but erect themselves to imbibe its influence, and so are more prominent, while the withered blades are beaten down and flattened by it.

April 2. Not only the grass but the pines also were greener yesterday for being wet. To-day, the grass being dry, the green blades are less conspicuous than yesterday. It would seem, then, that this color is more vivid when wet, and perhaps all green plants, like lichens, are to some extent greener in moist weather. Green is essentially *vivid*, or the color of life, and it is therefore most brilliant when a plant is moist or most alive. A plant is said to be green in opposition to being withered and dead. The word, according to Webster, is from the Saxon *grene*, to grow, and hence is the color of herbage when growing.

High winds all night, rocking the house, opening doors, etc. To-day also. It is wintry cold also, and ice has formed nearly an inch thick in my boat.

P.M. — Down the river-bank.

April 15. 9 A.M. — To Atkins's boat-house.

Returning, we had a fine view of a blue heron, standing erect and open to view on a meadow island, by the great swamp south of the bridge, looking as broad as a boy on the side. When the heron takes to flight, what a change in size and appearance! It is *presto change*! There go two great undulating wings pinned together, but the body and neck must have been left behind somewhere.

April 19. 5 A.M. — Up Assabet.

Warm and still and somewhat cloudy. Am without greatcoat. Many tortoises have their heads out. The river has fallen a little. Going up the Assabet, two or three tortoises roll down the steep bank with a rustle. One tumbles on its edge and rolls swiftly like a disk

cast by a boy, with its back to me, from eight or ten feet into the water.

P.M. — To Walden.

APRIL 20. Rains all day, taking out the frost and imprisoning me. You cannot set a post yet on account of frost.

April 22. Fair, but windy. The yellow willow catkins pushing out begin to give the trees a misty, downy appearance, dimming them. The bluish band on the breast of the kingfisher leaves the pure white beneath in the form of a heart. The blossoms of the sweet-gale are now on fire over the brooks, contorted like caterpillars.

April 29. That lake grass — or perhaps I should call it *purple* grass — is now apparently in perfection on the water. Long and slender blades (about an eighth of an inch wide and six to twelve inches long, the part exposed) lie close side by side straight and parallel on the surface, with a dimple at the point where they emerge. Some are a very rich purple, with apparently a bloom, and very suggestive of placidity. It is a true *bloom*, at any rate, — the first blush of the spring caught on these little standards elevated to the light. By the water they are left perfectly smooth and flat and straight, as well as parallel, and thus, by their mass, make the greater impression on the eye. It has a strong marshy, somewhat fishy, almost seaweed-like scent when plucked. Seen through a glass the surface is finely grooved.

April 30. I hear from far the scream of a hawk circling over the Holden woods and swamp. This accounts for those two men with guns just entering it. What a dry, shrill, angry scream! I see the bird with my glass resting upon the topmost plume of a tall white pine. Its back, reflecting the light, looks white in patches; and now it circles again. It is a red-tailed hawk. The tips of its wings are curved upward as it sails. How it scolds at the men beneath! I see its open bill. It must have a nest there. Hark! there goes a gun, and down it tumbles from a rod or two above the wood. So I thought, but was mistaken. In the meanwhile, I learn that there is a nest there, and the gunners

killed one this morning, which I examined. They are now getting the young. Above it was brown, but not at all reddish brown except about head.

Powerful neck and legs. The claws pricked me as I handled it. It measured one yard and three eighths plus from tip to tip, *i.e.* four feet and two inches. Some ferruginous on the neck; ends of wings nearly black.

May 1. Rained some in the night; cloudy in the forenoon; clears up in the afternoon.

P.M. — By boat with Sophia to Conantum, a maying.

There is an unaccountable sweetness as of flowers in the air, — a true May day. Raw and drizzling in the morning. The grackle still. What various brilliant and evanescent colors on the surface of this agitated water! It reminds me of the sea.

Went to Garfield's for the hawk of yesterday. It was nailed to the barn *in terrorem* and as a trophy. He gave it to me with an egg. He called it the female, and probably was right, it was so large. He tried in vain to shoot the male, which I saw circling about just out of gunshot and screaming, while he robbed the nest.

The hawk measures exactly 22½ inches in length and 4 feet 4½ inches in alar extent, and weighs 3¼ pounds. The ends of closed wings almost two inches short of end of tail. The wing-coverts and scapulars glossed with purple reflections. The twelve tail-feathers (which MacGillivray says is the number in all birds of prey, *i.e.* the *Falconinæ* and *Striginæ*) showing five and three quarters inches a clear brown red, or rather fox-color, above, with a narrow dark band within half an inch of the end, which is tipped with dirty white.

Bill very *blue* black, with a *short, stout* curved tip, — curving from the cere more than a quarter of a circle, extends not quite a quarter of an inch beyond the lower mandible. [*Etc.: 5 more pages of data — observation, dissection, reading*].

May 5. Looking over my book, I found I had done my errands, and said to myself I would find a crow's nest. (I had heard a crow scold at a passing hawk a quarter of an hour before.) I had hardly taken this resolution when, looking up, I saw a crow wending his

way across an interval in the woods towards the highest pines in the swamp, on which he alighted. I directed my steps to them and was soon greeted with an angry *caw*, and, within five minutes from my resolve, I detected a new nest close to the top of the tallest white pine in the swamp. A crow circled cawing about it within gunshot, then over me surveying, and, perching on an oak directly over my head within thirty-five feet, cawed angrily. But suddenly, as if having taken a new resolution, it flitted away, and was joined by its mate and two more, and they went off silently a quarter of a mile or more and lit in a pasture, as if they had nothing to concern them in the wood.

May 7. 5 A.M. — To Island. Finger-cold and windy.

A crow's nest near the top of a pitch pine about twenty feet high, just completed, betrayed by the birds' cawing and alarm. As on the 5th, *one* came and sat on a bare oak within forty feet, cawed, reconnoitred; and then both flew off to a distance, while I discovered and climbed to the nest within a dozen rods. One comes near to spy you first.

P.M. — Climbed to two crows' nests, — or maybe one of them a squirrel's, — in Hubbard's Grove. Do they not sometimes use a squirrel's nest for a foundation? A ruby-crested wren is apparently attracted and eyes me. It is wrenching and fatiguing, as well as dirty, work to climb a tall pine with nothing, or maybe only dead twigs and stubs, to hold by. You must proceed with great deliberation and see well where you put your hands and your feet. Scared up two gray squirrels in the Holden wood, which ran glibly up the tallest trees on the opposite side to me, and leaped across from the extremity of the branches to the next trees, and so on very fast ahead of me. Remembering — aye, aching with — my experience in climbing trees this afternoon and morning, I could not but admire their exploits. To see them travelling with so much swiftness and ease that road over which I climbed a few feet with such painful exertion!

A short distance beyond the hawk's-nest pine, I observed a middling-sized red oak standing a little aslant on the side-hill over the swamp, with a pretty large hole in one side about fifteen feet from the ground, where apparently a limb on which a felled tree

lodged had been cut some years before and so broke out a cavity. I thought that such a hole was too good a one not to be improved by some inhabitant of the wood. Perhaps the gray squirrels I had just seen had their nest there. Or was not the entrance big enough to admit a screech owl? So I thought I would tap on it and put my ear to the trunk and see if I could hear anything stirring within it, but I heard nothing. Then I concluded to look into it. So I shinned up, and when I reached up one hand to the hole to pull myself up by it, the thought passed through my mind perhaps something may take hold my fingers, but nothing did. The first limb was nearly opposite to the hole, and, resting on this, I looked in, and, to my great surprise, there squatted, filling the hole, which was about six inches deep and five to six wide, a salmon-brown bird not so big as a partridge, seemingly asleep within three inches of the top and close to my face. It was a minute or two before I made it out to be an owl. It was a salmon-brown or fawn (?) above, the feathers shafted with small blackish-brown somewhat hastate (?) marks, *grayish* toward the ends of the wings and tail, as far as I could see. A large white circular space about or behind eye, banded in rear by a pretty broad (one third of an inch) and quite conspicuous perpendicular *dark*-brown stripe. It lay crowded in that small space, with its tail somewhat bent up and one side of its head turned up with one egret, and its large dark eye open only by a long slit about a sixteenth of an inch wide; visible breathing. After a little while I put in one hand and stroked it repeatedly, whereupon it reclined its head a little lower and closed its eye entirely. Though curious to know what was under it, I disturbed it no farther at that time.

In the meanwhile, the crows were making a great cawing amid and over the pine-tops beyond the swamp, and at intervals I heard the scream of a hawk, probably the surviving male hen-hawk, whom they were pestering (unless they had discovered the male screech owl), and a part of them came cawing about me. This was a very fit place for hawks and owls to dwell in, — the thick woods just over a white spruce swamp; the gray squirrels, partridges, hawks, and owls, all together. It was probably these screech owls which I heard in moonlight nights hereabouts last fall.

Returning by owl's nest, about one hour before sunset, I climbed

up and looked in again. The owl was gone, but there were four nearly round *dirty brownish white* eggs, quite warm, on nothing but the bits of rotten wood which made the bottom of the hole. The eggs were very nearly as large at one end as the other, slightly oblong, 1⅜ inches by 1¢/8, as nearly as I could measure. I took out one. It would probably have hatched within a week, the young being considerably feathered and the bill remarkably developed. Perhaps she heard me coming, and so left the nest.

Nuttall says, Little Screech-Owl: Greenland to Florida; chiefly prey on mice; also small birds, beetles, crickets, etc.; nest in May and June, and lined with etc., etc., eggs four to six; several bluebirds, blackbirds, and song sparrows in one. In cloudy weather come out earlier. Wilson's thrush attacked one. Note in autumn, "hō, hŏ, hŏ, hŏ, hŏ, hŏ, hŏ, proceeding from high and clear to a low guttural shake or trill."

May 11. You can hardly walk in a thick pine wood now, especially a swamp, but presently you will have a crow or two over your head, either silently flitting over, to spy what you would be at and if its nest is in danger, or angrily cawing. It is most impressive when, looking for their nests, you first detect the presence of the bird by its shadow.

May 12. As I approached the owl's nest, I saw her run past the hole up into that part of the hollow above it, and probably she was there when I thought she had flown on the 7th. I looked in, and at first did not know what I saw. One of the three remaining eggs was hatched, and a little downy *white* young one, two or three times as long as an egg, lay helpless between the two remaining eggs. Also a dead white-bellied mouse (*Mus leucopus*) lay with them, its tail curled round one of the eggs. Wilson says of his red owl (*Strix asio*), — with which this apparently corresponds, and not with the mottled, though my egg is not "pure white," — that "the young are at first covered with a whitish down."

Just before sundown, took our seats before the owl's nest and sat perfectly still and awaited her appearance. We sat about half an hour, and it was surprising what various distinct sounds we heard there

deep in the wood, as if the aisles of the wood were so many ear trumpets, — the cawing of crows, the peeping of hylas in the swamp and perhaps the croaking of a tree-toad, the oven-bird, the *yorrick* of Wilson's thrush, a distant stake-driver, the night-warbler and black and white creeper, the lowing of cows, the late supper horn, the voices of boys, the singing of girls, — not all together but separately, distinctly, and musically, from where the partridge and the red-tailed hawk and the screech owl sit on their nests.

Another, Sept. 17th, found in morning. Another the 18th, between 8 and 11 A.M. Another the 18th, between 11 A.M. and 1 P.M. Another between 1 and 3 P.M. the 18th. Another found out on the morning of the 19th. Another was dug out the 25th. (All hatched, then, but one egg which I have.)

A snapping turtle had come out on the morning of the 20th, one at least. Another on the morning of the 23d Sept. Another on the morning of the 26th.

[Abbé Adrien Rougette of New Orleans — Louisiana Creole, authority on monastic solitude, friend of the Choctaw Indians, and nature writer — praised *Walden* and sent Thoreau three of his own books: *La Thébaïde en Amérique, Wild Flowers*, and *Les Savanes*.]

Lycopus.

Vide 20th and 26th.

[Thoreau's notebook on Indians.]

Probably this.

Or rather all the water freezes where it is shallow and the grass is frozen into it. *Vide* Mar. 11th.

Vide Mar. 7th.

Vide next page.

No.

Vide forward. *More*.

A mistake.

MacGillivray describes no eggs of this color, — only white, — and the same with Nuttall, except the great gray owl.

MAY 17. Waked up at 2.30 by the peep of robins, which were aroused by a fire at the pail-factory about two miles west. I hear that the air was full of birds singing thereabouts. It rained gently at the

same time, though not steadily.

MAY 19. Put my little turtles into the river. They had not noticeably increased in size, — or hardly. Three had died within a week for want of attention, — two mud turtles and one musk turtle. Two were missing, — one mud and one musk. Five musk were put into the river.

May 25. Critchicrotches in prime.

Heard the first regular bullfrog's trump on the 18th; none since.

Juniper, plucked yesterday, sheds pollen in house to-day, and probably in field.

The golden robin keeps whistling something like *Eat it, Potter, eat it!*

May 28. I see a tanager, the most brilliant and tropical-looking bird we have, bright-scarlet with black wings, the scarlet appearing on the rump again between wing-tips. He brings heat, or heat him. A remarkable contrast with the green pines.

June 11. What if we feel a yearning to which no breast answers? I walk alone. My heart is full. Feelings impede the current of my thoughts. I knock on the earth for my friend. I expect to meet him at every turn; but no friend appears, and perhaps none is dreaming of me. I am tired of frivolous society, in which silence is forever the most natural and the best manners. I would fain walk on the deep waters, but my companions will only walk on shallows and puddles. I am naturally silent in the midst of twenty from day to day, from year to year. I am rarely reminded of their presence. Two yards of politeness do not make society for me. One complains that I do not take his jokes. I took them before he had done uttering them, and went my way. One talks to me of his apples and pears, and I depart with my secret untold. His are not the apples that tempt me.

Now (September 16, '55), after four or five months of invalidity and worthlessness, I begin to feel some stirrings of life in me.

What a difference between one red-wing blackbird's egg and another's! C. finds one long as a robin's, but narrow, with large black

spots on larger end and on side, on or between the bushes by riverside; another much shorter, with a large black spot on the side. Both pale-blue ground.

I have noticed the green oak-balls some days. Now observe the dark *evergreen* of June.

AUG. 7. To Tarbell Hill again with the Emersons, a-berrying.

Very few berries this year.

Sept. 14. It costs so much to publish, would it not be better for the author to put his manuscripts in a safe?

Sept. 24. P.M. — Up river to Conantum with C.

A very bright and pleasant fall day. The button-bushes pretty well browned with frost (though the maples are but just beginning to blush), their pale-yellowish season past. Nowadays remark the more the upright and fresh green phalanxes of bulrushes when the pontederias are mostly prostrate.

Brought home quite a boat-load of fuel, — one oak rail, on which fishers had stood in wet ground at Bittern Cliff, a white pine rider (?) with a square hole in it made by a woodpecker anciently, so wasted the sap as to leave the knots projecting, several chestnut rails; and I obtained behind Cardinal Shore a large oak stump which I know to have been bleaching there for more than thirty years, with three great gray prongs sprinkled with lichens. It bore above the marks of the original burning. Also, at Clamshell Hill Shore, a chestnut boat-post with a staple in it, which the ice took up last winter, though it had an arm put through it two feet underground. Some much decayed perhaps old red maple stumps at Hubbard's Bath Place. It would be a triumph to get all my winter's wood thus. How much better than to buy a cord coarsely from a farmer, seeing that I get my money's worth! Then it only affords me a momentary satisfaction to see the pile tipped up in the yard. Now I derive a separate and peculiar pleasure from every stick that I find. Each has its history, of which I am reminded when I come to burn it, and under what circumstances I found it. Got home late. C. and I supped together after our work at wooding, and talked it over with great appetites.

Dr. Aikin, in his "Arts of Life," says that "the acorns of warm climates are fit for human food."

Sept. 25. A very fine and warm afternoon after a cloudy morning. Carry Aunt and Sophia a-barberrying to Conantum. Saw two marsh hawks skimming low over the meadows and another, or a hen-hawk, sailing on high.

We got about three pecks of barberries from four or five bushes, but I filled my fingers with prickles to pay for them. With the hands well defended, it would be pleasant picking, they are so handsome, and beside are so abundant and fill up so fast. I take hold the end of the drooping twigs with my left hand, raise them, and then strip downward at once as many clusters as my hand will embrace, commonly bringing away with the raceme two small green leaves or bracts, which I do not stop to pick out. When I come to a particularly thick and handsome wreath of fruit, I pluck the twig entire and bend it around the inside of the basket. Meanwhile the catbird mews in the alders by my side, and the scream of the jay is heard from the wood-side.

In the evening went to Welch's (?) circus with C. Approaching, I perceived the peculiar scent which belongs to such places, a certain sourness in the air, suggesting trodden grass and cigar smoke. The curves of the great tent, at least eight or ten rods in diameter, — the main central curve and wherever it rested on a post, — suggested that the tent was the origin of much of the Oriental architecture, the Arabic perhaps. There was the pagoda in perfection. It is remarkable what graceful attitudes feats of strength and agility seem to require.

Sept. 26. Went up Assabet for fuel. One old piece of oak timber looks as if it had been a brace in a bridge. I get up oak rails here and there, almost as heavy as lead, and leave them to dry somewhat on the bank. Stumps, partially burned, which were brought by the freshet from some newly cleared field last spring; bleached oak trees which were once lopped for a fence; alders and birches which the river ice bent and broke by its weight last spring. It is pretty hard and dirty work.

Oct. 2. Rode [*from New Bedford*] to Middleborough, thirteen miles. Many quails in road. Passed over a narrow neck between the two Quitticus ponds, after first visiting Great Quitticus on right of road and gathering clamshells there, as I had done at Long Pond and intend to do at Assawampsett. These shells labelled will be good mementos of the ponds.

Returning along the shore, we saw a man and woman putting off in a small boat, the first we had seen. The man was black. He rowed, and the woman steered. R. called to them. They approached within a couple of rods in the shallow water. "Come nearer," said R. "Don't be afraid; I ain't a-going to hurt you." The woman answered, "I never saw the man yet that I was afraid of." The man's name was Thomas Smith, and, in answer to R.'s very direct questions as to how much he was of the native stock, said that he was one-fourth Indian. He then asked the woman, who sat unmoved in the stern with a brown dirt-colored dress on, a regular countrywoman with half an acre of face (squaw-like), having first inquired of Tom if she was his woman, how much Indian blood she had in her. She did not answer directly so home a question, yet at length as good as acknowledged to one-half Indian, and said that she came from Carver, where she had a sister; the only half-breeds about here. Said her name was Sepit, but could not spell it. R. said, "Your nose looks rather Indiany." Where will you find a Yankee and his wife going a-fishing thus? They lived on the shore. Tom said he had seen turtles in the pond that weighed between fifty and sixty; had caught a pickerel that morning that weighed four or five pounds; had also seen them washed up with another in their mouths.

Their boat was of peculiar construction, and T. said it was called a sharper; with very high sides and a remarkable run on the bottom aft, and the bottom boards were laid across, coming out flush, and the sides set on them. An ugly model.

This boat had a singular "wooden grapple," as Tom called it, made in form of a cross, thus: with a stone within.

The arrowheads hereabouts are commonly white quartz.

R. says "gamble-roof." This should be "gambrel," apparently from the hind leg of a horse, — crooked like it.

Oct. 12. Carried home a couple of rails which I fished out of the bottom of the river and left on the bank to dry about three weeks ago. One was a chestnut which I have noticed for some years on the bottom of the Assabet, just above the spring on the east side, in a deep hole. It looked as if it had been there a hundred years. It was so heavy that C. and I had as much as we could do to lift it, covered with mud, on to the high bank. It was scarcely lighter to-day, and I amused myself with asking several to lift one half of it after I had sawed it in two. They failed at first, not being prepared to find it so heavy, though they could easily lift it afterward.

Oct. 16. P.M. — To the white pine grove beyond Beck Stow's.

How evenly the freshly fallen pine-needles are spread on the ground! quite like a carpet. Throughout this grove no square foot is left bare. I dug down with a stick and found that the layers of three or four years could be distinguished with considerable ease, and much deeper the old needles were raised in flakes or layers still. The topmost, or this year's, were fawn-colored; last year's, dark dull reddish; and so they went on, growing darker and more decayed, till, at the depth of three inches, where, perhaps, the needles were fifteen or twenty years old, they began to have the aspect of a dark loose-lying virgin mould, mixed with roots (pine cones and sticks a little higher). The freshly fallen needles lay as evenly strewn as if sifted over the whole surface, giving it a uniform neat fawn-color, tempting one to stretch himself on it. They rested alike on the few green leaves of weeds and the fallen cones and the cobwebs between them, in every direction across one another like joggle-sticks. In course of years they are beaten by rain and snow into a coarse, thick matting or felt to cover the roots of the trees with.

Oct. 18. Last night I was reading Howitt's account of the Australian gold-diggings, and had in my mind's eye the numerous valleys with their streams all cut up with foul pits, ten to a hundred feet deep and half a dozen feet across, as close as they can be dug, and half full of water, where men furiously rushed to probe for their fortunes, uncertain where they shall break ground, not knowing but

the gold is under their camp itself; sometimes digging a hundred and sixty feet before they strike the vein, or then missing it by a foot; turned into demons and regardless of each other's rights in their thirst after riches; whole valleys for thirty miles suddenly honeycombed by the pits of the miners, so that hundreds are drowned in them. Standing in water and covered with mud and clay, they work night and day, dying of exposure and disease. Having read this and partly forgotten it, I was thinking of my own unsatisfactory life, doing as others do without any fixed star habitually in my eye, my foot not planted on any blessed isle. Then, with that vision of the diggings before me, I asked myself why I might not be washing some gold daily, though it were only the finest particles, or might not sink a shaft down to the gold within me and work that mine. There is a Ballarat or Bendigo for you. What though it were a "Sulky Gully"? Pursue some path, however narrow and crooked, in which you can walk with love and reverence. Wherever a man separates from the multitude and goes his own way, there is a fork in the road, though the travellers along the highway see only a gap in the paling.

P.M. — To Great Meadows to observe the hummocks left by the ice. I find the white fragments of a tortoise-shell in the meadow, — thirty or forty pieces, straight-sided polygons, — which apparently a hay-cart passed over. They look like broken crockery. I brought it home and amused myself with putting it together. It is a painted tortoise. The variously formed sections or component parts of the shell are not broken, but only separated. To restore them to their places is like the game which children play with pieces of wood completing a picture. It is surprising to observe how these different parts are knitted together by countless minute teeth on their edges. Then the scales, which are not nearly so numerous, and therefore larger commonly, are so placed over the former as to break joints always, as appears by the indented lines at their edges and the serrations of the shell. These scales, too, *slightly* overlap each other, *i.e.* the foremost over the next behind, so that they may not be rubbed off. Thus the whole case is bound together like a very stout band-box. The bared shell is really a very interesting study. The sternum in its natural position looks like a well-contrived drag, turned up at the sides in one solid piece.

When I was surveying for Legross, as we went to our work in the morning, we passed by the Dudley family tomb, and Legross remarked to me, all in good faith, "Would n't you like to see old Daddy Dudley? He lies in there. I'll get the keys if you'd like. I sometimes go in and look at him."

Those bright-red marks on the marginal scales of the painted tortoise remind me of some Chinese or other Oriental lacquer-work on waiters (?). This color fades to a pale yellow. The color is wholly in the scale above the bone. Of the bright colors, the yellow marks on tortoise-shells are the fastest.

How much beauty in decay! I pick up a white oak leaf, dry and stiff, but yet mingled red and green, October-like, whose pulpy part some insect has eaten beneath, exposing the delicate network of its veins. It is very beautiful held up to the light, — such work as only an insect eye could perform. Yet, perchance, to the vegetable kingdom such a revelation of ribs is as repulsive as the skeleton in the animal kingdom. In each case it is some little gourmand, working for another end, that reveals the wonders of nature. There are countless oak leaves in this condition now, and also with a submarginal line of network exposed.

Men rush to California and Australia as if the true gold were to be found in that direction; but that is to go to the very opposite extreme to where it lies. They go prospecting further and further away from the true lead, and are most unfortunate when most successful. Is not our native soil auriferous? Does not a stream from the golden mountains flow through our native valley? and has it not for more than geologic ages been bringing down the shining particles and the nuggets? Yet, strange to tell, if a digger steal away prospecting for this true gold into the unexplored solitudes, there is no danger, alas, that any will dog his steps and endeavor to supplant him. He may claim and undermine the whole valley, even the cultivated and uninhabited portions, his whole life long in peace, and no one will ever dispute his claim.

To rebuild the tortoise-shell is a far finer game than any geographical or other puzzle, for the pieces do not merely make part of a plane surface, but you have got to build a roof and a floor and the connecting walls. These are not only thus dovetailed and braced

and knitted and bound together, but also held together by the skin and muscles within. It is a *band*-box.

Oct. 19. P.M. — To Pine Hill for chestnuts.

I see Mrs. Riordan and her little boy coming out of the woods with their bundles of fagots on their backs. It is surprising what great bundles of wood an Irish-woman will contrive to carry. I confess that though I could carry one I should hardly think of making such a bundle of them. They are first regularly tied up, and then carried on the back by a rope, — somewhat like the Indian women and their straps. There is a strange similarity; and the little boy carries his bundle proportionally large. The sticks about four feet long. They make haste to deposit their loads before I see them, for they do not know how pleasant a sight it is to me. The Irishwoman does the squaw's part in many respects.

When, returning at 5 o'clock, I pass the pond in the road, I see the sun, which is about entering the grosser hazy atmosphere above the western horizon, brilliantly reflected in the pond, — a dazzling sheen, a bright golden shimmer. His broad sphere extended stretches the whole length of the pond toward me. First, in the extreme distance, I see a few sparkles of the gold on the dark surface; then begins a regular and solid column of shimmering gold, straight as a rule, but at one place, where a breeze strikes the surface from one side, it is remarkably spread or widened, then recovers its straightness again, thus: Again it is remarkably curved, say thus: then broken into several pieces, then straight and entire again, then spread or blown aside at the point like smoke from a chimney, thus: Of course, if there were eyes enough to occupy all the east shore, the whole pond would be seen as one dazzling shimmering lake of melted gold. Such beauty and splendor adorns our walks!

Talking with Bellew this evening about Fourierism and communities, I said that I suspected any enterprise in which two were engaged together. "But," said he, "it is difficult to make a stick stand unless you slant two or more against it." "Oh, no," answered I, "you may split its lower end into three, or drive it single into the ground, which is the best way; but most men, when they start on a new enterprise, not only figuratively, but really, *pull up stakes*. When

the sticks prop one another, none, or only one, stands erect."

He showed me a sketch of Wachusett. Spoke of his life in Paris, etc. I asked him if he had ever visited the Alps and sketched there. He said he had not. Had he been to the White Mountains? "No," he answered, "the highest mountains I have ever seen were the Himalayas, though I was only two years old then." It seems that he was born in that neighborhood.

He complains that the Americans have attained to bad luxuries, but have no comforts.

Oct. 20. I have collected and split up now quite a pile of driftwood, — rails and riders and stems and stumps of trees, — perhaps half or three quarters of a tree. It is more amusing, not only to collect this with my boat and bring it up from the river on my back, but to split it also, than it would be to speak to a farmer for a load of wood and to saw and split that. Each stick I deal with has a history, and I read it as I am handling it, and, last of all, I remember my adventures in getting it, while it is burning in the winter evening. That is the most interesting part of its history. It has made part of a fence or a bridge, perchance, or has been rooted out of a clearing and bears the marks of fire on it. When I am splitting it, I study the effects of water on it, and, if it is a stump, the curiously winding grain by which it separates into so many prongs, — how to take advantage of its grain and split it most easily. I find that a dry oak stump will split pretty easily in the direction of its diameter, but not at right angles with it or along its circles of growth. I got out some good knees for a boat. Thus one half the value of my wood is enjoyed before it is housed, and the other half is equal to the whole value of an equal quantity of the wood which I buy.

Some of my acquaintances have been wondering why I took all this pains, bringing some nearly three miles by water, and have suggested various reasons for it. I tell them in my despair of making them understand me that it is a profound secret, — which it has proved, — yet I did hint to them that one reason was that I wanted to get it. I take some satisfaction in eating my food, as well as in being nourished by it. I feel well at dinner-time as well as after it. The world will never find out why you don't love to have your bed

tucked up for you, — why you will be so perverse. I enjoy more drinking water at a clear spring than out of a goblet at a gentleman's table. I like best the bread which I have baked, the garment which I have made, the shelter which I have constructed, the fuel which I have gathered.

Oct. 21. It began to rain about 10 o'clock last evening after a cloudy day, and it still rains, gently but steadily, this morning. The wind must be east, for I hear the church bell very plainly; yet I sit with an open window, it is so warm.

I enjoyed getting that large oak stump from Fair Haven some time ago, and bringing it home in my boat. I tipped it in with the prongs up, and they spread far over the sides of the boat. There was no passing amidships. I much enjoyed this easy carriage of it, floating down the Musketaquid from far. It was a great stump and sunk my boat considerably, and its prongs were so in the way that I could take but a short stroke with my paddle. I enjoyed every stroke of my paddle, every rod of my progress, which advanced me so easily nearer to my port. It was as good as to sit by the best oak wood fire. I still enjoy such a conveyance, such a victory, as much as boys do riding on a rail. All the upper part of this, when I came to split it, I found to be very finely honeycombed, reduced to a coarse cellular mass, apparently by shrinkage and wasting; but it made excellent fuel, nevertheless, as if all the combustible part remained. Only the earthy had returned to earth.

I have been thinking over with Father the old houses in this street. There was the Hubbard (?) house at the fork of the roads; the Thayer house (now Garrison's); Sam Jones's (now Channing's); Willoughby Prescott's (a bevel-roof, which I do not remember), where Loring's is (Hoar's was built by a Prescott); Ma'm Bond's; the Jones Tavern (Bigelow's); the old Hurd (or Cumming's?) house; the Dr. Hurd house; the old mill; and the Richardson Tavern (which I do not remember). On this side, the Monroe house, in which we lived; the Parkman house, which William Heywood told me twenty years ago that he helped raise the rear of sixty years before (it then sloping to one story behind), and that then it was called an old house (Dr. Ripley said that a Bond built it); the Merrick house; a rough-cast

house where Bates's is (Betty?); and all the south side of the Mill-Dam. Still further from the centre the old houses and sites are about as numerous as above. Most of these houses slanted to one story behind.

Oct. 22. The Plymouth fishermen have just come home from the Banks, except one.

Oct. 23. The streets are strewn with buttonwood leaves, which rustle under your feet, and the children are busy raking them into heaps, some for bonfires. The sugar maples on the Common stand dense masses of rich yellow leaves with a deep scarlet blush, — far more than blush. They are remarkably brilliant this year on the exposed surfaces. The last are as handsome as any trees in the street. I am struck with the handsome form and clear, though very pale, say lemon, yellow of the black birch leaves on sprouts in the woods, finely serrate and distinctly *plaited* from the midrib. I plucked three leaves from the end of a red maple shoot, an underwood, each successively smaller than the last, the brightest and clearest scarlet that I ever saw. These and the birch attracted universal admiration when laid on a sheet of white paper and passed round the supper table, and several inquired particularly where I found them. I never saw such colors painted. They were without spot; ripe leaves.

Now is the time for chestnuts. A stone cast against the trees shakes them down in showers upon one's head and shoulders. But I cannot excuse myself for using the stone. It is not innocent, it is not just, so to maltreat the tree that feeds us. I sympathize with the tree, yet I heaved a big stone against the trunks like a robber, — not too good to commit murder. I trust that I shall never do it again. It is worse than boorish, it is criminal, to inflict an unnecessary injury on the tree that feeds or shadows us. Old trees are our parents, and our parents' parents, perchance. If you would learn the secrets of Nature, you must practice more humanity than others. I was affected as if I had cast a rock at a sentient being, — with a duller sense than my own, it is true, but yet a distant relation.

Faded white ferns now at Saw Mill Brook. They press yellow or straw-color.

Oct. 26. I see a red squirrel dash out from the wall, snatch an apple from amid many on the ground, and, running swiftly up the tree with it, proceed to eat it, sitting on a smooth dead limb, with its back to the wind and its tail curled close over its back. It allows me to approach within eight feet. It holds the apple between its two fore paws and scoops out the pulp, mainly with its lower incisors, making a saucer-like cavity, high and thin at the edge, where it bites off the skin and lets it drop. It keeps its jaws a-going very fast, from time to time turning the apple round and round with its paws (as it eats), like a wheel in a plane at right angles to its body. It holds it up and twirls it with ease. Suddenly it pauses, having taken alarm at something, then drops the remainder of the apple in the hollow of the bough and glides off by short snatches, uttering a faint, sharp bird-like note.

I sometimes think that I must go off to some wilderness where I can have a better opportunity to play life, — can find more suitable materials to build my house with, and enjoy the pleasure of collecting my fuel in the forest. I have more taste for the wild sports of hunting, fishing, wigwam-building, making garments of skins, and collecting wood wherever you find it, than for butchering, farming, carpentry, working in a factory, or going to a wood market.

Oct. 28. As I paddle under the Hemlock bank this cloudy afternoon, about 3 o'clock, I see a screech owl sitting on the edge of a hollow hemlock stump about three feet high, at the base of a large hemlock. It sits with its head drawn in, eying me, with its eyes partly open, about twenty feet off. When it hears me move, it turns its head toward me, perhaps one eye only open, with its great glaring golden iris. You see two whitish triangular lines above the eyes meeting at the bill, with a sharp reddish-brown triangle between and a narrow curved line of black under each eye. At this distance and in this light, you see only a black spot where the eye is, and the question is whether the eyes are open or not. It sits on the lee side of the tree this raw and windy day. You would say that this was a bird without a neck. Its short bill, which rests upon its breast, scarcely projects at all, but in a state of rest the whole upper part of the bird from the wings is rounded off smoothly, excepting the horns, which stand up

conspicuously or are slanted back. After watching it ten minutes from the boat, I landed two rods above, and, stealing quietly up behind the hemlock, though from the windward, I looked carefully around it, and, to my surprise, saw the owl still sitting there. So I sprang round quickly, with my arm outstretched, and caught it in my hand. It was so surprised that it offered no resistance at first, only glared at me in mute astonishment with eyes as big as saucers. But ere long it began to snap its bill, making quite a noise, and, as I rolled it up in my handkerchief and put it in my pocket, it bit my finger slightly. I soon took it out of my pocket and, tying the handkerchief, left it on the bottom of the boat. So I carried it home and made a small cage in which to keep it, for a night. When I took it up, it clung so tightly to my hand as to sink its claws into my fingers and bring blood.

When alarmed or provoked most, it snaps its bill and hisses. It puffs up its feathers to nearly twice its usual size, stretches out its neck, and, with wide-open eyes, stares this way and that, moving its head slowly and undulatingly from side to side with a curious motion. While I write this evening, I see that there is ground for much superstition in it. It looks out on me from a dusky corner of its box with its great solemn eyes, so perfectly still itself. I was surprised to find that I could imitate its note as I remember it, by a *guttural* whinnering.

A remarkably squat figure, being very broad in proportion to its length, with a short tail, and very catlike in the face with its horns and great eyes. Remarkably large feet and talons, legs thickly clothed with whitish down, down to the talons. It brought blood from my fingers by clinging to them. It would lower its head, stretch out its neck, and, bending it from side to side, peer at you with laughable circumspection; from side to side, as if to catch or absorb into its eyes every ray of light, strain at you with complacent yet earnest scrutiny. Raising and lowering its head and moving it from side to side in a slow and regular manner, at the same time snapping its bill smartly perhaps, and faintly hissing, and puffing itself up more and more, — cat-like, turtle-like, both in hissing and swelling. The slowness and gravity, not to say solemnity, of this motion are striking. There plainly is no jesting in this case.

General color of the owl a rather pale and perhaps slightly reddish brown, the feathers centred with black. Perches with two claws above and two below the perch. It is a slight body, covered with a mass of soft and light-lying feathers. Its head muffled in a great hood. It must be quite comfortable in winter. Dropped a pellet of fur and bones (?) in his cage. He sat, not really moping but trying to sleep, in a corner of his box all day, yet with one or both eyes slightly open all the while. I never once caught him with his eyes shut. Ordinarily stood rather than sat on his perch.

Oct. 29. P.M. — Up Assabet.

Carried my owl to the hill again. Had to shake him out of the box, for he did not go of his own accord. (He had learned to alight on his perch, and it was surprising how lightly and noiselessly he would hop upon it.) There he stood on the grass, at first bewildered, with his horns pricked up and looking toward me. In this strong light the pupils of his eyes suddenly contracted and the iris expanded till they were two great brazen orbs with a centre spot merely. His attitude expressed astonishment more than anything. I was obliged to toss him up a little that he might feel his wings, and then he flapped away low and heavily to a hickory on the hillside twenty rods off. (I had let him out in the plain just east of the hill.) Thither I followed and tried to start him again. As I moved around him, he turned his head always toward me, till he looked *directly* behind himself as he sat crosswise on a bough. He behaved as if bewildered and dazzled, gathering all the light he could and ever straining his great eyes toward you to make out who you are, but not inclining to fly. He never appeared so much alarmed as surprised and astonished.

When I moved him in his cage he would cling to the perch, though it was in a perpendicular position, one foot above another, suggesting his habit of clinging to and climbing the inside of hollow trees.

I have got a load of great hardwood stumps. For sympathy with my neighbors I might about as well live in China. They are to me barbarians, with their committee-works and gregariousness.

NOVEMBER, 1855

Nov. 1. *Thursday.* P. M. — Up Assabet, a-wooding.

After a rain-threatening morning it is a beautiful Indian-summer day, the most remarkable hitherto and equal to any of the kind. Yet we kept fires in the forenoon, the warmth not having got into the house. It is akin to sin to spend such a day in the house. The air is still and warm. This, too, is the *recovery* of the year, — as if the year, having nearly or quite accomplished its work, and abandoned all design, were in a more favorable and poetic mood, and thought rushed in to fill the vacuum. The river is perfectly smooth. Whole schools of *little* minnows leap from the surface at once with a silvery gleam. The wool-grass, with its drooping head and the slender withered leaves dangling about its stem, stands in little sheaves upon its tussocks, clean dry straw, and is thus reflected in the water. This is the November shore. The maples and swamp oaks and willows are for the most part bare, but some of the oaks are partly clothed yet with withered ones [sic]. I see one white maple quite thick and green, and *some* black willows are thinly clad with *green* leaves, and many yellowish leaves are seen on the sallows rising above the bare button-bushes. Yet I see no painted tortoises out, and I think it is about a fortnight since I saw any.

As I pushed up the river past Hildreth's, I saw the blue heron (probably of last Monday) arise from the shore and disappear with heavily-flapping wings around a bend in front; the greatest of the bitterns *(Ardeoe),* with heavily-undulating wings, low over the water, seen against the woods, just disappearing round a bend in front; with a great slate-colored expanse of wing, suited to the shadows of the stream, a tempered blue as of the sky and dark water commingled. This is the aspect under which the Musketaquid might be represented at this season: a long, smooth lake, reflecting the bare willows and button-bushes, the stubble, and the wool-grass on its tussock, a muskrat-cabin or two conspicuous on its margin amid the unsightly tops of pontederia, and a bittern disappearing on undulating wing around a bend.

The wood I get is pretty rotten. The under side of an oak which

has lain for years on the miry bank is turned almost to mould, — in this I find ants, — while the upper is hard and dry. Or else it is stumps whose fangs have so rotted off that I can kick them over at last, but then I must shake out a half a peck or more of mould. I made out to get one great and heavy stump to the water twenty rods distant by ant-like turning it over and over laboriously. It sunk my craft low in the water. Others are boughs which in the winter fell or were dragged down by the ice, their tops in the water and their butts on shore. These I saw off where they dip into the water, though the saw pinches.

Returning in the twilight, I see a bat over the river.

Nov. 4. P. M. — To Hill by Assabet.

This forenoon the boys found a little black kitten about a third grown on the Island or Rock, but could not catch it. We supposed that some one had cast it in to drown it. This afternoon, as I was paddling by the Island, I saw what I thought a duck swimming down the river diagonally, to the south shore just below the grassy island, opposite the rock; then I thought it two ducks, then a muskrat. It passed out of sight round a bend. I landed and walked alongshore, and found that it was a kitten, which had just got ashore. It was quite wet excepting its back. It swam quite rapidly, the whole length of its back out, but was carried down about as fast by the stream. It had probably first crossed from the rock to the grassy island, and then from the lower end of this to the town side of the stream, on which side it may have been attracted by the noise of the town. It was rather weak and staggered as it ran, from starvation or cold, being wet, or both. A very pretty little black kitten.

It is a dark, almost rainy day. Though the river *appears* to have risen considerably, it is not more than nine or ten inches above the lowest summer level, as I see by the bridge. Yet it brings along a little driftwood. Whatever rails or boards have been left by the water's edge the river silently takes up and carries away. Much small stuff from the pail-factory.

The winter is approaching. The birds are almost all gone. The note of the *dee de de* sounds now more distinct, prophetic of winter, as I go amid the wild apples on Nawshawtuct. The autumnal dandelion

sheltered by this apple-tree trunk is drooping and half closed and shows but half its yellow, this dark, late, wet day in the fall.

Gathered a bag of wild apples. A great part are decayed now on the ground. The snail slug is still eating them. Some have very fiery crimson spots or eyes on a very white ground.

Returned, and went up the main stream. Larches are now quite yellow, — in the midst of their fall.

The river-brink — at a little distance at least — is now all sere and rustling, except a few yellowed sallow leaves, though beyond in the meadows there is some fresh greenness, but cattle seem to stray wider for food than they did. They are turned into the meadows now, where is all the greenness. New fences are erected to take advantage of all the fall feed. But the rank herbage of the rivers brink is more tender and has fallen before the frosts. Many new muskrat-houses have been erected this wet weather, and much gnawed root is floating. When I look away to the woods, the oaks have a dull, dark red now, without brightness. The willow-tops on causeways have a pale, bleached, silvery, or wool-grass-like look.

See some large flocks of *F. hyemalis,* which fly with a clear but faint chinking chirp, and from time to time you hear quite a strain, half warbled, from them. They rise in a body from the ground and fly to the trees as you approach. There are a few tree sparrows with them. These and one small soaring hawk are all the birds I see.

I have failed to find White pine seed this year, though I began to look for it a month ago. The cones were fallen and open. Look the first of September.

From my experience with wild apples I can understand that there may be a reason for a savage preferring many kinds of food which the civilized man rejects. The former has the palate of an outdoor man. It takes a savage or wild taste to appreciate a wild apple. I remember two old maids to whose house I enjoyed carrying a purchaser to talk about buying their farm in the winter, because they offered us wild apples, though with an unnecessary apology for their wildness.

Nov. 5. I hate the present modes of living and getting a living. Farming and shopkeeping and working at a trade or profession are all

odious to me. I should relish getting my living in a simple, primitive fashion. The life which society proposes to me to live is so artificial and complex — bolstered up on many weak supports, and sure to topple down at last — that no man surely can ever be inspired to live it, and only "old fogies" ever praise it. At best some think it their duty to live it. I believe in the infinite joy and satisfaction of helping myself and others to the extent of my ability. But what is the use in trying to live simply, raising what you eat, making what you wear, building what you inhabit, burning what you cut or dig, when those to whom you are allied insanely want and will have a thousand other things which neither you nor they can raise and nobody else, perchance, will pay for? The fellow-man to whom you are yoked is a steer that is ever bolting right the other way.

I was suggesting once to a man who was wincing under some of the consequences of our loose and expensive way of living, "But you might raise all your own potatoes, etc., etc." We had often done it at our house and had some to sell. At which he demurring, I said, setting it high, "You could raise twenty bushels even."

"But," said he, "I use thirty-five."

"How large is your family?"

"A wife and three infant children." This was the real family; I need not enumerate those who were hired to *help* eat the potatoes and waste them. So he had to hire a man to raise his potatoes.

Thus men invite the devil in at every angle and then prate about the garden of Eden and the fall of man.

I know many children to whom I would fain make a present on some one of their birthdays, but they are so far gone in the luxury of presents — have such perfect museums of costly ones — that it would absorb my entire earnings for a year to buy them something which would not be beneath their notice.

P. M. — To foot of Fair Haven Hill *via* Hubbard's Grove.

I see the shepherd's-purse, hedge-mustard, and red clover, — November flowers. Crossing the Depot Field Brook, I observe the downy, fuzzy globular tops of the *Aster puniceus.* They are slightly tinged with yellow, compared with the hoary gray of the goldenrod. The distant willow-tops are yellowish like them in the right light.

At Hubbard's Crossing I see a large male hen-harrier skimming

over the meadow, its deep slate somewhat sprinkled or mixed with black; perhaps young. It flaps a little and then sails straight forward, so low it must rise at every fence. But I perceive that it follows the windings of the meadow over many fences. I pass a great white pine stump, — half a cord in it and more, —— turned up out of a meadow. I look upon it with interest, and wish I had it at my door, for there are many warm fires in that. You could have many thoughts and tell many stories while that was burning.

Walked through Potter's Swamp. That white birch fungus always presents its face to the ground, parallel with it. For here are some on an upright dead birch whose faces or planes are at right angles with the axis of the tree as usual, looking down; but others, attached to the top of the tree, which lies prostrate on the ground, have their planes parallel with the axis of the tree, as if looking round the birch. When the epidermis is cracked, apparently as they grew, they are watered handsomely with white streams an eighth of an inch wide above. They have remarkably thick necks. They protrude through a rent in the bark, carrying it along with their necks, a little way.

The brightness of the foliage generally ceased pretty exactly with October. The still bright leaves which I see as I walk along the river edge of this swamp are birches, clear yellow at top; high blueberry, some very bright scarlet red still; some sallows; *Viburnum nudum*, fresh dark red; alder sprouts, large *green* leaves. Swamp-pink buds now begin to show. The late growth of the pyrus is now checked by the frost. The bark of many frostweeds is now cracked or burst off, and curled backward in five or six strips for about an inch, leaving the woody part bare at, or an inch above, the ground, sometimes five or six inches above the ground. I *suspect* the frost is the dying breath of the weed congealed.

I am pleased to see that the lower and larger four or five leaves of the water andromeda on the edge of the meadow next the swamp are pretty commonly turned a dark scarlet now, just as they fall, Confirming my old impression. I have not observed for some years.

A nest made very thick, of grass and stubble, and lined with finer grass and horsehair, as big as a kingbird's, on an alder, within eighteen inches of ground, close to the water, at Cardinal Shore. The alder had been broken down at that height by the ice, and the nest

rested on the stub ends. I took a few dead leaves out and to my surprise found an egg, — *very pale* greenish-blue. Probably the *wood thrush,* if not the olivaceous one, whose eggs I have not seen described. Not *quite* so big as a bluebird's. This egg popped and burst suddenly, with a noise about as loud as popping corn, or like a pop-gun, while I held it in my hand in my chamber. It had been addled when new. I had another pop in the chamber some months ago. So you must blow them before you bring them into a warm room.

I am puzzled with the lecheas. Are there not four kinds? First, there is the *L. major*, with broad leaves; and second, the *least*, with fine spreading branches and with *branched* shoots at base. Third, there is the very common one, intermediate in size, with large fruit and linear-lanceolate leaves, now commonly fallen. But I see, fourth (?), this afternoon, one fifteen inches high, half a dozen rods from Cardinal Shore, and stout, with leaves like the third, but fruit very small and *abundant* (there is apparently a little recent-growth opening of leaves at the extremities of it, some radical shoots on stem six inches from ground!); and fifth, close by, a slender one a foot high, with leaves elliptic pointed, one half inch by one sixth, and larger fruit than last, at top and generally. (May be a variety of *L. major?* It has some leaves like it.) It is perhaps the third kind which, when only three or four inches high now, has such dense linear leaves one half inch plus long, pine-tree-like and spreading branches just above radical shoots.

I find that one of my old oak logs, which was lying on the damp bank of the river, half rotted through below, contained many great black ants gone into winter quarters in those great eaten cells of the rotten wood. Yet this would have been covered with water in the winter. Those with wings were three quarters of an inch or more long. They move but slowly when exposed. In one I set up for splitting in the yard, I find a clamshell, carried in by a muskrat.

Nov. 6. A mizzling rain from the east drives me home from my walk. The knawel in the sand on the railroad causeway grows in dense green tufts like the hudsonia, six or eight inches in diameter and one or two high. It is still in bloom. The gooseberry leaves at the

end of the currant row, being wet, are a still more brilliant scarlet.

A great many rainy or mizzling days the last fortnight, yet not much rain.

Pennyroyal has a long time stood withered and dark, blackish brown, in the fields, yet scented.

I can hardly resist the inclination to collect driftwood, to collect a great load of various kinds, which 'will sink my boat low in the water, and paddle or sail slowly home with it. I love this labor so much that I would gladly collect it for some person of simple habits who might want it. Men ordinarily do not have the pleasure of sawing and splitting their wood even, for while they are buying it an Irishman stands by with his sawhorse on his back, and the next thing I see him in their yards — him and his understrapper — sawing for dear life and two shillings a cut. When I think, too, of the many decaying stumps and logs which the coming freshets will carry off perchance to sea. Rails and posts and bits of boards and boughs are carried far into the swamps.

Nov. 7. Another drizzling day, — as fine a mist as can *fall.*

P. M. — Up Assabet.

I see a painted tortoise swimming under water, and to my surprise another afterward out on a willow trunk this dark day. It is long since I have seen one of any species except the *insculpta.* They must have begun to keep below and go into winter quarters (?) about three weeks ago.

Looking west over Wheeler's meadow, I see that there has been much gossamer on the grass, and it is now revealed by the dewy mist which has collected on it. Some green-briar leaves still left, a dull red or scarlet, others yellowish; also the silky cornel is conspicuously dull-red, and others yellowish-red. And the sallow on river's brink (not *cordata*), with a narrow leaf pointed at both ends, shows some clear chrome-yellow leaves atop. The white birches lose their lower leaves first, and now their tops show crescents or cones of bright-yellow (spiring flames) leaves, some of the topmost even *green* still. The black willows almost everywhere entirely bare, yet the color of their twigs gives them the aspect of the crisp brown weeds of the river's brink. How completely crisp and shrivelled the leaves and

stems of the *Polygonum amphibium* var *terrestre*, still standing above the water and grass!

The river has risen a little more, the North Branch especially, and the pail-stuff which has drifted down it has been carried a few rods up the main stream above the junction. It rises and falls very suddenly, and I was surprised to see the other day a line of sawdust more than a foot above the water's edge, showing that it had risen to that height and suddenly fallen without my knowledge.

Opened a muskrat-house nearly two feet high, but there was no hollow to it. Apparently they do not form that part yet.

I find it good to be out this still, dark, mizzling afternoon; my walk or voyage is more suggestive and profitable than in bright weather. The view is contracted by the misty rain, the water is perfectly smooth, and the stillness is favorable to reflection. I am more open to impressions, more sensitive (not calloused or indurated by sun and wind), as if in a chamber still. My thoughts are concentrated; I am all compact. The solitude is real, too, for the weather keeps other men at home. This mist is like a roof and walls over and around, and I walk with a domestic feeling. The sound of a wagon going over an unseen bridge is louder than ever, and so of other sounds. I am *compelled* to look at near objects. All things have a soothing effect; the very clouds and mists brood over me. My power of observation and contemplation is much increased. My attention does not wander. The world and my life are simplified. What now of Europe and Asia?

Birds are pretty rare now. I hear a few tree sparrows in one place on the trees and bushes near the river, — a clear, chinking chirp and a half-strain, — a jay at a distance; and see a nuthatch flit with a ricochet flight across the river, and hear his *gnah* half uttered when he alights.

A gray squirrel — as day before yesterday — runs down a limb of an oak and hides behind the trunk and I lose him. A red one runs along the trees to scold at me, boldly or carelessly, with a chuckling, birdlike note and that other peculiar sound at intervals, between a purr and a grunt. He is more familiar than the gray and more noisy. What sound does the gray make?

Some of my driftwood is the burnt timbers of a mill, which the

swollen river has gleaned for me.

Found in Wheeler's potato-field, which has been burned over to get rid of the weeds before digging, near the Hemlocks by river, a little mouse dead. Whole length three inches (minus); tail hardly seven eighths of an inch, so short (less than half the body) I thought at first it had been bitten off by some animal. General color above, a rust of brown or tawny brown, with mouse-color seen through it; beneath, rather hoary mouse-color, but nowhere white; the fur dark-slate. Snout and head blunt, the latter large. Hind legs longest. Ears quite concealed in the fur. It answers to Emmons's *Arvicola hirsutus*, or meadow mouse, except that it is smaller. Is it a young one? Tips of incisors light-yellow.

Nov. 8. A quite warm and foggy morning. I can sit with my window open and no fire. Much warmer than this time last year. Though there is quite a fog over the river and doubtful weather behind, the reflection of the wool-grass, etc., is quite distinct, the reflection from the fog or mist making the water light for a background.

Nov. 9. 7 A. M. — Grass white and stiff with frost.

9 A. M. — With Blake up Assabet.

A clear and beautiful day after frost.

Looking over the meadow westward from Merrick's Pasture Shore, I see the alders beyond Dodd's, now quite bare and gray (maple-like) in the morning sun (the frost melted off, though I found a little *ice on* my boat-seat), — that true November sight, — ready to wear frost leaves and to transmit (so open) the tinkle of tree sparrows. How wild and refreshing to see these old black willows of the river-brink, unchanged from the first, which man has never cut for fuel or for timber! Only the muskrat, tortoises, blackbirds, bitterns, and swallows use them.

Two blackbirds fly over pretty near, with a chuck, — either red-wings or grackles, but *I see no red.* See a painted tortoise and a wood tortoise in different places *out on the bank* still!

Saw in the pool at the Hemlocks what I at first thought was a brighter leaf moved by the zephyr on the surface of the smooth dark

water, but it was a splendid male summer duck, which allowed us to approach within seven or eight rods, sailing up close to the shore, and then rose and flew up the curving stream. We soon overhauled it again, and got a fair and long view of it. It was a splendid bird, a perfect floating gem, and Blake, who had never seen the like, was greatly surprised, not knowing that so splendid a bird was found in this part of the world. There it was, constantly moving back and forth by invisible means and wheeling on the smooth surface, showing now its breast, now its side, now its rear. It had a large, rich, flowing, green burnished crest, — a most ample head-dress, — two crescents of dazzling white on the side of the head and the black neck, a pinkish (?)-red bill (with black tip) and similar irides, and a long white mark under and at wing point on sides; the side, as if the form of wing at this distance, light bronze or greenish brown; but, above all, its breast, when it turns into the right light, all aglow with splendid purple (?) or ruby (?) reflections, *like the throat of the hummingbird.* It might not appear so close at hand. This was the most surprising to me. What an ornament to a river to see that glowing gem floating in contact with its waters! As if the hummingbird should recline its ruby throat and its breast on the water. Like dipping a glowing coal in water! It so affected me.

It became excited, fluttered or flapped its wings with a slight whistling noise, and arose and flew two or three rods and alighted. It sailed close up to the edge of a rock, by which it lay pretty still, and finally sailed fast up one side of the river by the willows, etc., off the duck swamp beyond the spring, now and then turning and sailing back a foot or two, while we paddled up the opposite side a rod in the rear, for twenty or thirty rods. At length we went by it, and it flew back low a few rods to where we roused it. It never offered to dive. We came equally near it again on our return. Unless you are thus near, and have a glass, the splendor and beauty of its colors will not be discovered.

Found a good stone jug, small size, floating stopple up. I drew the stopple and smelled, as I expected, molasses and water, or something stronger (black-strap?), which it *had* contained. Probably some meadow-haymakers' jug left in the grass, which the recent rise of the river has floated off. It will do to put with the white pitcher I found

and keep flowers in. Thus I get my furniture.

Yesterday I got a perfectly sound oak timber, eight inches square and twenty feet long, which had lodged on some rocks. It had probably been the sill of a building. As it was too heavy to lift aboard, I towed it. As I shall want some shelves to put my Oriental books on, I shall begin to save boards now.

I deal so much with my fuel, — what with finding it, loading it, conveying it home, sawing and splitting it, — get so many values out of it, am warmed in so many ways by it, that the heat it will yield when in the stove is of a lower temperature and a lesser value in my eyes, — though when I feel it I am reminded of all my adventures. I just turned to put on a stick. I had my choice in the box of gray chestnut rail, black and brown snag of an oak stump, dead white pine top, gray and round, with stubs of limbs, or else old bridge plank, and chose the last. Yes, I lose sight of the ultimate uses of this wood and work, the immediate ones are so great, and yet most of mankind, those called most successful in obtaining the necessaries of life, — getting their living, — obtain none of this, except a mere vulgar and perhaps stupefying warmth. I feel disposed, to this extent, to do the getting a living and the living for any three or four of my neighbors who really want the fuel and will appreciate the act, now that I have supplied myself. There was a fat pine plank, heavy as lead, I gave to Aunt L. for kindling.

That duck was all jewels combined, showing different lustres as it turned on the unrippled element in various lights, now brilliant glossy green, now dusky violet, now a rich bronze, now the reflections that sleep in the ruby's grain.

I see floating, just above the Hemlocks, the large sliding door of a railroad car, burnt to a cinder on one side and lettered in large bright-yellow letters on the other, " Cheshire 1510." It may have been cast over at the railroad bridge.

I affect what would commonly be called a mean and miserable way of living. I thoroughly sympathize with all savages and gypsies in so far as they merely assert the original right of man to the productions of Nature and a place in her. The Irishman moves into the town, sets up a shanty on the railroad land, and then gleans the dead wood from the neighboring forest, which would never get to

market. But the so-called owner forbids it and complains of him as a trespasser. The highest law gives a thing to him who can use it.

Nov. 11. P, M. — Up Assabet.

As long as the sun is out, it is warm and pleasant.

The water is smooth. I see the reflections, not only of the wool-grass, but the bare button-bush, with its brown balls beginning to crumble and show the lighter inside, and the brittle light-brown twigs of the black willow, and the coarse rustling sedge, now completely withered (and hear it pleasantly whispering), and the brown and yellowish sparganium blades curving over like well-tempered steel, and the gray cottony mikania.

The bricks of which the muskrat builds his house are little masses or wads of the dead weedy rubbish on the muddy bottom, which it probably takes up with its mouth. It consists of various kinds of weeds, now agglutinated together by the slime and dried confervæ threads, utricularia, horn wort, etc., — a streaming, tuft-like wad. The building of these cabins appears to be coincident with the commencement of their clam diet, for now their vegetable food, excepting roots, is cut off. I see many small collections of shells already left along the river's brink. Thither they resort with their clam to open and eat it. But if it is the edge of a meadow which is being overflowed, they must raise it and make a permanent dry stool there, for they cannot afford to swim far with each clam. I see where one has left half a peck of shells on perhaps the foundation of an old stool or a harder clod, which the water is just about to cover, and he has begun his stool by laying two or three *fresh* wads upon the shells, the foundation of his house. Thus their cabin is first apparently intended merely for a stool, and afterward, when it is large, is perforated as if it were the bank! There is no cabin for a long way above the Hemlocks, where there is no low meadow bordering the stream.

The clamshells freshly opened are handsomest this month (or rather are most observable, before the ice and snow conceal them) and in the spring.

I am surprised to see quite a number of painted tortoises out on logs and stones and to hear the wood tortoise rustling down the bank.

Frogs are rare and sluggish, as if going into winter quarters. A cricket also sounds rather rare and distinct.

At the Hemlocks I see a narrow reddish line of hemlock leaves and, half an inch below, a white line of sawdust, eight inches above the present surface, on the upright side of a rock, both mathematically level. This chronicles the hemlock fall, which I had not noticed, we have so few trees, and also the river's rise. The North Branch must have risen suddenly before the South, for I see much pail-stuff from the Fort Pond Brook, which has been carried eighteen rods up the latter stream above the Rock, or as far as it extends immediately due west there. By "pail-stuff" I mean the curved and grooved pieces which form the sides and the flat ones for the bottom and their trimmings.

High blueberry leaves still conspicuous bright scarlet; also duller and darker green-briar leaves hold on on the Island.

I hear gray squirrels coursing about on the dry leaves, pursuing one another, and now they come in sight, coursing from pine to pine on their winding way, on their unweariable legs, on their undulating and winding course. It is a motion intermediate between running and flying. I hear but a tree sparrow and a chickadee this voyage.

Nov. 13. In mid-forenoon (10.45), seventy or eighty geese, in three harrows successively smaller, flying southwest — pretty well west — over the house. A completely overcast, occasionally drizzling forenoon. I at once heard their clangor and rushed to and opened the window. The three harrows were gradually formed into one great one before they were out of sight, the geese shifting their places without slacking their progress.

P. M. — To Cardinal Shore.

Going over Swamp Bridge Brook at 3 p. M., I saw in the pond by the roadside, a few rods before me, the sun shining bright, a mink swimming, the whole length of his back out. It was a rich brown fur, glowing internally as the sun fell on it, like some ladies' boas, not black, as it sometimes appears, especially on ice. It landed within three rods, showing its long, somewhat cat-like neck, and I observed was carrying something by its mouth, dragging it overland. At first I thought it a fish, maybe an eel, and when it had got half a dozen feet,

I ran forward, and it dropped its prey and went into the wall. It was a muskrat, the head and part of the fore legs tom off and gone, but the rest still fresh and quite heavy, including hind legs and tail. It had probably killed this muskrat in the brook, eaten so much, and was dragging the remainder to its retreat in the wall.

A fine clear afternoon after the misty morning and heavy rain of the night. Even after all this rain I see the streaming lines of gossamer from trees and fences. From Fair Haven Hill the air is clear and fine-grained, and now it is a perfect russet November landscape, —— including the reddish brown of the oaks, excepting where the winter-rye fields and some low meadows show their green, the former quite bright, and also the evergreen patches of pines, edged in the northwest by the blue mountain ridges.

Got the wood thrush's (?) nest of November 5th. It is about five inches [in] diameter from outside to outside, and two and a half within. Outside of some weedy tufts (beneath), weed stems and stubble (some dry galium stems, small), and lined with a little fine grass and horsehair. I found the egg partly concealed by some dry alder leaves which had fallen into the nest.

Nov. 14. Minott hears geese to-day.

Heard to-day in my chamber, about 11 A. M., a singular sharp crackling sound by the window, which made me think of the snapping of an insect (with its wings, or striking something). It was produced by one of three *small* pitch pine cones which I gathered on the 7th, and which lay in the sun on the window-sill. I noticed a slight motion in the scales at the apex, when suddenly, with a louder crackling, it burst, or the scales separated, with a snapping sound on all sides of it. It was a general and sudden bursting or expanding of all the scales with a sharp crackling sound and motion of the whole cone, as by a force pent up within it.

I suppose the strain only needed to be relieved in one point for the whole to go off.

I was remarking to-day to Mr. Rice on the pleasantness of this November thus far, when he remarked that he remembered a similar season fifty-four years ago, and he remembered it because on the 13th of November that year he was engaged in *pulling turnips* and

saw wild geese go over, when one came to tell him that his father was killed by a bridge giving way when his team was crossing it, and the team falling on him walking at its side.

P. M. — Up Assabet with Sophia.

A clear, bright, warm afternoon. A painted tortoise swimming under water and a wood tortoise out on the bank. The rain has raised the river an additional foot or more, and it is *creeping over the meadows.* My boat is two thirds full and hard to come at. The old weedy margin is covered and a new grassy one acquired. The current is stronger, though the surface is pretty smooth. Much small rubbish is drifting down and slowly turning in the eddies. The motion of my boat sends an undulation to the shore, which rustles the dry sedge half immersed there, as if a tortoise were tumbling through it. Leaves and sticks and billets of wood come floating down in middle of the full, still stream, turning round in the eddies, and I mistake them for ducks at first. See two red-wing blackbirds alight on a black willow.

Nov. 15. The river rising. I see a spearer's light to-night.

Nov. 16. Minott speaks of the last fortnight as good weather to complete the harvesting, — com, potatoes, turnips, carrots, etc. It seemed late for harvest, but some of the above crops were not gathered.

A part of to-day and yesterday I have been making shelves for my Oriental books, which I hear to-day are now on the Atlantic in the Canada.

Mr. Rice asked me to-night if I knew how hard a head a goat had. When he lived in Roxbury a man asked him to kill a goat for him. He accordingly struck the goat with a hatchet, hard enough, as he supposed, to dash his brains out, but the goat instantly, with a bleat, leaped on to a wall and ran twenty rods on the wall faster than they could on the ground after him, and he saw him as much as a month afterward none the worse for the blow.

He thinks that muskrats have always, even in the winter, a dry bed in the bank, as well as the wet place to eat in their cabins. Told me again the story of the muskrat which he saw *resting* under the ice, he himself lying flat and still upon the ice and the muskrat having a long

way to go from the bank to his cabin. As soon as he stopped with his nose against the ice, a bubble issued from his mouth and flatted out to three inches in diameter against the ice, and he remained for half a minute with his mouth in it. Then drew it in, all but a little, and proceeded.

He spoke of the mud turtle resting on the "river-bush" (meaning the button-bush) in the spring, so near the top of the water that he could put his snout out when he pleased. Has taken them in April formerly, on Fast-Day.

I think that by the "swamp robin" he means the veery.

I see many more nests in the alders now than I suspected in the summer.

Nov. 17. Just after dark the first snow is falling, after a chilly afternoon with cold gray clouds, when my hands were uncomfortably cold.

It is interesting to me to talk with Rice, he lives so thoroughly and satisfactorily to himself. He has learned that rare art of living, the very elements of which most professors do not know. His life has been not a failure but a success. Seeing me going to sharpen some plane-irons, and hearing me complain of the want of tools, he said that I ought to have a chest of tools. But I said it was not worth the while. I should not use them enough to pay for them. "You would use them more, if you had them," said he. "When I came to do a piece of work I used to find commonly that I wanted a certain tool, and I made it a rule first always to make that tool. I have spent as much as $3000 thus on my tools." Comparatively speaking, his life is a success; not such a failure as most men's. He gets more out of any enterprise than his neighbors, for he helps himself more and hires less. Whatever pleasure there is in it he enjoys. By good sense and calculation he has become rich and has invested his property well, yet practices a fair and neat economy, dwells not in untidy luxury. It costs him less to live, and he gets more out of life, than others. To get his living, or keep it, is not a hasty or disagreeable toil. He works slowly but surely, enjoying the sweet of it. He buys a piece of meadow at a profitable rate, works at it in pleasant weather, he and his son, when they are inclined, goes a-fishing or a-bee-hunting or a-

rifle-shooting quite as often, and thus the meadow gets redeemed, and potatoes get planted, perchance, and he is very sure to have a good crop stored in his cellar in the fall, and some to sell. He always has the best of potatoes there. In the same spirit in which he and his son tackle up their Dobbin (he never keeps a fast horse) and go a-spearing or a-fishing through the ice, they also tackle up and go to their Sudbury farm to hoe or harvest a little, and when they return they bring home a load of stumps in their hay-rigging, which impeded their labors, but, perchance, supply them with their winter wood. All the woodchucks they shoot or trap in the bean-field are brought home also. And thus their life is a long sport and they know not what hard times are.

Rice says there are no bees worth hunting about here now. He has sometimes been to a large wood in the west part of Sudbury, and also to Nagog, yet there was little honey there.

Saw Goodwin this afternoon returning from the river with two minks, one trapped, the other shot, and half a dozen muskrats. Mink seem to be more commonly seen now, and the rising of the river begins to drive out the muskrats.

Labaume says that he wrote his journal of the Campaign in Russia each night, in the midst of incredible danger and suffering, with "a raven's quill, and a little gunpowder, mixed with some melted snow, in the hollow of my hand," the quill cut and mended with "the knife with which I had carved my scanty morsel of horse-flesh." Such a statement promises well for the writer's qualifications to treat such a theme.

Nov. 18. About an inch of snow fell last night, but the ground was not at all frozen or prepared for it. A little greener grass and stubble here and there seems to burn its way through it this forenoon.

It clears up at noon, and at 1 — p. M. I go to Fair Haven Hill *via* Hubbard's Grove.

As I sat in the house, I was struck with the brightness and heat of the sun reflected from this our first snow. There was an intenser light in the house, and I felt an uncommon heat from the sun's rays on my back. The air is very clear, and the sky heavenly, with a few floating downy clouds. I am prepared to hear sharp, screaming notes rending

the air, from the winter birds. I do, in fact, hear many jays, and the tinkling, like rattling glass, from chickadees and tree sparrows. I do not detect any peculiar brightness whatever in the osiers on the Hubbard causeway; they are scarcely, if at all, brighter than the tops of the trees. Now first mark the stubble and numerous withered weeds rising above the snow. They have suddenly acquired a new character. Tansy still shows its yellow disks, but yarrow is particularly fresh and perfect, cold and chaste, with its pretty little dry-looking rounded white petals and green leaves. Its very color gives it a right to bloom above the snow, — as level as a snow-crust on the top of the stubble. It looks like a virgin wearing a white ruff.

The snow is the great track-revealer. I come across the tracks of persons who, at a different hour from myself, have crossed, and perhaps often cross, some remote field on their errands, when I had not suspected a predecessor; and the track of the dog or staff are seen too. The cattle have tracked their whole pasture over, as if there had been a thousand. I have this silent but unerring evidence of any who have crossed the fields since last night. It is pleasant to see tracks leading towards the woods, — to be reminded that any have engagements there. Yet for the most part the snow is quite untrodden. Most fields have no track of man in them. I only see where a squirrel has leaped from the wall.

I now remark how the perfectly leafless alder thickets are much darker than the maples, now that the ground is whitened. The pasture directly under my face is white, but, seen aslant a few rods off, mostly russet. Gathered a bagful of fair apples on Fair Haven, showing their red cheeks above the snow.

I was so warmed in spirit in *getting* my wood that the heat it finally yielded when burnt was coldness in comparison. That first is a warmth which you cannot buy.

These apples which I get nowadays — russets and Baldwins — are the ripest of all, being acted on by the frost and partly left because they were slightly overripe for keeping. I come home with a heavy bagful and rob no one.

Instead of walking in the wood-market amid sharp-visaged teamsters, I float over dark reflecting waters in which I see mirrored the stumps on the bank, and am dazzled by the beauty of a summer

duck. Though I should get no wood, I should get a beauty perhaps more valuable. The price of this my wood, however high, is the very thing which I delight to pay. What I obtain with the most labor — the most water-logged and heaviest wood which I fish up from the bottom and split and dry — warms the most. The greater, too, the distance from which I have conveyed it, the more I am warmed by it in my thought. All the intervening shores glow and are warmed by it as it passes, or as I repass them in my mind. And yet men will cut their wood with sorrow, and burn it with lucifer matches. This was where I drove my team afield, and, instead of the grey-fly, I heard the wood tortoises even yet rustling through the sedge to the water, or the gray squirrel coursing from maple to maple.

One man thinks that he has a right to burn his thirty cords in a year because he can give a certain sum of money in exchange for them, but that another has no right to pick up the fagots which else nobody would burn. They who will remember only this kind of right do as if they stood under a shed and affirmed that they were under the unobscured heavens. The shed has its use, but what is it to the heavens above?

So of the *warmth* which food, shelter, and clothing afford, or might afford, if we used *economical stoves.* We might burn the smoke which now puts our eyes out. The pleasure, the warmth, is not so much in *having* as in a true and simple manner *getting* these necessaries.

Men prefer foolishly the gold to that of which it is the symbol, — simple, honest, independent labor. Can gold be said to buy food, if it does not buy an appetite for food? It is fouler and uglier to have too much than not to have enough.

Nov. 19. A cold, gray day, once spitting snow. Water froze in tubs enough to bear last night.

Minott had two cats on his knee. One given away without his knowledge a fortnight before had just found its way back. He says he would not kill a cat for twenty dollars, — no, not for fifty. Finally he told his women folks that he would not do it for five hundred, or any sum. He thought they loved life as well as we. Johnny Vose would n't do it. He used to carry down milk to a shop every day for a litter

of kittens.

Speaking of geese, he says that Dr. Hurd told a tough story once. He said that when he went out to the well there came a flock of geese flying so low that they had to rise to clear the well-sweep. M. says that there used to be a great many more geese formerly; he used to hear a great many flocks in a day go "yelling" over. Brant, too, he used to see.

Told me of his fishing for pickerel once in the brook, when a mink leaped into the water toward his bait (a frog), but, seeing the end of his pole, he dived and made off. Some years ago he saw a mink steal out of the brook, which, being disturbed, dropped a pout half grown which it had caught. This was in his rye, then five or six inches high. Presently it returned and carried the pout to the wall by the elm at R. W. E. 's bound. He followed, looked under a rock, and saw two young minks. He has taken the jackets off many a one, but they smell so rank it is unpleasant work.

Rice says that that brook which crosses the road just beyond his brother Israel's is called Cold Brook. It comes partly from Dunge Hole. When the river is rising it will flow up the brook a great way.

Rice told his turtle story the other night: "One day I was going through Boston market and I saw a huddle of men around something or other. I edged my way between them and saw that they had got a great mud turtle on a plank, and a butcher stood over him with a cleaver in his hand. 'Eh,' said I, 'what are you trying to do?'

'We are waiting for him to put out his head so that we may cut it off. Look out,' they said; 'don't come so near, or he'll bite you.'

'Look here,' said I, 'let me try. I guess I can make him put his head out.'

'Let him try. Let him try,' they said, with a laugh. So I stepped into the ring and stood astride of the turtle, while they looked on to see the sport. After looking at him a moment, I put down my hands and turned him over on to his back, whereupon he immediately ran out his head and pushed against the plank to turn himself back, but, as they were not ready to cut at once, or his neck was not in a good position, I seized his head in both hands and, putting my feet against his breast-bone, drew his head out the full length of his neck and said, 'Now cut away. Only take care you don't cut my fingers.' They

cut, and I threw the head down on the floor. As I walked away, some one said, 'I guess that fellow has seen mud turtles before to-day.'"

Nov. 20. Again I hear that sharp, crackling, snapping sound and, hastening to the window, find that another of the pitch pine cones gathered November 7th, lying in the sun, or which the sun has reached, has separated its scales very slightly at the apex. It is only discoverable on a close inspection, but while I look the whole cone opens its scales with a smart crackling and rocks and seems to bristle up, scattering the dry pitch on the surface. They all thus fairly loosen and open, though they do not at once spread wide open. It is almost like the disintegration of glass. As soon as the tension is relaxed in one part, it is relaxed in every part.

A cold day. The snow that fell November 17th in the evening is still seen on the ground.

Nov. 24. Geese went over on the 13th and 14th, on the 17th the first snow fell, and the 19th it began to be cold and blustering. That first slight snow has not yet gone off! and *very little* has been added. The last three or four days have been quite cold, the sidewalks a glare of ice and very little melting. To-day has been exceedingly blustering and disagreeable, as I found while surveying for Moore. The farmers now bring the apples they have engaged (and the cider); it is time to put them in the cellar, and the turnips. Ice has frozen pretty thick in the bottom of my boat.

Nov. 26. Bottom of boat covered with ice. The ice next the shore bore me and my boat.

Nov. 21. P. M. — By river to J. Farmer's.

He gave me the head of a gray rabbit which his boy had snared. This rabbit is white beneath, the whole length, reddish-brown on the sides, and the same spotted with black, above; the hairs coarse and homely, yet the fur beneath thick and slate-colored as usual. Well defended from the cold. Sides I might say *pale* brick-color, the brown part. The fur under the feet dirty-yellowish, as if stained by what it trod upon. He makes no use of their skins or fur. The skin is

very tender. The tail, short and curled up, is white on the inside like that of the deer described by Loskiel, *q v.,* Indian book.

He showed me the preserved skin of the heads of a double-headed calf, still-born, also the adjoining portion of the spine, where two short spinal columns, two or three inches long, merged in one. Only one body and other organs.

I told him I saw a mink. He said he would have given me $1.50 and perhaps something more for him. I hear that he gives $1.75, and sells them again at a profit. They are used to trim ladies' coats with, among other things. A mink skin which he showed me was a darker brown than the one I saw last (he says they changed suddenly to darker *about* a fortnight since); and the tail was nearly all black.

He said that his grandfather, who could remember one hundred and twenty-five years before this, told him that they used to catch wolves in what is now Carter's pasture by the North River (east of Dodge's Brook) in this manner: They piled up logs, cob-house fashion, beginning with a large base, eight or ten feet square, and narrowing successively each tier, so as to make steps for the wolves to the top, say ten feet high. Then they put a dead sheep within. A wolf soon found it in the night, sat down outside and howled till he called his comrades to him, and then they ascended step by step and jumped down within; but when they had done they could not get out again. They always found one of the wolves dead, and supposed that he was punished for betraying the others into this trap.

A man in Brighton, whom he fully believes, told him that he built a bower near a dead horse and placed himself within to shoot crows. One crow took his station as sentinel on the top of the tree, and thirty or forty alighted upon the horse. He fired and killed seven or eight, but the rest, instead of minding him, immediately flew to their sentinel and pecked him to pieces before his eyes. Also Mr. Joseph Clark told him that, as he was going along the road, he cast a stick over the wall and hit some crows in a field, whereupon they flew directly at their sentinel on an apple tree and beat and buffeted him away to the woods as far as he could see.

There is little now to be heard along the river but the sedge rustling on the brink. There is a little ice along most of the shore throughout the day.

Farmer told me that some one told him he found a pickerel washed up in the river, choked by a bream which it had endeavored to swallow.

Nov. 30. River skimmed over behind Dodd's and elsewhere. Got in my boat. River remained iced over all day.

This evening I received Cholmondeley's gift of Indian books, forty-four volumes in all, which came by the Canada, reaching Boston on the morning of the 24th. Left Liverpool the 10th.

Goodwin and Farmer think that a dog will not touch the dead body of a mink, it smells so strongly. The former, after skinning them, throws the carcass into a tree for the crows. He has got eleven this fall; shot two and trapped the rest.— '

On the 27th, when I made my last voyage for the season, I found a large sound pine log about four feet long floating, and brought it home. Off the larger end I sawed two wheels, about a foot in diameter and seven or eight inches thick, and I fitted to them an axle-tree made of a joist, which also I found in the river, and thus I had a convenient pair of wheels on which to get my boat up and roll it about. The assessors called me into their office this year and said they wished to get an inventory of my property; asked if I had any real estate. No. Any notes at interest or railroad shares? No. Any taxable property? None that I knew of. "I own a boat," I said; and one of them thought that that might come under the head of a pleasure carriage, which is taxable. Now that I have wheels to it, it comes nearer to it. I was pleased to get my boat in by this means rather than on a borrowed wheelbarrow. It was fit that the river should furnish the material, and that in my last voyage on it, when the ice reminded me that it was time to put it in winter quarters.

I am waiting for colder weather to survey a swamp, now inaccessible on account of the water.

I asked Aunt L. to-night why *Scheeter* Potter was so called. She said, because his neighbors regarded him as so small a man that they said in jest that it was his business to make mosquitoes' bills. He was accused of catching his neighbor's hens in a trap and eating them. But he was crazy.

William Wheeler says that he went a-spearing on the 28th (night

before Thanksgiving) and, besides pouts and pickerel, caught two great suckers. He had one of the last stuffed and baked for Thanksgiving, and made himself sick by eating too heartily of it.

DECEMBER, 1855

Dec. 3. *Monday.* A pleasant day. No snow yet (since that first whitening which lasted so long), nor do I see any ice to speak of.

Hear and see, of birds, only a tree sparrow in the willows on the Turnpike. Met Goodwin going out with his gun. He shot (evidently) some crossbills once in Roxbury. He sometimes gets a skunk drowned in his muskrat or mink traps, and so can get at their secretion without being disturbed by the scent. He, too, has heard that it is a sure cure for the phthisic.

The fields and woods seem now particularly empty and bare. No cattle in pasture; only here and there a man carting or spreading manure.

Every larger tree which I knew and admired is being gradually culled out and carried to mill. I see one or two more large oaks in E. Hubbard's wood lying high on stumps, waiting for snow to be removed. I miss them as surely and with the same feeling that I do the old inhabitants out of the village street. To me they were something more than timber; to their owner not so.

Dec. 4. Melvin says that he shot a sheldrake once in the act of swallowing a perch seven or eight inches long He had got nothing to-day, for he forgot his' caps.

A pleasant day and yet no snow nor ice. The younger osiers on Shattuck's row *do* shine.

Dec. 6. 10 p. M. — Hear geese going over.

Dec. 8. *Saturday.* Still no snow, — nor ice noticeable. I might have left my boat out till now. I have not worn gloves yet.

This afternoon I go to the woods down the railroad, seeking the society of some flock of little birds, or some squirrel, but in vain. I only hear the faint lisp of (probably) a tree sparrow. I go through empty halls, apparently unoccupied by bird or beast. Yet it is cheering to walk there while the sun is reflected from far through the aisles with a silvery light from the needles of the pine. The contrast

of light or sunshine and shade, though the latter is now so thin, is food enough for me. Some scarlet oak leaves on the forest floor, when I stoop low, appear to have a little blood in them still. The shrivelled Solomon's-seal berries are conspicuously red amid the dry leaves. I visited the door of many a squirrel's burrow, and saw his nutshells and cone-scales and tracks in the sand, but a snow would reveal much more. Let a snow come and clothe the ground and trees, and I shall see the tracks of many inhabitants now unsuspected, and the very snow covering up the withered leaves will supply the place of the green ones which are gone. ' In a little busy flock of lisping birds, — chickadees or lesser redpolls, — even in a nuthatch or downy woodpecker, there would have been a sweet society for me, but I did not find [it]. Yet I had the sun penetrating into the deep hollows through the aisles of the wood, and the silvery sheen of its reflection from masses of white pine needles.

Met Therien coming from Lincoln on the railroad. He says that he carried a cat from Jacob Baker's to Riordan's shanty in a bag in the night, but she ran home again. "Had they not a cat in the shanty?" I asked. "Yes," said he, "but she was run over by the cars and killed; they found her head on the track separated from her body, just below the pond." That cat of Baker's used to eat eggs and so he wished to get rid of her. He carried her in a bag to Waltham, but she came back.

Therien had several times seen where tortoises had been run over. They lie just under the rail, and put their heads out upon the rail to see what is coming, and so their heads are crushed. Also he has seen snakes cut in two. The men on the road told him that small birds were frequently run over.

Jacob Farmer brought me the head of a mink tonight and took tea here. He says that partridges sometimes fly against a house in the night, he thinks when started by a fox. His man found one in his bam this fall, which had come in in the night, and caught it before it could get out.

The mink has a delicate pard-like nose, cat-like. The long hairs are black or blackish, yet the general aspect is brown.

Farmer says he can call a male quail close to him by imitating the note of the female, which is only a single faint whistle. He says if

you take eggs out of a partridge's nest and put them back, you will find just as many cast out afterwards as you took out.

Dec. 9. A still, completely gray, overcast, chilly morning. At 8.30 a fine snow begins to fall, increasing very gradually, perfectly straight down, till in fifteen minutes the ground is white, the smooth places first, and thus the winter landscape is ushered in. And now it is falling thus all the land over, sifting down through the tree-tops in woods, and on the meadow and pastures, where the dry grass and weeds conceal it at first, and on the river and ponds, in which it is dissolved. But in a few minutes it turns to rain, and so the wintry landscape is postponed for the present.

Dec. 10. To Cambridge.

Dec. 11. P. M. — To Holden Swamp, Conantum.

For the first time I wear gloves, but I have not walked *early* this season.

I see no birds, but hear, methinks, one or two tree sparrows. No snow; scarcely any ice to be detected. It is only an aggravated November. I thread the tangle of the spruce swamp, admiring the leafets of the swamp pyrus which had put forth again, now frostbitten, the great yellow buds of the swamp-pink, the round red buds of the high blueberry, and the fine sharp red ones of the panicled andromeda. Slowly I worm my way amid the snarl, the thicket of black alders and blueberry, etc.; see the forms, apparently, of rabbits at the foot of maples, and catbirds' nests now exposed in the leafless thicket.

Standing there, though in this *bare* November landscape, I am reminded of the incredible phenomenon of small birds in winter. That ere long, amid the cold powdery snow, as it were a fruit of the season, will come twittering a flock of delicate crimson-tinged birds, lesser redpolls, to sport and feed on the seeds and buds now just ripe for them on the sunny side of a wood, shaking down the powdery snow there in their cheerful social feeding, as if it were high midsummer to them. These crimson aerial creatures have wings which would bear them quickly to the regions of summer, but here is

all the summer they want. What a rich contrast! tropical colors, crimson breasts, on cold white snow! Such etherealness, such delicacy in their forms, such ripeness in their colors, in this stern and barren season! It is as surprising as if you were to find a brilliant crimson flower which flourished amid snows. They greet the chopper and the hunter in their furs. Their Maker gave them the last touch and launched them forth the day of the Great Snow. He made this bitter imprisoning cold before which man quails, but He made at the same time these warm and glowing creatures to twitter and be at home in it. He said not only, Let there be linnets in winter, but linnets of rich plumage and pleasing twitter, bearing summer in their natures. The snow will be three feet deep, the ice will be two feet thick, and last night, perchance, the mercury sank to thirty degrees below zero. All the fountains of nature seem to be sealed up. The traveller is frozen on his way. But under the edge of yonder birch wood will be a little flock of crimson-breasted lesser redpolls, busily feeding on the seeds of the birch and shaking down the powdery snow! As if a flower were created to be now in bloom, a peach to be now first fully ripe on its stem. I am struck by the perfect confidence and success of nature. There is no question about the existence of these delicate creatures, their adaptedness to their circumstances. There is superadded superfluous paintings and adornments, a crystalline, jewel-like health and soundness, like the colors reflected from ice-crystals.

When some rare northern bird like the pine grosbeak is seen thus far south in the winter, he does not suggest poverty, but dazzles us with his beauty. There is in them a warmth akin to the warmth that melts the icicle. Think of these brilliant, warm-colored, and richly warbling birds, birds of paradise, dainty-footed, downy-clad, in the midst of a New England, a Canadian winter. The woods and fields, now somewhat solitary, being deserted by their more tender summer residents, are now frequented by these rich but delicately tinted and hardy northern immigrants of the air. Here is no imperfection to be suggested. The winter, with its snow and ice, is not an evil to be corrected. It is as it was designed and made to be, for the artist has had leisure to add beauty to use. My acquaintances, angels from the north. I had a vision thus prospectively of these birds as I stood in the swamps. I saw this familiar — too *familiar* — fact at a different

angle, and I was charmed and haunted by it. But I could only attain to be thrilled and enchanted, as by the sound of a strain of music dying away. I had seen into paradisaic regions, with their air and sky, and I was no longer wholly or merely a denizen of this vulgar earth. Yet had I hardly a foothold there. I was only sure that I was charmed, and no mistake. It is only necessary to behold thus the least fact or phenomenon, however familiar, from a point a hair's breadth aside from our habitual path or routine, to be overcome, enchanted by its beauty and significance. Only what we have touched and worn is trivial, — our scurf, repetition, tradition, conformity. To perceive freshly, with fresh senses, is to be inspired. Great winter itself looked like a precious gem, reflecting rainbow colors from one angle.

My body is all sentient. As I go here or there, I am tickled by this or that I come in contact with, as if I touched the wires of a battery. I can generally' recall — have fresh in my mind — several scratches last received. These I continually recall to mind, reimpress, and harp upon. The age of miracles is each moment thus returned. Now it is wild apples, now river reflections, now a flock of lesser redpolls. In winter, too, resides immortal youth and perennial summer. Its head is not silvered; its cheek is not blanched but has a ruby tinge to it.

If any part of nature excites our pity, it is for ourselves we grieve, for there is eternal health and beauty. We get only transient and partial glimpses of the beauty of the world. Standing at the right angle, we are dazzled by the colors of the rainbow in colorless ice. From the right point of view, every storm and every drop in it is a rainbow. Beauty and music are not mere traits and exceptions. They are the rule and character. It is the exception that we see and hear. Then I try to discover what it was in the vision that charmed and translated me. What if we could daguerreotype our thoughts and feelings! for I am surprised and enchanted often by some quality which I cannot detect. I have seen an attribute of another world and condition of things. It is a wonderful fact that I should be affected, and thus deeply and powerfully, more than by aught else in all my experience, — that this fruit should be borne in me, sprung from a seed finer than the spores of fungi, floated from other atmospheres! finer than the dust caught in the sails of vessels a thousand miles from land! Here the invisible seeds settle, and spring, and bear

flowers and fruits of immortal beauty.

Dec. 13. This morning it is snowing, and the ground. is whitened. The countless flakes, seen against the dark evergreens like a web that is woven in the air, impart a cheerful and busy aspect to nature. It is like a grain that is sown, or like leaves that have come to clothe the bare trees. Now, by 9 o'clock, it comes down in larger flakes, and I apprehend that it will soon stop. It does.

How pleasant a sense of preparedness for the winter, —— plenty of wood in the shed and potatoes and apples, etc., in the cellar, and the house banked up! Now it will be a cheerful sight to see the snows descend and hear the blast howl.

Sanborn tells me that he was waked up a few nights ago in Boston, about midnight, by the sound of a flock of geese passing over the city, probably about the same night I heard them here. They go honking over cities where the arts flourish, waking the inhabitants; over State-houses and capitols, where legislatures sit; over harbors where fleets lie at anchor; mistaking the city, perhaps, for a swamp or the edge of a lake, about settling in it, not suspecting that greater geese than they have settled there.

Dec. 14. It began to snow again last evening, but soon ceased, and now it has turned out a fine winter morning, with half an inch of snow on the ground, the air full of mist, through which the smokes rise up perfectly straight; and the mist is frozen in minute leafets on the fences and trees and the needles of the pines, silvering them. —

I stood by Bigelow the blacksmith's forge yesterday, and saw him repair an axe. He burned the handle out, then, with a chisel, cut off the red-hot edge even, there being some great gaps in it, and by hammering drew it out and shaped it anew, — all in a few minutes. It was interesting to see performed so simply and easily, by the aid of fire and a few rude tools, a work which would have surpassed the skill of a tribe of savages.

P. M. — To Pink Azalea Woods.

The warm sun has quite melted the thin snow on the south sides of the hills, but I go to see the tracks of animals that have been out on the north sides. First, getting over the wall under the walnut trees on

the south brow of the hill, I see the broad tracks of squirrels, probably red, where they have ascended and descended the trees, and the empty shells of walnuts which they have gnawed left on the snow. The snow is so very shallow that the impression of their toes is the more distinctly seen. It imparts life to the landscape to see merely the squirrels' track in the snow at the base of the walnut tree. You almost realize a squirrel at every tree. The attractions of nature are thus condensed or multiplied. You see not merely bare trees and ground which you might suspect that a squirrel had left, but you have this unquestionable and significant evidence that a squirrel has been there since the snow fell, — as conclusive as if you had seen him.

A little further I heard the sound [of] a downy woodpecker tapping a pitch pine in a little grove, and saw him inclining to dodge behind the stem. He flitted from pine to pine before me. Frequently, when I pause to listen, I hear this sound in the orchards or streets. This was in one of these dense groves of young pitch pines.

Suddenly I heard the screwing mew and then the whir of a partridge on or beneath an old decaying apple tree which the pines had surrounded. There were several such, and another partridge burst away from one. They shoot off swift and steady, showing their dark-edged tails, almost like a cannon-ball. I saw one's track under an apple tree and where it had pecked a frozen-thawed apple.

Then I came upon a fox-track made last night, leading toward a farmhouse, — Wheeler's, where there are many hens, — running over the side of the hill parallel with Wheeler's new wall. He was dainty in the choice of his ground, for I observed that for a mile he had adhered to a narrow cow-path, in which the snow lay level, for smoothness. Sometimes he had cantered, and struck the snow with his foot between his tracks. Little does the farmer think of the danger which threatens his hens.

In a little hollow I see the sere gray pennyroyal rising above the snow, which, snuffed, reminds me of garrets full of herbs.

Now I hear, half a mile off, the hollow sound of woodchopping, the work of short winter days begun, which is gradually laying bare and impoverishing our landscape. In two or three thicker woods which I have visited this season, I was driven away by this ominous sound.

Further over toward the river, I see the tracks of a deer mouse on a rock, which suddenly come to an end where apparently it had ascended a small pine by a twig which hung over it. Sometimes the mark of its tail was very distinct. Afterwards I saw in the pasture westward where many had run about in the night. In one place many had crossed the cow-path in which I was walking, in one trail, or the same one had come and gone many times. In the large hollows where rocks have been blasted, and on the sides of the river, I see irregular spaces of dark ice bare of snow, which was frozen after the snow ceased to fall. But this ice is rotten and mixed with snow. I am surprised to see the river frozen over for the most part with this thin and rotten snow ice, and the drooping or bent alders are already frozen into this slush, giving to the stream a very wintry aspect. I see some squirrel-tracks about a hole in a stump.

At the azalea meadow or swamp, the red tops of the osiers, which are very dense and of a uniform height, are quite attractive, in the absence of color at this season. Any brighter and warmer color catches our eye at this season. I see an elm there whose bark is worn quite smooth and white and bare of lichens, showing exactly the height at which the ice stood last winter.

Looking more closely at the light snow there near the swamp, I found that it was sprinkled all over (as with pellets of cotton) with regular star-shaped cottony flakes with six points, about an eighth of an inch in diameter and on an average a half an inch apart. It snowed geometry.

How snug and warm a hemlock looks in the winter! That by the azalea looks thus:

There is a tendency in the limbs to arrange themselves ray-wise about a point one third from the base to the top. What singular regularity in the outline of a tree!

I noticed this morning successive banks of frost on the windows, marked by their irregular waving edges, like the successive five, ten, and fifteen fathom lines which mark the depth of the shores on charts.

Thus by the snow I was made aware in this short walk of the recent presence there of squirrels, a fox, and countless mice, whose trail I had crossed, but none of which I saw, or probably should have

seen before the snow fell. Also I saw this afternoon the track of one sparrow, probably a tree sparrow, which had run among the weeds in the road.

Dec. 15. This morning it has begun to snow apparently in earnest. The air is quite thick and the view confined. It is quite still, yet some flakes come down from one side and some from another, crossing each other like woof and warp apparently, as they are falling in different eddies and currents of air. In the midst of it, I hear and see a few little chickadees prying about the twigs of the locusts in the graveyard. They have come into town with the snow. They now and then break forth into a short sweet strain, and then seem suddenly to check themselves, as if they had done it before they thought.

The boys have skated a little within two or three days, but it has not been thick enough to bear a man yet.

How like a bird of ill omen the crow behaves! Still holding its ground in our midst like a powwow that is not to be exterminated! Sometimes when I am going through the Deep Cut, I look up and see half a dozen black crows flitting silently across in front and ominously eying down; passing from one wood to another, yet as if their passage had reference to me.

The snow turned to rain, and this afternoon I walk in it down the railroad and through the woods. The low grass and weeds, bent down with a myriad little crystalline drops, ready to be frozen perhaps, are very interesting, but wet my feet through very soon. A steady but gentle, warm rain.

Dec. 16. Steady, gentle, warm rain all the forenoon, and mist and mizzling in the afternoon, when I go round by Abel Hosmer's and back by the railroad.

The mist makes the near trees dark and noticeable, like pictures, and makes the houses more interesting, revealing but one at a time. The old apple trees are very important to this landscape, they have so much body and are so dark. It is very pleasing to distinguish the dim outline of the woods, more or less distant, through the mist, sometimes the merest film and suspicion of a wood. On one side it is the plump and rounded but soft masses of pitch pines, on another the

brushy tops of maples, birches, etc. Going by Hosmer's, the very heaps of stones in the pasture are obvious as cairns in one of Ossian's landscapes.

Saw two red squirrels on the fence, one on each side of his house, particularly red along their backs and top of head and tail. They are remarkably tame. One sits twirling apparently a dried apple in his paws, with his tail curled close over his back as if to keep it warm, fitting its curve. How much smothered sunlight in their wholesome brown red this misty day! It is clear New England, *Nov-anglia*, like the red subsoil. It is springlike.

As we go over the bridge, admire the reflection of the trees and houses from the smooth open water over the channel, where the ice has been dissolved by the rain.

Dec. 17. 9.30 A. M. — To Hill.

A remarkably fine, springlike morning. The earth all bare; the sun so bright and warm; the steam curling up from every fence and roof, and carried off at [an] angle by the slight northwesterly air. After those rainy days the air is apparently uncommonly clear, and hence (?) the sound of cock-crowing is so sweet, and I hear the sound of the sawmill even at the door, also the cawing of crows. There is a little ice, which makes it as yet good walking, in the roads. The peculiar brightness and sunniness may be partly owing to the sun being reflected through the cleansed air from the more than russet, the bleached, surface of the earth. Methinks every squirrel will be out now. This is the morning. Ere long the wind will rise and this season will be over. There will probably be some wrack in the afternoon sky.

Columella says you must be careful not to carry out seeds in your manure and so have *segetes herbidas* (weedy crops).

Dec. 18. Saw to-day a dark-colored spider of the *very largest* kind on ice, — the mill-pond at E. Wood's in Acton.

J. Farmer says that he once tried to kill a cat by taking her by the legs and striking her head against a stone, but she made off, and in a week was about again, apparently as well as ever, and he did not meddle with her again.

Dec. 20. Still no snow, and, as usual, I wear no gloves.

P. M. — To Hubbard's skating meadow.

A few chickadees busily inspecting the buds at the willow-row ivy tree, for insects, with a short, clear *chink* from time to time, as if to warn me of their neighborhood.

Boys are now devoted to skating after school at night, far into evening, going without their suppers. It is pretty good on the meadows, which are somewhat overflown, and the sides of the river, but the greater part of it is open. I walk along the side of the river, on the ice beyond the Bath Place. Already there is dust on this smooth ice, on its countless facets, revealed by the sun. How warm the dull-red cranberry vine rises above the ice here and there! I stamped and shook the ice to detect the holes and weak places where that little brook comes in there. They were plainly revealed, for the water beneath, being agitated, proclaimed itself at every hole far and wide or for three or four rods. The edge of the ice toward the channel is either rubbed up or edged with a ridge of frozen foam.

I see *some* gossamer on the weeds above the ice. Also, in now hard, dark ice, the tracks apparently of a fox, made when it was saturated snow. So long his trail is revealed, but over the pastures no hound can now trace him. There has been much overflow about every tussock in the meadow, making that rough, opaque ice, like yeast. I mark the many preparations for another year which the farmer has made, — his late plowings, his muck-heaps in fields, perhaps of grass, which he intends to plow and cultivate, his ditches to carry off the winter's floods, etc. How placid, like silver or like steel in different lights, the surface of the still, living water between these borders of ice, reflecting the weeds and trees, and now the warm colors of the sunset sky! The ice is that portion of the flood which is congealed and laid up in our fields for a season.

Dec. 21. Going to the post-office at 9 A. M. this very pleasant morning, I hear and see tree sparrows on Wheildon's pines, and just beyond scare a downy woodpecker and a brown creeper in company, from near the base of a small elm within three feet of me. The former dashes off with a loud rippling of the wing, and the creeper flits

across the street to the base of another small elm, whither I follow. At first he hides behind the base, but ere long works his way upward and comes in sight. He is a gray-brown, a low curve from point of beak to end of tail, resting flat against the tree.

P. M. — *Via* Hubbard's Grove and river to Fair Haven Pond. Return by Andromeda Ponds.

See only a jay (?) flying high over the fields, and chickadees. The last rarely seem to mind you, keeping busy at work, yet hop nearer and nearer. Hubbard's barren pasture under Fair Haven Hill, whose surface is much broken, alternate sod and bare sand, is now tinged with the pale leather or cinnamon color of the second-sized pinweed, which thickly covers it.

I here take to the riverside. The broader places are frozen over, but I do not trust them yet. Fair Haven is entirely frozen over, probably some days. Already some eager fisherman has been here, this morning or yesterday, and I hear that a great pickerel was carried through the street. I see, close under the high bank on the east side, a distinct tinge of that red in the ice for a rod.

I remark the different pale colors to which the grasses have faded and bleached. Those coarse sedges amid the button - bushes are bleached particularly light. Some, more slender, in the Pleasant Meadow, is quite light with singular reddish or pinkish radical blades making a mat at the base. Some dense sedge or rushes in tufts in the Andromeda Ponds have a decided greenish tinge, *somewhat* like well-cured hay.

A few simple colors now prevail. Even the apples on the trees have assumed the brown color of the leaves.

I do not remember to have seen the Andromeda Ponds so low. The weedy and slimy bottom is for the most part exposed. The slime, somewhat clay-colored, is collected here and there into almost organic forms, — manna[?]-like, with a skin to it. I make a nosegay of the sphagnum, which must suffer from this unusual exposure. It is frozen stiff at the base. What rugged castellated forms it takes at the base of the andromeda which springs from it! Some is green or yellowish-green, some bright-crimson, some brown, some quite white, with different shades of all these colors. Such are the temples and cheeks of these soft crags. What a primitive and swampy

wilderness for the wild mice to run amidst! — the andromeda woods!

Walden is skimmed over, all but an acre, in my cove. It will probably be finished to-night.

No doubt the healthiest man in the world is prevented from doing what he would like by sickness.

Dec. 22. Dull overcast morning, so warm that it has actually thawed in the night, and there is a wet space larger than the ice on the sidewalk. It draws forth crowing from cockerels, as spring does rills from glaciers.

P. M. — Warm rain and frost coming out and muddy walking.

In reading Columella I am frequently reminded, not only by the general tone, but even by the particular warnings and directions, of our agricultural journals and reports of farmers' clubs. Often what is last and most insisted on among us, was most insisted on by the Romans. As when he says it is better to cultivate a little land well than a great deal ill, and quotes the poet: —

"... Laudato ingentia rura, Exiguum colito."

"Modus ergo, qui in omnibus rebus, etiam parandis agris adhibebitur: tantum enim obtinendum est, quanto est opus, ut emisse videamur quo potiremur, non quo oneraremur ipsi, atque aliis fruendum eriperemus, more praepotentium, qui possident fines gentium, quos ne circumire equis quidem valent, sed proculcandos pecudibus, et vastandos ac populandos feris derelinquunt, aut occupatos nexu civium, et ergastulis tenent." (Therefore, as in all things, so in buying land moderation will be used; for only so much is to be obtained as is necessary, to make it appear that we have bought what we can use, not what we may be burdened with, and hinder others from enjoying, like those overpowerful ones who possess the territory of nations, which they cannot go round even with horses, but leave to be trampled by herds, and to be laid waste and depopulated by wild beasts, or keep occupied by *nexu civium* and prisons.)

This reminds me of those extensive tracts said to belong to the

Peter Piper estate, running back a mile or more and absorbing several old farms, but almost wholly neglected and run out, which I often traverse and am better acquainted with than their so-called owners. Several times I have had to show such the nearest way out of their wood-lots. Extensive wood-lots and cranberry meadows, perhaps, and a rambling old country house on one side, but you can't buy an acre of land for a house-lot. "Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

Dec. 23. P. M. — To Conantum-End.

A very bright and pleasant day with remarkably soft wind from a little north of west. The frost has come out so in the rain of yesterday that I avoid the muddy plowed fields and keep on the grass ground, which shines with moisture. I think I do not remember such and so much pleasant, springlike weather as this and some other days of this month.

I admire those old root fences which have almost entirely disappeared from tidy fields, — white pine roots got out when the neighboring meadow was a swamp, —— the monuments of many a revolution. These roots have not penetrated into the ground, but spread over the surface, and, having been cut off four or five feet from the stump, were hauled off and set up on their edges for a fence. The roots are not merely interwoven, but grown together into solid frames, full of loopholes like Gothic windows of various sizes and all shapes, triangular and oval and harp-like, and the slenderer parts are dry and resonant like harp-strings. They are rough and unapproachable, with a hundred snags and horns which bewilder and balk the calculation of the walker who would surmount them. The part of the trees above ground presents no such fantastic forms. Here is one seven paces, or more than a rod, long, six feet high in the middle, and yet only one foot thick, and two men could turn it up, and in this case the roots were six or nine inches thick at the extremities. The roots of pines growing in swamps grow thus in the form of solid frames or rackets, and those of different trees are interwoven with all so that they stand on a very broad foot and stand or fall together to some extent before the blasts, as herds meet the assault of beasts of prey with serried front. You have thus only to dig

into the swamp a little way to find your fence, —— post, rails, and slats already solidly grown together and of material more durable than any timber. How pleasing a thought that a field should be fenced with the roots of the trees got out in clearing the land a century before! I regret them as mementoes of the primitive forest. The tops of the same trees made into fencing-stuff would have decayed generations ago. These roots are singularly unobnoxious to the effects of moisture.

The swamp is thus covered with a complete web of roots. Wild trees, such as are fitted to grow in the uncultivated swamps.

I detect the Irishman where the elms and maples on the causeway are cut off at the same height with the willows *to make 'pollards* of!

I sit on the hillside near the wall corner, in the further Conantum field, as I might in an Indian-summer day in November or October. These are the colors of the earth now: all land that has been some time cleared, except it is subject to the plow, is russet, the color of withered herbage and the ground finely commixed, a lighter straw-color where are rank grasses next water; sprout-lands, the pale leather-color of dry oak leaves; pine woods, green; deciduous woods (bare twigs and stems and withered leaves commingled), a brownish or reddish gray; maple swamps, smoke-color; land just cleared, dark brown and earthy; plowed land, dark brown or blackish; ice and water, slate-color or blue; andromeda swamps, dull red and dark gray; rocks, gray.

At Lee's Cliff I notice these radical (?) leaves quite fresh: saxifrage, sorrel, polypody, mullein, columbine, veronica, thyme-leaved sandwort, spleenwort, strawberry, buttercup, radical johnswort, mouse-ear, radical pinweeds, cinquefoils, checkerberry, wintergreen, thistles, catnip, *Turritis stricta* especially fresh and bright. What is that fine very minute plant thickly covering the ground, like a young arenaria?

Think of the life of a kitten, ours for instance: last night her eyes set in a fit, doubtful if she will ever come out of it, and she is set away in a basket and submitted to the recuperative powers of nature; this morning running up the clothes-pole and erecting her back in frisky sport to every passer.

Dec. 25. 9 A. M. — Snow driving almost horizontally from the northeast and fast whitening the ground, and with it the first tree sparrows I have noticed in the yard. It turns partly to rain and hail at midday.

Dec. 26. After snow, rain, and hail yesterday and last night, we have this morning quite a glaze, there being at last an inch or two of crusted snow on the ground, the most we have had. The sun comes out at 9 A. M. and lights up the ice-incrusted trees, but it is pretty warm and the ice rapidly melts.

I go to Walden *via* the almshouse and up the railroad. Trees seen in the west against the dark cloud, the sun shining on them, are perfectly white as frostwork, and their outlines very perfectly and distinctly revealed, great wisps that they are and ghosts of trees, with recurved twigs. The walls and fences are encased, and the fields bristle with a myriad of crystal spears. Already the wind is rising and a brattling is heard overhead in the street. The sun, shining down a gorge over the woods at Brister's Hill, reveals a wonderfully brilliant as well as seemingly solid and diversified region in the air. The ice is from an eighth to a quarter of an inch thick about the twigs and pine-needles, only half as thick commonly on one side. Their heads are bowed; their plumes and needles are stiff, as if preserved under glass for the inspection of posterity.

Thus is our now especially slow-footed river laid up not merely on the meadows, but on the twigs and leaves of the trees, on the needles of the pines. The pines thus weighed down are sharp-pointed at top and remind me of firs and even hemlocks, their drooping boughs being wrapped about them like the folds of a cloak or a shawl. The crust is already strewn with bits of the green needles which have been broken off. Frequently the whole top stands up bare, while the middle and lower branches are drooping and massed together, resting on one another. But the low and spreading weeds in the fields and the wood-paths are the most interesting. Here are asters, savoryleaved, whose flat imbricated calyxes, three quarters of an inch over, are surmounted and inclosed in a perfectly transparent ice button, like a glass knob, through which you see the reflections of the brown calyx. These are very common. Each little blue-curls calyx

has a spherical button like those brass ones on little boys' jackets, — little sprigs on them, — and the pennyroyal has still smaller spheres, more regularly arranged about its stem, chandelier-wise, and still smells through the ice. The finest grasses support the most wonderful burdens of ice and most branched on their minute threads. These weeds are spread and arched over into the snow again, — countless little arches a few inches high, each cased in ice, which you break with a tinkling crash at each step.

The scarlet fruit of the cockspur lichen, seen glowing through the more opaque whitish or snowy crust of a stump, is, on close inspection, the richest sight of all, for the scarlet is increased and multiplied by reflection through the bubbles and hemispherical surfaces of the crust, as if it covered some vermilion grain thickly strewn. And the brown cup lichens stand in their midst. The whole rough bark, too, is encased.

Already a squirrel has perforated the crust above the mouth of his burrow, here and there by the side of the path, and left some empty acorn shells on the snow. He has shovelled out this morning before the snow was frozen on his door-step.

Now, at 10 A. M., there blows a very strong wind from the northwest, and it grows cold apace.

Particularly are we attracted in the winter by greenness and signs of growth, as the green and white shoots of grass and weeds, pulled or floating on the water, and also by color, as cockspur lichens and crimson birds, etc.

Thorny bushes look more thorny than ever; each thorn is prolonged and exaggerated.

Some boys have come out to a wood-side hill to coast. It must be sport to them, lying on their stomachs, to hear their sled cronching the crystalled weeds when they have reached the more weedy pasture below.

4 p. M. — Up railroad.

SinCe the sun has risen higher and fairly triumphed over the clouds, the ice has glistened with all the prismatic hues. On the trees it is now considerably dissipated, but rather owing to the wind than the sun. The ice is chiefly on the upper and on the storm side of twigs, etc. The whole top of the pine forest, as seen miles off in the

horizon, is of sharp points, the leading shoots with a few plumes, even more so than I have drawn on the last page but one.

It has grown cold, and the crust bears. The weeds and grasses, being so thickened by this coat of ice, appear much more numerous in the fields. It is surprising what a bristling crop they are. The sun is gone before five. Just before I looked for rainbow flocks in the west, but saw none, — only some small *pink-dun* (?) clouds. In the east still larger ones, which after sunset turned to pale slate.

In a true history or biography, of how little consequence those events of which so much is commonly made! For example, how difficult for a man to remember in what towns or houses he has lived, or when! Yet one of the first steps of his biographer will be to establish these facts, and he will thus give an undue importance to many of them. I find in my Journal that the most important events in my life, if recorded at all, are not dated.

Dec. 27. Recalled this evening, with the aid of Mother, the various houses (and towns) in which I have lived and some events of my life.

Born, July 12, 1817, in the *Minott House*, on the Virginia Road, where Father occupied Grandmother's thirds, carrying on the farm. The Catherines the other half of the house. Bob Catherines and John threw up the turkeys. Lived there about eight months. Si Merriam next neighbor. Uncle David died when I was six weeks old. I was baptized in old M. H. by Dr. Ripley, when I was three months, and did not cry.

The *Red House*, where Grandmother lived, we the west side till October, 1818, hiring of Josiah Davis, agent for Woodwards. (There were Cousin Charles and Uncle C. more or less.) According to day-book, Father hired of Proctor, October 16, 1818, and shop of *Spaulding, November 10, 1818.* Day-book first used by Grandfather, dated 1797. His part cut out and used by Father in Concord in 1808-9, and in Chelmsford, 1818-19-20-21.

(Chelmsford,) till March, 1821. (Last charge in Chelmsford about middle of March, 1821.) Aunt Sarah taught me to walk there when fourteen months old. Lived next the meeting-house, where they kept the powder in the garret. Father kept shop and painted signs, etc.

(Pope's House,) at South End in Boston, five or six (?) months, a

ten-footer. Moved from Chelmsford through Concord, and may have tarried in Concord a little while. Day-book says, "Moved to Pinkney Street Sep 10th 1821 on Monday."

(Whitwell's House,) Pinckney Street, Boston, to March, 1823 (?).

(Brick House,) Concord, to spring of 1826.

(Davis's House)(next to S. Hoar's) to May 7th, 1827.

(Shattuck House) (now William Monroe's) to spring (Hollis Hall,) of 1835. (Hollis, Cambridge, Cambridge) 1833.)

Aunts House, to spring of 1837. At Brownson's (Hollis Hall and Canton)

Parkman House, (Hollis, Cambridge)

(R. W. E.'s)

(William Emerson's, Staten Island) while teaching in winter of 1835. Went to New York with Father, peddling, in 1836. to fall of 1844. Was graduated in 1837. — Kept town school a fortnight in 1837 (?). Began the big Red Journal, October, 1837. Found first arrowheads, fall of 1837. Wrote a lecture (my first) on Society, March 14th, 1838, and read it before the Lyceum in the Masons' Hall, April 11th, 1838. Went to Maine for a school in May, 1838. Commenced school in the house in summer of 1838. Wrote an essay on Sound and Silence, December, 1838. — Fall of 1839 up Merrimack to White Mountains. "Aulus Persius Flaccus," first printed paper of consequence, February 10th, 1840. The Red Journal of 546 pages ended, June, 1840. Journal of 396 pages ended January 31st, 1841. Went to R. W. E.'s in spring of 1841 and stayed there to summer of 1843. Went to Staten Island, June, 1843, and returned in December, 1843, or to Thanksgiving. Made pencils in 1844.

Texas House, to August 29th, 1850. At Walden, (Walden) — July, 1845, to fall of 1847, then at (R. W. E.'s) R. W. E.'s to fall of 1848, or while he was in Europe.

Yellow House, reformed, till present.

Dec. 28. P. M. — Hollowell place and back near Hubbard's Bridge.

To-day and yesterday the boys have been skating on the crust in the streets, — it is so hard, the snow being very shallow. Considerable ice still clings to the rails and trees and especially

weeds, though much attenuated. The birches were most bent — and are still — in hollows on the north *fit'* sides of hills. Saw some rabbit's furon the crust and some (apparently — bird?) droppings, since the sleet fell, — a few pinches of fur the only trace of the murder. Was it a hawk's work? Crossed the river on the ice in front of Puffer's. What do the birds do when the seeds and bark are thus encased in ice?

Dec. 29. Down railroad to Andromeda Ponds.

I occasionally see a small snowflake in the air against the woods. It is quite cold, and a serious storm seems to be beginning. Just before reaching the Cut I see a shrike flying low beneath the level of the railroad, which rises and alights on the topmost twig of an elm within four or five rods. All ash or bluish-slate above down to middle of wings; dirty-white breast, and a broad black mark through eyes on side of head; primaries (?) black, and some white appears when it flies. Most distinctive its small hooked bill (upper mandible). It makes no sound, but flits to the *top* of an oak further off. Probably a male.

Am surprised to find eight or ten acres of Walden still open, notwithstanding the cold of the 26th, 27th, and 28th and of to-day. It must be owing to the wind partly. If quite cold, it will probably freeze to-night.

I find in the andromeda bushes in the Andromeda Ponds a great many nests apparently of the red-wing (?) suspended after their fashion amid the twigs of the andromeda, each now filled with ice. I count twenty-one within fifteen rods of a centre, and have no doubt there are a hundred in that large swamp, for I only looked about the edge part way. It is remarkable that I do not remember to have seen flocks of these birds there. It is an admirable place for them, these swamps are so impassable and the andromeda so dense. It would seem that they steal away to breed here, are not noisy here as along the river.

I never knew, or rather do not remember, the crust so strong [and] hard as it is now and has been for three days. You can skate over it as on ice in any direction. I see the tracks of skaters on all the roads, and they seem hardly to prefer the ice. Above Abiel Wheeler's, on the

back road, the crust is not broken yet, though many sleds and sleighs have passed. The tracks of the skaters are as conspicuous [as] any there. But the snow is but two or three inches deep. Jonas Potter tells me that [he] has known the crust on snow two feet deep to be as strong as this, so that he could drive his sled anywhere over the walls; so that he cut off the trees in Jenny's lot three feet from the ground, and cut again after the snow was melted.

When two men, Billings and Prichard, were dividing the stock of my father and Hurd, the former acting for Father, P. was rather tight for Hurd. They came to a cracked bowl, at which P. hesitated and asked, "Well, what shall we do with this?" B. took it in haste and broke it, and, presenting him one piece, said, "There, that is your half and this is ours."

A good time to walk in swamps, there being ice but no snow to speak of, — all crust. It is a good walk along the edge of the river, the wild side, amid the button-bushes and willows. The eupatorium stalks still stand there, with their brown hemispheres of little twigs, orreries.

The nests of last page are suspended very securely between eight or ten andromeda stems, about halfway up them; made of more or less coarse grass or sedge without, then about half an inch of *dense and fine, now frozen sphagnum,* then fine wild grass or sedge very regularly, and sometimes another layer of sphagnum and of fine grass above these, the whole an inch thick, the bottom commonly rounded. The outside grasses are well twisted about whatever andromeda stems stand at or near the river. I saw the traces of mice in some of them.

Dec. 30. The snow which began last night has continued to fall very silently but steadily, and now it is not far from a foot deep, much the most we have had yet; a dry, light, powdery snow. When I come down I see it in miniature drifts against the panes, alternately streaked dark and light as it is more or less dense. A remarkable, perfectly regular conical peak, a foot high, with concave sides, stands in the fireplace under the sink-room chimney. The pump has a regular conical Persian (?) cap, and every post about the house a

similar one. It is quite light, but has not drifted. About 9 A. M. it ceases, and the sun comes out, and shines dazzlingly over the white surface. Every neighbor is shovelling out, and hear the sound of shovels scraping on door-steps. Winter now first fairly commenced, I feel.

The places which are slowest to freeze in our river are, first, *on account of warmth as well as motion*, where a brook comes in, and also probably where are springs in banks and under bridges; then, on account of shallowness and rapidity, at bends. I perceive that the cold respects the same places every winter. In the dark, or after a heavy snow, I know well where to cross the river most safely. Where the river is most like a lake, broad with a deep and muddy bottom, there it freezes first and thickest. The open water at a bend seems to be owing to the swiftness of the current, and this to the shallowness, and this to the sands taken out of the opposing bank and deposited there.

There was yesterday eight or ten acres of open water at the west end of Walden, where is depth and breadth combined.

What a *horrid* shaggy and stiff low wilderness were the Andromeda Ponds yesterday! What then must they have been on the 21st! As it was, it was as if I walked through a forest of glass (with a tough woody core) up to my middle. That dense tufted grass with a greenish tinge was still stiffly coated with ice, as well as everything else, and my shoes were filled with the fragments, but here and there the crimson sphagnum blushed through the crust beneath. Think of that dense grass, a *horrid* stiff crop, [Water Milkweed Pods. See page 72] each stem as big as your finger, firm but brittle and about two feet high, and the countless birds' nests filled even with ice!

P. M. —

Across river and over Hill.

The wind has been blowing and the snow drifting. — [Rose Hips. See page 72]

The paths are filled up again. The surface of the snow is coarsely waved and rough now, as if it caught at every straw and faced its

windy foe again. It appears a coarser grain now. By the river are conspicuous the now empty and spread pods of the water milkweed, gray-brown without, silky-white within, — in some a seed or two left still; also the late rose corymbs of red hips; also the eupatorium drawn at venture four pages back, or more erect, thus, — some with brown fuzz and seeds still; the sium sometimes, with its very flat cymes;and that light-brown sedge or rush.

Some black ash keys still hang on amid the black abortions (?).

For a few days I have noticed the snow sprinkled with alder and birch scales. I go now through the birch meadow southwest of the Rock. The high wind is scattering them over the snow there. See one downy (?) woodpecker and one or two chickadees. The track of a squirrel on the Island Neck. Tracks are altered by the depth of the The Mead-snow. Looking up over the top of the hill now, ow-sweet southwest, at 3.30 p m., I see a few mother-o'- pearl tints, and methinks the same or rainbow tints in the drifting snow there, against the bright light of the unseen sun. Only in such clear cold air as this have the small clouds in the west that fine evanishing edge. It requires a state of the air that quickly dissipates all moisture. It must be rare in summer. In this rare atmosphere all cloud is quickly dissipated and mother-o'-pearl tinted as it passes away. The snow is too deep and soft yet for many tracks. No doubt the mice have been out beneath it.

Recrossing the river behind Dodd's, now at 4 p. M., the sun quite low, the open reach just below is quite green, a vitreous green, as if seen through a junk-bottle. Perhaps I never observed this phenomenon but when the sun was low.

He who would study birds' nests must look for them in November and in winter as well as in midsummer, for then the trees are bare and he can see them, and the swamps and streams are frozen and he can approach new kinds. He will often be surprised to find how many have haunted where he little suspected, and will receive many hints accordingly, which he can act upon in the summer. I am surprised to find many new ones (*i.e.* not new species) in groves which I had examined several times with particular care in the summer.

This was not a lodging snow, and the wind has already blown most of it off the trees, yet the long-limbed oak on the north of the

hill still supports a ridge of its pure white as thick as its limbs. They lie parallel like the ulna and radius, and one is a bare white bone.

Beside the other weeds on the last page, I might have shown the — tall rough golden-rod, still conspicuous:

Found, in the Wheeler — meadow, southwest of the Island, a nest — in the fork of an alder about eight feet from — ground, partly saddled on, made apparently chiefly of fine grass and bark fibres, quite firm and very thick bottomed, and well bound without with various kind of lint. This is a little oval, three by three and a half inches within and seven eighths deep, with a very firm, smooth rim of fine grass and dark shreds, lined with the same and some lint. A few alder leaves dangle from the edge, and, what is remarkable, the outer edge *all around* is defiled, quite covered, with black and white caterpillarlike droppings of the young birds. It is broader and shallower than a yellowbird's and larger than a wood pewee's. Can it be a redstart's? I should think it too large.

Dec. 31. It is one of the mornings of *creation,* and the trees, shrubs, etc., etc., are covered with a fine leaf frost, as if they had their morning robes on, seen against the sun. There has been a mist in the night. Now, at 8.30 A. m., I see, collected over the low grounds behind Mr. Cheney's, a dense fog (over a foot of snow), which looks dusty like smoke by contrast with the snow. Though limited to perhaps twenty or thirty acres, it [is] as dense as any in August. This accounts for the frost on the twigs. It consists of minute leaves, the longest an eighth of an inch, all around the twigs, but longest commonly on one side, in one instance the southwest side.

Clearing out the paths, which the drifting snow had filled, I find already quite [a] crust, from the sun and the blowing making it compact; but it is soft in the woods.

9 a m. — To Partridge Glade.

I see many partridge-tracks in the light snow, where they have sunk deep amid the shrub oaks; also gray rabbit and deer mice tracks, for the last ran over this soft surface last night. In a hollow in the glade, a gray rabbit's track, apparently, leading to and from a hole in the snow, which, following, and laying open, I found to extend curving about this pit, four feet through and under the snow, to a

small hole in the earth, which apparently led down deep.

At ten the frost leaves are nearly all melted.

It is invariably the east track on the railroad causeway which has the least snow on it. Though it is nearly all blown off elsewhere on the causeway, Trillium Woods have prevented its being blown off opposite to them. The snow-plow yesterday cast the snow six feet one side the edge of the cars, and it fell thick and rich, evenly broken like well-plowed land. It lies like a rich tilth in the sun, with its glowing cottony-white ridges and its shadowy hollows.

JANUARY, 1856

Jan. 1. Speaking of foxes, J. Farmer told me last evening that some time ago Sherman Barrett's folks heard a squealing, and, running up, saw a fox leap out of the pen with a sucking-pig in his mouth and escape with it. Farmer says they commonly take the dead lambs from the fields, though most dogs will not.

P. M. — To Walden.

Walden is covered with white snow ice six inches thick, for it froze while it was snowing, though commonly there is a thin dark beneath. This is now, therefore, bare, while the river, which was frozen before, is covered with snow. A very small patch of Walden, frozen since the snow, looks at a little distance exactly like open water by contrast with the snow ice, the trees being reflected in it, and indeed I am not certain but a *very small* part of this patch was water.

The track-repairers have shovelled four little paths by the sides of the rails, all the way from the depot to Walden. As I went by the engine house, I saw great icicles four feet long hanging from the eastern eaves, like slender pointed spears, the last half blown aside by the wind:and still more. By the side of the Deep Cut If are the tracks of probably tree sparrows If about the weeds, and of partridges. —

On the ice at Walden are very beautiful great leaf crystals in great profusion. The ice is frequently thickly covered with them for many rods. They seem to be connected with the rosettes, — a running together of them. They look like a loose web of small white feathers springing from a tuft of down, for their shafts are lost in a tuft of fine snow like the down about the shaft of a feather, as if a feather bed had been shaken over the ice. They are, on a close examination, surprisingly perfect leaves, like ferns, only very broad for their length and commonly more on one side the midrib than the other. They are from an inch to an inch and a half long and three quarters wide, and slanted, where I look, from the southwest. They have, first, a very distinct midrib, though so thin that they cannot be taken up; then, distinct ribs branching from this, commonly opposite, and

minute ribs springing again from these last, as in many ferns, the last running to each crenation in the border. How much further they are subdivided, the naked eye cannot discern. They are so thin and fragile that they melt under your breath while looking closely at them. A fisherman says they were much finer in the morning. In other places the ice is strewn with a different kind of frostwork in little patches, as if oats had been spilled, like fibres of asbestos rolled, a half or three quarters of an inch long and an eighth or more wide. Here and there patches of them a foot or two over. Like some boreal grain spilled.

Here are two fishermen, and one has preceded them. They have not had a bite, and know not why. It has been a clear winter day.

On the north shore, near the railroad, I see the tracks apparently of a white rabbit, afterward many tracks of gray rabbits, and where they had squatted under or rather by the side of an alder stem or the like, and left many balls in the pure snow. Many have run in one course. In the midst of them I see the track of a large rabbit, probably a white one, which was evidently on the full spring. Its tracks are four feet apart, and, unlike the others, which are on the surface even of this light snow, these break through deep, making a hole six inches over. Why was this one in such haste? I conclude to trace him back and find out. His bounds grow greater and greater as I go back, now six feet quite, and a few rods further are the tracks of a fox *(possibly* a dog, but I think not) exactly on the trail! A little further, where the rabbit was ascending a considerable slope, through this snow nearly a foot deep, the bounds measure full seven feet, leaving the snow untouched for that space between. It appeared that the fox had started the rabbit from a bank on which it was resting, near a young hemlock, and pursued it only a dozen rods up the hill, and then gave up the chase, — and well he might, methought.

Goodwin says that the white rabbit never burrows, but the gray regularly. Yet he once knew a white one to earth itself.

In a rabbit's track the two fore feet are the furthest apart, thus: This chase occurred probably in the night, either the last or night before, when there was not a man within a mile; but, treading on these very deep and distinct tracks, it was as if I had witnessed it, and

in imagination I could see the sharp eyes of the crafty fox and the palpitating breast of the timorous rabbit, listening behind. We unwittingly traverse the scenery of what tragedies! Every square rod, perchance, was the scene of a life or death struggle last night. As you track the rabbit further off, its bounds becoming shorter and shorter, you follow also surely its changing moods from desperate terror till it walks calmly and reassured over the snow without breaking its very slight crust, — perchance till it gnaws some twig composedly, — and in the other direction you trace the retreating steps of the disappointed fox until he has forgotten this and scented some new game, maybe dreams of partridges or wild mice. Your own feelings are fluttered proportionably.

Jan. 2. Probably the coldest morning yet, our thermometer 6° below zero at 8 A. M.; yet there was quite a mist in the air. The neighbors say it was 10° below zero at 7 A. M.

P. M. — To Walden.

As for the fox and rabbit race described yesterday, I find that the rabbit was going *the other way*, and possibly the fox was a rabbit, for, tracing back the rabbit, I found that it had first been walking with alternate steps, fox-like.

There were many white rabbits' tracks in those woods, and many more of the gray rabbit, but the former broke through and made a deep track, except where there was a little crust on the south slope, while the latter made but a faint impression on the surface. The latter run very much in the same path, which is well trodden, and you would think you were in the midst of quite a settlement of them.

Crossing the railroad at the Heywood meadow, I saw some snow buntings rise from the side of the embankment, and with surging, rolling flight wing their way up through the cut. I walked through the westernmost Heywood swamp. There are the tracks of many rabbits, both gray and white, which have run about the edges of these swamps since this snow came, amid the alders and shrub oaks, and one white one has crossed it. The cat-tails rise high above the snow in the swamp, their brown heads bursting on one side into creamy (?) billows and wreaths, or partly bare. Also the rattlesnake grass is still gracefully drooping on every side, with the weight of its seeds, — a

rich, wild grain. And other wild grasses and rushes rise above the snow. There is the wild-looking remnant of a white pine, quite dead, rising fifteen or twenty feet, which the woodpeckers have bored; and it is still clad with sulphur lichens and many dark-colored tufts of cetraria in the forks of its branches.

Returning, I saw, near the back road and railroad, a small flock of eight snow buntings feeding on the seeds of the pigweed, picking them from the snow, — apparently flat on the snow, their legs so short, — and, when I approached, alighting on the rail fence. They were pretty black, with white wings and a brown crescent on their breasts. They have come with this deeper snow and colder weather.

Jan. 3. Snows again. About two inches have fallen in the night, but it turns to a fine mist. It was a damp snow.

P. M. — To Hill.

The snow turned to a fine mist or mizzling, through which I see a little blue in the snow, lurking in the ruts.

In the river meadows and on the (perhaps moist) sides of the hill, how common and conspicuous the brown spear-heads of the hardhack, above the snow, and looking black by contrast with it!

Just beyond the Assabet Spring I see where a squirrel, gray or red, dug through the snow last night in search of acorns. I know it was last night, for it was while the last snow was falling, and the tracks are partly filled by it; they are like this:T h i s squirrel has burrowed to the ground in many places within a few yards, probing the leaves for acorns in various directions, making a short burrow under the snow, sometimes passing under the snow a yard and coming out at another place; for, though it is somewhat hardened on the surface by the nightly freezing and the hail, it is still quite soft and light beneath next the earth, and a squirrel or mouse can burrow very fast indeed there. I am surprised to find how easily I can pass my hand through it there. In many places it has dropped the leaves, etc., about the mouth of the hole. (The whole snow about ten inches deep.) I see where it sat in a young oak and ate an acorn, dropping the shells on the snow beneath, for there is no track to the shells, but only to the base of the oak. How independently they live, not alarmed, though the snow be two feet deep!

Now, when all the fields and meadows are covered deep with snow, the warm-colored shoots of osiers, red and yellow, rising above it, remind me of flames.

It is astonishing how far a merely well-dressed and good-looking man may go without being challenged by any sentinel. What is called good society will bid high for such.

The man whom the State has raised to high office, like that of governor, for instance, from some, it may be, honest but less respected calling, cannot return to his former humble but profitable pursuits, his old customers will be so shy of him. His ex-honorableness-ship stands seriously in his way, whether he is a lawyer or a shopkeeper. He can't get ex-honorated. So he becomes a sort of State pauper, an object of charity on its hands, which the State is bound in honor to see through and provide still with offices of similar respectability, that he may not come to want. A man who has been President becomes the Ex-President, and can't travel or stay at home anywhere but men will persist in paying respect to his ex-ship. It is cruel to remember his deeds so long. When his time is out, why can't they let the poor fellow go?

Jan. 4. A clear, cold day.

P. M. — To Walden to examine the ice.

I think it is only such a day as this, when the fields on all sides are well clad with snow, over which the sun shines brightly, that you observe the blue shadows on the snow. I see a little of it to-day.

December 29th there were eight or ten acres of Walden still open. That evening it began to snow and snowed all night, and the remainder of the pond was frozen on that [and] the succeeding night. But on January 1st I was surprised to find all the visible ice snow ice, when I expected that only the eight or ten acres would be; but it appeared that the weight of the snow had sunk the ice already formed and then partly dissolved in the water, which rose above it and partly was frozen with it. The whole ice January 1st was about six inches thick, and I should have supposed that over the greater part of the pond there would be a clear ice about two inches thick on the lower side, yet, where I cut through near the shore, I distinguished two kinds of ice, the upper two and a half inches thick and evidently

snow ice, the lower about four inches thick and clearer, yet not remarkably clear.

Some fishermen had, apparently by accident, left two of their lines there, which were frozen in. I could see their tracks leading from hole to hole, where they had run about day before yesterday, or before the snow, and their dog with them. And the snow was stained with tobacco-juice. They had had lines set in two or three distant coves. They had, apparently, taken no fish, for they had cut no well to put them in. I cut out the lines, the ice being about an inch thick around them, and pulled up a fine yellow pickerel which would weigh two pounds or more. At first I thought there was none, for he was tired of struggling, but soon I felt him. The hook had caught in the outside of his jaws, and the minnow hung entire by his side. It was very cold, and he struggled but a short time, not being able to bend and quirk his tail; in a few minutes became quite stiff as he lay on the snowy ice. The water in his eyes was frozen, so that he looked as if he had been dead a week. About fifteen minutes after, thinking of what I had heard about fishes coming to life again after being frozen, on being put into water, I thought I would try it. This one was to appearance as completely dead as if he had been frozen a week. I stood him up on his tail without bending it. I put him into the water again without removing the hook. The ice melted off, and its eyes looked bright again; and after a minute or two [I] was surprised by a sudden, convulsive quirk of the fish, and a minute or two later by another, and I saw that it would indeed revive, and drew it out again. Yet I do not believe that if it had been frozen solid through and through it would have revived, but only when it is superficially frozen.

This reminded me of the pickerel which I caught here under similar circumstances for Peter Hutchinson, and thrust my mittened hands in after. When I put this pickerel in again after half an hour, it did not revive, but I held it there only three or four minutes, not long enough to melt the ice which encased it.

Another man had passed since the last snow fell, and pulled up at least one of the lines. I knew it was to-day and not yesterday by the character of his track, for it was made since the stiff crust formed on this snow last night, a broad depression cracking the crust around;

but yesterday it was comparatively soft and moist.

Aunt says that Mr. Hoar tells a story of Abel Davis to this purport: He had once caught a pickerel in the brook near his house and was overheard to say, "Why, who'd V thought to find you here in Temple Brook. With a slice of pork you 'll make Rhody" (or whatever the name of his wife was) "and I a good meal." He probably was not much of a fisherman, and could hardly contain himself for joy.

It is snapping cold this night (10 p m.). I see the frost on the windows sparkle as I go through the passageway with a light.

Jan. 5. One of the coldest mornings. Thermometer —— 9°, say some.

P. M. — Up river to Hubbard's Bridge.

It has been trying to snow all day, but has not succeeded; as if it were too cold. Though it has been falling all day, there has not been enough to whiten the coat of the traveller. I come to the river, for here it is the best walking. The snow is not so deep over the ice. Near the middle, the superincumbent snow has so far been converted into a coarse snow ice that it will bear me, though occasionally I slump through intervening water to another ice below. Also, perhaps, the snow has been somewhat blown out of the river valley. At any rate, by walking where the ice was frozen last, or over the channel, I can get along quite comfortably, while it is hard travelling through this crusted snow in the fields. Generally, to be sure, the river is but a white snow-field, indistinguishable from the fields, but over the channel there is a thread, commonly, of yellowish porous-looking snow ice.

The hardhack above the snow has this form: Should not that meadow where *tip* the first bridge was built be called Hardhack Meadow? Also there are countless small ferns, with terminal leafet only left on, still rising above the snow, for I notice the herbage of the riverside now, — thus, like the large ones in swamps: What with the grasses — that coarse, now straw-colored grass — and the stems of the button-bushes, the snow about the button-bushes forms often broad, — several rods broad, — low mounds, nearly burying the bushes, along which the tops of the button-bushes and that broad-bladed now straw colored grass still rise, with masses of thin, now

black-looking balls, erect or dangling. The black willows have here and there still a very few little curled and crispy leaves.

The river is last open, methinks, just below a bend, as now at the Bath Place and at Clamshell Hill; and quite a novel sight is the dark water there. How little locomotive now look the boats whose painted stems I just detect where they are half filled with ice and almost completely buried in snow, so neglected by their improvident owners, — some frozen in the ice, opening their seams, some drawn up on the bank. This is not merely improvidence; it is ingratitude.

Now and then I hear a sort of creaking twitter, maybe from a passing snow bunting. This is the weather for them. I am surprised that Nut Meadow Brook has overflowed its meadow and converted it into that coarse yellowish snow ice. Otherwise it had been a broad snow-field, concealing a little ice under it. There is a narrow thread of open water over its channel.

The thin snow now driving from the north and lodging on my coat consists of those beautiful star crystals, not cottony and chubby spokes, as on the 13th December, but thin and partly transparent crystals. They are about a tenth of an inch in diameter, perfect little wheels with six spokes without a tire, or rather with six perfect little leafets, fern-like, with a distinct straight and slender midrib, raying from the centre. On each side of each midrib there is a transparent thin blade with a crenate edge, thus: How full of the creative genius is the air in which these are generated! I should hardly admire more if real stars fell and lodged on my coat. Nature is full of genius, full of the divinity; so that not a snowflake escapes its fashioning hand. Nothing is cheap and coarse, neither dewdrops nor snowflakes. Soon the storm increases, — it was already very severe to face, — and the snow comes finer, more white and powdery. Who knows but this is the original form of all snowflakes, but that when I observe these crystal stars falling around me they are but just generated in the low mist next the earth? I am nearer to the source of the snow, its primal, auroral, and golden hour or infancy, but commonly the flakes reach us travel-worn and agglomerated, comparatively without order or beauty, far down in their fall, like men in their advanced age.

As for the circumstances under which this phenomenon occurs, it is quite cold, and the driving storm is bitter to face, though very little

snow is falling. It comes almost horizontally from the north. Methinks this kind of snow never falls in any quantity.

A divinity must have stirred within them before the crystals did thus shoot and set. Wheels of the storm-chariots. The same law that shapes the earth-star shapes the snow-star. As surely as the petals of a flower are fixed, each of these countless snow-stars comes whirling to earth, pronouncing thus, with emphasis, the number six. Order, *κόσμος*.

On the Saskatchewan, when no man of science is there to behold, still down they come, and not the less fulfill their destiny, perchance melt at once on the Indian's face. What a world we live in! where myriads of these little disks, so beautiful to the most prying eye, are whirled down on every traveller's coat, the observant and the unobservant, and on the restless squirrel's fur, and on the far-stretching fields and forests, the wooded dells, and the mountain-tops. Far, far away from the haunts of man, they roll down some little slope, fall over and come to their bearings, and melt or lose their beauty in the mass, ready anon to swell some little rill with their contribution, and so, at last, the universal ocean from which they came. There they lie, like the wreck of chariot-wheels after a battle in the skies. Meanwhile the meadow mouse shoves them aside in his gallery, the schoolboy casts them in his snowball, or the woodman's sled glides smoothly over them, these glorious spangles, the sweeping of heaven's floor. And they all sing, melting as they sing of the mysteries of the number six, — six, six, six. He takes up the water of the sea in his hand, leaving the salt; He disperses it in mist through the skies; He recollects and sprinkles it like grain in six-rayed snowy stars over the earth, there to lie till He dissolves its bonds again.

Found on a young red maple near the water, in Hubbard's riverside grove, a nest, perhaps a size bigger than a summer yellowbird's, chiefly of bark shreds, bound and lined with lint and a little of something like dried hickory blossoms. A little feather, yellow at the extremity, attached to the outside. It was on a slanting twig or small branch about eighteen feet high, and I shook it down. The rim of fine shreds of grape-vine bark chiefly, the outer edge being covered with considerable of the droppings of the young birds.

I thought it the same kind with that found December 30th *ult.* Can it be a redstart, or is [it] one of the vireos possibly? or a goldfinch? which would account for the yellow-tipped feather.

In the blueberry swamp near by, which was cut down by the ice, another, perhaps a little smaller, of very similar materials but more of the hickory (??) blossoms on the outside beneath, but this was in a nearly upright fork of a red maple about seven feet high. The little nest of June 26th, 1855, looks like the inside of one of these. Upon these two nests found to-day and on that of the 30th December, I find the same sort of dried catkin (apparently *not* hickory) connected with a little sort of brown bud, maybe birch or alder. This makes me suspect they may be all one kind, though the last was in an upright fork and had no droppings on it.

Jan. 6. High wind and howling and driving snowstorm all night, now much drifted. There is a great drift in the front entry and at the crack of every door and on the window-sills. Great drifts on the south of walls.

Clears up at noon, when no vehicle had passed the house.

Frank Morton has brought home, and I opened, that pickerel of the 4th. It is frozen solid. Yellow spawn as big as a pin-head, with smaller between, enwraps its insides the whole length, half an inch thick. It must spawn very early then. I find in its gullet, or paunch, or maw (the long white bag), three young perch, one of them six inches long, and the tail of a fourth. Its belly was considerably puffed out. Two of the perch lay parallel, side by side, of course head downward, in its gullet (?). The upper and largest perch was so high that he was cut in two in the middle in cutting off the head. And yet it was caught in endeavoring to swallow another large minnow! This is what you may call voracity.

P. M. — To Drifting Cut.

The snow is now probably more than a foot deep on a level.

While I am making a path to the pump, I hear hurried *rippling* notes of birds, look up, and see quite a flock of snow buntings coming to alight amid the currant-tops in the yard. It is a sound almost as if made with their wings. What a pity our yard was made so tidy in the fall with rake and fire, and we have now no tall crop of

weeds rising above this snow to invite these birds!

I am come forth to observe the drifts. They are, as usual, on the south side of the walls and fences and, judging from the direction of their ridges, the wind was due north. Behind Monroe's tight board fence it is a regularly swelled, unbroken bank, but behind the wall this side carved into countless scallops, perforations, scrolls, and copings. An open wall is, then, the best place for a drift. Yet these are not remarkably rich. The snow was perhaps too dry. Perhaps six more inches on a level has fallen, or more. It has not lodged on the trees.

Now, at 4.15, the blue shadows are very distinct on the snow-banks.

On the north side of the Cut, above the crossing, the jutting edges of the drift are quite handsome upon the bank. The snow is raised twelve feet above the track, and it is all scalloped with projecting eaves or copings, like turtle-shells.

They project from three to five feet, and I can stand under them. They are in three or four great layers, one lapping over another like the coarse edge of a shell. Looking along it, they appear somewhat thus: —

Often this coping has broken by its own weight, and great blocks have fallen down the bank, like smoothed blocks of white marble. The exquisite purity of the snow and the gracefulness of its curves are remarkable.

Around some houses there is not a single track. Neither man, woman, nor child, dog nor cat nor fowl, has stirred out to-day. There has been no meeting. Yet this afternoon, since the storm, it has not been very bad travelling.

Jan. 7. At breakfast time the thermometer stood at -12°. Earlier it was probably much lower. Smith's was at -24° early this morning. The latches are white with frost at noon. They say there was yet more snow at Boston, two feet even.

They tell how I swung on a gown [?] on the stairway when I was at Chelmsford. The gown [?] gave way; I fell and fainted, and it took two pails of water to bring me to, for I was remarkable for holding my breath in those cases.

Mother tried to milk the cow which Father took on trial, but she kicked at her and spilt the milk. (They say a dog had bitten her teats.) Proctor laughed at her as a city girl, and then he tried, but the cow kicked him over, and he finished by beating her with his cowhide shoe. Captain Richardson ipilked her warily, standing up. Father came home, and thought he would "brustle right up to her," for she needed much to be milked, but suddenly she lifted her leg and "struck him fair and square right in the muns," knocked him flat, and broke the bridge of his nose, which shows it yet. He distinctly heard her hoof rattle on his nose. This "started the claret," and, without stanching the blood, he at once drove her home to the man he had her of. She ran at some young women by the way, who saved themselves by getting over the wall in haste.

Father complained of the powder in the meetinghouse garret at town meeting, but it did not get moved while we lived there. Here he painted over his old signs for guide-boards, and got a fall when painting Hale's (?) factory. Here the bladder John was playing with burst on the hearth. The cow came into the entry after pumpkins. I cut my toe, and was knocked over by a hen with chickens, etc., etc.

Mother tells how, at the brick house, we each had a little garden a few feet square, and I came in one day, having found a potato just sprouted, which by her advice I planted in my garden. Ere long John came in with a potato which he had found and had it planted in his garden,— "Oh, mother, I have found a potato all sprouted. I mean to put it in my garden," etc. Even Helen is said to have found one. But next I came crying that somebody had got my potato, etc., etc., but it was restored to me as the youngest and original discoverer, if not inventor, of the potato, and it grew in *my* garden, and finally its crop was dug by myself and yielded a dinner for the family.

I was kicked down by a passing ox. Had a chicken given me by Lidy — Hannah — and peeped through the keyhole at it. Caught an eel with John. Went to bed with new boots on, and after with cap. "Rasselas" given me, etc., etc. Asked P. Wheeler, "Who owns all the land?" Asked Mother, having got the medal for geography, "Is Boston in Concord?" If I had gone to Miss Wheeler a little longer, should have received the chief prize book, "Henry Lord Mayor," etc., etc.

P. M. — Up river.

The snow is much deeper on the river than it was, — on an average, eight or nine inches. The cold weather has brought the crows, and for the first time this winter I hear them cawing amid the houses. I noticed yesterday, from three to six feet behind or northwest of a small elm, a curve in a drift answering to the tree, showing how large an eddy it had produced. The whole surface of the snow on fields and river is composed now of flat, rough little drifts, like the surface of some rough slaty rocks. Hardly anywhere is the ice visible now.

It is completely frozen at the Hubbard's Bath bend now, — a small strip of dark ice, thickly sprinkled with those rosettes of crystals, two or three inches in diameter, this surrounded by a broad border of yellowish spew. The water has oozed out from the thinnest part of the black ice, and I see a vapor curling up from it. There is also much vapor in the air, looking toward the woods. I go along the edge of the Hubbard Meadow woods, the north side, where the snow is gathered, light and up to my middle, shaking down birds' nests. Returning, just before sunset, the few little patches of ice look green as I go from the sun (which is in clouds). It is probably a constant phenomenon in cold weather when the ground is covered with snow and the sun is low, morning or evening, and you are looking from it.

I see birch scales (bird-like) on the snow on the river more than twenty rods south of the nearest and only birch, and trace them north to it.

Jan. 8. P. M. — To Walden.

The snow is about a foot, or probably a little more, deep on a level, and considerably drifted, but on the pond it is not more than five inches deep on an average, being partly turned into snow ice by the sinking of the ice, and perhaps partly blown off.

Many catbird-nests about the pond. In apparently one I see a snake's slough interwoven. The leaves of red oak shrubs are still quite bloody-colored. All of the pitch pine cones that I see, but one, are open. I see prying into the black fruit of the alder, along the pond-side, a single probably lesser redpoll (?). Yellowish breast and distinct white bar on wing.

Monroe is fishing there. As usual, a *great* pickerel had bitten and ran off, and was lost, he supposed, among the brush by the shore. He tells of an eel up the North Branch that weighed seven pounds; also that George Melvin, spearing one night, speared a large owl (probably cat owl) that sat near by.

For a couple of days the cars have been very much delayed by the snow, and it is now drifting somewhat. The fine dry snow is driving over the fields like steam, if you look toward the sun, giving a new form to the surface, spoiling the labor of the track-repairers, gradually burying the rails. The surface of the snow on the pond is finely scored in many places by the oak leaves which have been blown across it. They have furrowed deeper than a mouse's track and might puzzle a citizen. They are more frisky than a squirrel. Many of the young oaks appear not to have lost any leaves yet. They are so full of them that they still sustain some masses of snow, as if there were birds' nests for a core. I see the great tracks of white rabbits that have run and frisked in the night along the pond-side.

Jan. 9. Clear, cold morning. Smith's thermometer — 16°; ours — 14° at breakfast time, — 6° at 9 A. M.

3 P. M. — To Beck Stow's.

The thermometer at + 2°. When I return at 4.30, it is at — *2°*. Probably it has been below zero *far* the greater part of the day. I meet choppers, apparently coming home early on account of the cold. I wade through the swamp, where the snow lies light eighteen inches deep on a level, a few leaves of andromedas, etc., peeping out. (I am a-birds'-nesting.) The mice have been out and run over it. I see one large bush of winter-berries still quite showy, though somewhat discolored by the cold. The rabbits have run in paths about the swamp. Go now anywhere in the swamp and fear no water. The fisherman whom I saw on Walden last night will find his lines well frozen in this morning.

In passing through the deep cut on the new Bedford road, [I saw] that a little sand, which was pretty coarse, almost gravel, had fallen from the bank, and was blown over the snow, here and there. The surface of the snow was diversified by those slight drifts, or perhaps cliffs, which are left a few inches high (like the fracture of slate

rocks), with a waved outline, and all the sand was collected in waving lines just on the edge of these little drifts, in ridges, maybe an eighth of an inch high. This may help decide how those drifts (?) or cliffs (?) are formed.

It has not been so cold throughout the day, before, this winter. I hear the boots of passing travellers squeak.

Jan. 10. The weather has considerably moderated; —— 2° at breakfast time (it was — 8° at seven last evening); but this has been the coldest night probably. You lie with your feet or legs curled up, waiting for morning, the sheets shining with frost about your mouth. Water left by the stove is frozen thickly, and what you sprinkle in bathing falls on the floor ice. The house plants are all frozen and soon droop and turn black. I look out on the roof of a cottage covered a foot deep with snow, wondering how the poor children in its garret, with their few rags, contrive to keep their toes warm. I mark the white smoke from its chimney, whose contracted wreaths are soon dissipated in this stinging air, and think of the size of their wood-pile, and again I try to realize how they panted for a breath of cool air those sultry nights last summer. Realize it now if you can. Recall the hum of the mosquito.

It seems that the snow-storm of Saturday night was a remarkable one, reaching many hundred miles along the coast. It is said that some thousands passed the night in cars.

The kitchen windows were magnificent last night, with their frost sheaves, surpassing any cut or ground glass.

I love to wade and flounder through the swamp now, these bitter cold days when the snow lies deep on the ground, and I need travel but little way from the town to get to a Nova Zembla solitude, — to wade through the swamps, all snowed up, untracked by man, into which the fine dry snow is still drifting till it is even with the tops of the water andromeda and halfway up the high blueberry bushes. I penetrate to islets inaccessible in summer, my feet slumping to the sphagnum far out of sight beneath, where the alder berry glows yet and the azalea buds, and perchance a single tree sparrow or a chickadee lisps by my side, where there are few tracks even of wild animals; perhaps only a mouse or two have burrowed up by the side

of some twig, and hopped away in straight lines on the surface of the light, deep snow, as if too timid to delay, to another hole by the side of another bush; and a few rabbits have run in a path amid the blueberries and alders about the edge of the swamp. This is instead of a Polar Sea expedition and going after Franklin. There is but little life and but few objects, it is true. We are reduced to admire buds, even like the partridges, and bark, like the rabbits and mice, — the great yellow and red forward-looking buds of the azalea, the plump red ones of the blueberry, and the fine sharp red ones of the panicled andromeda, sleeping along its stem, the speckled black alder, the rapid-growing dogwood, the pale-brown and cracked blueberry, etc. Even a little shining bud which lies sleeping behind its twig and dreaming of spring, perhaps half concealed by ice, is object enough. I feel myself upborne on the andromeda bushes beneath the snow, as on a springy basketwork, then down I go up to my middle in the deep but silent snow, which has no sympathy with my mishap. Beneath the level of this snow how many sweet berries will be hanging next August!

This freezing weather I see the pumps dressed in mats and old clothes or bundled up in straw. Fortunate he who has placed his cottage on the south side of some high hill or some dense wood, and not on the middle of the Great Fields, where there is no hill nor tree to shelter it. There the winds have full sweep, and such a day as yesterday the house is but a fence to stay the drifting snow. Such is the piercing wind, no man loiters between his house and bam. The road-track is soon obliterated, and the path which leads round to the back of the house, dug this morning, is filled up again, and you can no longer see the tracks of the master of the house, who only an hour ago took refuge in some halfsubterranean apartment there. You know only by an occasional white wreath of smoke from his chimney, which is at once snapped up by the hungry air, that he sits warming his wits there within, studying the almanac to learn how long it is before spring. But his neighbor, who, only half a mile off, has placed his house in the shelter of a wood, is digging out of a drift his pile of roots and stumps, hauled from the swamp, at which he regularly dulls his axe and saw, reducing them to billets that will fit his stove. With comparative safety and even comfort he labors at this mine.

As for the other, the windows give no sign of inhabitants, for they are frosted over as if they were ground glass, and the curtains are down beside. The path is snowed up, and all tracks to and fro. No sound issues from within. It remains only to examine the chimney's nostrils. I look long and sharp at it, and fancy that I see some smoke against [the] sky there, but this [is] deceptive, for, as we are accustomed to walk up to an empty fireplace and imagine that we feel some heat from it, so I have convinced myself that I saw smoke issuing from the chimney of a house which had not been inhabited for twenty years. I had so vivid an idea of smoke curling up from a chimney's top that no painter could have matched my imagination. It was as if the spirits of the former inhabitants, revisiting their old haunts, were once more boiling a spiritual kettle below, — a small whitish-bluish cloud, almost instantly dissipated, as if the fire burned with a very clear flame, or else, the postmeridian hours having arrived, it were partially raked up, and the inhabitants were taking their siesta.

P. M. — Worked on flower-press.

Jan. 11. P. M. — To Walden.

Cold as the weather has been for some days, it [is] melting a little on the south side of houses to-day for the first time for quite a number of days, though the 9th was the coldest day thus far, the thermometer hardly going above zero during the day. Yet whenever I have been to Walden, as January 4th, 8th, and to-day, I have found much water under the snow above the ice, though there is but about five inches, both snow and water, above the ice. January 4th was the coldest day that I have been there, and yet I slumped through the snow into water, which evidently was prevented from freezing at once by the snow. I think that you may find water on the ice thus at any time, however cold, and however soon it may freeze. Probably some of the overflow I noticed on the river a few days ago was owing to the weight of the snow, as there has been no thaw.

Observed that the smooth sumachs about the north side of the Wyman meadow had been visited by partridges and a great many of the still crimson berries were strewn on the snow. There they had eaten them, perched on the twigs. Elsewhere they had tracked the

snow from bush to bush, visiting almost every bush Sumachs and leaving their traces. The mice, also, had run from the base of one sumach to that of another on all sides, though there was no entrance to the ground there. Probably they had climbed the stems for berries. Most of the bunches now hang half broken off, by time, etc.

The lespedeza, now a very pale brown, looks thus: —

The sunsets, I think, are now particularly interesting. The colors of the west seem more than usually warm, perhaps by contrast with this simple snow-clad earth over which we look and the clear cold sky, — a sober but extensive redness, almost every night passing into a dun. There is nothing to distract our attention from it.

Monroe, who left his lines in Walden on the 8th, cut them out to-day, but he got no fish, though all his bait were gone.

The January Sunsets.

To-day I burn the first stick of the wood which I bought and did not get from the river. What I have still left of the river wood, added to what of it I reserve for other uses, would last me a week longer.

Animals that live on such cheap food as buds and leaves and bark and wood, like partridges and rabbits and wild mice, never need apprehend a famine.

I have not done wondering at that voracity of the pickerel, — three fresh perch and part of another in its maw! If there are a thousand pickerel in the pond, and they eat but one meal a day, there go a thousand perch or shiners for you out of this small pond. One year would require 365,000! not distinguishing frogs. Can it be so? The fishermen tell me that when they catch the most, the fish are fullest.

Mother reminds me that when we lived at the Parkin an house she lost a ruff a yard and a half long and with an edging three yards long to it, which she had laid on the grass to whiten, and, looking for it, she saw a robin tugging at the tape string of a stay on the line. He would repeatedly get it in his mouth, fly off and be brought up when he got to the end of his tether. Miss Ward thereupon tore a fine linen handkerchief into strips and threw them out, and the robin carried them all off. She had no doubt that he took the ruff.

It is commonly said that fishes are long-lived on account of the equable temperature of their element. The temperature of the body of

Walden may perhaps range from 85° — perhaps at bottom much less — down to 32°, or 53°, while that of the air ranges from 100° down to — 28°, or 128°, more than twice as much. Yet how large a portion of animal life becomes dormant or migrates in the winter! And on those that remain with us there is an increase of fur, and probably of down, corresponding to the increased cold. If there is no corresponding thickening of the integument or scales of fishes on the approach of winter, they would seem to enjoy no advantage over land animals. Beside their thick coats, most land animals seek some comparatively warm and sheltered place in which to sleep, but where do the fishes resort? They may sink to the bottom, but it is scarcely so warm there as at the bottom of a gray rabbit's or a fox's burrow. Yet the fish is a tender animal in respect to cold. Pull him out in the coldest weather, and he at once becomes encased in ice and as stiff as a stake, and a fox (?) stands at his ease on the ice devouring him. Frogs, which, perchance, are equally tender, and must (?) come to the air occasionally, are therefore compelled [to] go into the mud and become dormant. They may be said to live there in a southern climate. Even the tough mud turtle possesses a southern constitution. He would snap in vain, and soon cease snapping, at the northwest wind when the thermometer is at *25°* below zero. Wild mice and spiders and snow-fleas would be his superiors.

Jan. 12. Moderating, though at zero at 9 A. M.

P. M. — To Andromeda Swamps, measuring snow. It is a fortnight since we had about a foot of snowfall on two or three inches which was firmly crusted, and a week since about six inches fell upon the last, — I guess at these depths, — and we have had clear cold weather ever since. I carry a four-foot stick marked in inches, striking it down as far as it will go at every tenth step. First, beginning in the first field west of the railroad causeway, four to six rods from the railroad, and walking parallel with the railroad, — open fields north to south: —

		145	309			Then Trillium, a
	19	10	10	10	11	thick, chiefly pine
	11	8	12	8	8	wood, seventy-
	14	9	11	8	10	five years old.
	10	14	6	8	13	North to south.
	7	15	8	12	9	8
	12	13	7	8	10	12
	9	22	9	12	13	8
	7	wall	10	14	fence) 10	11
apple	6	7	11	9	10	8
tree	7	6	9	7	wall	11
	9	7	11	10	20	11
	9	7	9	10	16	9
	10	7	422	10	598	8
	10	8	Then cross	7	73)728	9
	6	10	to east of	9	Average	10
	9	12	railroad,	14	say 10^{2}	10
	145^{1}	9	six rods	9		7
		309	off, in	11		10
			Stow's	422		12
			meadow.	598		8
						9
						10
						11
						19)182 (say
						$9\frac{1}{2}$

Other things being equal, the snow should be deeper in woods than in open fields because the trunks of trees take up room there, but this may be more than balanced by what is dissipated on the branches.

Then sprout-land between railroad and Andromeda Pond, down-hill toward the west.	The first Andromeda Swamp from east to west. The snow in the swamp was within about three inches of the top of the *highest* andromeda bushes and was swelled about three or four inches higher there than between such. Foxes had sunk from one to four inches in it.	Wheeler's squirrel wood, west of railroad, measuring from south to north parallel with railroad. An average mixed pine and oak wood, not very level, say seventy-five years old.
15	24	12
11	16	9
20	20	10
17	26	12
17	29	10
13	26	10
14	16	12
16	19	12
15	27	8
17	27	9
15	24	11
17	21	7
12)187(say $15\frac{1}{2}$ [1]	27	7
	22	12
	16	12
	17	8
	28	7
	33	12
	28	12
	30	19)192(say 10 [3]
	20)476(say $23\frac{4}{5}$ [2]	

The result of 34 measures on Walden, eight or ten acres of which did not freeze till during the snow of a fortnight ago, gave 51/6.

Probably there is less snow in the woods than in open land, though it may lie high and light.

In the swamp the dull-red leaves of the andromeda were just peeping out, the snow lying not quite level, but with gentle swells about the highest clumps of bushes.

Deep as the snow was, it was no harder but perhaps easier walking there than in summer. It would not much impede a mouse running about below.

Though the snow is only ten inches deep on a level, farmers affirm that it is two feet deep, confidently.

Jan. 13. Sunrise. — A heavy lodging snow, almost rain, has been falling — how long? — coming from the eastward. The weather comparatively warm, but windy. It will probably turn to rain. Say four or five inches deep. It sticks to the sides of the houses.

Took to pieces a pensile nest which I found the 11th on the south shore of Walden on an oak sapling (red or black), about fifteen feet from the ground. Though small, it measures three inches by three in the extreme, and was hung between two horizontal twigs or in a fork forming about a right angle, the third side being regularly rounded without any very stiff material. The twigs extended two or three inches beyond the nest. The bulk of it is composed of fine shreds or fibres, pretty long (say three to six inches), of apparently inner oak (?) bark, judging from some scraps of the epidermis adhering. It looks at first sight like sedge or grass. The bottom, which I accidentally broke off and disturbed the arrangement of, was composed of this and white and pitch pine needles and little twigs about the same size and form, rough, with little leaf-stalks or feet (probably hemlock (?)), and also strips and curls of paper birch epidermis, and some hornet or other wasp nest used like the last. I mention the most abundant material first. Probably the needles and twigs were used on account of their curved form and elasticity, to give shape to the bottom. The sides, which were not so thick, were composed of bark shreds, paper birch, and hornet-nest (the two latter chiefly outside, probably to bind and conceal and keep out the wind), agglutinated together. But most pains was taken with the thin edge and for three quarters of an inch down, where, beside the bark-fibres, birch paper, and hornets' nest, some silky reddish-brown and also white fibre was used to bind all with, almost spun into threads and

passed over the twigs and agglutinated to them, or over the bark edge. The shreds of birch paper were smaller there, and the hornets' nest looked as if it had been reduced to a pulp by the bird and spread very thinly here and there over all, mixed with the brown silk. This last looked like cow's hair, but as I found a piece of a small brown cocoon, though a little paler, I suspect it was from that. The white may have been from a cocoon, or else vegetable silk. Probably a vireo's nest, maybe red-eye's.

In our workshops we pride ourselves on discovering a use for what had previously been regarded as waste, but how partial and accidental our economy compared with Nature's. In Nature nothing is wasted. Every decayed leaf and twig and fibre is only the better fitted to serve in some other department, and all at last are gathered in her compost-heap. What a wonderful genius it is that leads the vireo to select the tough fibres of the inner bark, instead of the more brittle grasses, for its basket, the elastic pine-needles and the twigs, curved as they dried to give it form, and, as I suppose, the silk of cocoons, etc., etc., to bind it together with! I suspect that extensive use is made of these abandoned cocoons by the birds, and they, if anybody, know where to find them. There were at least seven materials used in constructing this nest, and the bird visited as many distinct localities many times, always with the purpose or design to find some particular one of these materials, as much as if it had said to itself, "Now I will go and get some old hornets' nest from one of those that I saw last fall down in the maple swamp — perhaps thrust my bill into them — or some silk from those cocoons I saw this morning."

It turned to rain before noon, four or five inches of very moist snow or sleet having fallen.

Jan. 14. Sunrise. — Snows again. I think that you can best tell from what side the storm came by observing on which side of the trees the snow is plastered.

The crows are flitting about the houses and alight upon the elms.

After snowing an inch or two it cleared up at night. Boys, etc., go about straddling the fences, on the crust.

Jan. 15. A fine, clear winter day.

P. M. — To Hemlocks on the crust, slumping in every now and then.

A bright day, not cold. I can comfortably walk without gloves, yet my shadow is a most celestial blue. This only requires a clear bright day and snow-clad earth, not great cold. I cross the river on the crust with some hesitation. The snow appears considerably deeper than the 12th, maybe four or five inches deeper, and the river is indicated by a mere depression in it.

In the street not only fences but trees are obviously shortened, as by a flood. You are sensible that you are walking at a level a foot or more above the usual one. Seeing the tracks where a leaf had blown along and then tacked and finally doubled and returned on its trail, I thought it must be the tracks of some creature new to me.

I find under the hemlocks, in and upon the snow, apparently brought down by the storm, an abundance of those little dead hemlock twigs described on the 13th. They are remarkably slender, and without stiffness like the fir (and I think spruce) twigs, and this gives the hemlock its peculiar grace. These are not yet curved much, and perhaps they got that form from being placed in the nest.

Jan. 16. 8 A. M. — Down railroad, measuring snow, having had one bright day since the last flake fell; but, as there was a crust which would bear yesterday (as to-day), it cannot have settled much. The last storms have been easterly and northeasterly.

Why so much (five and one half inches) more now in the woods than on the 12th, as compared with open fields? Was the driving snow caught in a small wood, or did it settle less in the rain there, or since the snow on account of bushes?

I hear flying over (and see) a snow bunting, — a clear loud *tcheep* or *tcheop*, sometimes rapidly trilled or quavered, — calling its mates.

With this snow the fences are scarcely an obstruction to the traveller; he easily steps over them. Often they are buried. I suspect it is two and a half feet deep in Andromeda Swamps now. The snow is much deeper in yards, roads, and all small inclosures than in broad fields.

Jan. 17. Henry Shattuck tells me that the quails come almost every day and get some saba beans within two or three rods of his house, — some which he neglected to gather. Probably the deep snow drives them to it.

Jan. 18. J. B. Moore says that he has caught twenty pounds of pickerel in Walden in one winter, etc., and had had nearly as good luck five or six times the same winter there, not less than ten pounds at one time. Suppose, then, that he has caught fifty pickerel there in one winter, and all others the same winter a hundred and fifty, you have two hundred caught in one winter. I suspect there are as many as two thousand that will weigh a pound. Five men caught three hundred and thirty-three pounds in a pond in Eastham in one day this winter, say the papers, — largest five and a half pounds.

Analyzed a nest which I found January 7th in an upright fork of a red maple sapling on the edge of Hubbard's Swamp Wood, north side, near river, about eight feet from the ground, the deep grooves made by the twigs on each side. It *may* be a yellowbird's.

Extreme breadth outside, three inches; inside, one and a half. Extreme height outside, three inches; inside, one and five eighths; sides, three quarters of an inch thick.

It is composed of seven principal materials. (I name the most abundant first; I mean most abundant when compressed.)

1. — Small compact lengths of silvery pappus about seven eighths of an inch long, perhaps of erechthites, one half inch deep and nearly pure, a very warm bed, chiefly concealed, just beneath the lining inside.

2. — Slender catkins, often with the buds and twig ends (of perhaps hazel), throughout the whole bottom and sides, making it thick but open and light, mixed with (3) milkweed silk, *i.e.* fibres like flax, but white, being bleached, also in sides and rim, some of it almost threadlike, white with some of the dark epidermis. From the pods?

4. — Thin and narrow strips of grape-vine bark, chiefly in the rim and sides for three quarters of an inch down, and here and there throughout.

5. — Wads of apparently brown fern wool, mixed with the last

three.

6. — Some finer pale-brown and thinner shreds of bark within the walls and bottom, apparently not grape. If this were added to the grape, these five materials would be not far from equally abundant.

7. — Some very fine pale-brown wiry fibres for a lining, just above the pappus and somewhat mixed with it, perhaps for coolness, being springy.

Directly beneath the pappus were considerable other shreds of grape and the other bark, short and broken. In the rim and sides some cotton ravellings and some short shreds of fish-line or crow-fence. A red maple leaf within the bottom; a kernel of corn just under the lining of fibres (perhaps dropped by a crow or blackbird or jay or squirrel while the nest was building). A few short lengths of stubble or weed stems in the bottom and sides. A very little brown wool, like, apparently, that in the nest last described, which may be brown fern wool. The milkweed and fern wool conspicuous without the rim and about the twigs. I was most struck by that mass of pure pappus under the inside lining.

P. M. — To Walden to learn the temperature of the water.

The snow is so deep at present in the streets that it is very difficult turning out, and there are cradle-holes between this and the post-office. The sidewalks being blotted out, the street, like a woodman's path, looks like a hundred miles up country. I see where children have for some days come to school across the fields on the crust from Abiel Wheeler's to the railroad crossing. I see their tracks in the slight snow upon the crust which fell the 14th. They save a great distance and enjoy the novelty.

This is a very mild, melting winter day, but clear and bright, yet I see the blue shadows on the snow at Walden. The snow lies very level there, about ten inches deep, and for the most part bears me as I go across with my hatchet. I think I never saw a more elysian blue than my shadow. I am turned into a tall blue Persian from my cap to my boots, such as no mortal dye can produce, with an amethystine hatchet in my hand. I am in raptures at my own shadow. What if the substance were of as ethereal a nature? Our very shadows are no longer black, but a celestial blue. This has nothing to do with cold, methinks, but the sun must not be too low.

I cleared a little space in the snow, which was nine to ten inches deep over the deepest part of the pond, and cut through the ice, which was about seven inches thick, only the first four inches, perhaps, snow ice, the other three clear. The moment I reached the water, it gushed up and overflowed the ice, driving me out this yard in the snow, where it stood at last two and a half inches deep above the ice.

The thermometer indicated 33 1/2° at top and 34f° when drawn up rapidly from thirty feet beneath. So, *apparently*, it is not much warmer beneath.

Goodwin was fishing there. He says he once caught fifty pounds of pickerel here in two days; he thought twenty-five or thirty fishes. Thought that there were many hundred caught here in a winter; that nearly all were females.

Observed some of those little hard galls on the high blueberry, pecked or eaten into by some bird (or *possibly* mouse), for the little white grubs which lie curled up in them. What entomologists the birds are! Most men do not suspect that there are grubs in them, and how secure the latter seem under these thick dry shells! Yet there is no secret but it is confided to some one.

Jan. 19. Another bright winter day.

P. M. — To river to get some water asclepias to see what birds' nests are made of.

The only open place in the river between Hunt's Bridge and the railroad bridge is a small space against Merrick's pasture just below the Rock. As usual, just below a curve, in shallow water, with the added force of the Assabet.

The willow osiers of last year's growth on the pollards in Shattuck's row, Merrick's pasture, from four to seven feet long, are *perhaps* as bright as in the spring, the lower half yellow, the upper red, but they are a *little* shrivelled in the bark.

Measured again the great elm in front of Charles Davis's on the Boston road, which he is having cut down. The chopper, White, has taken off most of the limbs and just begun, tried his axe, on the foot of the tree. He will probably fall it on Monday, or the 21st. At the smallest place between the ground and the limbs, seven feet from the ground, it is fifteen feet and two inches in circumference; at one foot

from the ground on the lowest side, twenty-three feet and nine inches. White is to have ten dollars for taking off the necessary limbs and cutting it down merely, help being found him. He began on Wednesday. Davis and the neighbors were much alarmed by the creaking in the late storms, for fear it would fall on their roofs. It stands two or three feet into Davis's yard.

As I came home through the village at 8.15 p. M., by a bright moonlight, the moon nearly full and not more than 18° from the zenith, the wind northwest, but not strong, and the air pretty cold, I saw the melon-rind arrangement of the clouds on a larger scale and more distinct than ever before. There were eight or ten courses of clouds, so broad that with equal intervals of blue sky they occupied the whole width of the heavens, broad white cirro-stratus in perfectly regular curves from west to east across the whole sky. The four middle ones, occupying the greater part of the visible cope, were particularly distinct. They were all as regularly arranged as the lines on a melon, and with much straighter sides, as if cut with a knife. I hear that it attracted the attention of those who were abroad at 7 p. M., and now, at 9 P. M., it is scarcely less remarkable. On one side of the heavens, north or south, the intervals of blue look almost black by contrast. There is now, at nine, a strong wind from the northwest. Why do these bars extend east and west? Is it the influence of the sun, which set so long ago? or of the rotation of the earth? The bars which I notice so often, morning and evening, are apparently connected with the sun at those periods.

In Oliver N. Bacon's History of Natick, page 235. it is said that, of phænogamous plants, "upwards of 800 species were collected from Natick soil in three years' time, by a single individual." I suspect it was Bacon the surveyor. There is given a list of those which are rare in that vicinity. Among them are the following which I do not know to grow here: *Actæa rubra* (W.), *Asclepias tuberosa, Alopecurus pratensis*, *Corallorhiza odontorhiza* (?) (Nutt.), *Drosera filiformis* (Nutt.), *Ledum latifolium, Malaxis lilifolia* (W.) (what in Gray?), *Sagina procumbens.* Among those rare there but common here are *Calla Virginica, Glecoma hederacea*, *Iris prismatica*, *Lycopus Virginicus, Mikania scandens*, *Prunus borealis*, *Hhodord Canadensis*, *Xyris aquatica*, *Zizania aquatica.* They, as well as we,

have *Equisetum hyemale, Kalmia glauca*, *Liatris scariosa, Ulmus fulva*, *Linnæa borealis*, *Pyrola maculata*, etc., etc.

Bacon quotes White, who quotes Old Colony Memorial account of manners and customs, etc., of our ancestors.

Bacon says that the finest elm in Natick stands in front of Thomas F. Hammond's house, and was set out "about the year 1760."

"The trunk, five feet from the ground, measures fifteen and a half feet." G. Emerson gives a different account, *q v.*

Observed within the material of a robin's nest, this afternoon, a cherry-stone.

Gathered some dry water milkweed stems to compare with the materials of the bird's nest of the 18th. The bird used, I am almost certain, the fibres of the bark of the stem, — not the pods, — just beneath the epidermis; only the bird's is older and more fuzzy and finer, like worn twine or string. The fibres and bark have otherwise the same appearance under the microscope. I stripped off some bark about one sixteenth of an inch wide and six inches long and, separating ten or twelve fibres from the epidermis, rolled it in my fingers, making a thread about the ordinary size. This I could not break by direct pulling, and no man could. I doubt if a thread of flax or hemp of the same size could be made so strong. What an admirable material for the Indian's fish-line! I can easily get much longer fibres. I hold a piece of the dead weed in my hands, strip off a narrow shred of the bark before my neighbor's eyes and separate ten or twelve fibres as fine as a hair, roll them in my fingers, and offer him the thread to try its strength. He is surprised and mortified to find that he cannot break it. Probably both the Indian and the bird discovered for themselves this same (so to call it) wild hemp. The corresponding fibres of the mikania seem not so divisible, become not so fine and fuzzy; though somewhat similar, are not nearly so strong. I have a hang-bird's nest from the riverside, made almost entirely of this, in narrow shreds or strips with the epidermis on, wound round and round the twigs and woven into a basket. That is, this bird has used perhaps the strongest fibre which the fields afforded and which most civilized men have not detected.

Knocked down the bottom of that summer yellow-bird's nest made on the oak at the Island last summer. It is chiefly of fern wool

and also, *apparently*, some sheep's wool (?), with a fine green moss (apparently that which grows on button-bushes) inmixed, and some milkweed fibre, and all very firmly agglutinated together. Some shreds of grape-vine bark about it. Do not know what portion of the whole nest it is.

Jan. 20. In my experience I have found nothing so truly impoverishing as what is called wealth, *i.e.* the command of greater means than you had before possessed, though comparatively few and slight still, for you thus inevitably acquire a more expensive habit of living, and even the very same necessaries and comforts cost you more than they once did. Instead of gaining, you have lost some independence, and if your income should be suddenly lessened, you would find yourself poor, though possessed of the same means which once made you rich. Within the last five years I have had the command of a little more money than in the previous five years, for I have sold some books and some lectures; yet I have not been a whit better fed or clothed or warmed or sheltered, not a whit richer, except that I have been less concerned about my living, but perhaps my life has been the less serious for it, and, to balance it, I feel now that there is a possibility of failure. Who knows but I *may* come upon the town, if, as is likely, the public want no more of my books, or lectures (which last is already the case)? Before, I was much likelier to take the town upon my shoulders. That is, I have lost some of my independence on them, when they would say that I had gained an independence. If you wish to give a man a sense of poverty, give him a thousand dollars. The next hundred dollars he gets will not be worth more than ten that he used to get. Have pity on him; withhold your gifts.

P. M. — Up river to Hollowell place.

I see the blue between the cakes of snow cast out in making a path, in the triangular recesses, though it is pretty cold, but the sky is completely overcast.

It is now good walking on the river, for, though there has been no thaw since the snow came, a great part of it has been converted into snow ice by sinking the old ice beneath the water, and the crust of the rest is stronger than in the fields, because the snow is so shallow and

has been so moist. The river is thus an advantage as a highway, not only in summer and when the ice is bare in the winter, but even when the snow lies very deep in the fields. It is invaluable to the walker, being now not only the most interesting, but, excepting the narrow and unpleasant track in the highways, the only practicable route. The snow never lies so deep over it as elsewhere, and, if deep, it sinks the ice and is soon converted into snow ice to a great extent, beside being blown out of the river valley. Neither is it drifted here. Here, where you cannot walk at all in the summer, is better walking than elsewhere in the winter. But what a different aspect the river's brim now from what it wears in summer! I do not this moment hear an insect hum, nor see a bird, nor a flower. That museum of animal and vegetable life, a meadow, is now reduced to a uniform level of white snow, with only half a dozen kinds of shrubs and weeds rising here and there above it.

Nut Meadow Brook is open in the river meadow, but not into the river. It is remarkable that the short strip in the middle below the Island *(vide* yesterday) should be the only open place between Hunt's Bridge and Hubbard's, at least, — probably as far as Lee's. The river has been frozen solidly ever since the 7th, and that small open strip of yesterday (about one rod wide and in middle) was probably not more than a day or two old. It is very rarely closed, I suspect, *in all places* more than two weeks at a time. Ere long it wears its way up to the light, and its blue artery again appears here and there. In one place close to the river, where the forget-me-not grows, that springy place under the bank just above the railroad bridge, the snow is quite melted and the bare ground and flattened weeds exposed for four or five feet.

Broke open a frozen nest of mud and stubble in a black willow, probably a robin's, in which were a snail (?) shell and a skunk-cabbage seed (?). Were they not left there by a mouse? Or could they have been taken up with the mud? (They were somewhat in the mud. A downy woodpecker without red on head the only bird seen in this walk [?]. I stand within twelve feet.

The arrangement of the clouds last night attracted attention in various parts of the town.

A probable kingbird's nest, on a small horizontal branch of a

young swamp white oak, amid the twigs, about ten feet from ground. This tree is very scraggy; has numerous short twigs at various angles with the branches, making it unpleasant to climb and affording support to birds' nests. The nest is round, running to rather a sharp point on one side beneath. Extreme diameter outside, four and a half to five inches; within, three inches; depth within, two inches; without, four or more. The principal materials are ten, in the order of their abundance thus: —

1. — Reddish and gray twigs, some a foot and more in length, which are cranberry vines, with now and then a leaf on, probably such as were tom up by the rakers. Some are as big round as a knitting-needle, and would be taken for a larger bush. These make the stiff mass of the outside above and rim.

2. — Woody roots, rather coarser, intermixed from waterside shrubs. Probably some are from cranberry vines. These are mixed with the last and with the bottom.

3. — Softer and rather smaller roots and root-fibres of herbaceous plants, mixed with the last and a little further inward, for the harshest are always most external.

4. — (Still to confine myself to the order of abundance) withered flowers and short bits of the gray downy stems of the fragrant everlasting; these more or less compacted and apparently agglutinated from the mass of the solid bottom, and more loose, with the stems run down to a point on one side the bottom.

5. — What I think is the fibrous growth of a willow, moss-like with a wiry dark-colored hair-like stem (possibly it is a moss). This, with or without the tuft, is the lining, and lies contiguous in the sides and bottom.

6. — What looks like brown decayed leaves and confervae from the dried bottom of the riverside, mixed with the everlasting-tops internally in the solid bottom.

7. — Some finer brown root-fibres, chiefly between the lining of No. 6 and hair and the coarser fibres of No. 3.

8. — A dozen whitish cocoons, mixed with the everlasting-tops and dangling about the bottom peak externally; a few within the solid bottom. Also eight or ten very minute cocoons mixed with these, attached in a cluster to the top of an everlasting.

9. — A few black much branched roots (?) (perhaps some utricularia from the dried bottom of river), mixed with Nos. 2 and 3.

10. — Some horsehair, white and black, together with No. *5* forming the lining.

There are also, with the cocoons and everlasting-tops externally, one or two cotton-grass heads, one small white feather, and a little greenish-fuscous moss from the button-bush, and, in the bottom, a small shred of grape-vine bark.

Jan. 21. Four men, cutting at once, began to fell the big elm *(vide* 19th) at 10 a m., went to dinner at 12, and got through at 2.30 p m. They used a block and tackle with five falls, fastened to the base of a buttonwood, and drawn by a horse, to pull it over the right way; so it fell without harm down the road. One said he pulled twenty turns. I measured it at 3 p m., just after the top had been cut off.

It was 15 feet to the first crotch. At 75 feet, the most upright and probably highest limb was cut off, and measured 27 inches in circumference. As near as I could tell from the twigs on the snow, and what the choppers said who had just removed the top, it was about 108 feet high. At 15 feet from the stump, it divided into two parts, about an equal size. One was decayed and broken in the fall, being undermost, the other (which also proved hollow) at its origin was 11 4/12 4/12 feet in circumference. (The whole tree directly beneath this crotch was 19 3/12 round.) This same limb branched again at 36 8/12 from the stump, and there measured, just beneath the crotch, 14 10/12 in circumference. At the ground the stump measured 8 4/12 one way, 8 3/12 another, 7 1/2 another. It was solid quite through at butt (excepting 3 inches in middle), though somewhat decayed within, and I could count pretty well 105 rings, to which add 10 more for the hollow and you have 115.

There was a currant bush opposite the first crotch, in a large hole at that height, where probably a limb once broke off (making three there), and also a great many stones bigger than a hen's egg, probably cast in by the boys. There was also part of an old brick with some clay, thirty or forty years within the tree at the stump, completely overgrown and cut through by the axe. I judged that there were at least seven cords then in the road, supposing one main limb

sound, and Davis thought that the pile in the yard, from the limbs taken off last week, contained four more. He said that there were some flying squirrels within and upon it when they were taking off the limbs. There was scarcely any hollowness to be discovered. It had grown very rapidly the first fifty years or so. You could see where there had once been deep clefts between different portions of the trunk at the stump, but the tree had afterward united and overgrown them, leaving some bark within the wood. In some places the trunk as it lay on the ground (though flatwise) was as high as a man's head.

This tree stood directly under the hill, which is some sixty feet high, the old burying hill continued, south of where the flagstaff was planted when the British marched into town. This tree must have been some fifty years old and quite sizable then. White, when taking off the limbs, said that he could see all over Sleepy Hollow, beyond the hill. There were several great wens on the trunk, a foot in diameter and nearly as much in height. The tree was so sound I think it might have lived fifty years longer; but Mrs. Davis said that she would not like to spend another such a week as the last before it was cut down. They heard it creak in the storm. One of the great limbs which reached over the house was cracked. The two main limbs proved hollow.

Jan. 22. P. M. — To Walden.

The Walden road is nearly full of snow still, to the top of the wall on the north side, though there has been no snow falling since the 14th. The snow lies particularly solid. Looking toward the sun, the surface consists of great patches of shining crust and dry driving snow, giving it a *watered* appearance.

Miss Minott talks of cutting down the oaks about her house for fuel, because she cannot get her wood sledded home on account of the depth of the snow, though it lies all cut there. James, at R. W. E.'s, waters his cows at the door, because the brook is frozen.

If you wish to know whether a tree is hollow, or has a hole in it, ask the squirrels. They know as well as whether they have a home or not. Yet a man lives under it all his life without knowing, and the chopper must fairly cut it up before he can tell. If there is a cleft in it,

he is pretty sure to find some nutshell or materials of a bird's nest left in it.

At Brister's Spring I see where a squirrel has been to the spring and also sat on a low alder limb and eaten a hazelnut. Where does he find a sound hazelnut now? Has them in a hollow tree.

See tracks of fishermen and pickerel. *Vide* forward.

At Walden, near my old residence, I find that since I was here on the 11th, apparently within a day or two, some gray or red squirrel or squirrels have been feeding on the pitch pine cones extensively. The snow under one young pine is covered quite thick with the scales they have dropped while feeding overhead. I count the cores of thirty-four cones on the snow there, and that is not all. Under another pine there are more than twenty, and a well-worn track from this to a fence-post three rods distant, under which are the cores of eight cones and a corresponding amount of scales. The track is like a very small rabbit. They have gnawed off the cones which were perfectly closed.

I see where one has taken one of a pair and left going up the page the other partly off. He had first sheared off the needles that were in the way, and then gnawed off the sides or cheeks of the twig to come at the stem of the cone, which as usual was cut by successive cuts as with a knife, while bending it. One or two small, perhaps dead, certainly unripe ones were taken off and left unopened. I find that many of those young pines are now full of unopened cones, which apparently will be two years old next summer, and these, the squirrel now eats. There are also some of them open, perhaps on the most thrifty twigs.

F. Morton hears to-day from Plymouth that three men have just caught in Sandy Pond, in Plymouth, about two hundred pounds of pickerel in two days.

Somebody has been fishing in the pond this morning, and the water in the holes is beginning to freeze. I see the track of a crow, the toes as usual less spread and the middle one making a more curved furrow in the snow than the partridge, as if they moved more unstably, recovering their balance, — feeble on their feet. The inner toe a little the nearest to the middle one. This track goes to every hole but one or two out of a dozen, — directly from hole to hole,

sometimes flying a little, — and also to an apple-core on the snow. I am pretty sure that this bird was after the bait which is usually dropped on the ice or in the hole. E. Garfield says they come regularly to his holes for bait as soon as he has left. So, if the pickerel are not fed, it is. It had even visited, on the wing, a hole, now frozen and snowed up, which I made far from this in the middle of the pond several days since, as I discovered by its droppings, the same kind that it had left about the first holes.

I was surprised, on breaking with my foot the ice in a pickerel-hole near the shore, evidently frozen only last night, to see the water rise at once half an inch above it. Why should the ice be still sinking? Is it growing more solid and heavier?

Most were not aware of the size of the great elm till it was cut down. I surprised some a few days ago by saying that when its trunk should lie prostrate it would be higher than the head of the tallest man in the town, and that two such trunks could not stand in the chamber we were then in, which was fifteen feet across; that there would be ample room for a double bedstead on the trunk, nay, that the very dinner-table we were sitting at, with our whole party of seven, chairs and all, around it, might be set there. On the decayed part of the butt end there were curious fine black lines, giving it a geographical look, here and there, half a dozen inches long, sometimes following the line of the rings; the boundary of a part which had reached a certain stage of decay. The force on the pulleys broke off more than a foot in width in the middle of the tree, much decayed.

I have attended the felling and, so to speak, the funeral of this old citizen of the town, — I who commonly do not attend funerals, — as it became me to do. I was the chief if not the only mourner there. I have taken the measure of his grandeur; have spoken a few words of eulogy at his grave, remembering the maxim *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* (in this case *magnum*). But there were only the choppers and the passers-by to hear me. Further the town was not represented; the fathers of the town, the selectmen, the clergy were not there. But I have not known a fitter occasion for a sermon of late. Travellers whose journey was for a short time delayed by its prostrate body were forced to pay it some attention and respect, but the axe-boys

had climbed upon it like ants, and commenced chipping at it before it had fairly ceased groaning. There was a man already bargaining for some part. How have the mighty fallen! Its history extends back over more than half the whole history of the town. Since its kindred could not conveniently attend, I attended. Methinks its fall marks an epoch in the history of the town. It has passed away together with the clergy of the old school and the stage-coach which used to rattle beneath it. Its virtue was that it steadily grew and expanded from year to year to the very last. How much of old Concord falls with it! The town clerk will not chronicle its fall. I will, for it is of greater moment to the town than that of many a human inhabitant would be. Instead of erecting a monument to it, we take all possible pains to obliterate its stump, the only monument of a tree which is commonly allowed to stand. Another link that bound us to the past is broken. How much of old Concord was cut away with it! A few such elms would alone constitute a township. They might claim to send a representative to the General Court to look after their interests, if a fit one could be found, a native American one in a true and worthy sense, with catholic principles. Our town has lost some of its venerableness. No longer will our eyes rest on its massive gray trunk, like a vast Corinthian column by the wayside; no longer shall we walk in the shade of its lofty, spreading dome. It is as if you had laid the axe at the feet of some venerable Buckley or Ripley. You have laid the axe, you have made fast your tackle, to one of the king-posts of the town. I feel the whole building wracked by it. Is it not sacrilege to cut down the tree which has so long looked over Concord beneficently?

Supposing the first fifteen feet to average six feet in diameter, they would contain more than three cords and a foot of wood; but probably not more than three cords.

With what feelings should not the citizens hear that the biggest tree in the town has fallen! A traveller passed through the town and saw the inhabitants cutting it up without regret.

The tracks of the partridges by the sumachs, made before the 11th, are perhaps more prominent now than ever, for they have consolidated the snow under them so that as it settled it has left them *alto-relievo.* They look like broad chains extending straight far over the snow.

I brought home and examined some of the droppings of the crow mentioned four pages back. They were brown and dry, though partly frozen. — After long study with a microscope, I discovered that they consisted of the seeds and skins and other indigestible parts of red cedar berries and some barberries (I detected the imbricated scale-like leaves of a berry stem and then the seeds and the now black skins of the cedar berries, but easily the large seeds of the barberries) and perhaps something more, and I knew whence it had probably come, *i.e.* from the cedar woods and barberry bushes by Flint's Pond. These, then, make part of the food of crows in severe weather when the snow is deep, as at present.

Jan. 23. Brown is filling his ice-house. The *clear* ice is only from one and a half to four inches thick; all the rest, or nearly a foot, is snow ice, formed by the snow sinking the first under the water and freezing with the water. The same is the case at Walden. To get ice at all clear or transparent, you must scrape the snow off after each fall. Very little ice is formed by addition below, such a snowy winter as this.

There was a white birch scale yesterday on the snowed-up hole which I made in the very middle of Walden. I have no doubt they blow across the widest part of the pond.

When approaching the pond yesterday, through my bean-field, I saw where some fishermen had come away, and the tails of their string of pickerel had trailed on the deep snow where they sank in it. I afterward saw where they had been fishing that forenoon, the water just beginning to freeze, and also where some had fished the day before with red-finned minnows, which were frozen into an inch of ice; that these men had chewed tobacco and ate apples. All this I knew, though I saw neither man nor squirrel nor pickerel nor crow.

Measured, this afternoon, the snow in the same fields which I measured just a week ago, to see how it had settled. It has been uniformly fair weather of average winter coldness, without any thaw. West of railroad it averages 11 1/3 + (On the 16th it was *12 1/4*.) East of railroad, 14 inches (16th, 15 5/8). Or average of both 12 1/3 + — say *12 1/2*. It has settled, therefore, in open fields 1 1/10 inches, showing how very solid it is, as many have remarked. Not allowing

for what of the light snow above the crust may have drifted against the railroad embankment (though I measured on both sides of it). Trillium Woods, 13 1/4+; 16th it was 17. Has settled 3 3/4. It seems, then, that, as it lies light in the wood at first, it settles much faster there, so that, though it was nearly 3 1/2 inches the deepest there a week ago, it is less than 1 inch the deepest there now.

Jan. 24. A journal is a record of experiences and growth, not a preserve of things well done or said. I am occasionally reminded of a statement which I have made in conversation and immediately forgotten, which would read much better than what I put in my journal. It is a ripe, dry fruit of long-past experience which falls from me easily, without giving pain or pleasure. The charm of the journal must consist in a certain greenness, though freshness, and not in maturity. Here I cannot afford to be remembering what I said or did, my scurf cast off, but what I am and aspire to become.

Reading the hymns of the Rig Veda, translated by Wilson, which consist in a great measure of simple epithets addressed to the firmament, or the dawn, or the winds, which mean more or less as the reader is more or less alert and imaginative, and seeing how widely the various translators have differed, they regarding not the poetry, but the history and philology, dealing with very concise Sanscrit, which must almost always be amplified to be understood, I am sometimes inclined to doubt if the translator has not made something out of nothing, — whether a real idea or sentiment has been thus transmitted to us from so primitive a period. I doubt if learned Germans might not thus edit pebbles from the seashore into hymns of the Rig Veda, and translators translate them accordingly, extracting the meaning which the sea has imparted to them in very primitive times. While the commentators and translators are disputing about the meaning of this word or that, I hear only the resounding of the ancient sea and put into it all the meaning I am possessed of, the deepest murmurs I can recall, for I do not the least care where I get my ideas, or what suggests them.

I knew that a crow had that day plucked the cedar berries and barberries by Flint's Pond and then flapped silently through the trackless air to Walden, where it dined on fisherman's bait, though

there was no living creature to tell me.

Holbrook's elm measured to-day 11 feet 4 inches in circumference at six feet from ground, the size of one of the branches of the Davis elm (call it the Lee elm, for a Lee formerly lived there). Cheney's largest in front of Mr. Frost's, 12 feet 4 inches, at six feet; 16 feet 6 inches, at one foot. The great elm opposite Keyes's land, near by (call it the Jones elm): 17 feet 6 inches, at two behind and one plus before; 15 feet 10 inches, at four; 15 feet 5 inches, at six; 16 feet at seven and a half, or spike on west side. At the smallest place between the ground and branches, this is a little bigger than the Davis elm, but it is not so big at or near the ground, nor is it so high to the branching, — about twelve feet, — nor are the branches so big, but it is much sounder, and its top broader, fuller, and handsomer. This has an uncommonly straight-sided and solid-looking trunk, measuring only two feet less at six feet from the ground than at two.

P. M. — Up Assabet.

Even the patches of shining snow-crust between those of dry white surface snow are slightly blue, like ice and water.

You may walk anywhere on the river now. Even the open space against Merrick's, below the Rock, has been closed again, and there is only six feet of water there now. I walk with a peculiar sense of freedom over the snow-covered ice, not fearing that I shall break through. I have not been able to find any tracks of muskrats this winter. I suspect that they very rarely venture out in winter with their wet coats.

I see squirrel-tracks about the hemlocks.

They are much like rabbits, only the toes, are very distinct. From this they pass into a semicircular figure sometimes. Some of the first are six inches from outside to outside lengthwise, with one to two feet of interval.

Are these the gray or red?

A great many hemlock cones have fallen on the snow and rolled down the hill.

Higher up, against the Wheeler Swamp, I see where many squirrels — perhaps red, for the tracks appear smaller — have fed on the alder cones on the twigs which are low or frozen into the ice,

stripping them to the core just as they do the pine cones.

Here are the tracks of a crow, like those of the *22d,* with a *long hind toe*, nearly two inches. The two feet are also nearly two inches apart. I see where the bird alighted, descending with an impetus and breaking through the slight crust, planting its feet side by side.

How different this partridge-track, with its slight hind toe, open and wide-spread toes on each side, both feet forming one straight line, exactly thus: —

(Five inches from centre to centre.) The middle toe alternately curved to the right and to the left, and what is apparently the outer toe in each case shorter than the inner one.

I see under a great many trees, black willow and swamp white oak, the bark scattered over the snow, some pieces six inches long, and above see the hole which a woodpecker has bored.

The snow is so deep along the sides of the river that I can now look into nests which I could hardly reach in the summer. I can hardly believe them the same. They have only an ice egg in them now. Thus we go about, raised, generally speaking, more than a foot above the summer level. So much higher do we carry our heads in the winter. What a great odds such a little difference makes! When the snow raises us one foot higher than we have been accustomed to walk, wc are surprised at our elevation! So we soar.

I do not find a foot of open water, even, on this North Branch, as far as I go, *i, e* to J. Hosmer's lot. The river has been frozen unusually long and solidly. They have been sledding wood along the river for a quarter of a mile in front of Merriam's and past the mouth of Sam Barrett's Brook, where it is bare of snow, — hard, glare ice on which there is scarcely a trace of the sled or oxen. They have sledded home a large oak which was cut down on the bank. Yet this is one of the rockiest and swiftest parts of the stream. Where I have so often stemmed the swift current, dodging the rocks, with my paddle, there the heavy, slowpaced oxen, with their ponderous squeaking load, have plodded, while the teamster walked musing beside it.

That Wheeler swamp is a great place for squirrels. I observe many of their tracks along the riverside there. The nests are of leaves, and

apparently of the gray species.

There is much of the water milkweed on the little island just above Dove Rock. It rises above the deep snow there.

It is remarkable how much the river has been tracked by dogs the week past, not accompanied by their masters. They hunt, perchance, in the night more than is supposed, for I very rarely see one alone by day.

The river is pretty low and has fallen within a month, for there has been no thaw. The ice has broken and settled around the rocks, which look as if they had burst up through it. Some maple limbs which were early frozen in have been broken and stripped down by this irresistible weight.

You see where the big dogs have slipped on one or two feet in their haste, sinking to the ice, but, having two more feet, it did not delay them.

I walk along the sides of the stream, admiring the rich mulberry catkins of the alders, which look almost edible. They attract us because they have so much of spring in them. The clear red osiers, too, along the riverside in front of Merriam's on Wheeler's side.

I have seen many a collection of stately elms which better deserved to be represented at the General Court than the manikins beneath, — than the barroom and victualling cellar and groceries they overshadowed. When I see their magnificent domes, miles away in the horizon, over intervening valleys and forests, they suggest a village, a community, there. But, after all, it is a secondary consideration whether there are human dwellings beneath them; these may have long since passed away. I find that into my idea of the village has entered more of the elm than of the human being. They are worth many a political borough. They constitute a borough. The poor human representative of his party sent out from beneath their shade will not suggest a tithe of the dignity, the true nobleness and comprehensiveness of view, the sturdiness and independence, and the serene beneficence that they do. They look from township to township. A fragment of their bark is worth the backs of all the politicians in the union. They are free-soilers in their own broad sense. They send their roots north and south and east and west into many a conservative's Kansas and Carolina, who does not suspect

such underground railroads, — they improve the subsoil he has never disturbed, — and many times their length, if the support of their principles requires it. They battle with the tempests of a century. See what scars they bear, what limbs they lost before we were born! Yet they never adjourn; they steadily vote for their principles, and send their roots further and wider from the *same centre.* They die at their posts, and they leave a tough butt for the choppers to exercise themselves about, and a stump which serves for their monument. They attend no caucus, they make no compromise, they use no policy. Their one principle is growth. They combine a true radicalism with a true conservatism. Their radicalism is not cutting away of roots, but an infinite multiplication and extension of them under all surrounding institutions. They take a firmer hold on the earth that they may rise higher into the heavens. Their conservative heart-wood, in which no sap longer flows, does not impoverish their growth, but is a firm column to support it; and when their expanding trunks no longer require it, it utterly decays. Their conservatism is a dead but solid heart-wood, which is the pivot and firm column of support to all this growth, appropriating nothing to itself, but forever by its support assisting to extend the area of their radicalism. Half a century after they are dead at the core, they are preserved by radical reforms. They do not, like men, from radicals turn conservative. Their conservative part dies out first; their radical and growing part survives. They acquire new States and Territories, while the old dominions decay, and become the habitation of bears and owls and coons.

Jan. 25. P. M. — Up river.

The hardest day to bear that we have had, for, beside being 5° at noon and at 4 p m., there is a strong northwest wind. It is worse than when the thermometer was at zero all day. Pierce says it is the first day that he has not been able to work outdoors in the sun. The snow is now very dry and powdery, and, though so hard packed, drifts somewhat. The travellers I meet have red faces. Their ears covered. Pity those who have not thick mittens. No man could stand it to travel far toward this wind. It stiffens the whole face, and you feel a tingling sensation in your forehead. Much worse to bear than a still

cold. I see no life abroad, no bird nor beast. What a stem, bleak, inhospitable aspect nature now wears! (I am off Clamshell Hill.) Where a few months since was a fertilizing river reflecting the sunset, and luxuriant meadows resounding with the hum of insects, is now a uniform crusted snow, with dry powdery snow drifting over it and confounding river and meadow. I make haste away, covering my ears, before I freeze there. The snow in the road has frozen dry, as dry as bran.

A closed pitch pine cone gathered January *22d* opened last night in my chamber. If you would be convinced how differently armed the squirrel is naturally for dealing with pitch pine cones, just try to get one off with your teeth. He who extracts the seeds from a single closed cone with the aid of a knife will be constrained to confess that the squirrel earns his dinner. It is a rugged customer, and will make your fingers bleed. But the squirrel has the key to this conical and spiny chest of many apartments. He sits on a post, vibrating his tail, and twirls it as a plaything.

But so is a man commonly a locked-up chest to us, to open whom, unless we have the key of sympathy, will make our hearts bleed.

The elms, they adjourn not night nor day; they pair not off. They stand for magnificence; they take the brunt of the tempest; they attract the lightning that would smite our roofs, leaving only a few rotten members scattered over the highway. The one by Holbrook's is particularly regular and lofty for its girth, a perfect sheaf, but thin-leaved, apparently a slow grower. It bore a tavern sign for many a year. Call it the Bond (?) elm.

Jan. 26. When I took the ether my consciousness amounted to this: I put my finger on myself in order to keep the place, otherwise I should never have returned to this world.

They have cut and sawed off the butt of the great elm at nine and a half feet from the ground, and I counted the annual rings there with the greatest ease and accuracy. Indeed I never saw them so distinct on a large butt. The tree was quite sound there, not the least hollow even at the pith. There were one hundred and twenty-seven rings. Supposing the tree to have been five years old when nine and a half feet high, then it was one hundred and thirty-two years old, or came

up in the year 1724, just before Lovewell's Fight.

There were two centres, fourteen inches apart. The accompanying coarse sketch will give a *general* idea of it. There were thirteen distinct rings about each centre, before they united and one ring inclosed both.

Then there was a piece of bark, — which may be rudely represented by the upper black mark, — say six or eight inches long. This was not overgrown but by the twenty-fourth ring. These two centres of growth corresponded in position to the two main branches six feet above, and I inferred that when the tree was about eighteen years old, the fork commenced at nine and a half feet from the ground, but as it increased in diameter, it united higher and higher up. I remember that the bark was considerably nearer one centre than the other. There was bark in several places completely overgrown and included on the extreme butt end where cut off, having apparently overgrown its own furrows.

Its diameter, where I counted the rings, was, one way, as near as I could measure in spite of the carf, four feet and three inches; another, four feet and eight inches; and five feet. On the line by which I counted, which was the long way of the tree, it had grown in the first fifty years twenty inches, or two fifths of an inch a year; the last fifty, five and three quarters inches or about one ninth of an inch a year; and there was a space of about five inches between the two, or for the intermediate twenty-seven years. At this height, it had grown on an average annually nearly twenty-four one-hundredths of an inch from the centre on one side.

The white or sap wood averaged about two inches thick. The bark was from one to two inches thick, and in the last case I could count from twelve to fifteen distinct rings in it, as if it were regularly shed after that period.

The court-house elm measured, at six feet from the ground on the west side, twelve feet one and one half inches in circumference. The willow by the Jim Jones house, fourteen feet at about eighteen inches from ground; thirteen feet eight inches, at about six inches from ground; and it bulged out much larger above this.

P. M. — Walked down the river as far as the south bend behind Abner Buttrick's. I also know its condition as far as the Hubbard

Bridge in the other direction. There is not a square foot open between these extremes, and, judging from what I know of the river beyond these limits, I may safely say that it is not open (the main stream, I mean) anywhere in the town. (Of the North Branch above the Bath Place, the goose ground, say to the stone bridge, I cannot speak confidently.) The same must have been the case yesterday, since it was colder. Probably the same has been true of the river, excepting the small space against Merrick's below the Rock (now closed), since January 7th, when it closed at the Hubbard Bath, or nearly three weeks, —— a long time, methinks, for it to be frozen so solidly. A sleigh might safely be driven now from Carlisle Bridge to the Sudbury meadows on the river. Methinks it is a remarkably cold, as well as snowy, January, for we have had good sleighing ever since the 26th of December and no thaw.

Walked as far as Flint's Bridge with Abel Hunt, where I took to the river. I told him I had come to walk on the river as the best place, for the snow had drifted somewhat in the road, while it was converted into ice almost entirely on the river. "But," asked he, "are you not afraid that you will get in?"

"Oh, no, it will bear a load of wood from one end to the other."

"But then there may be some weak places." Yet he is some seventy years old and was born and bred immediately on its banks. Truly one half the world does not know how the other half lives.

Men have been talking now for a week at the postoffice about the age of the great elm, as a matter interesting but impossible to be determined. The very choppers and travellers have stood upon its prostrate trunk and speculated upon its age, as if it were a profound mystery. I stooped and read its years to them (127 at nine and a half feet), but they heard me as the wind that once sighed through its branches. They still surmised that it might be two hundred years old, but they never stooped to read the inscription. Truly they love darkness rather than light. One said it was probably one hundred and fifty, for he had heard somebody say that for fifty years the elm grew, for fifty it stood still, and for fifty it was dying. (Wonder what portion of his career he stood still!) Truly all men are not men of science. They dwell within an integument of prejudice thicker than the bark of the cork-tree, but it is valuable chiefly to stop bottles

with. Tied to their buoyant prejudices, they keep themselves afloat when honest swimmers sink. —

Talking with Miss Mary Emerson this evening, she said, "It was not the fashion to be so original when I was young." She is readier to take my view — look through my eyes for the time — than any young person that I know in the town.

The white maple buds look large, with bursting downy scales as in spring.

I observe that the crust is strongest over meadows, though the snow is deep there and there is no ice nor water beneath, but in pastures and upland generally I break through. Probably there is more moisture to be frozen in the former places, and the snow is more compact.

Jan. 27. I have just sawed a wheel an inch and three quarters thick off the end of (apparently) a stick of red oak in my pile. I count twenty-nine rings, and about the same number of rings, or divisions of some kind, with more or less distinctness, in the bark, which is about a quarter of an inch thick. Is not the whole number of rings contained in the bark of all trees which have a bark externally smooth? This stick has two centres of growth, each a little one side of the middle. I trace one easily to a limb which was cut off close to the tree about three and a half inches above the lower side of the section. The two centres are one inch apart on the lower side, two inches and five eighths on the upper side. There are three complete circles to the main one on the lower side, and ten on the upper side, before they coalesce; hence it was seven years closing up through an inch and three quarters of height. There is a rough ridge, confined to the bark only and about a quarter of an inch high, extending from the crotch diagonally down the tree, apparently to a point over the true centre of growth.

P. M. — Walked on the river from the old stone to Derby's Bridge. It is open a couple of rods under the stone bridge, but not a rod below it, and also for forty rods below the mouth of Loring's Brook, along the west side, probably because this is a mill-stream. The only other open places within the limits mentioned yesterday are in one or two places close under the bank, and concealed by it, where

warm springs issue, the river, after freezing, having shrunk and the ice settled a foot or eighteen inches there, so that you can see water over its edge.

The white maple at Derby's Bridge measures fifteen feet in circumference at ground, including apparently a very large sucker, and ten feet five inches, at four feet above the ground, not including sucker, there free.

The lodging snow of January 13th, just a fortnight ago, still adheres in deep and conspicuous ridges to large exposed trees, too stubborn to be shaken by the wind, showing from which side the storm came.

The fruit stems of the dogwood still hold on, and a little fruit. (Of course, the limbs should be smoother.) The outline much like a peach tree, but it is without the numerous small limbs or twigs.

Saw what I think were bass nuts on the snow on the river, at Derby's railroad bridge, probably from up-stream.

Jan. 28. Snowed all day, about two inches falling. They say it snowed about the same all yesterday in New York. Cleared up at night.

Jan. 29. P. M. — Measured the snow in the same places measured the 16th and 23d, having had, except yesterday, fair weather and no thaw.

			Average of both sides.
West of railroad, average	$11\frac{1}{2}+$	East of railroad, 17	$13\frac{3}{4}-$
On the 23d it was	$11\frac{1}{8}$	14	$12\frac{1}{8}+$
" " 16th " "	$12\frac{1}{4}$	$15\frac{2}{8}$	$13\frac{6}{10}$
Trillium Woods to-day	$14\frac{6}{10}$		
the 23d	$13\frac{1}{4}+$		
16th	17		

As I measured oftener west than east of railroad, the snow is probably about fourteen on a level in open fields now, or *quite* as deep as at any time this winter. Yet it has apparently been settling a

little the last six days. In the woods, apparently, it has also been settling, but it is not so deep there as on the 16th, because it settled rapidly soon after that date. It is deeper east of railroad, evidently because it lies behind it like a wall, though I measure from six to ten or twelve rods off on that side. Since the 13th there has been at no time less than one foot on a level in open fields.

It is interesting to see near the sources, even of small streams or brooks, which now flow through an open country, perhaps shrunken in their volume, the traces of ancient mills, which have devoured the primitive forest, the earthen dams and old sluiceways, and ditches and banks for obtaining a supply of water. These relics of a more primitive period are still frequent in our midst. Such, too, probably, has been the history of the most thickly settled and cleared countries of Europe. The saw-miller is neighbor and successor to the Indian.

It is observable that not only the moose and the wolf disappear before the civilized man, but even many species of insects, such as the black fly and the almost microscopic "no-see-em." How imperfect a notion have we commonly of what was the actual condition of the place where we dwell, three centuries ago!

For the most part the farmers have not been able to get into the woods for the last fortnight or more, on account of the snow, and some who had not got up their wood before are now put to their trumps, for though it may not be more than eighteen inches deep on a level in sprout-lands, the crust cuts the legs of the cattle, and the occasional drifts are impassable. Sometimes, with two yoke of oxen and a horse attached to the sled, the farmer attempts to break his way into his lot, one driving while another walks before with a shovel, treading and making a path for the horse, but they must take off the cattle at last and turn the sled with their hands.

Miss Minott has been obliged to have some of her locusts about the house cut down. She remembers when the whole top of the elm north of the road close to Dr. Heywood's broke off, — when she was a little girl. It must have been there before 1800.

Jan. 30. 8 A. M. — It has just begun to snow, — those little round dry pellets like shot.

George Minott says that he was standing with Bowers (?) and Joe

Barrett near Dr. Heywood's bam in the September gale, and saw an elm, twice as big as that which broke off before his house, break off ten feet from the ground, — splinter all up, — and the bam bent and gave so that he thought it was time to be moving. He saw stones "as big as that [air-tight] stove, blown right out of the wall." So, by bending to the blast, he made his way home. All the *small* buildings on the Walden road across the brook were blown back toward the brook. Minott lost the roof of his shed. The wind was southerly.

As I walked above the old stone bridge on the 27th, I saw where the river had recently been open under the wooded bank on the west side; and recent sawdust and shavings from the pail-factory, and also the ends of saplings and limbs of trees which had been bent down by the ice, were frozen in. In some places some water stood above the ice, and as I stood there, I saw and heard it gurgle up through a crevice and spread over the ice. This was the influence of Loring's Brook, far above.

Stopped snowing before noon, not having amounted to anything.

P. M. — Measured to see what difference there was in the depth of the snow in different adjacent fields as nearly as possible alike and similarly situated. Commenced fifteen or twenty rods east of the railroad and measured across Hubbard's (?), Stow's, and Collier's fields toward a point on the south side of the last, twenty-five rods east of Trillium Woods. These three fields were nearly level, somewhat meadowy, especially the second, and at least twenty-five rods from the nearest disturbing influence, such as the railroad embankment or a wood.

North	AB	BC	[CD]	Average of all three, 14 – .[1]
A Wall and riders	22	20	21	
	19	27	12	
	14	12	13	
Average 14⅝ Hub.'s (?)	13	9	8	
	13	9	14	
B Rail fence	17	8	11	
	13	10	15	
	10	10	14	
Average 12½ Stow's	21	9	10	
	13	8	14	
C Rail fence	13	15	15	
	12	11)137(12½	16	
and ditch	11		15	
	14		16	
Average 14 Collier's	12		10	
	17		14	
D Wall and riders	16)234(14⅝		21	
South			17)239(14	

The walls, no doubt, gave the first and third fields somewhat more snow. Yet I am inclined to think that in this trial the snow is shallower very nearly as the fields are more moist. It is three inches shallower here than nearer the railroad, where I measured yesterday, showing the effect of that bank very clearly, six to fifteen rods off, but the average is the same obtained yesterday for open fields east and west of railroad, and proves the truth of that measuring. The snow in the first field measured two inches more than that in the second!

The andromeda swamp gave 26 1/2 4- (on the 12th it was 23 4/5). It has probably been more than feet, say on the 16th. The *Andromeda calyculata* is now quite covered, and I walk on the crust over an almost uninterrupted plain there; only a few blueberries and

Andromeda paniculata rise above it. Near the last, I break through. It is so light beneath that the crust breaks there in great cakes under my feet, and immediately falls about a foot, making a great hole, so that once pushing my way through — for regularly stepping is out of the question in the weak places — makes a pretty good path.

In Wheeler's squirrel wood, which on the 12th gave 10 inches of

snow now gives 15, which is what I should have judged from the changes in Trillium Wood. They are affected alike.

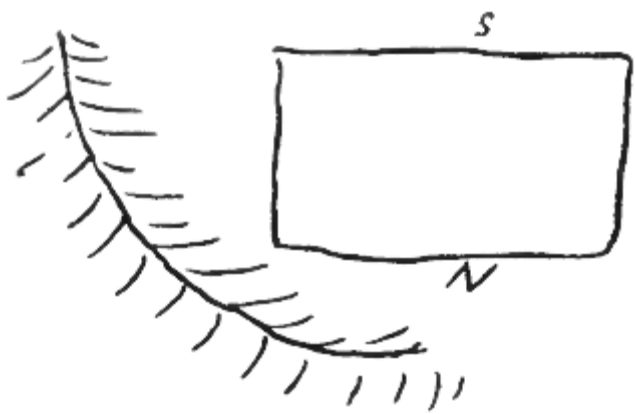
The sprout-land just south of this wood gives as average of fourteen measurements 214/10, which I suspect is too much, it is so sheltered a place.

By the railroad against Walden I heard the lisping of a chickadee, and saw it on a sumach. It repeatedly hopped to a bunch of berries, took one, and, hopping to a more horizontal twig, placed it under one foot and hammered at it with its bill. The snow was strewn with the berries under its foot, but I could see no *shells* of the fruit. Perhaps it clears off the crimson only. Some of the bunches are very large and quite upright there still.

Again, I suspect that on meadows the snow is not so deep and has a firmer crust. In an ordinary storm the depth of the snow will be affected by a wood twenty or more rods distant, or as far as the wood is a fence.

The snow is so light in the swamps under the crust, amid the andromeda, that a cat could almost run there. There are but few tracks of mice, now the snow is so deep. They run underneath.

The drift about Lynch's house is like this: —



There is a strong wind this afternoon from northwest, and the snow of the 28th is driving like steam over the fields, drifting into the roads. On the railroad causeway it lies in perfectly straight and regular ridges a few feet apart, northwest and southeast. It is dry and scaly, like coarse bran. Now that there is so much snow, it slopes up

to the tops of the walls on both sides.

What a difference between life in the city and in the country at present, — between walking in Washington Street, threading your way between countless sledges and travellers, over the discolored snow, and crossing Walden Pond, a spotless field of snow surrounded by woods, whose intensely blue shadows and your own are the only objects. What a solemn silence reigns here!

Jan. 31. P. M. — Up North Branch.

There are a few inches of light snow on top of the little, hard and crusted, that I walked on here last, above the snow ice. The old tracks are blotted out, and new and fresher ones are to be discerned. It is a *tabula rasa.* These fresh falls of snow are like turning over a new leaf of Nature's *Album.* At first you detect no track of beast or bird, and Nature looks more than commonly silent and blank. You doubt if anything has been abroad, though the snow fell three days ago, but ere long the track of a squirrel is seen making to or from the base of a tree, or the hole where he dug for acorns, and the shells he dropped on the snow around that stump.

The wind of yesterday has shaken down countless oak leaves, which have been driven hurry-scurry over this smooth and delicate and unspotted surface, and now there is hardly a square foot which does not show some faint trace of them. They still spot the snow thickly in many places, though few can be traced to their lairs. More hemlock cones also have fallen and rolled down the bank. The fall of these withered leaves after each rude blast, so clean and dry that they do not soil the snow, is a phenomenon quite in harmony with the winter.

Perhaps the tracks of the mice are the most amusing of any, they take such various forms and, though small, are so distinct. Here is where one has come down the bank and hopped meanderingly across the river.

Or An inch and a quarter wide by five, six, or seven apart from centre to centre.

But what track is this, just under the bank?

It must be a bird, which at last struck the snow with its wings and took to flight. There were but four hops in all, and then it ended as

above, though there was nothing near enough for it to hop upon from the snow. The form of the foot was somewhat like that of a squirrel, though only the outline was distinguished. The foot was about two inches long, and it was about two inches from outside of one foot to outside of the other. Sixteen inches from hop to hop, the rest in proportion. Looking narrowly, I saw where one wing struck the bank ten feet ahead, thus: —— as it passed. A quarter of a mile downstream it occurred again, thus: and near by still less of a track, but marks as if it had pecked in the snow. Could it be the track a crow its toes unusually close together? Or was it an owl?

Some creature has been eating elm blossom-buds and dropping them over the snow.

The tracks of the mice suggest extensive hopping in the night and going a-gadding. They commence and terminate in the most insignificant little holes by the side of a twig or tuft, and occasionally they give us the type of their tails very distinctly, even sidewise to the course on a bank-side, thus: —

Saw also the tracks, probably of a muskrat, for a few feet leading from hole to hole just under the bank.

FEBRUARY, 1856

Feb. 1. Our kitten Min, two-thirds grown, was playing with Sophia's broom this morning, as she was sweeping the parlor, when she suddenly went into a fit, dashed round the room, and, the door being opened, rushed up two flights of stairs and leaped from the attic window to the ice and snow by the side of the doorstep, — a descent of a little more than twenty feet, —— passed round the house and was lost. But she made her appearance again about noon, at the window, quite well and sound in every joint, even playful and frisky.

P. M. — Up river. —

What gives to the excrements of the fox that clay-color often, even at this season? Left on an eminence.

I scented a fox's trail this afternoon (and have done so several times before), where he crossed the river, just three rods distant. Looked sharp, and discovered where it had stopped by a prominence. Yet he could not have passed since last night, or twelve hours before, it being near the village. How widely they range these nights! I hear that Daniel Foster of Princeton had eleven turkeys taken from under his bam in one night last fall, probably by a fox. Two were found a week after, buried under some brush in a neighboring wood.

The snow is somewhat banked toward the sides of the river, but shows darker-yellowish or icy in the middle. Lichens, blown from the black willows, lie here and there on the snow. Nut Meadow Brook open for some distance in the meadow. I was affected by the sight of some green polygonum leaves there. Some kind of minnow darted off. I see where a crow has walked along its side. In one place it hopped, and its feet were side by side, as in the track of yesterday, though a little more spread, the toes. I have but little doubt that yesterday's track was a crow's. The two inner toes are near together; the middle, more or less curved often.

I see a gray rabbit amid the young oaks in Hubbard's riverside grove, curled and shrunk up, squatting on the snow. I advance and begin to sketch it, when it plunges into a little hole in the snow by its side, the entrance to its burrow, three inches wide by a little more in length. The track of its foot is about one inch wide.

I see a pitch pine seed, blown thirty rods from J. Hosmer's little grove.

The Sheldon house in Deerfield, pulled down about eight years since, represented in *Gleason's Pictorial* for 1851 and in Barber, is in the style of the Hunt house, except that there is but one window on each side of the door. It and the meeting-house alone of those within the fort survived the assault of 1704, and the door through which a hole was cut and a woman shot is still preserved.

This has been a memorable January for snow and cold. It has been excellent sleighing ever since the 26th of December, — not less than a foot at any time since January 6th on a level in open fields, in swamps much more. Cars have been detained; the wood-lots for the most part inaccessible. The river has been closed up from end to end, with the exception of one or two insignificant openings on a few days. No bare ice. The crows have been remarkably bold, coming to eat the scraps cast out behind the houses. They alight in our yard. I think I have not noticed a tree sparrow during the month. Blue jays and chickadees also common in the village, more than usual. We have completely forgotten the summer. There has been no January thaw, though one prophesied it a fortnight ago because he saw snow-fleas. The ponds are yielding a good crop of ice. The eaves have scarcely run at all. It has been what is called "an old-fashioned winter."

Feb. 2. Snowed again last night, perhaps an inch, erasing the old tracks and giving us a blank page again, restoring the purity of nature. It may be even a trifle deeper now than hitherto.

Feb. 3. Analyzed the crow blackbird's nest from which I took an egg last summer, eight or ten feet up a white maple by river, opposite Island. Large, of an irregular form, appearing as if wedged in between a twig and two large contiguous trunks. From outside to outside it measures from six to eight inches; inside, four; depth, two; height, six. The foundation is a loose mass of coarse strips of grape-vine bark chiefly, some eighteen inches long by five eighths of an inch wide; also slender grass and weed stems, mikania stems, a few cellular river weeds, as rushes, sparganium, pipe-grass, and some

soft, coarse, fibrous roots. The same coarse grape-vine bark and grass and weed stems, together with some harder, wiry stems, form the sides and rim, the bark being passed around the twig. The nest is lined with the finer grass and weed stems, etc. The solid part of the nest is of half-decayed vegetable matter and mud, full of fine fibrous roots and wound internally with grass stems, etc., and some grape bark, being an inch and a half thick at bottom. Pulled apart and lying loose, it makes a great mass of material. This, like similar nests, is now a great haunt for spiders.

P. M. — Up North Branch.

A strong northwest wind (and thermometer 11°), driving the surface snow like steam. About five inches of soft snow now on ice. See many seeds of the hemlock on the snow still, and cones which have freshly rolled down the bank.

Tracked some mice to a black willow by riverside, just above spring, against the open swamp; and about three feet high, in apparently an old woodpecker's hole, was probably the mouse-nest, a double handful, consisting, four ninths, of fine shreds of inner bark, perhaps willow or maple; three ninths, the greenish moss, apparently, of button-bush; two ninths, the gray-slate fur, apparently, of rabbits or mice. Half a dozen hog's bristles might have been brought by some bird to its nest there. These made a very warm and soft nest.

Got some kind of vireo's nest from a maple far up the stream, a dozen feet high, pensile; within, almost wholly rather coarse grape-vine shreds; without, the same and bark, covered with the delicate white spider-nests (?), birch-bark shreds, and brown cocoon silk.

Returning, saw near the Island a shrike glide by, cold and blustering as it was, with a remarkably even and steady sail or gliding motion like a hawk, eight or ten feet above the ground, and alight in a tree, from which at the same instant a small bird, perhaps a creeper or nuthatch, flitted timidly away. The shrike was apparently in pursuit.

We go wading through snows now up the bleak river, in the face of the cutting northwest wind and driving snow-steam, turning now this ear, then that, to the wind, and our gloved hands in our bosoms or pockets. Our tracks are obliterated before we come back. How different this from sailing or paddling up the stream here in July, or

poling amid the rocks! Yet still, in one square rod, where they have got out ice and a thin transparent ice has formed, I can see the pebbly bottom the same as in summer.

It is a cold and windy Sunday. The wind whistles round the northwest corner of the house and penetrates every crevice and consumes the wood in the stoves, — soon blows it all away. An armful goes but little way. Such a day makes a great hole in the wood-pile. [It] whisks round the corner of the house, in at a crevice, and flirts off with all the heat before we have begun to feel it.

Some of the low drifts but a few inches deep, made by the surface snow blowing, over the river especially, are of a fine, pure snow, so densely packed that our feet make hardly any impression on them.

River still tight at Merrick's.

There comes a deep snow in midwinter, covering up the ordinary food of many birds and quadrupeds, but anon a high wind scatters the seeds of pines and hemlocks and birch and alder, etc., far and wide over the surface of the snow for them.

You may now observe plainly the habit of the rabbits to run in paths about the swamps.

Mr. Emerson, who returned last week from lecturing on the Mississippi, having been gone but a month, tells me that he saw boys skating on the Mississippi and on Lake Erie and on the Hudson, and has no doubt they are skating on Lake Superior; and probably at Boston he saw them skating on the Atlantic.

The inside of the gray squirrel, or leaf, nests is of leaves chewed or broken up finely. I see where one, by the snow lodging on it, has helped weigh down a birch.

In Barber's "Historical Collections," page 476, there is a letter by Cotton Mather, dated "Boston, 10th Dec. 1717," describing the great snow of the previous February, from which I quote: —

"On the twentieth of the last February there came on a snow, which being added unto what had covered the ground a few days before, made a thicker mantle for our mother than what was usual: And the storm with it was, for the following day, so violent as to make all communication between the neighbors everywhere to cease. People, for some hours, could not pass from one side of a street unto another.... On the 24th day of the month, comes Pelion upon Ossa:

Another snow came on which almost buried the memory of the former, with a storm so famous that Heaven laid an interdict on the religious assemblies throughout the country, on this Lord's day, the like whereunto had never been seen before. The Indians near an hundred years old affirm that their fathers never told them of anything that equalled it. Vast numbers of cattle were destroyed in this calamity. Whereof some there were, of the stranger [stronger? mine] sort, were found standing dead on their legs, as if they had been alive many weeks after, when the snow melted away. And others had their eyes glazed over with ice at such a rate, that being not far from the sea, their mistake of their way drowned them there. One gentleman, on whose farms were now lost above 1100 sheep, which with other cattle, were interred (shall I say) or innived, in the snow, writes me word that there were two sheep very singularly circumstanced. For no less than eight and twenty days after the storm, the people pulling out the ruins of above an hundred sheep out of a snow bank which lay sixteen foot high, drifted over them, there was two found alive, which had been there all this time, and kept themselves alive by eating the wool of their dead companions. When they were taken out they shed their own fleeces, but soon got into good case again."

"A man had a couple of young hogs, which he gave over for dead, but on the 27th day after their burial, they made their way out of a snow-bank, at the bottom of which they had found a little tansy to feed upon."

"Hens were found alive after seven days; Turkeys were found alive after five and twenty days, buried in the snow, and at a distance from the ground, and altogether destitute of anything to feed them."

''The wild creatures of the woods, the out-goings of the evening, made their descent as well as they could in this time of scarcity for them towards the sea-side. A vast multitude of deer, for the same cause, taking the same course, and the deep snow spoiling them of their only defence, which is to run, they became such a prey to these devourers that it is thought not one in twenty escaped."

"It is incredible how much damage is done to the orchards, for the snow freezing to a crust, as high as the bows of the trees, anon split them to pieces. The cattle, also, walking on the crusted snow a dozen

foot from the ground, so fed upon the trees as very much to damnify them."

"Cottages were totally covered with the snow, and not the very tops of their chimneys to be seen." These "odd accidents," he says, "would afford a story. But there not being any relation to Philosophy in them, I forbear them." He little thought that his simple testimony to such facts as the above would be worth all the philosophy he might dream of.

Feb. 4. P. M. — To Walden.

I go to walk at 3 p. M., thermometer 18°. It has been about this (and 22°) at this hour for a week or two. All the light snow, some five inches above the crust, is adrift these days and driving over the fields like steam, or like the foam-streaks on a flooded meadow, from northwest to southeast. The surface of the fields is rough, like a lake agitated by the wind.

I see that the partridges feed quite extensively on the sumach berries, *e g.* at my old house. They come to them after every snow, making fresh tracks, and have now stripped many bushes quite bare.

At Tanager Glade I see where the rabbits have gnawed the bark of the shrub oaks extensively, and the twigs, down to the size of a goose-quill, cutting them off as smoothly as a knife. They have also gnawed some young white oaks, black cherry, and apple. The shrub oaks look like hedges which have been trimmed or clipped.

I have often wondered how red cedars could have sprung up in some pastures which I knew to be miles distant from the nearest fruit-bearing cedar, but it now occurs to me that these and barberries, etc., may be planted by the crows, and probably other birds.

The oak leaves which have blown over the snow are collected in dense heaps on the still side of the bays at Walden, where I suspect they make warm beds for the rabbits to squat on.

Feb. 5. The weather is still clear, cold, and unrelenting. I have walked much on the river this winter, but, ever since it froze over, it has been on a snow-clad river, or pond. They have been river walks because the snow was shallowest there. Even the meadows, on account of the firmer crust, have been more passable than the

uplands. In the afternoons I have walked off freely up or down the river, without impediment or fear, looking for birds and birds' nests and the tracks of animals; and, as often as it was written over, a new snow came and presented a new blank page. If it were still after it, the tracks were beautifully distinct. If strong winds blew, the dry leaves, losing their holds, traversed and scored it in all directions. The sleighing would have been excellent all the month past if it had not been for the drifting of the surface snow into the track whenever the wind blew, but that crust on the old snow has prevented very deep drifts. I should [say] the average cold was about 8° at 8 A. M. and 18° or 20° at 3 P. M.

Feb. 6. P. M. — To Walden.

The down is just peeping out from some of the aspen buds. Cut a cake of ice out of the middle of Walden, within three rods of where I cut on the 18th of January. The snow was about an inch deep only, so fast has it been converted into snow ice. I was obliged to make a hole about four feet square in order to get out a cake, and with great care to approach the water evenly on all sides, so that I might have the less chopping to do after the water began to rush in, which would wet me through. It was surprising with what violence the water rushed in as soon as a hole was made, under the pressure of that body of ice. On the 18th of January the ice had been about seven inches thick here, about four being snow ice, and about three water ice. It was now 19 inches thick, 11 1/2 — being snow ice and 7 1/2 water ice. Supposing it an inch thick only here when the snow began to fall on it (for it began to fall almost immediately), it had increased since that time 6j+ inches downward and 11 1/2 — upward. Since the 18th of January, when there was ten inches of snow on it, it had increased about downward and about *7 1/2* upward. I was not prepared to find that *any* ice had formed on the under side since the 18th. The water ice was very crystalline. This ice was thicker than the snow has been in open fields any time this winter, yet this winter has been remarkable for the abundance of snow. I also cut through and measured in the Ice Heap Cove. The snow ice was 12 1/4, and the water ice about 6, but perhaps a little was broken off in cutting through the last. In all about 18 1/4 inches. I was not prepared to find

it thickest in the middle. Earlier in the winter, or on the 18th January, it was thickest near the shore.

Goodwin says that he has caught two crows this winter in his traps set *in water* for mink, and baited with fish. The crows, probably put to it for food and looking along the very few open brooks, attracted by this bait, got their feet into the traps. He thinks that [what] I call muskrat-tracks are mink-tracks by the Rock, and that muskrat do not come out at all this weather. I saw a clamshell opened, and they say minks do not open them (?).

Feb. 7. Began to snow at 8 A. M.; turned to rain at noon, and cleared off, or rather ceased raining, at night, with some glaze on the trees. This the first thawing, though slight, since the 25th of December. During the rain the air was thick, the distant woods bluish, and the single trees, etc., on the hill, under the dull, mist-covered sky, remarkably distinct and black.

Feb. 8. 9 A. M. — To Fair Haven Pond.

A clear and a pleasanter and warmer day than we have had for a long time. The snow begins (at noon) to soften somewhat in the road.

For two or three weeks, successive light and dry snows have fallen on the old crust and been drifting about on it, leaving it at last three quarters bare and forming drifts against the fences, etc., or here and there low, slaty, fractured ones in mid-field, or pure white hard-packed ones. These drifts on the crust are commonly quite low and flat. But yesterday's snow turning to rain, which froze as it fell, there is now a glaze on the trees, giving them a hoary look, icicles like rakes' teeth on the rails, and a thin crust over all the snow. At this hour the crust sparkles with a myriad brilliant points or mirrors, one to every six inches, at least. This crust is cracked like ice into irregular figures a foot or two square. *Perhaps* the snow has settled considerably, for the track in the roads is the highest part. Some heard a loud cracking in the ground or ice last night.

I cut through, five or six rods from the east shore of Fair Haven, and find seven inches of snow, nine inches of snow ice and eight of water ice, — seventeen of both. The water rises to within half an inch of the top of the ice. Isaac Garfield has cut a dozen holes on the west

side. The ice there averages nineteen inches in thickness. Half the holes are five or six rods from the shore, and the rest nine or ten, the water from three to seven feet deep. In some places more than half the whole depth is ice. The thinnest ice is 17 inches; the thickest, 20 +. The inner row invariably the thickest. The water rises above the ice in some cases.

Edward and Isaac Garfield were fishing there, and Puffer came along, and afterward Lewis Miner with his gun. He cannot get near the partridges on account of the cracklings of the crust. I saw the last two approaching with my glass.

The fishermen agree in saying that the pickerel have generally been eating, and are full, when they bite. Puffer thinks they eat a good deal, but seldom. Some think it best to cut the holes the day before, because the noise frightens them; and the crackling of the crust to-day was thought to frighten them. E. Garfield says that his Uncle Daniel was once scaling a pickerel, when he pricked his finger against the horn of a pout which the pickerel had swallowed. He himself killed a pickerel with a paddle, in the act of swallowing a large perch. Puffer had taken a striped snake out of one.

They send to Lowell for their bait, and fishermen send thither from far and wide, so that there is not a sufficient supply for them. I. Garfield once caught an eel there with his pickerel bait, through the ice; also speared a trout that weighed three and a half pounds, he says, off Well Meadow.

E. Garfield says that he was just turning into the pond from up-stream when he heard a loud sound and saw and caught those two great mud turtles. He let the boat drift down upon them. One had got the other by the neck, and their shells were thumping together and their tails sticking up. He caught one in each hand suddenly, and succeeded in getting them into the boat only by turning them over, since they resisted with their claws against the side; then stood on them turned over, paddled to nearest shore, pulled his boat up with his heel, and, taking a tail in each hand, walked backward through the meadow in water a foot deep, dragging them; then carried one a few rods, left him and returned for the other, and so on. One weighed forty-three and the other forty-seven pounds, together ninety. Puffer said that he never saw two together so heavy. I. Garfield said that he

had seen one that weighed sixty-three pounds. All referred to the time when (about fifteen years ago; one said the year of the Bunker Hill Monument celebration) some forty were found dead on the meadows between there and Sudbury. It was about the end of March, and Puffer inferred that they had come out thus early from the river, and, the water going down, the ice had settled on them and killed them; but the Garfields thought that the ice, which tore up the meadows very much that year, exposed them and so they froze. I think the last most likely. Puffer searches for them in May under the cranberry vines with a spear, and calls one of the small kinds the "grass tortoise."

E. Garfield says that he saw the other day where a fox had caught in the snow three partridges and eaten two. He himself last winter caught two, on the hillside south of Fair Haven, with his hands. They flew before him and dived into the snow, which was about a foot deep, going twice their length into it. He thrust his hand in and caught them. Puffer said that his companion one night speared a partridge on the alders on the south side the pond.

E. Garfield says there were many quails here last fall, but that they are suffering now. One night as he was spearing on Conant's cranberry meadow, just north, the pond, his dog caught a sheldrake in the water by the shore. Some days ago he saw what he thought a hawk, as white as snow, fly over the pond, but it *may* have been a white owl (which last he never saw). He sometimes sees a hen-hawk in the winter, but never a partridge or other small hawk at this season. Speaks again of that large speckled hawk he killed once, which some called a "Cape eagle." Had a hum-bird's nest behind their house last summer, and was amused to see the bird drive off other birds; would pursue a robin and alight on his back; let none come near. I. Garfield saw one's nest on a horizontal branch of a white pine near the Charles Miles house, about seven feet from ground. E. Garfield spoke of the wren's nest as not uncommon, hung in the grass of the meadows, and how swiftly and easily the bird would run through a winrow of hay.

Puffer saw a couple of foxes cross the pond a few days ago. The wheelwright in the Comer saw four at once, about the same time.

They think that most squirrel-tracks now are of the gray ones; that

they do not lay up anything. Their tracks are much larger than those of the red. Puffer says that five gray squirrels came out of one of their leafy nests in a middle-sized white pine, *after* it was cut down, behind the Harrington house the other day, and, a day or two after, three out of another. He says that they, too, use bark in making their nests, as well [as] leaves, — the inner bark of old chestnut rails, which looks like seaweed.

E. Garfield says the chip squirrels come out this month.

Puffer saw a star-nosed mole yesterday in the road. Its track was dog-like.

Coming home at twelve, the ice is fast melting on the trees, and I see in the drops the colors of all the gems. The snow is soft, and the eaves begin to run as not for many weeks.

Thermometer at 3.30 p. M., 31°.

Puffer once found the nest of what he calls the deer mouse (probably jumping) in pile of wood at what is now R. Rice's place in Sudbury, and the old one carried off nine young clinging to her teats. These men do not chop now; they saw, because the snow is so deep and the crust cuts their legs.

Mr. Prichard tells me that he remembers a six weeks of more *uninterruptedly severe* cold than we have just [had], and that was in'31, ending the middle of January. The eaves on the south side of his house did not once run during that period, but they have run or dripped a trifle on several days during the past six weeks.

Puffer says that he and Daniel (?) Haynes set lines once when there was good skating in all the bays, from the long causeway in Sudbury down to the railroad bridge, but caught only two or three perch.

Feb. 9. How much the northwest wind prevails in the winter! Almost all our storms come from that quarter, and the ridges of snow-drifts run that way. If the Indians placed their heaven in the southwest on account of the warmth of the southwest wind, they might have made a stem winter god of the northwest wind.

P. M. — Up Assabet.

3.30 p. M., thermometer 30°. This and yesterday comparatively warm weather. Half an inch of snow fell this forenoon, but now it has

cleared up. I see a *few* squirrel-tracks, but no mice-tracks, for no night has intervened since the snow. It is only where the river washes a wooded bank that I see mice or even squirrel tracks; elsewhere only where dogs and foxes have traversed it. For example, there are no tracks on the side of the river against Hosmer's and Emerson's land, though many alders, etc., there, but many tracks *commonly* on the opposite wooded side. In the swamp west of Pigeon Rock, I see where the rabbits have bitten off the swamp white oak sprouts, where they have sprung up tender, looking like poplar, from stocks broken by the ice last winter.

I hear a phœbe note from a chickadee.

Saw a pensile nest eighteen feet high, within a lichen-clad red maple on the edge of the Assabet Spring or Pink Azalea Swamp. It looked very much like a bunch of the lichens dangling, and I was not sure it was not till I climbed up to it. Without, it was chiefly the coarse greenish lichens of the maple, bound with coarse bits of bark and perhaps bleached milkweed bark (??) and brown cocoon silk, and within, a thin lining of pine-needles, hemlock twigs, and the like. Was it a yellow-throat vireo's? It was not shaped like the red-eye's, but, sidewise, thus: looking down upon it, thus:! On a side twig to one of the limbs — and about a foot from the end of the twig.

Feb. 10. Speaking about the weather and the fishing with E. and I. Garfield on the 8th, I was amused to hear these two young farmers suddenly disputing as to whether the moon (?), if that be it, was in the Feet or the Head or elsewhere. Though I know far more of astronomy than they, I should not know how at once to find out this nonsense in an almanac. Yet they talk very glibly about it, and go a-fishing accordingly. Again, in the evening of the same day, I overtook Mr. Prichard and observed that it was time for a thaw, but said he, "That does not look like it," pointing to the moon in the west. "You could hang a powder-horn upon that pretty well."

P. M. — To Walden.

Returning, I saw a fox on the railroad, at the crossing below the shanty site, eight or nine rods from me. He looked of a dirty yellow and lean. I did not notice the white tip to his tail. Seeing me, he pricked up his ears and at first ran up and along the east bank on the

crust, then changed his mind and came down the steep bank, crossed the railroad before me, and, gliding up the west bank, disappeared in the woods. He coursed, or glided, along easily, appearing not to lift his feet high, leaping over obstacles, with his tail extended straight behind. He leaped over the ridge of snow about two feet high and three wide between the tracks, very easily and gracefully.

I followed, examining his tracks. There was about a quarter of an inch of recent snow above the crust, but for the most part he broke in two or three inches. I slumped from one to three feet. His tracks when running, as I have described, were like this: — being about two by five inches, as if he slid a little, no marks of toes being seen in that shallow snow; the greatest interval above, one foot. Soon after, thus:

The greatest interval sometimes four feet even. Sometimes the three tracks merged together where the crust broke:

When walking at ease, before he saw me his tracks were more round and nearer together, — about two inches by two and a half, thus: —

Sometimes I thought his tail had scraped the snow. He went off at an easy gliding pace such as he might keep up for a long time, pretty direct after his first turning.

Feb. 11. P. M. — To Fair Haven Pond by river.

Israel Rice says that he does not know that he can remember a winter when we had as much snow as we have had this winter. Eb. Conant says as much, excepting the year when he was twenty-five, about 1803. It is now fairly thawing, the eaves running; and puddles stand in some places. The boys can make snowballs, and the horses begin to slump occasionally.

Saw a partridge by the riverside, opposite Fair Haven Hill, which at first I mistook for the top of a fence-post above the snow, amid some alders. I shouted and waved my hand four rods off, to see if it was one, but there was no motion, and I thought surely it must be a post. Nevertheless I resolved to investigate. Within three rods, I saw it to be indeed a partridge, to my surprise, standing perfectly still, with its head erect and neck stretched upward. It was as complete a deception as if it had designedly placed itself on the Une of the fence and in the proper place for a post. It finally stepped off daintily with a

teetering gait and head up, and took to wing.

I thought it would be a thawing day by the *sound*, the peculiar sound, of cock-crowing in the morning.

It will indicate what steady cold weather we have had to say that the lodging snow of January 13th, though it did not lodge remarkably, has not yet completely melted off the sturdy trunks of large trees.

Feb. 12. Thawed all day yesterday and rained somewhat last night; clearing off this morning. Heard the eaves drop all night. The thermometer at 8.30 a m., 42°. The snow or crust and cold weather began December 26th, and not till February 7th was there any considerable relenting, when it rained a little; *i.e.* forty-three days of uninterrupted cold weather, and no serious thaw till the 11th, or yesterday. How different the sunlight over thawing snow from the same over dry, frozen snow! The former excites me strangely, and I experience a springlike melting in my thoughts. Water now stands above the ice and snow on the river.

I find, on shovelling away the snow, that there is about two inches of solid ice at the bottom, — that thin crusted snow of December 26th. These two inches must be added, then, to my measures of January 12th, 16th, 23d, 29th, and 30th. To-day I find it has settled since the 29th — owing, of course, mainly to the rain of the 7th and especially of last night — about two inches in open land and an inch and a half in Trillium Woods. Thus, west of railroad, 11 1/4+2 = 12 1/4 [sic]; east of railroad, 13+ 2 = 15 1/5; Trillium Woods, 13 + 2 = 15; average, 12+2 = 14. There has been scarcely any loss on the west side of the railroad, but 3f on the east side. It may be owing to the drifting since the 29th.

From January 6th to January 13th, not less than a foot of snow on a level in open land, and from January 13th to February 7th, not less than sixteen inches on a level at any one time in open land, and still there is fourteen on a level. That is, for twenty-five days the snow was sixteen inches deep in open land!!

Feb. 13. Grew cold again last night, with high wind. The wind began about midday. I think a high wind commonly follows rain or a

thaw in winter. The thermometer at 8.30 A. M. is at zero. (At 1 p. M., 8° +.) This fall of *42°* from 8.30 A. M. yesterday to the same time to-day has produced not a thin and smooth, but a very firm and thick, uneven crust, on which I go in any direction across the fields, stepping over the fences; yet there is some slosh at the bottom of the snow, above the icy foundation.

Now, no doubt, many sportsmen are out with their dogs, who have been imprisoned by the depth of the snow. In the woods where there are bushes beneath, you still slump more or less.

The crust is quite green with the needles of pitch pines, sometimes whole plumes which have recently fallen. Are these chiefly last year's needles brought down by the glaze, or those of the previous year which had not fallen before? I suspect they are chiefly the former, but *maybe* some of the latter.

Feb. 14. Still colder this morning, — 7° at 8.30 A. M.

P. M. — To Walden.

I find that a great many pine-needles, both white and pitch, of'54 still hold on, bristling around the twigs, especially if the tree has not grown much the last year. So those that strew the snow now are of both kinds.

I can now walk on the crust in every direction at the Andromeda Swamp; can run and stamp without danger of breaking through, raised quite above the andromeda (which is entirely concealed), more than two feet above the ground. But in the woods, and even in wood-paths, I slump at every other step.

In all the little valleys in the woods and sprout-lands, and on the southeast sides of hills, the oak leaves which have blown over the crust are gathered in dry and warm-looking beds, often five or six feet in diameter, about the base of the shrub oaks. So clean and crisply dry and warm above the cold, white crust, they are singularly inviting to my eye. No doubt they are of service to conceal and warm the rabbit and partridge and other beasts and birds. They fill every little hollow, and betray thus at a distance a man's tracks made a week ago, or a dog's many rods off on a hillside. If the snow were not crusted, they would not be gathered thus in troops.

I walk in the bare maple swamps and detect the minute pensile

nests of some vireo high over my head, in the fork of some unattainable twig, where I never suspected them in summer, — a little basket cradle that rocked so high in the wind. And where is that young family now, while their cradle is filled with ice?

I was struck to-day by the size and continuousness of the natural willow hedge on the east side of the railroad causeway, at the foot of the embankment, next to the fence. Some twelve years ago, when that causeway was built through the meadows, there were no willows there or near there, but now, just at the foot of the sand-bank, where it, meets the meadow, and on the line of the fence, quite a dense willow hedge has planted itself. I used to think that the seeds were brought with the sand from the Deep Cut in the woods, but there is no golden willow there; but now I think that the seeds have been blown hither from a distance, and lodged against the foot of the bank, just as the snow-drift accumulates there, for I see several ash trees among them, which have come from an ash ten rods east in the meadow, though none has sprung up elsewhere. There are also a few alders, elms, birch, poplars, and some elder. For years a willow might not have been persuaded to take root in that meadow; but run a barrier like this through it, and in a few years it is lined with them. They plant themselves here solely, and not in the open meadow, as exclusively as along the shores of a river. The sand-bank is a shore to them, and the meadow a lake. How impatient, how rampant, how precocious these osiers! They have hardly made two shoots from the sand in as many springs, when silvery catkins burst out along them, and anon golden blossoms and downy seeds, spreading their race with incredible rapidity. Thus they multiply and clan together. Thus they take advantage even of the railroad, which elsewhere disturbs and invades their domains. May I ever be in as good spirits as a willow! How tenacious of life! How withy! How soon it gets over its hurts! They never despair. Is there no moisture longer in nature which they can transmute into sap?

They are emblems of youth, joy, and everlasting life. Scarcely is their growth restrained by winter, but their silvery down peeps forth in the warmest days in January (?). The very trees and shrubs and weeds, if we consider their origin, have drifted thus like snow against the fences and hillsides. Their growth is protected and favored there.

Soon the alders will take their places with them. This hedge is, of course, as straight as the railroad or its bounding fence.

Over this crust, alder and birch and pine seeds, etc., which in summer would have soon found a resting-place, are blown far and wide.

Feb. 16. P. M. — To Walden.

It has been trying to snow for two days. About one inch fell last night, but it clears up at noon, and sun comes out very warm and bright. Wild says it is the warmest day at 12 M. since the 22d of December, when the thermometer stood at 50°. To-day it is at 44. I hear the eaves running before I come out, and our thermometer at 2 p. M. is 38°. The sun is most pleasantly warm on my cheek; the melting snow shines in the ruts; the cocks crow more than usual in bams; my greatcoat is an incumbrance.

There is no down visible on the sallows when I descend the east side of the railroad, unless a scale has come off.

Where I measured the ice in the middle of Walden on the 6th I now measure again, or close by it, though without cutting out the cake. I find about 11 1/4 (probably about same as the 6th, when called 11 1/2) of snow ice and 21 1/2 in all, leaving 10 1/4 clear ice, which would make the ice to have increased beneath through all this thickness and in spite of the thaws 2 3/4 — inches. Near the shore in one place it was twenty-two inches.

Feb. 17. Some three or four inches of snow fallen in the night and now blowing. At noon begins to snow again, as well as *blow*. Several more inches fall.

Feb. 18. Yesterday's snow drifting. No cars from above or below till 1 p. M.

Feb. 19. Measure snow again, on account of what fell on 17th. West of railroad, 15+ +2; east of railroad, 12 1/2 - + 2; average of both, 14 + 2 = 16; Trillium Wood, 18 1/2 + 2 = 20 1/2. The great body of the last snow appears to have settled under the east side of the railroad. There are five and one half inches more in the wood

than on the 12th, and I think this is about the average of what fell on the 17th (night and day). Accordingly, the snow has been deeper since the 17th than before this winter. I think if the drifts could be fairly measured it might be found to be seventeen or eighteen inches deep on a level. This snow, you may say, is all drifted, for in the fields east of the railroad there is not so much as there was a week ago, while west there is about four inches more.

Feb. 20. P. M. — Up Assabet.

See a broad and distinct otter-trail, made last night or yesterday. It came out to the river through the low woods north of Pinxter Swamp, making a very conspicuous trail, from seven to nine or ten inches wide and three or four deep, with sometimes singularly upright sides, as if a square timber had been drawn along, but commonly rounded. It made some short turns and zigzags; passed *under* limbs which were only five inches above the snow, not over them; had apparently slid down all banks and declivities, making a uniform broad hollow trail there without any mark of its feet. On reaching the river, it had come along under the bank, from time to time looking into the crevices where it might get under the ice there, sometimes ascending the bank and sliding back.

Commonly seven to nine or ten inches wide, and tracks of feet twenty to twenty-four apart; but sometimes there was no track of the feet for twenty-five feet, frequently for six; in the last case *swelled* in the outline, as above. Having come down as far as opposite the great white [sic] on the hill, it returned on its track and entered a hole under the ice at Assabet Spring, from which it has not issued.

Feb. 22. P. M. — To Assabet stone bridge and home on river.

It is a pleasant and warm afternoon, and the snow is melting. Yet the river is still perfectly closed (as it has been for many weeks), both against Merrick's and in the Assabet, excepting directly under this upper stone bridge and probably at mouth of Loring's Brook. I am surprised that the warm weather within ten days has not caused the river to open at Merrick's, but it was too thick to be melted.

Now first, the snow melting and the ice beginning to soften, I see those slender grayish-winged insects creeping with closed wings

over the snow-clad ice, — Perla (?). On all parts of the river. Have seen none before, this winter *ml* Just below this bridge begins an otter-track, several days old yet very distinct, which I trace half a mile down the river. In the snow less than an inch deep, on the ice, each foot makes a track three inches wide, apparently enlarged in melting, and the whole four appear thus: —

The clear interval, sixteen inches; the length occupied by the four feet, fourteen inches. It looks as if some one had dragged a round timber down the middle of the river a day or two since, which bounced as it went.

There is now a crack running down the middle of the river, and it is slightly elevated there, owing, probably, to the increasing temperature.

Feb. 23. 9 A. M. — To Fair Haven Pond, up river.

A still warmer day. The snow is so solid that it still bears me, though we have had several warm suns on it. It is melting gradually under the sun. In the morning I make but little impression in it. As it melts, it acquires a rough but regularly waved surface. It is inspiriting to feel the increased heat of the sun reflected from the snow. There is a slight mist above the fields, through which the crowing of cocks sounds springlike.

I sit by a maple on a maple [sic]. It wears the same shaggy coat of lichens summer and winter.

At 2 p. M. the thermometer is 47°. Whenever it is near 40 there is a speedy softening of the snow.

I read in the papers that the ocean is frozen, — not to bear or walk on safely, — or has been lately, on the back side of Cape Cod; at the Highland Light, one mile out from the shore. A phenomenon which, it is said, the oldest have not witnessed before.

Feb. 24. Dr. Jarvis tells me that he thinks there was as much snow as this in'35, when he lived in the Parkman house and drove in his sleigh from November 23d to March 30th excepting one day.

Feb. 25. P. M. — To Walden and Fair Haven.

The only bare ground is the railroad track, where the snow was

thin. The crust still bears, and [I] left the railroad at Andromeda Ponds and went through on crust to Fair Haven. Was surprised to see some little minnows only an inch long in an open place in Well Meadow Brook. As I stood there, saw that they had just felled my bee tree, the hemlock. The chopper even then stood at its foot. I went over and saw him cut into the cavity by my direction. He broke a piece out of his axe as big as my nail against a hemlock knot in the meanwhile. There was no comb within. They have just been cutting wood at Bittern Cliff. The sweet syrup is out on the ends of the hickory logs there.

Gathered some facts from Henry Bond's "Genealogies of the Families of Watertown, etc."

My mother's mother was *Mary Jones,* only daughter of "Col. Elisha Jones, Esq., of Weston. A Boston newspaper, of Feb. 15, 1775, says 'On Monday last, died, in this town, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, Elisha Jones Esq., late of Weston, for many years a magistrate, Col of a Regiment of Militia, and member of the General Assembly. In the many departments in which he acted, he eminently showed the man of principle, virtue,' &c. He married, Jan. 24, 1733-4, Mary Allen, and occupied his father's homestead." (Mary Allen was the daughter of Abel Allen, who was the son of Lewis Allen of Watertown Farms, who died 1707-8.)

The children of E. Jones and Mary Allen were (1) Nathan (2d son died in infancy), (3) Elisha, (4) Israel, (5) Daniel, (6) Elias, (7) Josiah, (8) Silas, (9) Mary (b. 1748), (10) Ephraim, (11) Simon (or Simeon), (12) Stephen, (13) Jonas, (14) Phillemore, (15) Charles.

Colonel Elisha Jones was born 1710, the son of *Captain Josiah Jones* (bom, 1670, in Weston) and *Abigail Barnes.* Captain Josiah Jones was the son of *Josiah Jones* of Watertown Farms (bom 1643) and *Lydia Treadway* (daughter of Nathaniel Treadway, who died in Watertown, 1689). Josiah Jones was son of *Lewis Jones* (who appears to have moved from Roxbury to Watertown about 1650, and died 1684) and Anna (perhaps Stone? born in England). This Josiah Jones in 1666 bought "of John Stone and wife Sarah, of Wat[ertown], a farm of 124 acres on the N. side of Sudbury highway, about two miles from Sudbury."

Feb. 26. P. M. — To Hubbard's Close.

I see at bottom of the mill brook, below Emerson's, two dead frogs. The brook has part way yet a snowy bridge over it. Were they left by a mink, or killed by cold and ice? In Hubbard's maple swamp beyond, I see the snow under a dead maple, where a woodpecker has drilled a handsome round hole. Excepting the carrying it downward within, it is ready for a nest. May they not have a view to this use even now?

Feb. 27. *Wednesday.* P. M. — Up Assabet.

Am surprised to see how the ice lasts on the river. It but just begins to be open for a *foot or two* at Merrick's, and you see the motion of the stream. It has overflowed the ice for many rods a few feet in width. It has been tight even there (and of course everywhere else on the main stream, and on North Branch except at Loring's Brook and under stone bridge) since January 25th, and elsewhere on the main stream since January 7th, as it still is. That is, we may say that the river has been frozen solidly for seven weeks. On the 25th I saw a load of wood drawn by four horses up the middle of the river above Fair Haven Pond. On that day, the 25th, they were cutting the last of Baker's wood-lot on the south side of Fair Haven. They cut the greater part of it last winter, and this was the wood they were hauling off.

I see many birch scales, freshly blown over the snow. They are falling all winter. What is that narrow, twisted, yellowish-brown scale which is seen on the snow all winter near woods?

Shaped like this: —

Found, in the snow in E. Hosmer's meadow, a gray rabbit's hind leg, freshly left there, perhaps by a fox.

The papers are talking about the prospect of a war between England and America. Neither side sees how its country can avoid a long and fratricidal war without sacrificing its honor. Both nations are ready to take a desperate step, to forget the interests of civilization and Christianity and their commercial prosperity and fly at each other's throats. When I see an individual thus beside himself, thus desperate, ready to shoot or be shot, like a blackleg who has little to lose, no serene aims to accomplish, I think he is a candidate

for bedlam. What asylum is there for nations to go to? Nations are thus ready to talk of wars and challenge one another, because they are made up to such an extent of poor, low-spirited, despairing men, in whose eyes the chance of shooting somebody else without being shot themselves exceeds their actual good fortune. Who, in fact, will be the first to enlist but the most desperate class, they who have lost all hope? And they may at last infect the rest.

Minott says that partridges will bud on black birches as on apple trees.

Feb. 28. P. M. — To Nut Meadow.

Mother says that the cat lay on her bread one night and caused it to rise finely all around her.

I go on the crust which we have had since the 13th, *i.e.* on the solid frozen snow, which settles very gradually in the sun, across the fields and brooks.

The very beginning of the river's breaking up appears to be the oozing of water through cracks in the thinnest places, and standing in shallow puddles there on the ice, which freeze solid at night. The river and brooks are quite shrunken. The brooks flow far under the hollow ice and snow-crust a foot thick, which here and there has fallen in, showing the shrunken stream far below. The surface of the snow melts into a regular waved form, like raised scales.

Miles is repairing the damage done at his new mill by the dam giving way. He is shovelling out the flume, which was half filled with sand, standing in the water. His sawmill, built of slabs, reminds me of a new country. He has lost a head of water equal to two feet by this accident. Yet he sets his mill agoing to show me how it works. What a smell as of gun-wash when he raised the gate! He calls it the sulphur from the pond. It must be the carburetted hydrogen gas from the bottom of the pond under the ice. It powerfully scents the whole mill. A powerful smelling-bottle. How pleasant are the surroundings of a mill! Here are the logs (pail-stuff), already drawn to the door from a neighboring hill before the mill is in operation. The dammed-up meadow, the meadow [sic], the melted snow, and welling springs are the serf he compels to do his work. He is unruly as yet, has lately broken loose, filled up the flume, and flooded the fields below. He

uses the dam of an old mill which stood here a hundred years ago, which now nobody knows anything about. The mill is built of slabs, of the worm-eaten sap-wood. The old dam had probably been undermined by muskrats. It would have been most prudent to have built a new one. Rude forces, rude men, and rude appliances.

Martial Miles, who is there, says that there are many trout in this brook. He sees them running down just before winter, and at that time Charles Snow once speared a great many, one weighing four pounds. He once came within four feet of an otter at 10 p. M., in the middle of the road, by the guide-board just north of this brook. Spoke of the one shot in a ditch at Donge Hole, as I had heard before; also of the three killed (shot) at Farrar's Swamp. The one who shot them told him that he attempted to kill them with a shovel, but that they would take it out of his hands as often as he attempted it.

Coombs came along with his dog and gun, on his way to shoot partridges, which will come out to bud this evening on certain young apple trees. He has got four or five for several nights in succession, and sees foxes there, running about on the crust. Francis Wheeler says he sold two young fox-skins to a tin peddler to-day for a dollar. Coombs says they got a silver-gray fox in Lincoln this winter, and sold its skin for sixteen dollars! He says that he killed a sheldrake a month or six weeks ago in a small open place beneath the falls at the factory. This shows what hardy birds they are. Last summer he found a black duck's nest on one of the islands in Loring's Pond. He saw the duck hide in the grass, came up, and put his hand on a parcel of feathers and, raising a handful, was surprised to find the eggs under them.

How various are the talents of men! From the brook in which one lover of nature has never during all his lifetime detected anything larger than a minnow, another extracts a trout that weighs three pounds, or an otter four feet long. How much more game he will see who carries a gun, *i.e.* who goes to see it! Though you roam the woods all your days, you never will see by chance what he sees who goes on purpose to see it. One gets his living by shooting woodcocks; most never see one in their lives.

Coombs goes to shoot partridges this evening by a far-off wood-side, and M. Miles goes home to load up, for he is going to Boston

with a load of wood to-night.

Our young maltese cat Min, which has been absent five cold nights, the ground covered deep with crusted snow, — her first absence, — and given up for dead, has at length returned at daylight, awakening the whole house with her mewing and afraid of the strange girl we have got in the meanwhile. She is a mere wrack of skin and bones, with a sharp nose and wiry tail. She is as one returned from the dead. There is as much rejoicing as at the return of the prodigal son, and if we had a fatted calf we should kill it. Various are the conjectures as to her adventures, — whether she has had a fit, been shut up somewhere, or lost, tom in pieces by a certain terrier or frozen to death. In the meanwhile she is fed with the best that the house affords, minced meats and saucers of warmed milk, and, with the aid of unstinted sleep in all laps in succession, is fast picking up her crumbs. She has already found her old place under the stove, and is preparing to make a stew of her brains there.

That strong gun-wash scent from the mill-pond water was very encouraging. I who never partake of the sacrament make the more of it.

How simple the machinery of the mill! Miles has dammed a stream, raised a pond or head of water, and placed an old horizontal mill-wheel in position to receive a jet of water on its buckets, transferred the motion to a horizontal shaft and saw by a few cogwheels and simple gearing, and, throwing a roof of slabs over all, at the outlet of the pond, you have a mill.

Returning on the crust, over Puffer's place, I saw a fine, plump hen hanging from an apple tree and a crow from another, probably poisoned to kill foxes with, — a hen which probably a fox had killed.

Stopped at Martial Miles's to taste his cider. Marvellously sweet and spirited without being bottled; alum and mustard put into the barrels.

A weight of water stored up in a meadow, applied to move a saw, which scratches its way through the trees placed before it. So simple is a sawmill.

A millwright comes and builds a dam across the foot of the meadow, and a mill-pond is created, in which, at length, fishes of various kinds are found; and muskrats and minks and otter frequent

it. The pond is like a weight wound up.

Feb. 29. Minott told me this afternoon of his catching a pickerel in the Mill Brook once, — before the pond was drawn off, when the brook had four or five times as much water as now, — which weighed four pounds. Says they stayed in it all winter in those days. This was near his land up the brook. He once also caught there, when fishing for pickerel, a trout which weighed three and a half pounds. He fell within two feet of the water, but [he] succeeded in tossing him higher up. When cutting peat thereabouts, he saw a stinkpot turtle in the water eating a frog which it had just caught. Speaks of seeing a mink swimming along a little [sic] in his beech wood-lot, and from time to time running along the shore; part way up an alder and down again.

He loves to recall his hunting days and adventures, and I willingly listen to the stories he has told me half a dozen times already. One day he saw about twenty black ducks on Goose Pond, and stole down on them, thinking to get a shot, but it chanced that a stray dog scared them up before he was ready. He stood on the point of the neck of land between the ponds, and watched them as they flew high toward Flint's Pond. As he looked, he saw one separate from the flock when they had got half-way to Flint's Pond, or half a mile, and return straight toward Goose Pond again. He thought he would await him, and give him a shot if he came near enough. As he flew pretty near and rather low, he fired, whereupon the duck rose right up high into the air, and he saw by his motions that he was wounded. Suddenly he dropped, by a slanting fall, into the point of a thick pine wood, and he heard him plainly strike the ground like a stone. He went there and searched for a long time, and was about giving it up, when at length he saw the duck standing, still alive and bleeding, by the side of a stump, and made out to kill him with a stick before he could reach the water.

He said he saw Emerson come home from lecturing the other day with his knitting-bag (lecture-bag) in his hand. He asked him if the lecturing business was as good as it used to be. Emerson said he did n't see but it was as good as ever; guessed the people would want lectures "as long as he or I lived."

Told again of the partridge hawk striking down a partridge which rose before him and flew across the run in the beech woods, — how suddenly he did it, — and he, hearing the fluttering of the partridge, came up and secured it, while the hawk kept out of gunshot.

MARCH, 1856

March 1. 9 A. M. — To Flint's Pond *via* Walden, by railroad and the crust.

I hear the hens cackle as not before for many months. Are they not now beginning to lay?

The catkins of the willow by the causeway and of the aspens appear to have pushed out a little further than a month ago. I see the down of half a dozen on that willow by the causeway; on the aspens pretty generally. As I go through the cut it is still, warm, and more or less sunny, springlike (about 40° +), and the sand and reddish subsoil is bare for about a rod in width on the railroad. I hear several times the fine-drawn *phe-be* note of the chickadee, which I heard only once during the winter. Singular that I should hear this on the first spring day.

I see a pitch pine seed with its wing, far out on Walden.

Going down the hill to Goose Pond, I slump now and then. Those dense, dry beds of leaves are gathered especially about the leafy tops of young oaks, which are bent over and held down by the snow. They lie up particularly light and crisp. The birch stubs stand around Goose Pond, killed by the water a year or two ago, five or six feet high and thickly, as if they were an irregular stake fence a rod out.

Going up the hill again, I slump in up to my middle.

At Flint's I find half a dozen fishing. The pond cracks a very little while I am there, say at half past ten. I think I never saw the ice so thick. It measures just two feet thick in shallow water, twenty rods from shore.

Goodwin says that somewhere where he lived they called cherry-birds "port-royals."

Haynes of Sudbury brought some axe-helves which he had been making to Smith's shop to sell to-day. Those made by hand are considered stronger than those which are turned, because their outline conforms to the grain. They told him they had not sold any of the last yet. "Well," said he, "you may depend on it you will. They've got to come after them yet, for they have n't been able to get into the woods this winter on account of the snow, and they'll have

to do all their chopping this month."

I like to see the farmer whittling his own axe-helve, as I did E. Hosmer a white oak one on the 27th *ult.*

It is remarkable, that though I have not been able to find any open place in the river almost all winter, except under the further stone bridge and at Loring's Brook, — this winter so remarkable for ice and snow, — Coombs should (as he says) have killed two sheldrakes at the falls by the factory, a place which I had forgotten, some four or six weeks ago. Singular that this hardy bird should have found this small opening, which I had forgotten, while the ice everywhere else was from one to two feet thick, and the snow sixteen inches on a level. If there is a crack amid the rocks of some waterfall, this bright diver is sure to know it. Ask the sheldrake whether the rivers are completely sealed up.

March 2. Has snowed three or four inches — very damp snow — in the night; stops about 9 A. M. This will probably help carry off the old snow, so solid and deep.

P. M. — Walking up the river by Prichard's, was surprised to see, on the snow over the river, a great many seeds and scales of birches, though the snow had so recently fallen, there had been but little wind, and it was already spring. There was one seed or scale to a square foot, yet the nearest birches were, about fifteen of them, along the wall thirty rods east. As I advanced toward them, the seeds became thicker and thicker, till they quite discolored the snow half a dozen rods distant, while east of the birches there was not one. The birches appear not to have lost a quarter of their seeds yet. As I went home up the river, I saw some of the seeds forty rods off, and *perhaps*, in a more favorable direction, I might have found them much further. It suggested how unwearied Nature is, spreading her seeds. Even the spring does not find her unprovided with birch, aye, and alder and pine seed. A great proportion of the seed that was carried to a distance lodged in the hollow over the river, and when the river breaks up will be carried far away, to distant shores and meadows.

The opening in the river at Merrick's is now increased to ten feet in width in some places.

I can hardly believe that hen-hawks may be beginning to build their nests now, yet their young were a fortnight old the last of April last year.

March 3. To Cambridge.

March 4. To Carlisle, surveying.

I had two friends. The one offered me friendship on such terms that I could not accept it, without a sense of degradation. He would not meet me on equal terms, but only be to some extent my patron. He would not come to see me, but was hurt if I did not visit him. He would not readily accept a favor, but would gladly confer one. He treated me with ceremony occasionally, though he could be simple and downright sometimes; and from time to time acted a part, treating me as if I were a distinguished stranger; was on stilts, using made words. Our relation was one long tragedy, yet I did not directly speak of it. I do not believe in complaint, nor in explanation. The whole is but too plain, alas, already. We grieve that we do not love each other, that we cannot confide in each other. I could not bring myself to speak, and so recognize an obstacle to our affection.

I had another friend, who, through a slight obtuseness, perchance, did not recognize a fact which the dignity of friendship would by no means allow me to descend so far as to speak of, and yet the inevitable effect of that ignorance was to hold us apart forever.

March 5. Snowed an inch or two in the night.

Went to Carlisle, surveying.

It is very hard turning out, there is so much snow in the road. Your horse springs and flounders in it. The snow in the wood-lot which I measured was about two feet on a level.

March 6. P. M. — Up Assabet.

The snow is softening. Methinks the lichens are a little greener for it. A thaw comes, and then the birches, which were gray on their white ground before, appear prettily clothed in green. I see various kinds of insects out on the snow now. On the rock this side the Leaning Hemlocks, is the track of an otter. He has left some scentless

jelly-like substance an inch and a half in diameter there, yellowish beneath, maybe part of a fish, or clam (?), or himself. The leaves still hanging on some perhaps young swamp white oaks are remarkably fresh, almost ochre-colored brown.

See the snow discolored yellowish under a (probably) gray squirrel's nest high in a pitch pine, and acom-shells about on it. Also a squirrel's track on the snow over Lee's Hill. The outside toe on the fore feet is nearly at right angles with the others. This also distinguishes it from a rabbit's track. It visits each apple tree, digs up frozen apples and sometimes filberts, and when it starts again, aims for an apple tree, though fifteen rods distant.

March 7. P. M. — Measured snow on account of snow which fell 2d and 4th. West of railroad, 16 +; east of railroad, 16; average, say 16 +; Trillium Wood, 21. Probably quite as deep as any time before, this year. There are still two or more inches of ice next the ground in open land.

I may say that there has not been less than sixteen inches of snow on a level in open land since January 13th. My stick entered the earth in some cases in the wood, as it has not done before. There has been some thawing under the snow.

March 9. Thermometer at 2 P. M. 15°, sixteen inches of snow on a level in open fields, hard and dry, ice in Flint's Pond two feet thick, and the aspect of the earth is that of the middle of January in a severe winter. Yet this is about the date that bluebirds arrive commonly. A pail of water froze nearly half an inch thick in my chamber, with fire raked up. The train which should have got down last night did not arrive till this afternoon (Sunday), having stuck in a drift.

March 10. Thermometer at 7 A. M. 6° below zero. Dr. Bartlett's, between 6.30 and 7 A. M., was at — 13°; Smith's at — 13° or — 14°, at 6 A. M.

P. M. — Up river to Hubbard Bridge.

Thermometer +9° at 3.30 p. M. (the same when I return at five). The snow hard and dry, squeaking under the feet; excellent sleighing. A biting northwest wind *compels* to cover the ears. It is one of the

hardest days of the year to bear. Truly a memorable 10th of March. There is no opening yet in the main stream at Prichard's, Hubbard Bath, or the Clamshell, or probably anywhere but at Merrick's, and that a dozen rods long by ten feet; and it is tight and strong under the bridges. A bluebird would look as much out of place now as the 10th of January.

I suspect that in speaking of the springing of plants in previous years I have been inclined to make them start too early generally.

The ice on ponds is as solid as ever. There has been no softening of it. Now is a good time to begin to cut; only its great thickness would hinder you. The blue shadows on snow are as fine as ever. It is hard to believe the records of previous years.

I have not seen a tree sparrow, methinks, since January. Probably the woods have been so generally buried by the snow this winter that they have migrated further south. There has not been one in the yard the past winter, nor a redpoll. I saw perhaps one redpoll in the town; that is all. The pinched crows are feeding in the road to-day in front of the house and alighting on the elms, and blue jays also, as in the middle of the hardest winter, for such is this weather. The blue jays hop about in yards.

The past has been a winter of such unmitigated severity that I have not chanced to notice a snow-flea, which are so common in thawing days.

I go over the fields now in any direction, sinking but an inch or two to the old solid snow of the winter. In the road you are on a level with the fences, and often considerably higher, and sometimes, where it is a level causeway in summer, you climb up and coast down great swells of hard-frozen snow, much higher than the fences. I may say that I have not had to climb a fence this winter, but have stepped over them on the snow.

Think of the art of printing, what miracles it has accomplished! Covered the very waste paper which flutters under our feet like leaves and is almost as cheap, a stuff now commonly put to the most trivial uses, with thought and poetry! The woodchopper reads the wisdom of ages recorded on the paper that holds his dinner, then lights his pipe with it. When we ask for a scrap of paper for the most trivial use, it may have the confessions of Augustine or the sonnets

of Shakespeare, and we not observe it. The student kindles his fire, the editor packs his trunk, the sportsman loads his gun, the traveller wraps his dinner, the Irishman papers his shanty, the schoolboy peppers the plastering, the belle pins up her hair, with the printed thoughts of men. Surely he who can see so large a portion of earth's surface thus darkened with the record of human thought and experience, and feel no desire to learn to read it, is without curiosity. He who cannot read is worse than deaf and blind, is yet but half alive, is still-born.

Still there is little or no chopping, for it will not pay to shovel the snow away from the trees; unless they are quite large, and then you must work standing in it two feet deep. There is an eddy about the large trees beside, which produces a hollow in the snow about them, but it lies close up to the small ones on every side.

10 p. M. — Thermometer at zero.

I read, when last at Cambridge, in the Philadelphia Philosophical Transactions, that, in the cold winter of 1780, many shellfish, frogs, insects, etc., as well as birds and plants, perished.

March 11. Thermometer at 7 A. M. 6°, yet, the fire going out, Sophia's plants are frozen again. Dr. Bartlett's was — 4°.

When it was proposed to me to go abroad, rub off some rust, and *better my condition* in a worldly sense, I fear lest my life will lose some of its homeliness. If these fields and streams and woods, the phenomena of nature here, and the simple occupations of the inhabitants should cease to interest and inspire me, no culture or wealth would atone for the loss. I fear the dissipation that travelling, going into society, even the best, the enjoyment of intellectual luxuries, imply. If Paris is much in your mind, if it is more and more to you, Concord is less and less, and yet it would be a wretched bargain to accept the proudest Paris in exchange for my native village. At best, Paris could only be a school in which to learn to live here, a stepping-stone to Concord, a school in which to fit for this university. I wish so to live ever as to derive my satisfactions and inspirations from the commonest events, every-day phenomena, so that what my senses hourly perceive, my daily walk, the conversation of my neighbors, may inspire me, and I may dream of no heaven but

that which lies about me. A man may acquire a taste for wine or brandy, and so lose his love for water, but should we not pity him?

The sight of a marsh hawk in Concord meadows is worth more to me than the entry of the allies into Paris. In this sense I am not ambitious. I do not wish my native soil to become exhausted and run out through neglect. Only that travelling is good which reveals to me the value of home and enables me to enjoy it better. That man is the richest whose pleasures are the cheapest.

It is strange that men are in such haste to get fame as teachers rather than knowledge as learners.

I hear that Goodwin found one of his traps frozen in this morning, where it has not frozen before this year.

P. M. — 3.30, thermometer 24°.

Cut a hole in the ice in the middle of Walden. It is just 24 3/4 inches thick, 11 1/2+ being snow ice, 12 3/4 water ice; and there is between 3 and 4 inches of crusted snow above this. The water rises to within 2 1/2 inches of the top of the ice, *i.e.* between a ninth and tenth of the whole thickness. The clear ice has therefore gained 2 3/4 inches beneath since the 16th of February. It has gone on freezing under 21 1/2 inches of ice. Yet people very commonly say that it will not continue to freeze under half that thickness of snow and ice. It is a job to cut a hole now. Snow and ice together make a curtain twenty-eight inches thick now drawn over the pond. Such is the prospect of the fishes!

March 12. The last four cold days have closed the river again against Merrick's, and probably the few other small places which *may* have opened in the town, at the mouth of one or two brooks. I hear, from two sources, of portions of brooks, etc., being frozen over within two days, which had not frozen before this winter.

We had a colder day in the winter of'54 and'55 than in the last, yet the ice did not get to be so thick. It is *long-continued*, *steady* cold which produces thick ice. If the present cold should continue uninterrupted a thousand years would not the pond become solid?

Rufus Hosmer says he has known the ground here to be frozen four feet deep.

I never saw such solid mountains of snow in the roads. You travel

along for many rods over excellent dry solid sleighing, where the road is perfectly level, not thinking but you are within a foot of the ground, then suddenly descend four or five feet and find, to your surprise, that you had been traversing the broad back of a drift.

The crow has been a common bird in our street and about our house the past winter.

One large limb of the great elm — at Davis's, sawed off, presented this outline: a perfect harp.

March 13. P. M. — To Flint's Pond.

Much warmer at last. On Flint's Pond I cut a hole and measured the ice twenty-two rods from the shore nearest to Walden, where the water was nine feet deep (measuring from its surface in the hole). The ice was twenty-six inches thick, thirteen and one half of it being snow ice, and the ice rose above the water two inches. This ice is as solid as at any time in the winter. Three inches of snow above. It was so much work to cut this hole with a dull axe that I did not try any other place where it may have been thicker. Perhaps it was thicker in the middle, as in'47.

March 14. *Friday.* Quite warm. Thermometer 46°.

3 P. M. — Up Assabet.

The ice formed the fore part of this week, as that at Merrick's noticed on the 12th, and heard of elsewhere in the Mill Brook, appears to have been chiefly snow ice, though no snow fell. It was apparently blown into the water during those extremely cold nights and assisted its freezing. So that it is a question whether the river would have closed again at Merrick's on the night of the 10th and 11th, notwithstanding the intense cold, if the snow had not been blown into it, — a question, I say, because the snow *was* blown into it.

I think it remarkable that, cold as it was, I should not have supposed from my sensations that it was nearly so cold as the thermometer indicated.

Tapped several white maples with my knife, but find no sap flowing; but, just above Pinxter Swamp, one red maple limb was moistened by sap trickling along the bark. Tapping this, I was

surprised to find it flow freely. Where the sap had dried on the bark, shining and sticky, it tasted quite sweet. Yet Anthony Wright tells me that he attempted to trim some apple trees on the 11th, but was obliged to give up, it was so cold. They were frozen solid. This is the only one of eight or ten white and red maples that flows. I do not see why it should be.

As I return by the old Merrick Bath Place, on the river, — for I still travel everywhere on the middle of the river, — the setting sun falls on the osier row toward the road and attracts my attention. They certainly look brighter now and from this point than I have noticed them before this year, — greenish and yellowish below and reddish above, — and I fancy the sap fast flowing in their pores. Yet I think that on a close inspection I should find no change. Nevertheless, it is, on the whole, perhaps the most springlike sight I have seen.

March 15. Put a spout in the red maple of yesterday, and hung a pail beneath to catch the sap. Mr. Chase (of the Town School), who has lived a hundred miles distant in New Hampshire, speaks of the snow-fleas as a spring phenomenon, — probably because the winter is more uniformly cold there, — and says that they think it time to stop making maple-sugar when they observe them. They get into the sap by myriads and trouble them much.

March 16. 7 A. M. — The sap of that red maple has not begun to flow yet. The few spoonfuls in the pail and in the hole are frozen.

These few rather warmer days have made a little impression on the river. It shows a rough, snowy ice in many places, suggesting that there is a river beneath, the water having probably oozed up or the snow blown and melted off there. A rough, softening snowy ice, with some darker spots where you suspect weakness, though it is still thick enough.

1 — p. M. — The red maple [sap] is now about an inch deep in a quart pail, — nearly all caught since morning. It now flows at the rate of about six drops in a minute. Has probably flowed faster this forenoon. It is perfectly clear, like water. Going home, slipped on the ice, throwing the pail over my head to save myself, and spilt all but a pint. So it was lost on the ice of the river. When the river breaks up,

it will go down the Concord into the Merrimack, and down the Merrimack into the sea, and there get salted as well as diluted, part being boiled into sugar. It suggests, at any rate, what various liquors, beside those containing salt, find their way to the sea, — the sap of how many kinds of trees!

There is, at any rate, such a phenomenon as the willows shining in the spring sun, however it is to be accounted for.

March 17. *Monday.* Snow going off very gradually under the sun alone. Going begins to be bad; horses slump; hard turning out. See where the cattle, which have stepped a few inches one side the sled-track, have slumped two feet or more, leaving great holes.

March 18. P. M. — Up river.

It is still quite tight at Hubbard's Bath Bend and at Clamshell, though I hesitate a little to cross at these places. There are dark spots in the soft, white ice, which will be soon worn through.

What a solid winter we have had! No thaw of any consequence; no bare ground since December 25th; but an unmelting mass of snow and ice, hostile to all greenness. Have not seen a green radical leaf even, as usual, all being covered up.

Nut Meadow Brook is open for a dozen rods from its mouth, and for a rod into the river. Higher up, it is still concealed by a snowy bridge two feet thick. I see the ripples made by some fishes, which were in the small opening at its mouth, making haste to hide themselves in the ice-covered river. This square rod and one or two others like it in the town are the only places where I could see this phenomenon now. Thus early they appear, ready to be the prey of the fish hawk. Within the brook I see quite a school of little minnows, an inch long, amid or over the bare dead stems of polygonums, and one or [two] little water-bugs (apple-seeds). The last also in the broad ditch on the Corner road, in Wheeler's meadow. Notwithstanding the backwardness of the season, all the town still under deep snow and ice, here they are, in the first open and smooth water, governed by the altitude of the sun.

I see many small furrows, freshly made, in the sand at the bottom of the brook, from half an inch to three quarters wide, which I

suspect are made by some small shellfish already moving, perhaps *Paludina!*

March 19. P. M. — To Walden.

Measured the snow again. West of railroad, 15; east of railroad, 11 4/5; average, 13 2/5; Trillium Woods, 16 3/4. The last measurement was on the 7th, when it averaged about sixteen inches in the open land. This depth it must have preserved, owing to the remarkably cold weather, till the 13th at least. So it chances that the snow was constantly sixteen inches deep, at least, on a level in open land, from January 13th to March 13th. It is remarkable how rapidly it has settled on the east of the railroad as compared with the west since the 7th (or I may say rather the 13th). The whole average settling, in open land, since say the 13th, is a little less than three inches.

The thickness of the ice on Walden in the long cove on the south side, about five rods from shore, where the water is nineteen and a half feet deep, is just twenty-six inches, about one foot being snow ice. In the middle it was twenty-four and a quarter on the 11th. It is the same there now, and undoubtedly it was then twenty-six in the long cove. Probably got to be the thickest on this side. Since the warmer weather which began on the 13th, the snow, which was three or four inches deep, is about half melted on the ice, under the influence of the sun alone, and the ice is considerably softened within the last five days, thus *suddenly*, quite through, it being easier to cut and more moist, quite fine and white like snow in the hole, sticking together as damp snow when I shovel it out on my axe, the dust not at all hard, dry, and crystalline. Apparently, then, Walden is as thickly frozen about shore as Flint's.

While I am measuring, though it is quite warm, the air is filled with large, moist snowflakes, of the star form, which are rapidly concealing the very few bare spots on the railroad embankment. It is, indeed, a new snow-storm.

Another old red maple bleeds now, on the warm south edge of Trillium Wood. The first maple was old and in a warm position.

WHAT BEFELL AT MRS. BROOKS'S.

On the morning of the 17th, Mrs. Brooks's Irish girl Joan fell down the cellar stairs, and was found by her mistress lying at the bottom, apparently lifeless. Mrs. Brooks ran to the street-door for aid to get her up, and asked a Miss Farmer, who was passing, to call the blacksmith near by. The latter lady turned instantly, and, making haste across the road on this errand, fell flat in a puddle of melted snow, and came back to Mrs. Brooks's, bruised and dripping and asking for opodeldoc. Mrs. Brooks again ran to the door and called to George Bigelow to complete the unfinished errand. He ran nimbly about it and fell flat in another puddle near the former, but, his joints being limber, got along without opodeldoc and raised the blacksmith. He also notified James Burke, who was passing, and he, rushing in to render aid, fell off one side of the cellar stairs in the dark. They no sooner got the girl up-stairs than she came to and went raving, then had a fit.

Haste makes waste. It never rains but it pours. I have this from those who have heard Mrs. Brooks's story, seen the girl, the stairs, and the puddles.

No sooner is some opening made in the river, a square rod in area, where some brook or rill empties in, than the fishes apparently begin to seek it for light and warmth, and thus early, perchance, may become the prey of the fish hawk. They are seen to ripple the water, darting out as you approach.

I noticed on the 18th that springy spot on the shore just above the railroad bridge, by the ash, which for a month has been bare for two or three feet, now enlarged to eight or ten feet in diameter. And in a few other places on the meadowy shore, *e g.* just above mouth of Nut Meadow, I see great dimples in the deep snow, eight or ten feet over, betraying springs. There the pads (*Nuphar*) and cress already spring, and shells are left by the rat. At the broad ditch on the Corner road, opposite Bear Garden, the snowy crust had slumped or fallen in here and there, and, where the bridge was perfect, I saw it quite two feet thick. In the smooth open water there, small water-bugs were gyrating singly, not enough to play the game.

I am surprised at the sudden change in the Walden ice within five

days. In cutting a hole now, instead of hard, dry, transparent chips of ice, you make a fine white snow, very damp and adhering together, with but few chips in it. The ice has been affected throughout its twenty-six inches, though most, I should say, above. Hard to say exactly where the ice begins, under the two inches of snow.

March 20. It snowed three or four inches of damp snow last afternoon and night, now thickly adhering to the twigs and branches. Probably it will soon melt and help carry off the snow.

P. M. — To Trillium Wood and to Nut Meadow Brook to tap a maple, see paludina, and get elder and sumach spouts, slumping in the deep snow. It is now so softened that I slump at every third step. The sap of red maples in *low and warm* positions now generally flows, but not in high and exposed ones.

Where I saw those furrows in the sand in Nut Meadow Brook the other day, I now explore, and find within a square foot or two half a dozen of *Paludina decisa* with their feet out, within an inch of the surface, so I have scarcely a doubt that they made them. I suppose that they do not furrow the bottom thus under the ice, but as soon as the spring sun has thawed it, they come to the surface, — *perhaps* at night only, — where there is some little sand, and furrow it thus by their motions. Maybe it is the love season. *Perhaps* these make part of the food of the crows which visit this brook and whose tracks I now see on the edge, and have all winter. Probably they also pick up some dead frogs.

Father read in a paper to-day of seven hundred and forty-odd apple tree buds recently taken out of the crop of a partridge.

Last night's snow, which is melting very fast, is evidently helping to rot the ice very fast, in the absence of rain, by settling into it, as did the older snow, indeed. Maybe it will thaw the ground in the same way. Considering how solid and thick the river was a week ago, I am surprised to find how cautious I have grown about crossing it in many places now.

For two or three days I have heard the gobbling of turkeys, the first spring sound, after the chickadees and hens, that I think of. The river has just begun to open at Hubbard's Bend. It has been closed there since January 7th, *i.e.* ten weeks and a half.

Set a pail before coining here to catch red maple sap, at Trillium Wood. I am now looking after elder and sumach for spouts. I find the latter best, for though the former has as large a pith (larger in proportion to its size), its wood commonly being less, it does not fill so large a hole, nor is it so strong. Yet there is some by A. Barrett's ditch more than two inches in diameter, very strong, but its pith small. The pith, etc., of the smooth smells to me like weak tobacco. What other shrubs have a large pith? Got my smooth sumach on the south side of Nawshawtuct. I know of no shrubs hereabout except elders and the sumachs which have a suitable pith and wood for such a purpose. The pith of the smooth sumach is a light brown, like *yellow* snuff. The ring of old wood next to it is a decayed-looking greenish yellow; the sap-wood is white. When cut or broken, it has a singularly particolored and decayed look, there being often but a small proportion of sap-wood. A white sticky juice oozes out of the edge of the bark where cut, and soon turns yellow and hard in drops like pitch or hickory sap. This pith does not come out quite so entire and smooth as elder, being drier now at least. You can shove it past the axils of twigs. The old wood of the ivy is also yellow like this, but there is more and harder sap-wood and the pith is quite small. The pith of the poison sumach or dogwood is considerably smaller, but I think it has the same scent with the smooth. Another poison-dogwood has a very large pith, and I am not sure about the scent. The juice of the bark is not white.

March 21. George Brooks, of the North Quarter, tells me that he went a-fishing at Nagog Pond on the 18th and found the ice from thirty to thirty-seven inches thick (the greater part, or all but about a foot, snow ice), the snow having blown on to the ice there. He measured it with a rule and a hooked stick. (But at Walden, where I measured, there was no drifting of the snow.) It may have been no thicker at Nagog on an average. He says that both the gray squirrel and the red eat pine seed, but not in company. The former have been quite common about his house the past winter, and his neighbor caught two in his yard.

10 A. M. — To my red maple sugar camp. Found that, after a pint and a half had run from a single tube after 3 p. M. yesterday, it had

frozen about half an inch thick, and this morning a quarter of a pint more had run. Between 10.30 and 11.30 A. M. this forenoon, I caught two and three quarters pints more, from six tubes, at the same tree, though it is completely overcast and threatening rain. Four and one half pints in all. This sap is an agreeable drink, like iced water (by chance), with a pleasant but slight sweetish taste. I boiled it down in the afternoon, and it made an ounce and a half of sugar, without any molasses, which appears to be the average amount yielded by the sugar maple in similar situations, *viz* south edge of a wood, a tree partly decayed, two feet [in] diameter.

It is worth the while to know that there is all this sugar in our woods, much of which might be obtained by using the refuse wood lying about, without damage to the proprietors, who use neither the sugar nor the wood.

I left home at ten and got back before twelve with two and three quarters pints of sap, in addition to the one and three quarters I found collected.

I put in saleratus and a little milk while boiling, the former to neutralize the acid, and the latter to collect the impurities in a skum. After boiling it till I burned it a little, and my small quantity would not flow when cool, but was as hard as half-done candy, I put it on again, and in a minute it was softened and turned to sugar.

While collecting sap, the little of yesterday's lodging snow that was left, dropping from the high pines in Trillium Wood and striking the brittle twigs in its descent, makes me think that the squirrels are running there.

I noticed that my fingers were purpled, evidently from the sap on my auger.

Had a dispute with Father about the *use* of my making this sugar when I knew it could be done and might have bought sugar cheaper at Holden's. He said it took me from my studies. I said I made it my study; I felt as if I had been to a university.

It dropped from each tube about as fast as my pulse beat, and, as there were three tubes directed to each vessel, it flowed at the rate of about one hundred and eighty drops in a minute into it. One maple, standing immediately north of a thick white pine, scarcely flowed at all, while a smaller, farther in the wood, ran pretty well. The south

side of a tree bleeds first in spring. I hung my pails on the tubes or a nail. Had two tin pails and a pitcher. Had a three-quarters-inch auger. Made a dozen spouts, five or six inches long, hole as large as a pencil, smoothed with a pencil.

March 22. *Saturday.* P.M. — To white maples and up Assabet.

The ice of the river is very rapidly softening, still concealed by snow, the upper part becoming homogeneous with the melting snow above it. I *sometimes* slump into snow and *ice* six or eight inches, to the harder ice beneath.

I walk up the middle of the Assabet, and most of the way on middle of South Branch.

Many tracks of crows in snow along the edge of the open water against Merrick's at Island. They thus visit the edge of water — this and brooks — before any ground is exposed. Is it for small shellfish? The snow now no longer bears you. It has become very coarse-grained under the sun, and I hear it sink around me as I walk.

Part of the white maples now begin to flow, some perhaps two or three days. Probably in equally warm positions they would have begun to flow as early as those red ones which I have tapped. Their buds, and apparently some of the red ones, are visibly swollen. This probably follows directly on the flowing of the sap. In three instances I cut off a twig, and sap flowed and dropped from the part attached to the tree, but in no case would any sap flow from the part cut off (I mean where I first had cut it), which appears to show that the sap is now *running up.* I also cut a notch in a branch two inches in diameter, and the upper side of the cut remained dry, while sap flowed from the lower side, but in another instance both sides were wet at once and equally. The sap, then, is now generally flowing upward in red and white maples in *warm positions.* See it flowing from maple twigs which were gnawed off by rabbits in the winter.

The down of willow catkins in very warm places has in almost every case peeped out an eighth of an inch, generally over the whole willow.

On water standing above the ice under a white maple, are many of those *Perla* (?) insects, with four wings, drowned, though it is all ice and snow around the country over. Do not see any flying, nor before

this.

The woodchoppers, who re cutting the wood at Assabet Spring, now at last go to their work up the middle of the river, but one got in yesterday, one leg the whole length. It is rotted through in many places behind Prichard's.

At the red maple which I first tapped, I see the sap still running and wetting the whole side of the tree. It has also oozed out from the twigs, especially those that are a little drooping, and run down a foot or two bathing them sometimes all around, both twigs and buds sometimes, or collected in drops on the under sides of the twigs and all evaporated to molasses, which is, for the most part, as black as blacking or ink, having probably caught the dust, etc., even over all this snow. Yet it is as sweet and thick as molasses, and the twigs and buds look as if blacked and polished. Black drops of this thick, sweet syrup spot the under sides of the twigs. No doubt the bees and other insects frequent the maples now. I thought I heard the hum of a bee, but perhaps it was a railroad whistle on the Lowell Railroad. It is as thick as molasses. See a fuzzy gnat on it. It is especially apt to collect about the bases of the twigs, where the stream is delayed. Where the sap is flowing, the red maple being cut, the inner bark turns crimson. I see many snow-fleas on the moist maple chips.

Saw a pigeon woodpecker under the swamp white oak in Merrick's pasture, where there is a small patch of bare ground. Probably Minott saw one in his door-yard in midwinter.

March 23. I spend a considerable portion of my time observing the habits of the wild animals, my brute neighbors. By their various movements and migrations they fetch the year about to me. Very significant are the flight of geese and the migration of suckers, etc., etc. But when I consider that the nobler animals have been exterminated here, — the cougar, panther, lynx, wolverene, wolf, bear, moose, deer, the beaver, the turkey, etc., etc., — I cannot but feel as if I lived in a tamed, and, as it were, emasculated country. Would not the motions of those larger and wilder animals have been more significant still? Is it not a maimed and imperfect nature that I am conversant with? As if I were to study a tribe of Indians that had lost all its warriors. Do not the forest and the meadow now lack

expression, now that I never see nor think of the moose with a lesser forest on his head in the one, nor of the beaver in the other? When I think what were the various sounds and notes, the migrations and works, and changes of fur and plumage which ushered in the spring and marked the other seasons of the year, I am reminded that this my life in nature, this particular round of natural phenomena which I call a year, is lamentably incomplete. I listen to [a] concert in which so many parts are wanting. The whole civilized country is to some extent turned into a city, and I am that citizen whom I pity. Many of those animal migrations and other phenomena by which the Indians marked the season are no longer to be observed. I seek acquaintance with Nature, — to know her moods and manners. Primitive Nature is the most interesting to me. I take infinite pains to know all the phenomena of the spring, for instance, thinking that I have here the entire poem, and then, to my chagrin, I hear that it is but an imperfect copy that I possess and have read, that my ancestors have tom out many of the first leaves and grandest passages, and mutilated it in many places. I should not like to think that some demigod had come before me and picked out some of the best of the stars. I wish to know an entire heaven and an entire earth. All the great trees and beasts, fishes and fowl are gone. The streams, perchance, are somewhat shrunk. — .

I see that a shopkeeper advertises among his perfumes for handkerchiefs “meadow flowers” and “new-mown hay.”

P. M. — To Walden.

The sugar maple sap flows, and for aught I know is as early as the red.

I think I may say that the snow has been *not less than a foot deep on a level* in open land until to-day, since January 6th, about eleven weeks. It probably begins to be less about this date. The bare ground begins to appear where the snow is worn in the street. It has been steadily melting since March l3th, the thermometer rising daily to 40 and 45 at noon, but no rain.

The east side of the Deep Cut is nearly bare, as is the railroad itself, and, on the driest parts of the sandy slope, I go looking for *Cicindela*, — to see it run or fly amid the sere blackberry vines, — some life which the warmth of the dry sand under the spring sun has

called forth; but I see none. I am reassured and reminded that I am the heir of eternal inheritances which are inalienable, when I feel the warmth reflected from this sunny bank, and see the yellow sand and the reddish subsoil, and hear some dried leaves rustle and the trickling of melting snow in some sluiceway. The eternity which I detect in Nature I predicate of myself also. How many springs I have had this same experience! I am encouraged, for I recognize this steady persistency and recovery of Nature as a quality of myself.

The first places which I observe to be bare now, though the snow is generally so deep still, are the steep hillsides facing the south, as the side of the Cut (though it looks not south exactly) and the slope of Heywood's Peak toward the pond, also under some trees in a meadow (there is less snow there on account of eddy, and apparently the tree absorbs heat), or a ridge in the same place. Almost the whole of the steep hillside on the north of Walden is now bare and dry and warm, though fenced in with ice and snow. It has attracted partridges, four of which whir away on my approach. There the early sedge is exposed, and, looking closer, I observe that it has been sheared off close down, when green, far and wide, and the fallen withered tops are little handfuls of hay by their sides, which have been covered by the snow and sometimes look as if they had served as nests for the mice, — for their green droppings are left in them abundantly, — yet not such plain nests as in the grain-field last spring, — probably the *Mus leucopus*, — and the wintergreen and the sere pennyroyal still retain some fragrance.

As I was returning on the railroad, at the crossing beyond the shanty, hearing a rustling, I saw a striped squirrel amid the sedge on the bare east bank, twenty feet distant. After observing me a few moments, as I stood perfectly still between the rails, he ran straight up to within three feet of me, out of curiosity; then, after a moment's pause, and looking up to my face, turned back and finally crossed the railroad. All the red was on his rump and hind quarters. When running he carried his tail erect, as he scratched up the snowy bank.

Now then the steep south hillsides begin to be bare, and the early sedge and sere, but still fragrant, pennyroyal and rustling leaves are exposed, and you see where the mice have sheared off the sedge and also made nests of its top during the winter. There, too, the partridges

resort, and perhaps you hear the bark of a striped squirrel, and see him scratch toward his hole, rustling the leaves. For all the inhabitants of nature are attracted by this bare and dry spot, as well as you.

The muskrat-houses were certainly very few and small last summer, and the river has been remarkably low up to this time, while, the previous fall, they [were] very numerous and large, and in the succeeding winter the river rose remarkably high. So much for the muskrat sign. The bare ground just begins to appear in a few spots in the road in middle of the town.

March 24. Monday. Very pleasant day. Thermometer 48° at noon.

9 A. M. — Start to get two quarts of white maple sap and home at 11.30. One *F. hyemalis* in yard. Spend the forenoon on the river at the white maples. I hear a bluebird's warble and a song sparrow's chirp. So much partly for being out the whole forenoon. Bluebirds seen in all parts of the town to-day for first time, as I hear. The *F. hyemalis* has been seen two or three days. Cross the river behind Monroe's. Go everywhere on the North Branch — it is all solid — and almost everywhere on the South Branch. The crust bears in the morning. The snow is so coarse-grained and hard that you can hardly get up a handful to wash your hands with, except the dirty surface. The early aspen buds down very conspicuous, half an inch long; yet I detect no flow of sap.

The white maple sap does not flow fast generally at first, — or 9 A. M., — not till about ten. Yet last year I paddled my boat to Fair Haven Pond on the 19th of March! Before noon I slump two feet in the snow.

You bore a little hole with your knife, and presently the wounded sap-wood begins to glisten with moisture, and anon a clear crystalline tear-like drop flows out and runs down the bark, or drops at once to the snow. This is the sap of which the far-famed maple-sugar is made. That's the sweet liquor which the Indians boiled a thousand years ago.

Cut a piece of *Rhus Toxicodendron* resting on rock at Egg Rock, five eighths of an inch in diameter, which had nineteen rings of annual growth. It is quite hard and stiff.

My sugar-making was spoiled by putting in much soda instead of saleratus by accident. I suspect it would have made more sugar than the red did. It proved only brittle black candy. This sap flowed just about as fast as that of the red maple.

It is said that a great deal of sap will run from the yellow birch.

The river begins to open generally at the bends for ten or twenty rods, and I see the dark ice alternating with dark water there, while the rest of the river is still covered with snow.

March 25. P. M. — To Walden.

The willow and aspen catkins have pushed out considerably since the 1st of February in warm places.

I have frequently seen the sap of maples flow in warm days in the winter, in warm localities. This was in twigs. Would it in the trunks of large trees? And if not, is not this an evidence that *this* sap did not come up from the roots?

The meadow east of the railroad causeway is bare in many spots, while that on the west is completely and deeply covered; yet a few weeks ago it was deepest on the east. I think of no reason for this, except that the causeway may keep off the cold northwest winds from the former meadow. For thirty rods distant there are no bare spots. Why is the eastern slope, now, as every spring, (almost completely) bare, long before the western? The road runs north and south, and the sun lies on the one side as long as on the other. Is it more favorable that the frozen snow be acted on by the warmed air before the sun reaches it than after it has left it? Another and second reason is probably that there is less snow on that side or on the west slope of a hill than on the eastern. Snow drifting from the northwest lodges under the west bank. So I observe to-day that the hills rising from the north and *west* (and this seems to give weight to the second reason urged above) sides of Walden are partially bare, while those on the south and east are deeply and completely covered with snow. Mr. Bull tells me that his grapes grow faster and ripen sooner on the west than the east side of his house.

There have been few if any small migratory birds the past winter. I have not seen a tree sparrow, nuthatch, creeper, nor more than one redpoll since Christmas. They probably went further south.

I now slump from two to four inches into Walden, though there has been no rain since I can remember. I cannot cut through, on account of the water in the softened ice flowing into the hole. At last, in a drier place, I was not troubled with water, till I had cut about a foot, or through the snow ice, when two or three streams of water half an inch or more in diameter spurted up through holes in the disorganized, partly honeycombed clear ice; so I failed to get through. Probably the clear ice is thus riddled all over the pond, for this was a drier place than usual. Is it the effect of the melted snow and surface working down? or partly of water pressing up? The whole mass in the middle is about twenty-four inches thick, but I scrape away about two inches of the surface with my foot, leaving twenty-two inches. For about a rod from the shore, on the north and west sides (I did not examine the others), it is comparatively firm and dry, then for two rods you slump four inches or more, then, and generally, only about two. Is that belt the effect of reflection from the hills?

Hear the hurried and seemingly frightened notes of a robin and see it flying over the railroad lengthwise, and afterwards its *tut tut* at a distance. This and the birds of yesterday have come, though the ground generally is covered deep with snow. They will not only stay with us through a storm, but come when there are but resting-places for them. It must be hard for them to get their living now.

The tallest water andromedas now rise six or eight inches above the snow in the swamp.

March 26. To Cambridge.

I hear that Humphrey Buttrick found a whole covey of quails dead. At Philadelphia, a month or two since, they offered a reward for live ones, more than market price, to preserve them. We have heard of an unusual quantity of ice in the course of the Liverpool packets this winter. Perhaps the Pacific has been sunk by one, as we hear that some other vessels have been. Yet the papers say it has been warmer about Lake Superior than in Kansas and that the lake will break up earlier than usual.

They are just beginning to use wheels in Concord, but only in the middle of the town, where the snow is at length worn and melted

down to bare ground in the middle of the road, from two to ten feet wide. Sleighs are far the most common, even here. In Cambridge there is no sleighing. For the most part, the *middle* of the road from Porter's to the College is bare and even *dusty* for twenty to thirty feet in width. The College Yard is one half bare. So, if they have had more snow than we, as some say, it has melted much faster.

There is also less in the towns between us and Cambridge than in Concord. The snow lies longer on the low, level plain surrounded by hills in which Concord is situated. I am struck by the more wintry aspect — almost entirely uninterrupted snow-fields — on coming into Concord in the cars.

The Romans introduced husbandry into England, where but little was practiced before, and the English have introduced it into America. So we may well read the Roman authors for a history of this art as practiced by us.

I am sometimes affected by the consideration that a man may spend the whole of his life after boyhood in accomplishing a particular design; as if he were put to a special and petty use, without taking time to look around him and appreciate the phenomenon of his existence. If so many purposes are thus necessarily left unaccomplished, perhaps unthought of, we are reminded of the transient interest we have in *this life*. Our interest in our country, in the spread of liberty, etc., strong and, as it were, innate as it is, cannot be as transient as our present existence here. It cannot be that all those patriots who die in the midst of their career have no further connection with the career of their country.

March 27. Uncle Charles died this morning, about midnight, aged seventy-six.

The frost is now entirely out in some parts of the New Burying-Ground, the sexton tells me, — half-way up the hill which slopes to the south, unless it is bare of snow, he says. In our garden, where it chances to be bare, two or more rods from the house, I was able to dig through the slight frost. In another place near by I could not.

The river is now open in reaches of twenty or thirty rods, where the ice has disappeared by melting.

Elijah Wood, Senior, about seventy, tells me he does not

remember that the river was ever frozen so long, nor that so much snow lay on the ground so long. People do not remember when there was so much old snow on the ground at this date.

March 28. Uncle Charles buried. He was born in February, 1780, the winter of the Great Snow, and he dies in the winter of another great snow, — a life bounded by great snows.

Cold, and the earth stiff again, after fifteen days of steady warm and, for the most part, sunny days (without rain), in which the snow and ice have rapidly melted.

Sam Barrett tells me that a boy caught a crow in his neighborhood the other day in a trap set for mink. Its leg was broken. He brought it home under his arm, and laid it down in a shop, thinking to keep it there alive. It looked up sidewise, as it lay seemingly helpless on the floor, but, the door being open, all at once, to their surprise, it lifted itself on its wings and flitted out and away without the least trouble. Many crows have been caught in mink-traps the past winter, they have been compelled to visit the few openings in brooks, etc., so much for food.

Barrett has suffered all winter for want of water.

I think to say to my friend, There is but one interval between us. You are on one side of it, I on the other. You know as much about it as I, — how wide, how impassable it is. I will endeavor not to blame you. Do not blame me. There is nothing to be said about it. Recognize the truth, and pass over the intervals that are bridged.

Farewell, my friends, my path inclines to this side the mountain, yours to that. For a long time you have appeared further and further off to me. I see that you will at length disappear altogether. For a season my path seems lonely without you. The meadows are like barren ground. The memory of me is steadily passing away from you. My path grows narrower and steeper, and the night is approaching. Yet I have faith that, in the definite future, new suns will rise, and new plains expand before me, and I trust that I shall therein encounter pilgrims who bear that same virtue that I recognized in you, who will be that very virtue that was you. I accept the everlasting and salutary law, which was promulgated as much that spring that I first knew you, as this that I seem to lose you.

My former friends, I visit you as one walks amid the columns of a ruined temple. You belong to an era, a civilization and glory, long past. I recognize still your fair proportions, notwithstanding the convulsions which we have felt, and the weeds and jackals that have sprung up around. I come here to be reminded of the past, to read your inscriptions, the hieroglyphics, the sacred writings. We are no longer the representatives of our former selves.

Love is a thirst that is never slaked. Under the coarsest rind, the sweetest meat. If you would read a friend aright, you must be able to read through something thicker and opaquer than horn. If you can read a friend, all languages will be easy to you. Enemies publish themselves. They declare war. The friend never declares his love.

March 29. Another cold day. Scarcely melts at all. Water skimmed over in chamber, with fire.

March 30. P. M. — To Walden and Fair Haven.

Still cold and blustering. I come out to see the sand and subsoil in the Deep Cut, as I would to see a spring flower, some redness in the cheek of Earth. These cold days have made the ice of Walden dry and pretty hard again at top. It is just twenty-four inches thick in the middle, about eleven inches of snow ice. It has lost but a trifle on the surface. The inside is quite moist, the clear ice very crystalline and leaky, letting the water up from below, so as to hinder my cutting. It seems to be more porous and brittle than the snow ice.

I go to Fair Haven *via* the Andromeda Swamps. The snow is a foot and more in depth there still. There is a little bare ground in and next to the swampy woods at the head of Well Meadow, where the springs and little black rills are flowing. I see already one blade, three or four inches long, of that purple or lake grass, lying flat on some water, between snow-clad banks, — the first leaf with a rich bloom on it. How silent are the footsteps of Spring! There, too, where there is a fraction of the meadow, two rods over, quite bare, under the bank, in this warm recess at the head of the meadow, though the rest of the meadow is covered with snow a foot or more in depth, I am surprised to see the skunk-cabbage, with its great spear-heads open and ready to blossom *(i.e.* shed pollen in a day or two); and the

Caltha palustris bud, which shows yellowish; and the golden saxifrage, green and abundant; also there are many fresh tender leaves of (apparently) the goldthread in open meadow there, all surrounded and hemmed in by snow, which [has] covered the ground since Christmas and stretches as far as you can see on every side; and there are as intense blue shadows on the snow as I ever saw. The spring advances in spite of snow and ice, and cold even. The ground under the snow has long since felt the influence of the spring sun, whose rays fall at a more favorable angle. The tufts or tussocks next the edge of the snow were crowned with dense phalanxes of stiff spears of the stiff triangularish sedge-grass, five inches high but quite yellow with a very slight greenness at the tip, showing that they pushed up through the snow, which melting, they had not yet acquired color. This is the greatest growth of any plant I have seen. I had not suspected *any*. I can just see a little greening on our bare and dry south bank. In warm recesses and clefts in meadows and rocks in the midst of ice and snow, nay, even under the snow, vegetation commences and steadily advances.

I find Fair Haven Pond and the river lifted up a foot or more, the result [of] the long, steady thaw in the sun. The water of the pond and river has run over the meadows, mixing with and partly covering the snow, making it somewhat difficult to get into the river on the east side. On the east side of the pond, the ice next the shore is still frozen to the bottom under water by one edge, while the other slants upward to meet the main body of the ice of the pond. This sort of canal on one or both sides of the river is from a rod to three or four rods wide. This is the most decided step toward breaking up as yet. But the pond and river are very solid yet. I walk over the pond and down on the middle of the river to the bridge, without seeing an opening.

Saw probably a hen-hawk (?) (saw the black tips to wings), sailing low over the low cliff next the river, looking probably for birds. The south hillsides no sooner begin to be bare, and the striped squirrels and birds resort there, than the hawks come from southward to prey on them. I think that even the hen-hawk is here in winter, only as the robin is.

For twenty-five rods the Comer road is impassable to horses,

because of their slumping in the old snow; and a new path has been dug, which a fence shuts off the old. Thus they have served the roads on all sides the town.

March 31. P. M. — To Peter's *via* Winter Street [?].

I see the scarlet tops of white maples nearly a mile off, down the river, the lusty shoots of last year. Those of the red maple do not show thus.

I see many little holes in this old and solid snow where leaves have sunk down gradually and perpendicularly, eleven or twelve inches, — the hole no larger at the top than at the bottom, nay, often partly closed at top by the drifting, and exactly the form and size of the leaf. It is as if the sun had driven this thin shield like a bullet thus deep into the solid snow. It is remarkable how deep the leaves settle into an old snow like this.

See a small ant running about over a piece of meadow turf. The celandine begins to be conspicuous, springing under Brown's fence.

APRIL, 1856

April 1. P. M. — Down railroad, measuring snow, and to Fair Haven Hill.

West of railroad		East of railroad	Average	Trillium Wood
2	3	0	5½ inches	22
0	3	0		11
3	9	0		11
5	7	0		7
4	11	0		8
4	13	10		12
4	13	8		11
5	12	0		11
3	13	0		11
5	14	0		6
5	13	0		9
7	15	0		14
8	16	0		11
14	13	0		10
9	12	0		10
7	17	0		11
3	11	0		8
10	11	0		8
5	15	3		6
5	15	9		3
40)344(8½		6		20)200(10 inches
		0		
		1		
		20		
		24)57(2½		

It appears from the above how rapidly the snow has melted on the east side of the railroad causeway, though eight to twelve rods from it, being sheltered by it from the northwest wind. It is for the most part bare ground there. Adhering to these localities, the average depth in open land is five and one half inches, but the east side of railroad is a peculiarly sheltered place and hence bare, while the earth generally is covered. It is probably about seven inches deep on a level generally in open land. It has melted at about the same rate west of railroad and in Trillium Woods since the 19th. It is a question whether it is better sleighing or wheeling now, taking all our roads

together. At any rate we may say the sleighing lasted till April. In some places it still fills the roads level with the walls, and bears me up still in the middle of the day. It grows more and more solid, apparently freezing at night quite through. William Wheeler (of the Comer road) tells me that it was more solid this morning than any time in the winter, and he was surprised to find that it would bear his oxen where three or four feet deep behind his house. On some roads you walk in a path recently shovelled out, with upright walls of snow three or four feet high on each side and a foot of snow beneath you, for twenty or thirty rods; and this is old snow. We have had none since March 20th, and that was very moist and soon melted. The drifts on the east side of the depot, which have lain there a great part of the winter, still reach up to the top of the first pane of glass. But, generally speaking, we slump so much, especially in the woods, except in the morning, and the snow is so deep, that we are confined to the roads or the river still. Choppers cannot work in the woods yet, and teams cannot get in for wood yet.

A new snow of this depth would soon go off, but this old snow is solid and icy and wastes very slowly. It seems to be gradually turning to ice. I observe that, while the snow has melted unevenly in waves and ridges, there is a transparent icy glaze about one sixteenth of an inch thick but as full of holes as a riddle, spread like gauze level over all, resting on the prominent parts of the snow, leaving hollows beneath from one inch to six or more inches in depth. I often see the spiders running underneath this. This is the surface, which has melted and formed an icy crust, and, being transparent, it has transmitted the heat to the snow beneath and has outlasted that. This crashes and rattles under your feet.

The bare places now are the steep south and west, or southwest, sides of hills and cliffs, and also next to woods and houses on the same sides, the bridges and brows of hills and slighter ridges and prominences in the fields, low open ground protected from the northwest wind, under trees, etc. I might have put the roads second.

Going by the path to the springs! Find great beds of oak leaves, sometimes a foot thick, very dry and crisp and filling the path, or one side of it, in the woods for a quarter of a mile, inviting one to lie down. They have absorbed the heat and settled, like the single one

seen yesterday, in mass a foot or more, making a path to that depth. Yet when they are unusually thick they preserve the snow beneath and are found to cover an almost icy mound.

April 2. 8 A. M. — To Lee's Cliff *via* railroad, Andromeda Ponds, and Well Meadow.

I go early, while the crust is hard. I hear a few song sparrows tinkle on the alders by the railroad. They skulk and flit along below the level of the ground in the ice-filled ditches; and bluebirds warble over the Deep Cut. A foot or more of snow in Andromeda Ponds.

In the warm recess at the head of Well Meadow, which makes up on the northeast side of Fair Haven, I find many evidences of spring. Pushed up through the dead leaves, yet flattened by the snow and ice which has just melted here, behold! the skunk-cabbage has been in bloom, *i.e.* has shed pollen some time and been frost-bitten and decayed. All that now sheds pollen here has been frost-bitten. Others are ready to shed it in a day or two. I find no other flower nearly so forward as this. The cowslip appears to be coming next to it. Its buds are quite yellowish and half an inch, almost, in diameter. The alder scales do not even appear relaxed yet. This year, at least, the cabbage is the first flower; and perhaps it is always earlier than I have thought, if you seek it in a favorable place. The springy soil in which it grows melts the snows early, and if, beside, it is under the south side of a hill in an open oozy alder swamp in a recess sheltered from cold winds like this, it *may commonly* be the first flower.

It will take you half a lifetime to find out where to look for the earliest flower. I have hitherto found my earliest at Clamshell, a much more exposed place. Look for some narrow meadowy bay, running north into a hill and protected by the hill on the north and partly on the east and west. At the head of this meadow, where many springs ooze out from under the hill and saturate all the ground, dissolving the snow early in the spring, in the midst, or on the edge, of a narrow open alder swamp, there look for the earliest skunk-cabbage and cowslip, where some little black rills are seen to meander or heard to tinkle in the middle of the coldest winter. There appear the great spear-heads of the skunk-cabbage, yellow and red or uniform mahogany-color, ample hoods sheltering their purple

spadixes. The plaited buds of the hellebore are four or five inches high. There are beds of fresh green moss in the midst of the shallow water. What is that coarse sedge-like grass, rather broadly triangularish, two inches high in the water? This and the cress have been eaten, probably by the rabbits, whose droppings are abundant. I see where they have gnawed and chipped off the willow osiers. Common grass is quite green.

Here, where I come for the earliest flowers, I might also come for the earliest birds. They seek the same warmth and vegetation. And so probably with quadrupeds, — rabbits, skunks, mice, etc. I hear now, as I stand over the first skunk-cabbage, the notes of the first red-wings, like the squeaking of a sign, over amid the maples yonder. Robins are peeping and flitting about. Am surprised to hear one sing regularly their morning strain, seven or eight rods off, yet so low and smothered with its ventriloquism that you would say it was half a mile off. It seems to be wooing its mate, that sits within a foot of it.

There are many holes in the surface of the bare, springy ground amid the rills, made by the skunks or mice, and now their edges are bristling with featherlike frostwork, as if they were the breathing-holes or nostrils of the earth.

That grass which had grown five inches on the 30th is apparently the cut-grass of the meadows. The withered blades which are drooping about the tufts are two feet long. I break the solid snow-bank with my feet and raise its edge, and find the stiff but tender yellow shoots beneath it. They seem not to have pierced it, but are prostrate beneath it. They have actually grown beneath it, but not directly up into it to any extent; rather flattened out beneath it.

Cross Fair Haven Pond to Lee's Cliff. The crowfoot and saxifrage seem remarkably backward; no growth as yet. But the catnep has grown even six inches, and perfumes the hillside when bruised. The columbine, with its purple leaves, has grown five inches, and one is flower-budded, apparently nearer to flower than anything there. Turritis stricta very forward, four inches high.

It is evident that it depends on the character of the season whether this flower or that is the most forward; whether there is more or less snow or cold or rain, etc. I am tempted to stretch myself on the bare ground above the Cliff, to feel its warmth in my back, and smell the

earth and the dry leaves. I see and hear flies and bees about. A large buff-edged butterfly flutters by along the edge of the Cliff, — *Vanessa antiopa.* Though so little of the earth is bared, this frail creature has been warmed to life again. Here is the broken shell of one of those large white snails *(Helix albolabris*) on the top of the Cliff. It is like a horn with ample mouth wound on itself. I am rejoiced to find anything so pretty. I cannot but think it nobler, as it is rarer, to appreciate some beauty than to feel much sympathy with misfortune. The Powers are kinder to me when they permit me to enjoy this beauty than if they were to express any amount of compassion for me. I could never excuse them that.

A woodchuck has been out under the Cliff, and patted the sand, cleared out the entrance to his burrow.

Muskrat-houses have been very scarce indeed the past winter. If they were not killed off, I cannot but think that their instinct foresaw that the river would not rise. The river has been at summer level through the winter up to April!

I returned down the middle of the river to near the Hubbard Bridge without seeing any opening.

Some of the earliest plants are now not started because covered with snow, as the stellaria and shepherd's-purse. Others, like the *Car ex Pennsylvania*, the crowfoot, saxifrage, callitriche, are either covered or recently uncovered. I think it must be partly owing to the want of rain, and not wholly to the snow, that the first three are so backward.

The white maples and hazels and, for the most part, the alders still stand in snow; yet those alders on the bare place by the skunk-cabbage, above named, appear to be no more forward! Maybe trees, rising so high, are more affected by cold winds than herbaceous plants.

April 3. When I awoke this morning I heard the almost forgotten sound of rain on the roof. I think there has not been any of any consequence since Christmas Day. Looking out, I see the air full of fog, and that the snow has gone off wonderfully during the night. The drifts have settled and the patches of bare ground extended themselves, and the river is fast spreading over the meadows. The

pattering of the rain is a soothing, slumberous sound, which tempts me to lie late, yet there is more fog than rain. Here, then, at last, is the end of the sleighing, which began the 25th of December. Not including that date and to-day it has lasted ninety-nine days. I hear that young Demond of the Factory will have come into town one hundred times in his sleigh the past winter, if he comes to-day, having come probably only once in a day.

P. M. — To Hunt's Bridge.

It is surprising how the earth on bare south banks begins to show some greenness in its russet cheeks in this rain and fog, — a precious emerald-green tinge, almost like a green mildew, the growth of the night, — a *green* blush suffusing her cheek, heralded by twittering birds. This sight is no less interesting than the corresponding bloom and ripe blush of the fall. How encouraging to perceive again that faint tinge of green, spreading amid the russet on earth's cheeks! I revive with Nature; her victory is mine. This is my jewelry. It rains very little, but a dense fog, fifteen or twenty feet high, rests on the earth all day, spiriting away the snow, — behind which the cockerels crow and a few birds sing or twitter. The osiers look bright and fresh in the rain and fog, like the grass. Close at hand they are seen to be beaded with drops from the fog. There seems to be a little life in the bark now, and it strips somewhat more freely than in winter. What a lusty growth have these yellow osiers! Six feet is common the last year, chiefly from the summit of the pollards, — but also from the sides of the trunk, — filling a quadrant densely with their yellow rays. The white maple buds on the south side of some trees have slightly opened, so that I can peep into their cavities and detect the stamens. They will probably come next to the skunk-cabbage this year, if the cowslip does not.. Yet the trees stand in the midst of the old snow.

I see small flocks of robins running on the bared portions of the meadow. Hear the sprayey tinkle of the song sparrow along the hedges. Hear also, squeaking notes of an advancing flock of red-wings, somewhere high in the sky. At length detect them high overhead, advancing northeast in loose array, with a broad extended front, competing with each other, winging — their way to some northern meadow which they remember. The note of some is like the

squeaking of many signs, while others accompany them with a steady dry tchuck, tchuck.

Hosmer is overhauling a vast heap of manure in the rear of his bam, turning the ice within it up to the light; yet he asks despairingly what life is for, and says he does not expect to stay here long. But I have just come from reading Columella, who describes the same kind of spring work, in that to him new spring of the world, with hope, and I suggest to be brave and hopeful with nature. Human life may be transitory and full of trouble, but the perennial mind, whose survey extends from that spring to this, from Columella to Hosmer, is superior to change. I will identify myself with that which did not die with Columella and will not die with Hosmer.

Coming home along the causeway, a robin sings (though faintly) as in May. The road is a path, here and there shovelled through drifts which are considerably higher than a man's head on each side.

People are talking about my Uncle Charles. Minott tells how he heard Tilly Brown once asking him to show him a peculiar (inside?) lock in wrestling. "Now, don't hurt me, don't throw me hard." He struck his antagonist inside his knees with his feet, and so deprived him of his legs. Hosmer remembers his tricks in the barroom, shuffling cards, etc. He could do anything with cards, yet he did not gamble. He would toss up his hat, twirling it over and over, and catch it on his head invariably. Once wanted to live at Hosmer's, but the latter was afraid of him. "Can't we study up something?" he asked. H. asked him into the house and brought out apples and cider, and Charles talked. "You!" said he, "I burst the bully of Lowell" (or Haverhill?). He wanted to wrestle; would not be put off. "Well, we won't wrestle in the house." So they went out to the yard, and a crowd got round. "Come spread some straw here," said C. "I don't want to hurt him." He threw him at once. They tried again. He told them to spread more straw and he "burst" him.

He had a strong head and never got drunk; would drink gin sometimes, but not to excess. Did not use tobacco, except snuff out of another's box sometimes. Was very neat in his person. Was not profane, though vulgar.

Very few men take a wide survey; their knowledge is very limited and particular. I talked with an old man the other day about the snow,

hoping he would give me some information about past winters. I said, “I guess you don’t remember so much old snow on the ground at this season.” He answered, “I never saw the snow so deep between my house and John’s.” It was n’t a stone’s throw.

Uncle Charles used to say that he had n’t a single tooth in his head. The fact was they were all double, and I have heard that he lost about all of them by the time he was twenty-one. Ever since I knew him he could swallow his nose.

The river is now generally and rapidly breaking up. It is surprising what progress has been made since yesterday. It is now generally open about the town. It has gradually worn and melted away at the bends, where it is shallow and swift, and now small pieces are breaking off around the edges and floating down these reaches. It is not generally floated off, but dissolved and melted where it is, for the open reaches gradually extend themselves till they meet, and there is no space or escape for floating ice in any quantity, until the ice is all gone from the channel. I think that what I have seen floating in former years is *commonly* such as had risen up afterward from the bottom of flooded meadows. Sometimes, however, you observe great masses of floating ice, consisting of that which is later to break up, the thicker and more lasting ice from broad bays or between bridges. There is now an open water passage on each side of the broad field of ice in the bay above the railroad. The water, which is rapidly rising, has overflowed the icy snow on the meadows, which is seen a couple of feet beneath it, for there is no true ice there. It is this rising of the water that breaks up the ice more than anything. The Mill Brook has risen much higher comparatively than the river.

April 4. P. M. — To Clamshell, etc.

The alder scales south of the railroad, beyond the bridge, are loosened. This corresponds to the opening (not merely expansion showing the fuzziness) of the white maple buds.

There is still but little rain, but the fog of yesterday still rests on the earth. My neighbor says it is the frost coming out of the ground. This, perhaps, is not the best description of it. It is rather the moisture in this warm air, condensed by contact with the snow and ice and frozen ground. Where the fields are bare I slump now three or four

inches into the oozy surface, also on the bare brows of hills clad with cladonias. These are as full of water as a sponge. The muskrats, no doubt, are now being driven out of the banks. I hear, as I walk along the shore, the dull sound of guns — probably most of them fired at muskrats — borne along the river from different parts of the town; one every two or three minutes.

Already I hear of a small fire in the woods in Emerson's lot, set by the engine, the leaves [sic] that are bare are so dry.

I find many sound cabbages shedding their pollen under Clamshell Hill. They are even more forward *generally* here than at Well Meadow. Probably two or three only, now dead among the alders at the last place, were earlier. This is simply the earliest flower such a season as this, *i.e.* when the ground continues covered with snow till very late in the spring. For this plant occupies ground which is the earliest to be laid bare, those great dimples in the snow about a springy place in the meadow, five or ten feet over, where the sun and light have access to the earth a month before it is generally bare. In such localities, then, they will enjoy the advantage over most other plants, for they will not have to contend with abundance of snow, but only with the cold air, which may be no severer than usual. Cowslips and a few other plants sometimes enjoy the same advantage. Sometimes, *apparently*, the original, now outer, spathe has been frost-bitten and is decayed, and a fresh one is pushing up. I see some of these in full bloom, though the opening to their tents is not more than half an inch wide. They are lapped like tent doors, effectually protected. Methinks most of these hoods open to the south. It is remarkable how completely the spadix is protected from the weather, first by the ample hood, whose walls are distant from it, next by the narrow tent-like doorway, admitting air and light and sun, generally I think on the south side, and also by its pointed top, curved downward protectingly over it. It looks like a monk in his crypt with powdered head. The sides of the doorway are lapped or folded, and one is considerably in advance of the other. It is contrived best to catch the vernal warmth and exclude the winter's cold. Notwithstanding all the snow the skunk-cabbage is earlier than last year, when it was also the earliest flower and blossomed on the 5th of April. It is, perhaps, owing to the long-continued warm weather from March 13th to 28th.

Yet it has been a hard winter for many plants, on dry, exposed hills. I am surprised to see the clover, cinquefoil, etc., etc., on the top of the bank at Clamshell completely withered and straw-colored, probably from the snow resting on it so long and incessantly. And plants that grow on high land are more backward than last year.

The ground no sooner begins to be bare to a considerable extent than I see a marsh hawk, or harrier.

The sap of the white birch at Clamshell begins to flow.

April 5. The April weather still continues. It looks repeatedly as if the sun would shine, and it rains five minutes after. I look out to see how much the river has risen. Last night there were a great many portions or islets visible, now they are engulfed, and it is a smooth expanse of water and icy snow. The water has been steadily deepening on Concord meadows all night, rising with a dimple about every stem and bush.

P. M. — To North River at Tarbell's.

Fair weather again. Saw half a dozen blackbirds, uttering that sign-like note, on the top of Cheney's elm, but noticed no red at this distance. Were they grackles? Hear after some red-wings sing *boby-lee.* Do these ever make the sign-like note? Is not theirs a fine shrill *whistle?*

The ice from the sides of the rivers has wheeled round in great cakes and lodged against each of the railroad bridges, *i.e.* over each stream. Near the town there is the firmest body of ice (in the river proper) above Hubbard's Bridge.

A warm and pleasant afternoon. The river not yet so high by four or five feet as last winter. Hear, on all sunny hillsides where the snow is melted, the chink-clicking notes of the *F. hyemalis* flitting before me. I am sitting on the dried grass on the south hillside behind Tarbell's house, on the way to Brown's. These birds know where there is a warm hillside as well as we. The warble of the bluebird is in the air. From Tarbell's bank we had looked over the bright moving flood of the Assabet with many maples standing in it, the purling and eddying stream, with a hundred rills of snow water trickling into it.

Further toward J. P. Brown's, saw two large ant-hills (red before, black abdomens), quite covered on all the sunny portion with ants,

which appeared to have come forth quite recently and were removing obstructions from their portals. Probably the frost is quite out there. Their black abdomens glistened in the sun. Each was bringing up some rubbish from beneath.

The outlines of one of these hills were a very regular cone; both were graceful curves. Came out upon the high terrace behind Hosmer's, whence we overlooked the bright-blue flood alternating with fields of ice (we being on the same side with the sun). The first sight of the blue water in the spring is exhilarating.

Saw half a dozen white sheldrakes in the meadow, where Nut Meadow Brook was covered with the flood. There were two or three females with them. These ducks would all swim together first a little way to the right, then suddenly turn together and swim to the left, from time to time making the water fly in a white spray, apparently with a wing. Nearly half a mile off I could see their green crests in the sun. They were partly concealed by some floating pieces of ice and snow, which they resembled.

On the hill beyond Clamshell scared up two turtle doves.

It is that walking when we must pick the hardest and highest ground or ice, for we commonly sink several inches in the oozy surface.

April 6. 7 A. M. — To Willow Bay.

The meadow has frozen over, skimmed over in the night. The ducks must have had a cold night of it. I thought [I] heard white-bellied swallows over the house before I arose. The hedges resound with the song of the song sparrow. He sits high on a spray singing, while I stand near, but suddenly, becoming alarmed, drops down and skulks behind the bushes close to the ground, gradually removing far to one side. I am not certain but I have seen the grass-bird as well as song sparrow this year, — on the 2d, — a sparrow with a light breast and less brown about the cheeks and head. The song sparrow I see now has a very brown breast. What a sly, skulking fellow! I have a glimpse of him skulking behind a stone or a bush next to the ground, or perhaps he drops into a ditch just before me, and when I run forward he is not to be seen in it, having flitted down it four or five rods to where it intersected with another, and then up that, all

beneath the level of the surface, till he is in the rear of me. -

Just beyond Wood's Bridge, I hear the pewee. With what confidence after the lapse of many months, I come out to this waterside, some warm and pleasant spring morning, and, listening, hear, from farther or nearer, through the still concave of the air, the note of the first pewee! If there is one within half a mile, it will be here, and I shall be sure to hear its simple notes from those trees, borne over the water. It is remarkable how large a mansion of the air you can explore with your ears in the still morning by the waterside.

I can dig in the garden now, where the snow is gone, and even under six inches of snow and ice I make out to get through the frost with a spade. The frost will all be out about as soon as last year, for the melting of the snow has been taking it out. It is remarkable how rapidly the ground dries, for where the frost is out the water does not stand, but is soaked up.

There has been no skating the last winter, the snow having covered the ice immediately after it formed and not melting, and the river not rising till April, when it was too warm to freeze thick enough.

As we sat yesterday under the warm, dry hillside, amid the F. hyemalis by Tarbell's, I noticed the first bluish haze — a small patch of it — over the true Nut Meadow, seen against the further blue pine forest over the near low yellow one. This was of course the subtle vapor which the warmth of the day raised from Nut Meadow. This, while a large part of the landscape was covered with snow, an affecting announcement of the approach of summer. The one wood seemed but an underwood on the edge of the other, yet all Nut Meadow's varied surface intervened, with its brook and its cranberries, its sweet-gale, alder, and willow, and this was its blue feather!

P. M. — To Hubbard's second grove, by river.

At Ivy Tree, hear the fine tseep of a sparrow, and detect the fox-colored sparrow on the lower twigs of the willows and from time to time scratching the ground beneath. It is quite tame, — a single one with its ashy head and mottled breast.

It is a still and warm, overcast afternoon, and I am come to look

for ducks on the smooth reflecting water which has suddenly surrounded the village, — water half covered with ice or icy snow. On the 2d it was a winter landscape, — a narrow river covered thick with ice for the most pail, and only snow on the meadows. In three or four days the scene is changed to these vernal lakes, and the ground more than half bare. The reflecting water alternating with unreflecting ice.

Apparently song sparrows may have the dark splash on each side of the throat but be more or less brown on the breast and head. Some are quite light, some quite dark. Here is one of the light-breasted on the top of an apple tree, sings unweariedly at regular intervals something like *tchulp | chilt chilt*, *chilt chilt*, (faster and faster) *chilt chilt*, *chilt chilt | fuller tchay ter splay-ee.* The last, or third, bar I am not sure about. It flew too soon for me. I only remember that the last part was sprinkled on the air like drops from a rill, as if its strain were moulded by the spray it sat upon. Now see considerable flocks of robins hopping and running in the meadows; crows next the water-edge, on small isles in the meadow.

As I am going along the Comer road by the meadow mouse brook, hear and see, a quarter of a mile northwest, on those conspicuous white oaks near the river in Hubbard's second grove, the crows buffeting some intruder. The crows had betrayed to me some large bird of the hawk kind which they were buffeting. I suspected it before I looked carefully. I saw several crows on the oaks, and also what looked to my naked eye like a cluster of the palest and most withered oak leaves with a black base about as big as a crow. Looking with my glass, I saw that it was a great bird. The crows sat about a rod off, higher up, while another crow was occasionally diving at him, and all were cawing. The great bird was just starting. It was chiefly a dirty white with great broad wings with black tips and black on other parts, giving it the appearance of dirty white, barred with black. I am not sure whether it was a white-headed eagle or a fish hawk. There appeared much more white than belongs to either, and more black than the fish hawk has. It rose and wheeled, flapping several times, till it got under way; then, with its rear to me, presenting the least surface, it moved off steadily in its orbit over the woods northwest, with the slightest possible undulation of its wings,

— a noble planetary motion, like Saturn with its ring seen edgewise. It is so rare that we see a large body selfsustained in the air. While crows sat still and silent and confessed their lord. Through my glass I saw the outlines of this sphere against the sky, trembling with life and power as it skimmed the topmost twigs of the wood toward some more solitary oak amid the meadows. To my naked eye it showed only so much black as a crow in its talons might. Was it not the white-headed eagle in the state when it is called the sea eagle? Perhaps its neck-feathers were erected.

I went to the oaks. Heard there a nuthatch's faint vibrating *tut-tut*, somewhat even like croaking of frogs, as it made its way up the oak bark and turned head down to peck. Anon it answered its mate with a *gnah gnah.* Smelt a skunk on my return, at Hubbard's blueberry swamp, which some dogs that had been barking there for half an hour had probably worried, for I did not smell it when I went along first. I smelt this all the way thence home, the wind being southwest, and it was quite as perceptible in our yard as at the swamp. The family had already noticed it, and you might have supposed that there was a skunk in the yard, yet it was three quarters of a mile off, at least.

April 7. *Monday.* Launched my boat, through three rods of ice on the riverside, half of which froze last night. The meadow is skimmed over, but by midforenoon it is melted.

P. M. — Up river in boat.

The first boats I have seen are out to-day, after muskrats, etc. Saw one this morning breaking its way far through the meadow, in the ice that had formed in the night. How independent they look who-have come forth for a day's excursion! Melvin is out, and Goodwin, and another boat still. They can just row through the thinnest of the ice. The first boat on the meadows is exciting as the first flower or swallow. It is seen stealing along in the sun under the meadow's edge. One breaks the ice before it with a paddle, while the other pushes or paddles, and it grates and wears against the bows.

We see Goodwin skinning the muskrats he killed this forenoon on bank at Lee's Hill, leaving their red and mutilated carcasses behind. He says he saw a few geese go over the Great Meadows on the 6th.

The half of the meadows next the river, or more, is covered with snow ice at the bottom, which from time to time rises up and floats off. These and more solid cakes from over the river clog the stream where it is least broken up, bridging it quite over. Great cakes rest against every bridge. We were but just able to get under the stone arches by lying flat and pressing our boat down, after breaking up a large cake of ice which had lodged against the upper side. Before we get to Clamshell, see Melvin ahead scare up two black ducks, which make a wide circuit to avoid both him and us. Sheldrakes pass also, with their heavy bodies. See the red and black bodies of more muskrats left on the bank at Clamshell, which the crows have already attacked. Their hind legs are *half-webbed*, the fore legs not at all. Their paunches are full apparently of chewed roots, yellowish and bluish. Goodwin says they are fatter than usual, perhaps because they have not been driven out of their holes heretofore. The open channel is now either over the river or on the upper side of the meadows next the woods and hills. Melvin floats slowly and quietly along the willows, watching for rats resting there, his white hound sitting still and grave in the prow, and every little while we hear his gun announcing the death of a rat or two. The dog looks on understanding and makes no motion.

At the Hubbard Bridge, we hear the incessant note of the phoebe, — *pevet, pe-e-vet, pevee*', — its innocent, somewhat impatient call. Surprised to find the river not broken up just above this bridge and as far as we can see, probably through Fair Haven Pond. Probably in some places you can cross the river still on the ice.

Yet we make our way with some difficulty, through a very narrow channel over the meadow and drawing our boat over the ice on the river, as far as foot of Fair Haven. See clams, fresh-opened, and roots and leaf-buds left by rats on the edge of the ice, and see the rats there. By rocking our boat and using our paddles, we can make our way through the softened ice, six inches or more in thickness.

The tops of young white birches now have a red-pink color. Leave boat there.

See a yellow-spotted tortoise in a ditch; and a bay-wing sparrow. It has no dark splash on throat and has a light or gray head.

April 8. 1 p. M. — To boat at Cardinal Shore, and thence to Well Meadow and back to port.

Another very pleasant and warm day. The white-bellied swallows have paid us twittering visits the last three mornings. You must rush out quickly to see them, for they are at once gone again. Warm enough to do without greatcoat to-day and yesterday, though I carry it and put it on when I leave the boat.

Hear the crack of Goodwin's piece close by, just as I reach my boat. He has killed another rat. Asks if I am bound up-stream. "Yes, to Well Meadow." Says I can't get above the hay-path a quarter of a mile above on account of ice; if he could, he'd 'a' been at Well Meadow before now. But I think I will try, and he thinks if I succeed he will try it. By standing on oars, which sink several inches, and hauling over one cake of ice, I manage to break my way into an open canal above, where I soon see three rats swimming. Goodwin says that he got twenty-four minks last winter, more than ever before in one season; trapped most, shot only two or three. From opposite Bittern Cliff, I pushed along, with more or less difficulty, to Well Meadow Brook. There was a water passage ten feet wide, where the river had risen beyond the edge of the ice, but not more than four or five feet was clear of the bushes and trees. By the side of Fair Haven Pond it was particularly narrow. I shoved the ice on the one hand and the bushes and trees on the other all the way. Nor was the passage much wider below, as far back as where I had taken my boat. For all this distance, the river *for the most part*, as well as all the pond, was an unbroken field of ice. I went winding my way and scraping between the maples. Half a dozen rods off on the ice, you would not have supposed that there was room for a boat there. In some places you could have got on to the ice from the shore without much difficulty. But all of Well Meadow was free of ice, and I paddled up to within a rod or two of where I found the cowslips so forward on the 2d. It is difficult pushing a boat over the meadows now, for even where the bottom is not covered with slippery snow ice which affords no hold to the paddle, the meadow is frozen and icy hard, for it thaws slowly under water. *This* meadow is completely open, because none of the snow ice has risen up. Sometimes you see a small piece that has been released come up suddenly, with such force as to lift it

partly out of water, but, sinking again at once, it looks like a sheldrake which has dived at a distance.

There, in that slow, muddy brook near the head of Well Meadow, within a few rods of its source, where it winds amid the alders, which shelter the plants somewhat, while they are open enough now to admit the sun, I find two cowslips in full bloom, shedding pollen; and they may have opened two or three days ago; for I saw many conspicuous buds here on the 2d which now I do not see. Have they not been eaten off? Do we not often lose the earliest flowers thus? A little more, or if the river had risen as high as frequently, they would have been submerged. What an arctic voyage was this in which I find cowslips, the pond and river still frozen over for the most part as far down as Cardinal Shore!

Saw two marsh hawks this afternoon, circling low over the meadows along the water's edge. This shows that frogs must be out. Goodwin and Puffer both fired at one from William Wheeler's shore. They say they made him duck and disturbed his feathers some. The muskrats are now very fat. They are reddish-brown beneath and dark-brown above. I see not a duck in all this voyage. Perhaps they are moving forward this bright and warm day.

Was obliged to come down as far as Nut Meadow (being on the west side), before I could clear the ice, and, setting my sail, tack across the meadow for home, the wind northwesterly. The river is still higher than yesterday.

About 8.0 p. M., hear geese passing quite low over the river.

Found beneath the surface, on the sphagnum, near the cowslips, a collection of little hard nuts with wrinkled shells, a little like nutmegs, perhaps bass nuts, collected after a freshet by mice! I noticed that the fibres of the alder roots in the same place were thickly [sic] with little yellow knubby fruit. Was not that clear light-brown snail in that sphagnum a different species from the common one in brooks? See a few cranberries and smell muskrats.

On the Fair Haven Cliff, crowfoot and saxifrage are very backward. That dense-growing moss on the rocks shows now a level surface of pretty crimson cups.

Noticed, returning, this afternoon, a muskrat sitting on the ice near a small hole in Willow Bay, so motionless and withal round and

featureless, of so uniform a color, that half a dozen rods off I should not have detected him if not accustomed to observing them. Saw the same thing yesterday. It reminds me of the truth of the Indian's name for it,— "that sits in a round form on the ice." You would think it was a particularly round clod of meadow rising above the ice. But while you look, it concludes its meditations or perchance its meal, and deliberately takes itself off through a hole at its feet, and you see no more of it. I noticed five muskrats this afternoon without looking for them very carefully. Four were swimming in the usual manner, showing the vertical tail, and plunging with a half-somerset suddenly before my boat. While you are looking, these brown clods slide off the edge of the ice, and it is left bare. You would think that so large an animal, sitting right out upon the ice, would be sure to be seen or detected, but not so. A citizen might paddle within two rods and not suspect them. Most countrymen might paddle five miles along the river now and not see one muskrat, while a sportsman a quarter of a mile before or behind would be shooting one or more every five minutes. The other, left to himself, might not be able to guess what he was firing at.

The marsh hawks flew in their usual irregular low tacking, wheeling, and circling flight, leisurely flapping and beating, now rising, now falling, in conformity with the contour of the ground. The last I think I have seen on the same beat in former years. He and his race must be well acquainted with the Musketicook and its meadows. No sooner is the snow off than he is back to his old haunts, scouring that part of the meadows that is bare, while the rest is melting. If he returns from so far to these meadows, shall the sons of Concord be leaving them at this season for slight cause?

River had risen so since yesterday I could not get under the bridge, but was obliged to find a round stick and roll my boat over the road.

April 9. *Wednesday.* Another fine day.

—— A. M. — To Trillium Woods.

Air full of birds. The line I have measured west of railroad is now just bare of snow, though a broad and deep bank of it lies between that line and the railroad. East of railroad has been bare some time.

The line in Trillium Woods is apparently just bare also. There is just about as much snow in these woods now as in the meadows and fields around generally; *i.e.,* it is confined to the coldest sides, as in them. There is not so much as on the east side of Lee's Hill. It is toward the north and east sides of the wood. Hence, apparently, in a level wood of this character the snow lies no longer than in adjacent fields divided by fences, etc., or even without them.

The air is full of birds, and as I go down the causeway, I distinguish the seringo note. You have only to come forth each morning to be surely advertised of each newcomer into these broad meadows. Many a larger animal might be concealed, but a cunning ear detects the arrival of each new species of bird. These birds give evidence that they prefer the fields of New England to all other climes, deserting for them the warm and fertile south. Here is their paradise. It is here they express the most happiness by song and action. Though these spring mornings may often be frosty and rude, they are exactly tempered to their constitutions, and call forth the sweetest strains.

The yellow birch sap has flowed abundantly, probably before the white birch.

8 A. M. — By boat to V. palmata Swamp for white birch sap.

Leave behind greatcoat. The waters have stolen higher still in the night around the village, bathing higher its fences and its dry withered grass stems with a dimple. See that broad, smooth vernal lake, like a painted lake. Not a breath disturbs it. The sun and warmth and smooth water and birds make it a carnival of Nature's. I am surprised when I perceive men going about their ordinary occupations. I presume that before ten o'clock at least all the villagers will have come down to the bank and looked over this bright and placid flood, — the child and the man, the housekeeper and the invalid, — even as the village beholds itself reflected in it. How much would be subtracted from the day if the water was taken away! This liquid transparency, of melted snows partially warmed, spread over the russet surface of the earth! It is certainly important that there be some priests, some worshippers of Nature. I do not imagine anything going on to-day away from and out of sight of the waterside.

Early aspen catkins have curved downward an inch, and began to shed pollen apparently yesterday. White maples also, the sunny sides of clusters and sunny sides of trees in favorable localities, shed pollen to-day.

I hear the note of a lark amid the other birds on the meadow. For two or three days, have heard delivered often and with greater emphasis the loud, clear, sweet *phebe* note of the chickadee, elicited by the warmth. Cut across Hosmer's meadow from Island to Black Oak Creek, where the river, still rising, is breaking over with a rush and a rippling. Paddled quite to the head of Pinxter Swamp, where were two black ducks amid the maples, which went off with a hoarse quacking, leaving a feather on the smooth dark water amid the fallen tree-tops and over the bottom of red leaves.

Set two sumach spouts in a large white birch in the southward swamp, and hung a tin pail to them, and set off to find a yellow birch. Wandering over that high huckleberry pasture, I hear the sweet jingle of the Fringilla juncorum.

In a leafy pool in the low wood toward the river, hear a rustling, and see yellow-spot tortoises dropping off an islet, into the dark, stagnant water, and four or five more lying motionless on the dry leaves of the shore and of islets about. Their spots are not very conspicuous out of water, and in most danger. The warmth of the day has penetrated into these low, swampy woods on the northwest of the hill and awakened the tortoises from their winter sleep. These are the only kind of tortoise I have seen this year. Probably because the river did not rise earlier, and the brooks, and thaw them out. When I looked about, I saw the shining black backs of four or five still left, and when I threw snowballs at them, they would not move. Yet from time to time I walk four or five rods over deep snow-banks, slumping in on the north and east sides of hills and woods. Apparently they love to feel the sun on their shells.

As I walk in the woods where the dry leaves are just laid bare, I see the bright-red berries of the Solomon's-seal still here and there above the leaves, affording food, no doubt, for some creatures.

Not finding the birches, I returned to the first swamp and tapped two more white birches. They flow generally faster than the red or white maples when I tried them. I sit on a rock in the warm, sunny

swamp, where the ground is bare, and wait for my vessels to be filled. It is perfectly warm and perhaps drier than ever here. The great butterflies, black with buff-edged wings, are fluttering about, and flies are buzzing over this rock. The spathes of the skunk-cabbage stand thickly amid the dead leaves, the only obvious sign of vegetable life. A few rods off I hear some sparrows busily scratching the floor of the swamp, uttering a faint *tseep tseep* and from time to time a sweet strain. It is probably the fox-colored sparrow. These always feed thus, I think, in woody swamps, a flock of them rapidly advancing, flying before one another, through the swamp. A robin peeping at a distance is mistaken for a hyla. A gun fired at a muskrat on the other side of the island towards the village sounds like planks thrown down from a scaffold, borne over the water. Meanwhile I hear the sap dropping into my pail. The birch sap flows thus copiously before there is any other sign of life in the tree, the buds not visibly swollen. Yet the aspen, though in bloom, shows no sap when I cut it, nor does the alder. Will their sap flow later? Probably this birch sap, like the maple, flows little if any at night. It is remarkable that this dead-looking trunk should observe such seasons, — that a stock should distinguish between day and night.

When I return to my boat, I see the snow-fleas like powder, in patches on the surface of the smooth water, amid the twigs and leaves. I had paddled far into the swamp amid the willows and maples. The flood has reached and upset, and is floating off the chopper's corded wood. Little did he think of this thief. It is quite hazy to-day. The red-wing's o'*gurgle-ee-e* is in singular harmony with the sound and impression of the lapsing stream or the smooth, swelling flood beneath his perch. He gives expression to the flood. The water reaches far in amid the trees on which he sits, and they seem like a water-organ played on by the flood. The sound rises up through their pipes. There was no wind, and the water was perfectly smooth, — a Sabbath stillness till 11 A. M. We have had scarcely any wind for a month.

Now look out for fires in the woods, for the leaves are never so dry and ready to burn as now. The snow is no sooner gone, — nay, it may still cover the north and west sides of hills, — when a day or two's sun and wind will prepare the leaves to catch at the least spark.

Indeed these are such leaves as have never yet been wet, as have blown about and collected in heaps on the snow, and they would burn there in midwinter, though the fire could not spread much.

If the ground were *covered* with snow, would any degree of warmth produce a *blue* haze like this?

But such a fire can only run up the south and southwest sides of hills at this season. It will stop at the summit and not advance forward far, nor descend at all toward the north and east.

P. M. — Up railroad. A very warm day.

The *Alnus incana*, especially by the railroad opposite the oaks, sheds pollen. At the first-named alder saw a striped snake, which probably I had scared into the water from the warm railroad bank, its head erect as it lay on the bottom and swaying back and forth with the waves, which were quite high, though considerably above it. I stood there five minutes at least, and probably it could remain there an indefinite period.

The wind has now risen, a warm, but pretty stormy southerly wind, and is breaking up those parts of the river which were yet closed. The great mass of ice at Willow Bay has drifted down against the railroad bridge. I see no ducks, and it is too windy for muskrat-shooters. In a leafy pond by railroad, which will soon dry up, I see large skater insects, where the snow is not all melted. The willow catkins there near the oaks show the red of their scales at the base of the catkins dimly through their down, — a warm crimson glow or blush. They are an inch long, others about as much advanced but rounded. They will perhaps blossom by day after tomorrow, and the hazels on the hillside beyond as soon at least, if not sooner. They are loose and begin to dangle. The stigmas already peep out, minute crimson stars, — Mars. The skaters are as forward to play on the first smooth and melted pool, as boys on the first piece of ice in the winter. It must be cold to their feet.

I go off a little to the right of the railroad, and sit on the edge of that sand-crater near the spring by the railroad. Sitting there on the warm bank, above the broad, shallow, crystalline pool, on the sand, amid russet banks of curled early sedge-grass, showing a little green at base, and dry leaves, I hear one hyla peep faintly several times.

This is, then, a degree of warmth sufficient for the hyla. He is the first of his race to awaken to the new year and pierce the solitudes with his voice. He shall wear the medal for this year. You hear him, but you will never find him. He is somewhere down amid the withered sedge and alder bushes there by the water's edge, but where? From that quarter his shrill blast sounded, but he is silent, and a kingdom will not buy it again.

The communications from the gods to us are still deep and sweet, indeed, but scanty and transient, — enough only to keep alive the memory of the past. I remarked how many old people died off on the approach of the present spring. It is said that when the sap begins to flow in the trees our diseases become more violent. It is now advancing toward summer apace, and we seem to be reserved to taste its sweetness, but to perform what great deeds? Do we detect the reason why we also did not die on the approach of spring?

I measured a white oak stump, just sawed off, by the railroad there, averaging just two feet in diameter with one hundred and forty-two rings; another, near by, an inch and a half broader, had but one hundred and five rings.

While I am looking at the hazel, I hear from the old locality, the edge of the great pines and oaks in the swamp by the railroad, the note of the pine warbler. It sounds far off and faint, but, coming out and sitting on the iron rail, I am surprised to see it within three or four rods, on the upper part of a white oak, where it is busily catching insects, hopping along toward the extremities of the limbs and looking off on all sides, twice darting off like a wood pewee, two rods, over the railroad, after an insect and returning to the oak, and from time to time uttering its simple, rapidly iterated, cool-sounding notes. When heard a little within the wood, as he hops to that side of the oak, they sound particularly cool and inspiring, like a part of the evergreen forest itself, the trickling of the sap. Its bright-yellow or golden throat and breast, etc., are conspicuous at this season, — a greenish yellow above, with two white bars on its bluish-brown wings. It sits often with loose-hung wings and forked tail.

Meanwhile a bluebird sits on the same oak, three rods off, pluming its wings. I hear faintly the warbling of one, apparently a quarter of a mile off, and [am] very slow to detect that it is even this

one before me, which, in the intervals of pluming itself, is apparently practicing in an incredibly low voice.

The water on the meadows now, looking with the sun, is a far deeper and more exciting blue than the heavens.

The thermometer at *5* p. M. is 66° +, and it has probably been 70° or more; and the last two days have been nearly as warm.

This degree of heat, then, brings the *Fringilla juncorum* and pine warbler and awakes the hyla.

April 10. *Thursday.* East-Day. — Some fields are dried sufficiently for the games of ball with which this season is commonly ushered in. I associate this day, when I can remember it, with gantes of baseball played over behind the hills in the russet fields toward Sleepy Hollow, where the snow was just melted and dried up, and also with the uncertainty I always experienced whether the shops would be shut, whether we should have an ordinary dinner, an extraordinary one, or none at all, and whether there would be more than one service at the meeting-house. This last uncertainty old folks share with me. This is a windy day, drying up the fields; the first we have had for a long time.

Therien describes to me the diagonal notch he used to cut in maples and birches (not having heard of boring) and the half-round spout, cut out of chestnut or other straight-grained wood with a half-round chisel, sharped and driven into a new-moon cut made by the same tool partly sidewise to the tree. This evidently injured the trees more than the auger. He says they used to boil the birch down to a syrup, and he thought that the black birch would run more than any tree.

P. M. — I set out to sail, the wind northwest, but it is so strong, and I so feeble, that I gave it up. The waves dashed over into the boat and with their sprinkling wet me half through in a few moments. Our meadow looks as angry now as it ever can. I reach my port, and go to Trillium Wood to get yellow birch sap.

The Deep Cut is full of dust. This wind, unlike yesterday's, has a decidedly cold vein in it. The ditch by Trillium Wood is strewn with yellowish hemlock leaves, which are still falling. In the still warmer and broader continuation of this ditch, south of the wood, in the

southwest recess, I see three or four frogs jump in, some probably large *Rana palustris*, others quite small. They are in before I see them plainly, and bury themselves in the mud before I can distinguish them clearly. They were evidently sitting in the sun by that leafy ditch in that still and warm nook. Let them beware of marsh hawks. I saw also four yellow-spot tortoises paddling about under the leaves on the bottom there. Once they were all together. This ditch is commonly dry in the summer.

The yellow birch sap runs very fast. I set three spouts in a tree one foot in diameter, and hung on a quart pail; then went to look at the golden saxifrage in Hubbard's Close. When I came back, the pail was running over. This was about 3 p. M. Each spout dropped about as fast as my pulse, but when I left, at 4 p. M., it was not dropping so fast. The red maples here do not run at all now, nor did they yesterday. Yet one up the Assabet did yesterday. Apparently the early maples have ceased to run.

We may now say that the ground is bare, though we still see a few patches or banks of snow on the hillsides at a distance, especially on the northeast sides of hills. You see much more snow looking west than looking east. Thus does this remarkable winter disappear at last. Here and there its veteran snow-banks spot the russet landscapes. In the shade of walls and north hillsides and cool hollows in the woods, it is panting its life away. I look with more than usual respect, if not with regret, on its last dissolving traces.

Is not that a jungermannia which so adorns the golden epidermis of the yellow birch with its fine fingers?

I boil down about two quarts of this yellow birch sap to two teaspoonfuls of a smart-tasting syrup. I stopped there; else should have boiled it all away. A slightly medicinal taste, yet not disagreeable to me. It yields but little sugar, then.

April 11. 8.0 A. M. — To Tarbell's to get black and canoe birch sap.

Going up the railroad, I see a male and female rusty grackle alight on an oak near me, the latter apparently a flaxen brown, with a black tail. She looks like a different species of bird. Wilson had heard only a *tchuck* from the grackle, but this male, who was courting his mate,

broke into incipient warbles, like a bubble burst as soon as it came to the surface, it was so aerated. Its air would not be fixed long enough.

Set two spouts in a canoe birch fifteen inches [in] diameter, and two in a black birch two feet plus in diameter. Saw a kingfisher on a tree over the water. Does not its arrival mark some new movement in its finny prey? He is the bright buoy that betrays it! And hear in the old place, the pitch pine grove on the bank by the river, the pleasant ringing note of the pine warbler. Its *a-che, vitter vitter*, *vitter vitter*, *vitter vitter*, *vitter vitter*, *vet* rings through the open pine grove very rapidly. I also heard it at the old place by the railroad, as I came along. It is remarkable that I have so often heard it first in these two localities, *i.e.* where the railroad skirts the north edge of a small swamp densely filled with tall old white pines and a few white oaks, and in a young grove composed wholly of pitch pines on the otherwise bare, very high and level bank of the Assabet. When the season is advanced enough, I am pretty sure to hear its ringing note in both those places.

The hazel sheds pollen to-day; some elsewhere possibly yesterday. The sallow up railroad will, if it is pleasant, to-morrow.

When I cut or break white pine twigs now, the turpentine exudes copiously from the bark, even from twigs broken off in the fall and now freshly broken, clear as water, or crystal. How early did it?

The canoe birch sap flowed rather the fastest. I have now got four kinds of birch sap. That of the white birch is a little tinged brown, apparently by the bark; the others are colorless as water. I am struck by the coolness of the sap, though the weather may be warm. Like wild apples, it must be tasted in the fields, and then it has a very slightly sweetish and acid taste, and cool as iced water. I do not think I could distinguish the different kinds of birch with my eyes shut. I drank some of the black birch wine with my dinner for the name of it; but, as a steady drink, it is only to be recommended to outdoor men and foresters. Now is apparently the very time to tap birches of all kinds. I saved a bottleful each of the white, canoe; and black birch sap (the yellow I boiled), and, in twenty-four hours, they had all three acquired a slight brown tinge but the white birch the most brown. They were at first colorless. On the whole, I have not observed so much difference in the amount of sap flowing from the six kinds of

trees which I have tapped as I have observed between different trees of the same kind, depending on position and size, etc. This flowing of the sap under the dull rinds of the trees is a tide which few suspect.

Though the snow melted so much sooner on the east side of the railroad causeway than on the west, I notice that it still lies in a broad, deep bank on the east side of Cheney's row of arbor-vitæ, while the ground is quite bare on the west. Whence this difference?

A few more hylas peep to-day, though it is not so warm as the 9th.

These warm pleasant days I see very few ducks about, though the river is high.

The current of the Assabet is so much swifter, and its channel so much steeper than that of the main stream, that, while a stranger frequently cannot tell which way the latter flows by his eye, you can perceive the declination of the channel of the former within a very short distance, even between one side of a tree and another. You perceive the waters heaped on the upper side of rocks and trees, and even twigs that trail in the stream.

Saw a pickerel washed up, with a wound near its tail, dead a week at least. Was it killed by a fish hawk? Its oil, when disturbed, smoothed the surface of the water with splendid colors. Thus close ever is the fair to the foul. The iridescent, oily surface. The same object is ugly or beautiful, according to the angle from which you view it. Here, also, in the river wreck is the never-failing teazle, telling of the factory above, and sawdust from the mill. The *teased* river! These I do not notice on the South Branch.

I hear of one field plowed and harrowed, — George Heywood's. Frost out there earlier than last year.

You thread your way amid the rustling oak leaves on some warm hillside sloping to the south, detecting no growth as yet, unless the flower-buds of the amelanchier are somewhat expanded, when, glancing along the dry stems, in the midst of all this dryness, you detect the crimson stigmas of the hazel, like little stars peeping forth, and perchance a few catkins are dangling loosely in the zephyr and sprinkling their pollen on the dry leaves beneath.

You take your way along the edge of some swamp that has been cleared at the base of some south hillside, where there is sufficient

light and air and warmth, but the cold northerly winds are fended off, and there behold the silvery catkins of the sallows, which have already crept along their lusty osiers, more than an inch in length, till they look like silvery wands, though some are more rounded, like bullets. The lower part of some catkins which have lost their bud-scales emit a tempered crimson blush through their down, from the small scales within. The catkins grow longer and larger as you advance into the warmest localities, till at last you discover one catkin in which the reddish anthers are beginning to push from one side near the end, and you know that a little yellow flame will have burst out there by to-morrow, if the day is fair.

I might [have] said on the 8th: Behold that little hemisphere of green in the black and sluggish brook, amid the open alders, sheltered under a russet tussock. It is the cowslips' forward green. Look narrowly, explore the warmest nooks; here are buds larger yet, showing more yellow, and yonder see two full-blown yellow disks, close to the water's edge. Methinks they dip into it when the frosty nights come. Have not these been mistaken for dandelions?

Or, on the 9th: This still warm morning paddle your boat into yonder smooth cove, close up under the south edge of that wood which the April flood is bathing, and observe the great mulberry-like catkins of yonder aspen curving over and downward, some already an inch or more in length, like great reddish caterpillars covered thickly with down, forced out by heat, and already the sides and ends of some are loose and of a pale straw-color, shedding their pollen. These, for their forwardness, are indebted to the warmth of their position.

Now for the white maple the same day: Paddle under yonder graceful tree which marks where is the bank of the river, though now it stands in the midst of a flood a quarter of a mile from land; hold fast by one of its trailing twigs, for the stream runs swiftly here. See how the tree is covered with great globular clusters of buds. Are there no anthers nor stigmas to be seen? Look upward to the sunniest side. Steady! When the boat has ceased its swaying, do you not see two or three stamens glisten like spears advanced on the sunny side of a cluster? Depend on it, the bees will find it out before noon, far over the flood as it is.

Seek out some young and lusty-growing alder (as on the 9th), with clear, shining, and speckled bark, in the warmest possible position, perchance where the heat is reflected from some bank or hillside and the water bathes its foot. The scales of the catkins generally are loosened, but on the sunniest cheek of the clump, behold one or two far more considerably loosened, wholly or partially dangling and showing their golden insides. Give the most forward of these a chuck, and you will get a few grains of its yellow dust in your hand. Some will be in full bloom above, while their extremities are comparatively dead, as if struck with a palsy in the winter. Soon will come a rude wind and shake their pollen copiously over the water.

April 12. There is still a little snow ice on the north side of our house, two feet broad, a relic of the 25th of December. This is all there is on our premises.

According to Rees's Cyclopaedia, the sap of the birches is fermentable in its natural state. Also, "Ratray, the learned Scot, affirms, that he has found by experiment, that the liquor which may be drawn from the birch tree in the springtime is equal to the whole weight of the tree, branches, roots, and all together."

I think on the whole that, of the particular trees which I tapped, the yellow and canoe birches flowed the fastest.

Hazy all day, with wind from the west, threatening rain. Haze gets to be very thick and perhaps smoky in the afternoon, concealing distinct forms of clouds, if there are any. Can it have anything to do with fires in woods west and southwest? Yet it is warm.

5 p. M. — Sail on the meadow.

There suddenly flits before me and alights on a small apple tree in Mackay's field, as I go to my boat, a splendid purple finch. Its glowing redness is revealed when it lifts its wings, as when the ashes is blown from a coal of fire. Just as the oriole displays its gold.

The river is going down and leaving the line of its wrack on the meadow. It was at its height when the snow *generally* was quite melted here, *i.e.* yesterday.

Rains considerably in the evening. Perhaps this will raise the river again.

April 13. Sunday. 8 A. M. — Up railroad.

Cold, and froze in the night. The sallow will not open till some time to-day.

I hear a bay-wing on the railroad fence sing — the rhythm — somewhat like, char char (or here here), che che, chip chip chip (fast), chitter chitter chitter chit (very fast and jingling), tchea tchea (jinglingly). It has another strain, considerably different, but a second also sings the above. Two on different posts are steadily singing the same, as if contending with each other, notwithstanding the cold wind.

P. M. — To Walden and Fair Haven Ponds.

Still cold and windy.

The early gooseberry leaf-buds in garden have burst, II — now like small green frilled horns. Also the amelanchier flower-buds are bursting.

As I go down the railroad causeway, I see a flock of eight or ten bay-wing sparrows flitting along the fence and alighting on an apple tree. There are many robins about also. Do they not incline more to fly in flocks a cold and windy day like this?

The snow ice is now all washed and melted off of Walden, down to the dark-green clear ice, which appears to be seven or eight inches thick and is quite hard still. At a little distance you would mistake it for water; further off still, as from Fair Haven Hill, it is blue as in summer. You can still get on to it from the southerly side, but elsewhere there is a narrow canal, two or three to twelve feet wide, next the shore. It may last four or five days longer, even if the weather is warm.

As I go by the Andromeda Ponds, I hear the *tut tut* of a few croaking frogs, and at Well Meadow I hear once or twice a prolonged stertorous sound, as from river meadows a little later usually, which is undoubtedly made by a different frog from the first.

Fair Haven Pond, to my surprise, is completely open. It was so entirely frozen over on the 8th that I think the finishing stroke must have been given to it but by last night's rain. Say then apparently April 13th (?).

Return over the Shrub Oak Plain and the Cliff. Still no cowslips

nor saxifrage. There were alders out at Well Meadow Head, as large bushes as any. Can they be *A. serrulata? Vide* leaves by and by.

Standing on the Cliffs, I see most snow when I look southwest; indeed scarcely a particle in any other direction, far or near, from which and from other observations, I infer that there is most snow now under the northeast sides of the hills, especially in ravines there.

At the entrance to the Boiling Spring wood, just beyond the orchard (of Hayden), the northeast angle of the wood, there is still a snow-drift as high as the wall, or three and a half feet deep, stretching quite across the road at that height, and the snow reaches six rods down the road. I doubt if there is as much in the road anywhere else in the town. It is quite impassable there still to a horse, as it has been all winter. This is the heel of the winter.

Scare up two turtle doves in the dry stubble in Wheeler's hill field by the railroad. I saw two together once before this year; probably they have paired.

April 14. *Monday.* A raw, overcast morning.

8 A. M. — Up Assabet.

See one striped squirrel chasing another round and round the Island, with a faint squeak from time to time and a rustling of the dry leaves. They run quite near to the water.

Hear the flicker's cackle on the old aspen, and his tapping sounds afar over the water. Their tapping resounds thus far, with this peculiar ring and distinctness, because it is a hollow tree they select to play on, as a drum or tambour. It is a hollow sound which rings distinct to a great distance, especially over water.

I still find small turtle's eggs on the surface entire, while looking for arrowheads by the Island.

See from my window a fish hawk flying high west of the house, cutting off the bend between Willow Bay and the meadow, in front of the house, between one vernal lake and another. He suddenly wheels and, straightening out his long narrow wings, makes one circle high above the last meadow, as if he had caught a glimpse of a fish beneath, and then continues his course down the river.

P. M. — Sail to Hill by Bedford line.

Wind southwest and pretty strong; sky overcast; weather cool.

Start up a fish hawk from near the swamp white oaks southwest of the Island, undoubtedly the one of the morning. I now see that this is a much darker bird, both above and beneath, than that bird of the 6th. It flies quite low, surveying the water, in an undulating, buoyant manner, like a marsh hawk, or still more a nighthawk, with its long curved wings. He flies so low westward that I lose sight of him against the dark hillside and trees.

The river is going down rapidly, yet the Hunt's Bridge causeway is but just bare. The south side of Ponkawtasset looks much greener and more forward than any part of the town I have noticed. It is almost like another season there. They are already plowing there.

I steer down straight through the Great Meadows, with the wind almost directly aft, feeling it more and more the farther I advance into them. They make a noble lake now. The boat, tossed up by the rolling billows, keeps falling again on the waves with a chucking sound which is inspiriting. There go a couple of ducks, which probably I have started, now scaling far away on motionless pinions, with a slight descent in their low flight, toward some new cove. Anon I scare up two black ducks which make one circle around me, reconnoitring and rising higher and higher, then go down the river. Is it they that so commonly practice this manœuvre? Peter's is now far behind on a forgotten shore. The boat moored beneath his hill is no longer visible, and the red russet hill which is my goal rises before me. I moor my boat to a tree at the base of this hill.

The waves are breaking with violence on this shore, as on a sea-beach, and here is the first painted tortoise just cast up by them and lying on his back amid the stones, in the most favorable position to display his bright-vermilion marks, as the waves still break over him. He makes no effort to turn himself back, probably being weary contending with the waves. A little further is another, also at the mercy of the waves, which greatly interfere with its staid and measured ways, its head helplessly wagging with every billow. Their scales are very clean and bright now. The only yellow I notice is about the head and *upper* part of the tail. The scales of the back are separated or bordered with a narrow greenish-yellow edging.

Looking back over the meadow from the top of this hill, I see it regularly *watered* with foam-streaks from five to ten feet apart,

extending quite across it in the direction of the wind. Washed up against this shore, I see the first dead sucker. You see nowadays on every side, on the meadow bottom, the miserable carcasses of the musquash stripped of their pelts. I saw one plunge from beneath the monument. There is much lumber — fencing-stuff, etc. — to be gathered now by those inclined.

I see an elm-top at the Battle-Ground covered [with blackbirds] uttering their *squeaks* and split whistles, as if they had not got their voices yet, and a coarse, rasping *tchuck* or *char*, not in this case from a crow blackbird.

Again I see the fish hawk, near the old place. He alights on the ground where there is a ridge covered with bushes, surrounded by water, but I scare him again, and he finally goes off northeast, flying high. He had apparently stayed about that place all day fishing.

April 15. 6.0 A. M. — To Hill.

It is warmer and quite still; somewhat cloudy in the east. The water quite smooth, — April smooth waters. I hear very distinctly Barrett's sawmill at my landing. The purple finch is singing on the elms about the house, together with the robins, whose strain its resembles, ending with a loud, shrill, ringing *chilt chilt chilt chilt.* I push across the meadow and ascend the hill. The white-bellied swallows are circling about and twittering above the apple trees and walnuts on the hillside. Not till I gain the hilltop do I hear the note of the *Fring ilia juncorum* (huckleberry-bird) from the plains beyond. Returned again toward my boat, I hear the rich watery note of the martin, making haste over the edge of the flood. A warm morning, over smooth water, before the wind rises, is the time to hear it. Near the water are many recent skunk probings, as if a drove of pigs had passed along last night, death to many beetles and grubs. From amid the willows and alders along the wall there, I hear a bird sing, *a-chitter chitter chitter chitter chitter chitter*, *che che che che*, with increasing intensity and rapidity, and the yellow redpoll hops in sight. A grackle goes over (with two females), and I hear from him a sound like a watchman's rattle, — but little more musical.

What I think the *Alnus serrulaia* (?) will shed pollen to-day on the edge of Catbird Meadow. Is that one at Brister's Spring and at Depot

Brook crossing? Also grows on the west edge of Trillium Wood.

Coming up from the riverside, I hear the harsh rasping *char-r char-r* of the crow blackbird, like a very coarsely vibrating metal, and, looking up, see three flying over.

Some of the early willow catkins have opened in my window. As they open, they curve backwards, exposing their breasts to the light.

By 9 A. M. the wind has risen, the water is ruffled, the sun seems more permanently obscured, and the character of the day is changed. It continues more or less cloudy and rain-threatening all day.

First salmon and shad at Haverhill to-day.

Ed. Emerson saw a toad in his garden to-day, and, coming home from his house at 11 p. M., a still and rather warm night, I am surprised to hear the first loud, clear, prolonged ring of a toad, when I am near Charles Davis's house. The same, or another, rings again on a different key. I hear not more than two, perhaps only one. I had only thought of them as commencing in the warmest part of some day, but it would seem that [they] may first be heard in the night. Or perhaps this one may have piped in the day and his voice been drowned by day's sounds. Yet I think that this night is warmer than the day has been. While all the hillside else, perhaps, is asleep, this toad has just awaked to a new year. It was a rather warm, moist night, the moon partially obscured by misty clouds, all the village asleep, only a few lights to be seen in some windows, when, as I passed along under the warm hillside, I heard a clear, shrill, prolonged ringing note from a toad, the first toad of the year, sufficiently countenanced by its Maker in the night and the solitude, and then again I hear it (before I am out of hearing, *i.e.* it is deadened by intervening buildings), on a little higher key. At the same time, I hear a part of the hovering note of my first snipe, circling over some distant meadow, a mere waif, and all is still again. A-lulling the watery meadows, fanning the air like a spirit over some far meadow's bay. And now for vernal sounds there is only the low sound of my feet on the Mill-Dam sidewalks.

April 16. I have not seen a tree sparrow, I think, since December.

5.0 A. M. — To Pinxter Swamp over Hill.

A little sunshine at the rising. I, standing by the river, see it first

reflected from E. Wood's windows before I can see the sun. Standing there, I hear that same stertorous note of a frog or two as was heard the 13th, apparently from quite across all this flood, and which I have so often observed before. What kind is it? It seems to come from the edge of the meadow, which has been recently left bare. Apparently this low sound can be heard very far over the water. The robins sing with a will now. What a burst of melody! It gurgles out of all conduits now; they are choked with it. There is such a tide and rush of song as when a river is straightened between two rocky walls. It seems as if the morning's throat were not large enough to emit all this sound. The robin sings most before 6 o'clock now. I note where some suddenly cease their song, making a quite remarkable vacuum.

As I walk along the bank of the Assabet, I hear the yeep yeep yeep yeeep yeeep yeep, or perhaps peop, of a fish hawk, repeated quite fast, but not so shrill and whistling as I think I have heard it, and directly I see his long curved wings undulating over Pinxter Swamp, now flooded.

From the hilltop I see bare ground appearing in ridges here and there in the Assabet meadow.

A grass-bird, with a sort of spot on its breast, sings, here here hé, che che che, chit chit chit, f chip chip chip chip chip. The latter part especially fast. The F. juncorum says, phe phe phe phe ph-ph-p-p-p-p-p-p-p-p-p-p, faster and faster; flies as I advance, but is heard distinctly still further off.

A moist, misty, rain-threatening April day. About noon it does mizzle a little. The robin sings throughout it. It is rather raw, tooth-achy weather.

P. M. — Round Walden.

The Stellaria media is abundantly out. I did not look for it early, it was so snowy. It evidently blossomed as soon after the 2d of April — when I may say the [snow] began to go off in earnest — as possible. The shepherd's-purse, too, is well out, three or four inches high, and may have been some days at least.

Cheney's elm shows stamens on the warm side pretty numerously. Probably that at Lee's Cliff a little earlier.

Plowing and planting are now going on commonly. As I go down the railroad, I see two or three teams in the fields. Frost appears to be

out of most soil. I see a pine warbler, much less yellow than the last, searching about the needles of the pitch and white pine. Its note is somewhat shorter, — a very rapid and continuous trill or jingle which I remind myself of by *vetter vetter vetter vetter vet*', emphasizing the last syllable.

Walden is still covered with ice, which [is] still darker green and more like water than before. A large tract in the middle is of a darker shade and particularly like water. Mr. Emerson told me yesterday that there was a large tract of water in the middle! This ice trembles like a batter for a rod around when I throw a stone on to it. One as big as my fist, thrown high, goes through. It appears to be three or four inches thick. It extends quite to the shore on the north side and is there met by snow.

The needles of the pines still show where they were pressed down by the great burden of snow last winter. I see a maple twig eaten off by a rabbit four and a quarter feet from the ground, showing how high the snow was there. Golden saxifrage at Hubbard's Close. Frogs sit round Callitriche Pool, where the tin is cast. We have waste places — pools and brooks, etc., — where to cast tin, iron, slag, crockery, etc. No doubt the Romans and Ninevites had such places. To what a perfect system this world is reduced! A place for everything and everything in its place!

April 17. Was awakened in the night by a thunder and lightning shower and hail-storm — the old familiar burst and rumble, as if it had been rumbling somewhere else ever since I heard it last, and had not lost the knack. I heard a thousand hailstones strike and bounce on the roof at once. What a clattering! Yet it did not last long, and the hail took a breathing-space once or twice. I did not know at first but we should lose our windows, the blinds being away at the painters'. These sounds lull me into a deeper slumber than before. Hail-storms are milked out of the first summer-like warmth; they belong to lingering cool veins in the air, which thus burst and come down. The thunder, too, sounds like the final rending and breaking up of winter; thus precipitous is its edge. The first one is a skirmish between the cool rear-guard of winter and the warm and earnest vanguard of summer. Advancing summer strikes on the edge of winter, which

does not drift fast enough away, and fire is elicited. Electricity is engendered by the early heats. I love to hear the voice of the first thunder as of the toad (though it returns irregularly like pigeons), far away in *his* moist meadow where he is warmed to life, and see the flash of his eye.

Hear a chip-bird high on an elm this morning, and probably that was one I heard on the 15th. You would not be apt to distinguish the note of the earliest. I still see quite a snow-bank from my window on the hillside at the northeast end of Clamshell, say a northeast exposure. This is on the surface, but the snow lies there in still greater quantity, in two hollows where sand has been dug for the meadow, on the hillside, though sloping to the southeast, where it is quite below the general surface. We have had scarcely any rain this spring, and the snow has been melting very gradually in the sun.

P. M. — Start for Conantum in boat, wind southwest. I can hide my oars and sail up there and come back another day. A moist muggy afternoon, rain-threatening, true April weather, after a particularly warm and pleasant forenoon. The meadows are still well covered, and I cut off the bends. The red-wing goes over with his *cha-e-e che-e-e,* chatter, chatter, chatter. On Hubbard's great meadow I hear the sound of some fowl, perhaps a loon, rushing through the water, over by Dennis's Hill, and push for it. Meanwhile it grows more and more rain-threatening, — all the air moist and muggy, a great ill-defined cloud darkening all the west, III — but I push on till I feel the first drops, knowing that the wind will take me back again. Now I hear ducks rise, and know by their hoarse quacking that they are black ones, and see two going off as if with one mind, along the edge of the wood.

Now comes the rain with a rush. In haste I put my boat about, raise my sail, and, cowering under my umbrella in the stem, with the steering oar in my hand, begin to move homeward. The rain soon fulls up my sail, and it catches all the little wind. From under the umbrella I look out on the scene. The big drops pepper the watery plain, the *aequor*, on every side. It is not a hard, dry pattering, as on a roof, but a softer, liquid pattering, which makes the impression of a double wateriness. You do not observe the drops descending but where they strike, for there they batter and indent the surface deeply

like buckshot, and they, or else other drops which they create, rebound or hop up an inch or two, and these last you see, and also when they fall back broken into small shot and roll on the surface. Around each shot-mark are countless circling dimples, running into and breaking one another, and very often a bubble is formed by the force of the shot, which floats entire for half a minute. These big shot are battering the surface every three inches or thicker. I make haste to take down my sail at the bridges, but at the stone arches forgot my umbrella, which was unavoidably crushed in part. Even in the midst of this rain I am struck by the variegated surface of the water, different portions reflecting the light differently, giving what is called a watered appearance. Broad streams of light water stretch away between streams of dark, as if they were different kinds of water unwilling to mingle, though all are equally dimpled by the rain, and you detect no difference in their condition. As if Nature loved variety for its own sake. It is a true April shower, or rain, — I think the first. It rains so easy, IV — has a genius for it and infinite capacity for [it]. Many showers will not exhaust the moisture of April.

When I get home and look out the window, I am surprised to see how it has greened the grass. It springs up erect like a green flame in the ditches on each side the road, where we had not noticed it before. Grass is bom. There is a quite distinct tinge of green on the hillside seen from my window now. I did not look for the very first.

I learn from the papers that an unusual number of fruit trees have been girdled by the mice under the deep snow of the past winter. Immense damage has been done to nurseries and orchards. I saw where a prostrate maple in the Great Meadows had been gnawed nearly bare.

Our river was *generally* breaking up on the 3d of April, though some parts were frozen till the 12th.

I see by the papers that the ice had left Lake St. Peter (St. Lawrence) the 12th. Another paper (of the 11th) has heard that the St. Lawrence was open from Quebec to Three Rivers, or before the Hudson. The ice on Lake Champlain was broken up on the 12th. Fair Haven Pond was quite open the 13th. The ice moved down the Penobscot, and the river opened the 15th. Lake Ontario was free of ice the 16th. The Kennebec is expected to open this week. (To-day is

Thursday.) There is still ice in Walden.

April 18. P. M. — To Lee's Cliff by boat.

A strong northwest wind. The waves were highest off Hubbard's second grove, where they had acquired their greatest impetus and felt the full force of the wind. Their accumulated volume was less beyond on account of the turn in the river. The greatest undulation is at the leeward end of the longest broad reach in the direction of the wind. I was steering there diagonally across the black billows, my boat inclined so as almost to drink water. Scare up the same two black ducks (and twice again). The under sides of their wings show quite light and silvery as they rise in the light.

Red maple stamens in some places project considerably, and it will probably blossom to-morrow if it is pleasant.

The farmer neglects his team to watch my sail. The slippery elm, with its round rusty woolly buds and pale-brown ashy twigs. That pretty, *now brown*-stemmed moss with green oval fruit. Common saxifrage and also early sedge I am surprised to find abundantly out — both — considering their backwardness April 2d. Both must have been out some, *i.e.* four or five, days half-way down the face of the ledge. Crowfoot, apparently two or three days. Antennaria at end of Cliff as you descend, say yesterday. *Turritis stricta.* Columbine, and already eaten by bees. Some with a hole in the side. It is worth the while to go there to smell the catnep. I always bring some home for the cat at this season.

See those great chocolate puffballs burst and diffusing their dust on the side of the hill. At the sandy place where I moored my boat, just this side this Cliff, the *Selaginella apus* is abundant, and on Conantum shore near elms thirty or forty rods below.

Left boat opposite Bittern Cliff.

Bearberry grows by path from river, seven rods beyond last pine, south side, now strongly flower-budded. Observed a large mass of white lily root with the mud washed up, the woolly steel-blue root, with singular knobs for offshoots and long, large, succulent white roots from all sides, the leaf-buds yellow and lightly rolled up on each side. Small sallow next above *tristis*, three feet high, in path to Walden.

Walden is open entirely to-day for the first time, owing to the rain of yesterday and evening. I have observed its breaking up of different years commencing in'45, and the average date has been April 4th.

This evening I hear the snipes *generally* and peeping of hylas from the door.

A small brown wasps' (?) nest (last year's, of course) hung to a barberry bush on edge of Lee's Cliff.

April 19. Was awakened in the night to a strain of music dying away, — passing travellers singing. My being was so expanded and infinitely and divinely related for a brief season that I saw how unexhausted, how almost wholly unimproved, was man's capacity for a divine life. When I remembered what a narrow and finite life I should anon awake to!

Though, with respect to our channels, our valleys, and the country we are fitted to drain, we are Amazons, we ordinarily live with dry channels.

The arbor-vitæ by riverside behind Monroe's appears to be just now fairly in blossom. I notice acorns sprouted. My birch wine now, after a week or more, has become pretty clear and colorless again, the brown part having settled and now coating the glass.

Helped Mr. Emerson set out in Sleepy Hollow two over-cup oaks, one beech, and two arbor-vitæs.

As dryness will open the pitch pine cone, so moisture closes it up again. I put one which had been open all winter into water, and in an hour or two it shut up nearly as tight as at first.

April 20. Rain, rain, rain, — ; a northeast storm. I see that it is raising the river somewhat again. Some little islets which had appeared on the meadow northwest of Dodd's are now fast being submerged again.

April 22. It has rained two days and nights, and now the sun breaks out, but the wind is still easterly, and the storm probably is not over. In a few minutes the air is full of mizzling rain again.

2 — A. M. — Go to my boat opposite Bittern Cliff.

Monroe's larches by river will apparently shed pollen soon. The

staminate flowers look forward, but the pistillate scarcely show any red. There is snow still (of the winter) in the hollows where sand has been dug on the hillside east of Clamshell. Going through Hubbard's root-fence field, see a pigeon woodpecker on a fence-post. He shows his lighter back between his wings cassock-like and like the smaller woodpeckers. Joins his mate on a tree and utters the wooing note *o-week o-week*, etc.

The seringo also sits on a post, with a very distinct yellow line over the eye, and the *rhythm* of its strain is *ker chick | ker che | ker-char-r-r-r-r | chick*, the last two bars being the part chiefly heard. The huckleberry buds are much swollen. I see the tracks of some animal which has passed over Potter's sand, perhaps a skunk. They are quite distinct, the ground being smoothed and softened by rain. The tracks of all animals are much more distinct at such a time. By the path, and in the sandy field beyond, are many of those star-fingered puffballs. I think they must be those which are so white, like pigeons' eggs, in the fall, the thick, leathery rind bursting into eight to eleven segments, like those of a boy's batting ball, and curving back. They are very pretty and remarkable now, sprinkled over the sand, smooth and plump on account of the rain. (I find some beyond at Mountain Sumach Knoll, smaller with a very thin rind and more turned back, a different species plainly.) The inside of the rind, which is uppermost, approaches a chocolate-color; the puffball is a rough dirty or brownish white; the dust which does not fly now at any rate is chocolate-colored. Seeing these thus open, I should know there had been wet weather.

The mountain sumach berries have no redness now, though the smooth sumach berries have. Its twigs are slender and so have a small pith. Its heart-wood is not yellow, like the smooth and the dogwood, but green. Its bark is more gray than that of the smooth, which last, when wet, is slightly reddish. Its bark sap or juice is not yellow like that of the smooth, and is slower to harden.

Some hellebore leaves are opened in the Cliff Brook Swamp. My boat is half full of water. There are myriads of snow-fleas in the water amid the bushes, apparently washed out of the bark by the rain and rise of river. —

I push up-stream to Lee's Cliff, behind Goodwin, who is after

musquash. Many suckers and one perch have washed up on the Conantum shore, the wind being southeasterly. I do not detect any wound. Their eyes are white, — it would be worth while to see how long before this happens, — and they appear to have been dead some time; their fins are worn, and they are slimy. I cut open a sucker, and it looked rather yellow within. I also see sometimes their bladders washed up. They float on their backs. When cut open they sink, but the double bladder is uppermost and protruded as far as possible. Saw some pieces of a sucker recently dropped by some bird or beast, eight or ten rods from the shore. Much root and leaf-bud washed up. A gull. Very perfect and handsome clamshells, recently opened by the musquash, *i.e.* during the storm, lie on the meadow and the hillside just above water-mark. They are especially handsome because wet by the rain. I buy a male muskrat of Goodwin, just killed. He sometimes baits his mink-traps with muskrat; always with some animal food. The musquash does not eat this, though he sometimes treads on the trap and is caught. It rains hard and steadily again, and I sail before it. Now I see many more ducks than in all that fair weather, — sheldrakes, etc. A marsh hawk, in the midst of the rain, is skimming along the shore of the meadow, close to the ground, and, though not more than thirty rods off, I repeatedly lose sight of it, it is so nearly the color of the hillside beyond. It is looking for frogs. The small slate-colored hawk which I have called pigeon hawk darts away from a bushy island in the meadow.

The muskrat, which I bought for twelve cents, weighs three pounds, six ounces. Goodwin thought that some would weigh a half to three quarters of a pound more than this; I think a pound more. Thought this was a young one of last year, — judged by the tail, 1839. — and that they hardly came to their growth in one year. Extreme length, twenty-three inches; length of *bare* tail, nine inches; breadth of tail, seven eighths of an inch; breadth of body, etc., as it lies, six and a half. An oval body, dark-brown above (black in some lights, the coarse wind hairs aft), reddish-brown beneath. Thus far the color of the hair. The fur within slate-color. Tail black; feet a delicate glossy dark slate (?), with white nails. The hind feet half webbed, and their sides and toes fringed thickly with stiff hair, apparently to catch water; ears (the head is wet and bruised), partly concealed in the fur,

short and round; long black mustachial bristles; fore legs, quite short, more like hands; hind ones, about three inches without the line of the body's fur and hair. Tail, on the skin, is a little curved downwards.

The star fungi, as they dried in my chamber in the course of two or three hours, drew in the fingers. The different segments curled back tightly upon the central puff, the points being strongly curled downward into the middle dimple-wise. It requires wet weather, then, to expand and display them to advantage. They are hygrometers. Their coat seems to be composed of two thicknesses of different material and quality, and I should guess that the inside chocolate-colored had a great affinity for moisture and, being saturated with it, swelled, and so necessarily burst off and turned back, and perchance the outside dirty-white or pale-brown one expands with dryness.

A single male sheldrake rose from amid the alders against Holden Swamp Woods, as I was sailing down in the rain, and flew with outstretched neck at right angles across my course, only four or five rods from me and a foot or two above the water, finally circling round into my rear.

Soon after I turned about in Fair Haven Pond, it began to rain hard. The wind was but little south of east and therefore not very favorable for my voyage. I raised my sail and, cowering under my umbrella in the stem, wearing the umbrella like a cap and holding the handle between my knees, I steered and paddled, almost perfectly sheltered from the heavy rain. Yet my legs and arms were a little exposed sometimes, in my endeavors to keep well to windward so as to double certain capes ahead. For the wind occasionally drove me on to the western shore. From time to time, from under my umbrella, I could see the ducks spinning away before me, like great bees. For when they are flying low directly from you, you see hardly anything but their vanishing dark bodies, while the rapidly moving wings or paddles, seen edgewise, are almost invisible. At length, when the river turned more easterly, I was obliged to take down my sail and paddle slowly in the face of the rain, for the most part not seeing my course, with the umbrella slanted before me. But though my progress was slow and laborious, and at length I began to get a little wet, I enjoyed the adventure because it combined to some extent the

advantages of being at home in my chamber and abroad in the storm at the same time.

It is highly important to invent a dress which will enable us to be abroad with impunity in the severest storms. We cannot be said to have fully invented clothing yet. In the meanwhile the rain-water collects in the boat, and you must sit with your feet curled up on a paddle, and you expose yourself in taking down your mast and raising it again at the bridges. These rain-storms — this is the third day of one — characterize the season, and belong rather to winter than to summer. Flowers delay their blossoming, birds tarry in their migrations, etc., etc. It is surprising how so many tender organizations of flowers and insects survive them uninjured.

The muskrat must do its swimming chiefly with its hind feet. They are similar in form and position to those of the sheldrake. Its broad oval and flattish body, too, must help keep it up.

Those star puffballs which had closed up in my chamber, put into water, opened again in a few hours.

What is that little bodkin-shaped bulb which I found washed up on the edge of the meadow, white with a few small greenish rounded leafets?

On the 19th, when setting out one of those overcup oaks in Sleepy Hollow, digging at the decayed stump of an apple tree, we disturbed, dug up, a toad, which probably had buried itself there last fall and had not yet come out.

April 23. P. M. — Up Assabet to white cedars.

The river risen again, on account of the rain of the last three days, to nearly as high as on the 11th. I can just get over Hosmer's meadow. The red maple did not shed pollen on the 19th and could not on the 20th, 21st, or 22d, on account of rain; so this must be the first day, — the 23d, — though I see none quite so forward by the river. The wind is now westerly and pretty strong. No sap to be seen in the bass. The white birch sap flows yet from a stump cut last fall, and a few small bees, flies, etc., are attracted by it. Along the shore by Dove Rock I hear a faint *tseep* like a fox-colored sparrow, and, looking sharp, detect upon a maple a white-throated sparrow. It soon flies to the ground amid the birches two or three rods distant, a

plump-looking bird and, with its bright white and yellow marks on the head distinctly separated from the slate-color, methinks the most brilliant of the sparrows. Those bright colors, however, are not commonly observed.

The white cedar swamp consists of hummocks, now surrounded by water, where you go jumping from one to another. The fans are now dotted with the minute reddish staminate flowers, ready to open. The skunk-cabbage leaf has expanded in one open place there; so it is at least as early as the hellebore of yesterday. Returning, when near the Dove Rock saw a musquash crossing in front. He dived without noise in the middle of the river, and I saw by a bubble or two where he was crossing my course, a few feet before my boat. He came up quietly amid the alders on my right, and lay still there with his head and back partly out. His back looked reddish-brown with a black grain inmixed.

I think that that white root washed up since the ice broke — up, with a stout stem flat on one side and narrow green or yellowish leaf-bud rolled up from each side, with a figure — in the middle, is the yellow lily, and probably I have seen no pontederia. The white lily root is thickly clothed with a slate-blue fur or felt, close-fitting, reflecting prismatic colors under the microscope, but generally the slate-color of the fur of most animals, and perhaps it is designed to serve a similar use, *viz* for warmth and dryness. The end of the root is abruptly rounded and sends forth leaves, and along the sides of the root are attached oval bulb-like offshoots, one or two inches long, with very narrow necks, ready, apparently, to be separated soon from the parent stock.

Hear the yellow redpoll sing on the maples below Dove Rock, — a peculiar though not very interesting strain, or jingle.

A very handsome little beetle, deep, about a quarter of an inch long, with *pale-g*olden wing-cases, artificially and handsomely marked with burnished dark-green marks and spots, one side answering to the other; front and beneath burnished dark-green; legs brown or cinnamon-color. It was on the side of my boat. Brought it home in a clam's shells tied up, — a good insect-box.

April 24. A rain-threatening April day. Sprinkles a little in the

forenoon.

P. M. — To mayflower.

The yellow willow peels fairly, probably for several days. Its buds are bursting and showing a little green, at end of railroad bridge. On Money-Diggers' Shore, much *large* yellow lily root washed up; that white root with white fibres and yellowish leaf-buds. I doubt if I have seen any pontederia this year. I find, on the southeast side of Lupine Hill, nearly four rods from the water and a dozen feet above its level, a young *Emys picta*, one and five eighths inches long and one and a half wide. I think it must have been hatched year before last. It was headed up-hill. Its rear above was already covered with some kind of green moss (?) or the like, which probably had adhered or grown to it in its winter quarters.

Warren Miles at his new mill tells me that he found a mud turtle of middling size in his brook there last Monday, or the 21st. I saw a wood tortoise there. He has noticed several dead trout, the young man says, and eels, about the shore of the pond, which had apparently died in the winter, washed up about his mill, some that would weigh a pound, and thought that they had been killed by that strong-scented stagnant water of his pond. They could not get down. Also they can't get above his mill *now*, in the spring. He says that at his mill near the factory, where he used a small undershot wheel, eighteen inches in diameter, for grinding lead, he was prevented from grinding at night by the eels stopping the wheel. It was in August, and they were going down-stream. They never ran till about dark, nor after daylight, but at that season one would get under the wheel every five minutes and stop it, and it had to be taken out. There was not width enough beneath the wheel, a small undershot one, *i.e.* between the wheel and the apron, to allow an eel of ordinary size to pass, and they were washed in sidewise so as to shut this space up completely. They were never troubled by them when going up, which he thought was in April. At the factory they can sometimes catch a bushel in a night at the same time in the box of wire in which they wash wool. Said that they had a wheel at the paper-mills above which killed every eel that tried to go through.

A Garfield (I judge from his face) confirmed the story of sheldrakes killed in an open place in the river between the factory

and Harrington's, just after the first great snow-storm (which must have been early in January), when the river was all frozen elsewhere. There were three, and they persisted in staying and fishing there. He killed one.

The epigæa on the upper edge of the bank shows a good deal of the pink, and may open in two or three days if it is pleasant. *Equisetum arvense*, by path beyond second brook, probably yesterday. As usual, am struck with the forwardness of the dark patch of slender rush at the cowslip place.

Returning, in the low wood just this side the first Second Division Brook, near the meadow, see a brown bird flit, and behold my hermit thrush, with one companion, flitting silently through the birches. I saw the fox-color on his tail-coverts, as well as the brown streaks on the breast. Both kept up a constant jerking of the tail as they sat on their perches.

This season of rain and superabundant moisture makes attractive many an unsightly hollow and recess.

I see some roadside lakes, where the grass and clover had already sprung, owing to previous rain or melted snow, now filled with perfectly transparent April rainwater, through which I see to their emerald bottoms, 1840. — paved with emerald. In the pasture beyond Nut Meadow Brook Crossing, the unsightly holes where rocks have been dug and blasted out are now converted into perfect jewels. They are filled with water of crystalline transparency, paved with the same emerald, with a few hardhacks and meadow-sweets standing in them, and jagged points of rock, and a few skaters gliding over them. Even these furnish goblets and vases of perfect purity to hold the dews and rains, and what more agreeable bottom can we look to than this which the earliest moisture and sun had tinged green? We do not object to see dry leaves and withered grass at the bottom of the goblet when we drink, if these manifestly do not affect the purity of the water. What wells can be more charming? If I see an early grasshopper drowning in one, it looks like a fate to be envied. Here is no dark unexplored bottom, with its imagined monsters and mud, but perfect sincerity, setting off all that it reveals. Through this medium we admire even the decaying leaves and sticks at the bottom.

The brook had risen so, owing to Miles's running his mill, that I could not get over where I did going.

April wells, call them, vases clean as if enamelled.

There is a slight sea-tum. I saw it like a smoke beyond Concord from Brown's high land, and felt the cool fresh east wind. Is it not common thus early?

The old caterpillar-nests which now lie on the ground under wild cherry trees, and which the birds may use, are a quite light-colored cottony web, close and thick-matted, together with the dried excrement of caterpillars, etc., on the inside.

See a dog's-bane with two pods open and partially curved backward on each side, but a third not yet open. This soon opens and scatters its down and seeds in my chamber. The outside is a dull reddish or mahogany-color, but the inside is a singularly *polished* very pale brown. The inner bark of this makes a strong twine like that of the milkweed, but there is not so much of it.

What is that now ancient and decayed fungus by the first mayflowers, — trumpet-shaped with a very broad mouth, the chief inner part green, the outer dark brown?

The earliest gooseberry leaf has spread a third of an inch or more.

Goodwin shot, about 6 p. M., and brought to me a cinereous coot *(Fulica Americana)* which was flying over the willows at Willow Bay, where the water now runs up.

It measures fourteen inches to end of tail; eighteen and one half to end of legs. Tail projects a halfinch beyond closed wings. Alar extent twenty-six inches. (These dimensions are somewhat stretched.) Above it is a bluish slate, passing into olive behind the wings, the primaries more brownish. Beneath, ash-color or pale slate. Head and neck, uniform deep black. Legs, clear green in front, passing into lead-color behind and on the lobes. Edging of wings, white; also the tips of the secondaries for one fourth of an inch, and a small space under the tail. Wings beneath, very light, almost silvery, slate. Vent, for a small space, T)lack. Bill, bluish-white, with a chestnut bar near tip, and corresponding chestnut spot on each side of lower mandible and a somewhat diamond-shaped chestnut spot at base in front. No noticeable yellow on bill. Irides, reddish. No noticeable whitish spot

beneath eyes; only bare lid. Legs and feet are very neat; talons very slender, curving, and sharp, the middle ones ½ inch + long. Lobes chiefly on the inner side of the toes. Legs bare half an inch above the joint. From its fresh and tender look I judge it to be a last year's bird. It is quite lousy.

According to Nuttall, they range from 55° north latitude to Florida and Jamaica and west to Oregon (?) and Mexico. Probably breed in every part of North America, — even in Fresh Pond, be would imply, — but their nests, eggs, and breeding-habits are yet unknown. Nocturnal, hiding by day. In Florida in the winter. Come to Fresh Pond in September. A pair there in April, and seen with young birds in June. When alarmed utter a "hoarse *kruk*." Called "flusterers" in Carolina, according to Lawson, because they fly trailing their legs or pattering with them over the water. Food: vegetables, also small shellfish, insects, gravel, etc. Leave the Northern States in November.

April 25. Minott tells me of David Wheeler of the Virginia Road, who used to keep an account of the comings and goings, etc., of animals. He was one of the few who knew [how] to set a trap for a fox so that he would get into it; scented it in a peculiar way, perhaps. Brought one home once on his shoulder, feigning death, which came to life suddenly in his entry and ran off with the trap.

Minott says that he could hardly raise cucumbers in his garden by the brook, the tortoises (painted, I judge, from his description) used to eat them so, both small and large, eating out the insides of the last. He sometimes found three or four there at once, and they lay all day hid among the vines.

Saw wasps about his dooryard.

P. M. — To Hill by boat.

Sweet-gale is out in some parts of the Island birch meadow, next the Indian field, probably several days, at least in some places. Larch not yet sheds pollen.

The toads have begun fairly io ring at noonday in earnest. I rest awhile on my oars in this meadow amid the birches [?] to hear them. The wind is pretty strong and easterly. There are many, probably squatted about the edge of the falling water, in Merrick's pasture.

(The river began to fall again, I think, day before yesterday.) It is a low, terrene sound, the undertone of the breeze. Now it sounds low and indefinitely far, now rises, as if by general consent, to a higher key, as if in another and nearer quarter, — a singular alternation. The now universal hard metallic ring of toads blended and partially drowned by the rippling wind. The voice of the toad, the herald of warmer weather.

The cinquefoil well out. I see two or three on the hemlock dry plain, — probably a day or two. I observe a male grackle with a brownish head and the small female on one tree, red-wings on another. Return over the top of the hill against the [wind]. The Great Meadows now, at 3.0 p m., agitated by the strong easterly wind this clear day, when I look against the wind with the sun behind me, look particularly *dark* blue.

Aspen bark peels; how long?

I landed on Merrick's pasture near the rock, and when I stepped out of the boat and drew it up, a snipe flew up, and lit again seven or eight rods off. After trying in vain for several minutes to see it on the ground there, I advanced a step and, to my surprise, scared up two more, which had squatted on the bare meadow all the while within a rod, while I drew up my boat and made a good deal of noise. In short, I scared up twelve, one or two at a time, within a few rods, which were feeding on the edge of the meadow just laid bare, each rising with a sound like *squeak squeak*, hoarsely. That part of the meadow seemed all alive with them. It is almost impossible to see one on the meadow, they squat and run so low, and are so completely the color of the ground. They rise from within a rod, fly half a dozen rods, and then drop down on the bare open meadow before your eyes, where there seems not stubble enough to conceal [them], and are at once lost as completely as if they had sunk into the earth. I observed that some, when finally scared from this island, flew off rising quite high, one a few rods behind the other, in their peculiar zigzag manner, rambling about high over the meadow, making it uncertain where they would settle, till at length I lost sight of one and saw the other drop down almost perpendicularly into the meadow, as it appeared.

5 p.m. — Went to see Tommy Wheeler's bounds.

Warren Miles had caught three more snapping turtles since yesterday, at his mill, one middling-sized one and two smaller. He said they could come down through his mill without hurt. Were they all bound down the brook to the river? I brought home one of the small ones. It was seven and one eighth inches long. Put it in a firkin for the night, but it got out without upsetting it. It had four points on each side behind, and when I put it in the river I noticed half a dozen points or projections on as many of its rear plates, in keeping with the crest of its tail. It buried itself in the grassy bottom within a few feet of the shore. Moves off very flat on the bottom. These turtles have been disturbed or revealed by his operations.

Anne Kamey, our neighbor, looking over her garden yesterday with my father, saw what she said was shamrock, which the Irish wear on their caps on St. Patrick's Day, the first she had ever seen in this country. My father pointed it out in his own garden to the Irishman who was working for him, and he was glad to see it, for he had had a dispute with another Irishman as to whether it grew in this country and now he could convince him, and he put it in his pocket. I saw it afterward and pronounced it common white clover, and, looking into Webster's Dictionary, I read, under Shamrock: "The Irish name for a three-leafed plant, the *Oxalis Acetosella*, or common wood-sorrel. It has been often supposed to be the *Trifolium repens*, white trefoil or white clover." This was very satisfactory, though perhaps Webster's last sentence should have been, The *Trifolium repens* has often been mistaken for it.

At evening see a spearer's light.

April 26. Worm-piles about the door-step this morning; how long?

The white cedar gathered the 23d does not shed pollen in house till to-day, and I doubt if it will in swamp before to-morrow. Monroe's larch will, apparently, by day after to-morrow. The white birch at Clamshell, which I tapped long ago, still runs and is partly covered with a pink froth. Is not this the only birch which shows this colored froth, as its sap is the most tinged and most inclined to ferment? — a sort of mother which is left on the bark and in the hole.

Looked over hastily the first two hundred lines of Lucretius, but

was struck only with the lines referring to Prometheus, whose *vivida vis animi*

"extra
Processit longe flammantia moenia mundi.

"But the custom of our ancestors also permitted these things on holidays: to pound wheat, cut torches, make candles, cultivate a hired vineyard, clear out and purge fish-ponds, ponds, and old ditches, mow grass ground a second time, spread dung, store up hay on scaffolds, gather the fruit of a hired olive yard, spread apples, pears, and figs, make cheese, bring home trees for the sake of planting on our shoulders or on a pack-mule, but not with one harnessed to a cart, nor to plant them when brought home, nor to open the ground, nor prune a tree, not even to attend to sowing seed, unless you have first sacrificed a puppy."

This reminds me of my bringing home an apple tree on my shoulder one Sunday and meeting the stream of meeting-goers, who seemed greatly outraged; but they did not know whether I set it out or not that day, or but that I sacrificed a puppy if I did.

April 27. P. M. — Up Assabet.

I find none of Monroe's larch buds shedding pollen, but the anthers look crimson and yellow, and the female flowers are now fully expanded and very pretty, but small. I think it will first scatter pollen to-morrow.

Apparently a small bullfrog by riverside, though it looks somewhat like a *Rana fontinalis;* also two or three (apparently) *R. palustris* in that well of Monroe's, which have jumped in over the curb, perhaps. I see quite a number of tortoises out sunning, just on the edge of the Hosmer meadow, which is rapidly becoming bare. Their backs shine from afar in the sun. Also one *Emys insculpta* out higher up. From close by I hear a red-wing's clear, loud whistle, — not squeak (which I think may be confined to the grackle). It is like *pte'-a pte'a*, or perhaps without the *p.*

The tapping of a woodpecker is made a more remarkable and emphatic sound by the hollowness of the trunk, the expanse of water which conducts the sound, and the morning hour at which I

commonly hear it. I think that the pigeon woodpeckers must be building, they frequent the old aspen now so much.

At the Hemlocks I see a rock which has been moved since last fall seven or eight feet into the river, though the ground is but little descending. The rock is about five and a half feet by three by one. I see [a] rather large devil's-needle coursing over the low osiers in Pinxter Swamp. Is it not early for one? The white birch which I tapped in V. palmata Swamp still runs; and the holes are full of, and the base of the tree covered with, a singular sour-tasted, rather hard-crusted *white* (not pink) froth, and a great many of those flat beetles (?), lightning-bug-like, and flies, etc., are sucking it.

April 28. Surveying the Tommy Wheeler farm.

Again, as so many times, I [am] reminded of the advantage to the poet, and philosopher, and naturalist, and whomsoever, of pursuing from time to time some other business than his chosen one, — seeing with the side of the eye. The poet will so get visions which no deliberate abandonment can secure. The philosopher is so forced to recognize principles which long study might not detect. And the naturalist even will stumble upon some new and unexpected flower or animal.

Mr. Newton, with whom I rode, thought that there was a peculiar kind of sugar maple which he called the white; knew of a few in the middle of Framingham and said that there was one on our Common.

How promising a simple, unpretending, quiet, somewhat reserved man, whether among generals or scholars or farmers! How rare an equanimity and serenity which are an encouragement to all observers! Some youthfulness, some manliness, some goodness. Like Tarbell, a man apparently made a deacon on account of some goodness, and not on account of some hypocrisy and badness as usual.

Is not the Hubbard Ditch plant the same I see in a Nut Meadow pool, and a remarkable evergreen? with much slime and many young snails on it?

I hear to-day frequently the *seezer seezer seezer* of the black and white creeper, or what I have referred to that, from J. P. Brown's wood bounding on Dugan. It is not a note, nor a bird, to attract

attention; only suggesting still warmer weather, — that the season has revolved so much further. See, but not yet hear, the familiar chewink amid the dry leaves amid the underwood on the meadow's edge.

Many *Anemone nemorosa* in full bloom at the further end of Yellow Thistle Meadow, in that warm nook by the brook, some probably a day or two there. I think that they are thus early on account of Miles's dam having broken away and washed off all the snow for some distance there, in the latter part of the winter, long before it melted elsewhere. It is a warm corner under the south side of a wooded hill, where they are not often, if ever before, flooded.

As I was measuring along the Marlborough road, a fine little blue-slate butterfly fluttered over the chain. Even its feeble strength was required to fetch the year about. How daring, even rash, Nature appears, who sends out butterflies so early! Sardanapalus-like, she loves extremes and contrasts.

I began to survey the meadow there early, before Miles's new mill had been running long this Monday morning and flooded it, but a great stream of water was already rushing down the brook, and it almost rose over our boots in the meadow before we had done.

Observing the young pitch pines by the road south of Loring's lot that was so heavily wooded, George Hubbard remarked that if they were cut down oaks would spring up, and sure enough, looking across the road to where Loring's white pines recently stood so densely, the ground was all covered with young oaks. *Mem.* — Let me look at the site of some thick pine woods which I remember, and see what has sprung up; *e g.* the pitch pines on Thrush Alley and the white pines on Cliffs, also at Baker's chestnuts, and the chestnut lot on the Tim. Brooks farm.

This was a very pleasant or rather warm day, looking a little rainy, but on our return the wind changed to easterly, and I felt the cool, fresh sea-breeze.

This has been a remarkably pleasant, and I think warm, spring. We have not had the usual sprinklings of snow, having had so much in the winter, — none since [that] I can remember. There is none to come down out of the air.

April 29. Was awakened early this morning by thunder and some rain, — the second thunder-shower of the season, — but it proved a fair day. At midforenoon saw a fish hawk flying leisurely over the house northeasterly.

P. M. — To Cedar Swamp.

Monroe's larch staminate buds have now erected and separated their anthers, and they look *somewhat* withered, as if they had shed a part of their pollen. *If so*, they began yesterday.

It was quite warm when I first came out, but about 3 p. M. I felt a fresh easterly wind, and saw quite a mist in the distance produced by it, a sea-tum. There was the same phenomenon yesterday at the same hour, and on the 24th, later in the day. Yet to-day the air was not much cooled. Your first warning of it *may* be the seeing a thick mist on all the hills and in the horizon. The wind is southeast.

I see great devil's-needles whiz by, coupled.

Do not sail well till I reach Dove Rock, then glide swiftly up the stream. I move upward against the current with a moderate but fair wind, the waves somewhat larger, probably because the wind contends with the current. The sun is in my face, and the waves look particularly lively and sparkling. I can steer and write at the same time. They gurgle under my stem, in haste to fill the hollow which I have created. The wave's seem to leap and roll like porpoises, with a slight surging sound when their crests break, and I feel an agreeable sense that I am swiftly gliding over and through them, bound on my own errands, while their motion is chiefly but an undulation, and an apparent one. It is pleasant, exhilarating, to feel the boat tossed up a little by them from time to time. Perhaps a wine-drinker would say it was like the effect of wine. It is flattering to a sense of power to make the wayward wind our horse and sit with our hand on the tiller. Sailing is much like flying, and from the birth of our race men have been charmed by it.

Near the little larch, scared a small dark-brown hawk from an apple tree, which flew off low to another apple tree beside Barrett's Pond. Just before he flew again I saw with my glass that his tail was barred with white. Must it not be a pigeon hawk then? He looked a dark slate as he sat, with tawny-white thighs and under head, — far

off. He soon started a third time, and a crow seemed to be in chase of him. I think I have not described this white-barred hawk before, but for the black-barred *vide* May 8, 1854, and April 16, 1855.

The white cedar now sheds pollen abundantly.

Many flowers are effete, though many are not open. Probably it began as much as three days ago. I strike a twig, and its peculiar pinkish pollen fills the air. Sat on the knoll in the swamp, now laid bare. How pretty a red maple in bloom (they are now in prime), seen in the sun against a pine wood, like these little ones in the swamp against the neighboring wood, they are so light and ethereal, not a heavy mass of color impeding the passage of the light, and they are of so cheerful and lively a color.

The pine warbler is heard very much now at midday, when already most birds are quiet. It must be the female which has so much less yellow beneath. Do not the toads ring most on a windy day like this? I heard but few on the still 27th. A pigeon woodpecker alights on a dead cedar top near me. Its cackle, thus near, sounds like *eh eh eh eh eh,* etc., rapidly and emphatically repeated. Some birch sprouts in the swamp are leafed as much as any shrub or tree. Barn swallows and chimney, with white-bellied swallows, are flying together over the river. I thought before that I distinguished the twitter of the chimney swallow.

April 30. Surveying the Tommy Wheeler farm.

A fine morning. I hear the first brown thrasher singing within three or four rods of me on the shrubby hillside in front of the Hadley place. I think I had a glimpse of one darting down from a sapling-top into the bushes as I rode by the same place on the morning of the 28th. This, I think, is the very place to hear them early, a dry hillside sloping to the south, covered with young wood and shrub oaks. I am the more attracted to that house as a dwelling-place. To live where you would hear the first brown thrasher! First, perchance, you have a glimpse of one's ferruginous long brown back, instantly lost amid the shrub oaks, and are uncertain if it was a thrasher, or one of the other thrushes; and your uncertainty lasts commonly a day or two, until its rich and varied strain is heard. Surveying seemed a noble employment which brought me within hearing of this bird. I was

trying to get the exact course of a wall thickly beset with shrub oaks and birches, making an opening through them with axe and knife, while the hillside seemed to quiver or pulsate with the sudden melody. Again, it is with the side of the ear that you hear. The music or the beauty belong not to your work itself but some of its accompaniments. You would fain devote yourself to the melody, but you will hear more of it if you devote yourself to your work.

Cutting off the limbs of a young white pine in the way of my compass, I find that it strips freely. How long this?

By the time I have run through to the Harvard road, I hear the small pewee's *tche-vetf* repeatedly.

The Italian with his hand-organ stops to stare at my compass, just as the boys are curious about *his* machine. We have exchanged places.

As I go along the Assabet, a peetweet skims away from the shore. The canoe birch sap still flows. It is much like that of the white, and is now pink, white, and yellow on the bark.

Bluets out on the bank by Tarbell's spring brook, maybe a day or two.

This was a very warm as well as pleasant day, but at one o'clock there was the usual fresh easterly wind and sea-turn, and before night it grew quite cold for the season. The regularity of the recurrence of this phenomenon is remarkable. I have noticed [it], at least, on the 24th late in the day, the 28th and the 29th about 3 p *m.,* and to-day at 1 p *m.* It has been the order. Early in the afternoon, or between one and four, the wind changes (I suppose, though I did not notice its direction in the forenoon), and a fresh cool wind from the sea produces a mist in the air.

About 3.0 *p m.,* when it was quite cloudy as well as raw, and I was measuring along the river just south of the bridge, I was surprised by the great number of swallows — white-bellied and bam swallows and perhaps republican — flying round and round, or skimming very low over the meadow, just laid bare, only a foot above the ground. Either from the shape of the hollow or their circling, they seemed to form a circular flock three or four rods in diameter and one swallow deep. There were two or three of these centres and some birds equally low over the river. It looked like rain,

but did not rain that day or the next. Probably their insect food was flying at that height over the meadow at that time. There were a thousand or more of swallows, and I think that they had recently arrived together on their migration. Only this could account for there being so many together. We were measuring through one little circular meadow, and many of them were not driven off by our nearness. The noise of their wings and their twittering was quite loud.

MAY, 1856

May 1. 6 p m. — To Hill.

I judge that the larch blossomed when the anthers began to be loose and dry and yellow on their edges. Say then the 28th. The water on the meadows is rapidly going down. I am now confined to the river for the most part. The water begins to feel as warm or warmer than the air when cool.

The scrolls of the ferns clothed in wool at Sassafras Shore, five or six inches high. *Thalictrum anemonoides* well out, probably a day or two, same shore, by the apple trees. *Viola ovata* on southwest side of hill, high up near pines. How pleasing that early purple grass in smooth water! Half a dozen long, straight purple blades of different lengths but about equal width, close together and exactly parallel, resting flat on the surface of the water. There is something agreeable in their parallelism and flatness.

From the hilltop I look over Wheeler's maple swamp. The maple-tops are now, I should say, a bright brick red. It is the red maple's reign now, as the peach and the apple will have theirs. Looking over the swamps a quarter of a mile distant, you see dimly defined crescents of bright brick red above and amid a maze of ash-colored branches.

May 2. The *tea lee* of the yellow-rump warbler in the street, at the end of a cool, rainy day.

May 3. Another cool, rainy day. A staminate balm-of-Gilead poplar by Peter's path. Many of the catkins fallen and effete in the rain, but many anthers still red and unopen. Probably began five or six days ago.

May 4. P. M. — To Cedar Swamp *via* Assabet.

Among others, I see republican swallows flying over river at Island. Again I see, as on the 30th of April, swallows flying low over Hosmer's meadow, over water, though comparatively few. About a foot above the water, about my boat, are many of those little fuzzy

gnats, and I suspect that it is these they are attracted by. (On the 6th, our house being just painted, the paint is peppered with the *myriads* of the same insects which have stuck to it. They are of various sizes, though all small, and there are a few shad-flies also caught. They are particularly thick on the coping under the eaves, where they look as if they had been dusted on, and dense swarms of them are hovering within a foot. Paint a house now, and these are the insects you catch.

—— suspect it is these fuzzy gnats that the swallows of the 30th were catching.)

The river is gone down so much — though checked by the rain of the 2d and 3d — that I now observe the tortoises on the bottom, a stemothærus among them.

Hear the something like *twe twe twe twe twé*, *ter té te twe twe* of the myrtle-bird, and see the bird on the swamp white oaks by Island.

The aspen there just begun to leaf; not quite the white maple. I observe that the river meadows, especially Hosmer's, are divided by two or more ridges and valleys (the latter alone now covered with water and so revealed), parallel with the river. The same phenomenon, but less remarkable, on the Wheeler meadow. Are they the traces of old river-banks, or where, in freshets, the current of the river meets the meadow current, and the sediment is deposited?

See a peetweet on Dove Rock, which just peeps out. As soon as the rocks begin to be bare the peetweet comes and is seen teetering on them and skimming away from me.

Having fastened my boat at the maple, met, on the bank just above, Luke Dodge, whom I met in a boat fishing up that way once or twice last summer and previous years. Was surprised to hear him say, "I am in my eighty-third year." He still looks pretty strong and has a voice like a nutmeg-grater. Within two or three years at most, I have seen him walking, with that remarkable gait. It is encouraging to know that a man may fish and paddle in this river in his eighty-third year. He says he is older than Winn, though not the oldest man in the town. Mr. Tolman is in his eighty-sixth year.

Went up Dodge's (an Englishman who once lived up it and no relation of the last-named) Brook and across Barrett's dam. In the Cedar Swamp *Andromeda caly-culata* abundantly out; how long?

Viburnum nudum leafing. *Smilacina trifolia* recently up; will apparently open in ten or twelve days.

At the dam, am amused with the various curves of jets of water which leak through at different' heights. According to the pressure. For the most part a thin sheet was falling smoothly over the top and cutting short off some smaller jets from the first crack (or edge of the first plank), leaving them like white spikes seen through the water. The dam leaked in a hundred places between and under the planks, and there were as many jets of various size and curve. Reminds me of the tail-piece in Bewick, of landlord drawing beer(?) from two holes, and knowledge of artist shown.

Shad-flies on the water, schooner-like. Hear and see a goldfinch, on the ground.

May 6. To Clamshell by river.

Our earliest currant out. Oat spawn showing little pollywogs (?) in meadow water. The horse-chestnut and mountain-ash leafing. Knawel out at Clamshell; how long? Cerastium out there under the bank. That early white birch there has about done running sap. *Equisetum sylvaticum* a day or two on the ditch bank there.

May 7. *Wednesday.* Fresh easterly wind.

—— p. M. — To bear-berry on Major Heywood road.

In Deacon Hosmer's bam meadows, hear the *don't don't* of a bullfrog.

In the first hollow in the bank this side of Clamshell, where sand has been dug for the meadow, are a hundred or more bank swallows at 2 p. M. (I suspect I have seen them for some time) engaged in prospecting and digging their holes and circling about. It is a snug place for them, — though the upright portion of the bank is only four or five feet high, — a semicircular recess facing the southeast. Some are within scratching out the sand, — I see it cast out of the holes behind them, — others hanging on to the entrance of the holes, others on the flat sandy space beneath in front, and others circling about, a dozen rods off over the meadow. Theirs is a low, dry, grating twitter, or rather rattle, less metallic or musical than the *vite vite* and twittering notes of bam and white-bellied swallows. They are white-

bellied, dark winged and tailed, with a crescent of white [sic] nearly around the lower part of the neck, and mouse-colored heads and backs. The upper and greater part of this bank is a coarse sliding gravel, and they build only in the perpendicular and sandy part (I sit and watch them within three or four rods) and close to the upper part of it. While I am looking, they all suddenly with one consent take to wing, and circle over the hillside and meadow, as if they chose to work at making their holes a little while at a time only. I find the holes on an average about a foot deep only as yet, some but a few inches.

In the meanwhile I hear, through this fresh, raw east wind, the *te-a-lea* of myrtle-birds from the woods across the river.

The bear-berry will perhaps open to-morrow.

I hear the evergreen-forest note close by; and hear and see many myrtle-birds, at the same time that I hear what I have called the black and white creeper's note. Have I ever confounded them?

Over the edge of Miles's mill-pond, now running off, a bumblebee goes humming over the dry brush. I think I saw one on the 5th also.

Miles began last night to let the water run off. The pond falls about three inches in twenty-four hours. The brook below is full of fishes, — suckers, pouts, eels, trouts, — endeavoring to get up, but his dam prevents. This morning his young man killed a number of pouts and eels and suckers with a shovel. Here he comes now, at 4 p m., with a spear, and raises the gate and waits a few moments for the water, which was two or three feet deep just below the mill, to run off; and then I see a good-sized trout, four or five pouts, and several suckers, and one eel still making their way upward, though the water hardly covers their backs. They do not turn and go down the stream with the water which is thus suddenly and rapidly let off. Meanwhile this young man picks out half a dozen pouts, eels, and suckers with his spear. Twenty rods down the brook I saw many more suckers trying to make their way up. They found it difficult now to get over the bars where the water was very shallow, and were sometimes confined to the hollows between. I saw two or three in company trying to squeeze through a narrow passage under some alder boughs, which was blocked up by two spotted tortoises; and one large eel

squirming directly over an indifferent wood turtle, concluding to go down the stream, but it soon hid under a projecting bank. The pouts, etc., would suddenly bury themselves in the sand or mud and be lost. The fishes seemed unwilling to turn and go down the brook, and for the most part would come so near in the shallow water that they could easily be struck with the spear.

The water thus suddenly let off, there were many spotted and wood tortoises seen crawling about on the bottom. One little snapping (making the fifth of its species here), three and a half inches long, going down a few rods below the dam. This, like the larger ones, going down the brook. Where to? and why? He cannot be old enough to breed yet, and it is too early to be laying at the desert. This young snapping turtle was very strong-scented. Its tail appeared particularly long, as long as its shell, and very tapering, and very distinctly and sharply keeled. The first half-dozen of its dorsal serrations were very prominent and sharp, and its bill was very sharp also. It had four sharp points on each side of its shell behind, and I noticed that it swam better than other kinds of tortoises. Its head was as large as that of an ordinary wood tortoise. There were tracks of other turtles on the sandy bank.

The young man said that the eels came along as many as three in an hour in the night, and this morning there were a great many of them about the wheel. Last fall (this dam being made late in the fall), they found in the hollow under the wheel which they bailed out sixteen trout which weighed eight pounds. It is surprising how many fishes will run up and breed in such a little brook as this. The fishes generally would conceal themselves in the mud under a projecting bank, or in some deep hole in the sand in mid-channel which communicated with the mud beneath.

One of those larger snapping turtles seized the one I had by the head and they braced and struggled awhile.

The miller now raises his gate and lets his pond run off. Do they not generally earlier?

For a week the road has been full of cattle going up country.

May 10. The third day of rain. The river has again gone over the meadows, which were almost bare.

P. M. — To Walden in rain.

R. Rice speaks of having seen myriads of eels formerly, going down the Charles River, young ones not longer than his hand, stopped behind a board at the dam. That once there, when repairing the dam, he saw, while standing on the bared bottom below it, a large eel come up close by it through hard gravel and he believed it had just come down the river and had penetrated through six feet in thickness of the same character, for the dam was carried down to that depth below the bottom of the river.

That the snapping turtle caught fish by lying buried in the mud with only his eyes out, was Rice's supposition.

Some Vaccinium Pennsylvanieum out in Cut woods; maybe a day, as it has rained steadily the last two days. It seems to bloom with or immediately after the bear-berry.

I would gladly walk far in this stormy weather, for now I see and get near to large birds. Two quails whir away from the old shanty stubble-field, and two turtle doves go off from an apple tree with their *clikit.* Also at Walden shore a pigeon hawk (or else sharpshinned), with deep-brown back, went off from close at hand.

I see there, just above the edge of the Pool in Hubbard's Wood Path, the *Viola blanda* passing into the *V. lanceolata*, which last also is now in bloom, probably earlier there than in wetter places. May have been as early as the *blanda.*

Where the pitch pines were cut some years ago on Thrush Alley, I now see birches, oaks, and pitch and white pines.

On the railroad causeway against Trillium Wood, I see an apparently native willow, a shrub, with greenish bark and conspicuous yellow catkins, now in full bloom, apparently a little earlier than the *Salix alba*, but its leafets or bracts much less advanced and conspicuous. Another on the Walden road. What is it? Mr. Prichard's Canada plum will open as soon as it is fair weather.

May 11. Rains still.

I noticed the other day that the stump of the large oak at Clamshell Hill, cut down fifteen years ago or more, was quite rotten, while the trunk which lay by its side, having never been removed, was comparatively sound.

The Roman writers Columella and Palladius warn not to build in a low valley or by a marsh, and the same rule is observed here to-day. In the West the prudent settler avoids the banks of rivers, choosing high and open land. It suggests that man is not completely at one with Nature, or that she is not yet fitted to be his abode. Adam soon found that he must give a marsh a wide berth, — that he must not put his bower in or near a swamp in the new country, — else he would get the fever and ague or an intermittent fever. Either nature may be changed or man. Some animals, as frogs and musquash, are fitted to live in the marsh. Only a portion of the earth is habitable by man. Is the earth improving or deteriorating in this respect? Does it require to be improved by the hands of man, or is man to live more naturally and so more safely?

P. M. — To Cedar Swamp up Assabet.

There is at length a prospect of fair weather. It will clear up at evening this fourth day of the rain. The river is nearly as high as it has been this spring.

The *Salix alba* by my boat is out and beaten by the rain; perhaps three or four days in some places, but not on the 6th. It does not rain now, though completely overcast, but looks as if it would clear up before night.

There are many swallows circling low over the river behind Monroe's, — bank swallows, bam, republican, chimney, and white-bellied. These are all circling together a foot or two over the water, passing within ten or twelve feet of me in my boat. It is remarkable how social the different species of swallow are one with another. They recognize their affinity more than usual. On the prospect of fair weather after so long a storm, the birds are more lively than ever. As I float through the Wheeler Indian field meadow, I see a veery hopping silent under the alders. The black and white creeper also is descending the oaks, etc., and uttering from time to time his *seeser seeser seeser.* What a rich, strong striped blue-black (?) and white bird, much like the myrtle-bird at a little distance, when the yellow of the latter is not seen. At a distance I hear the first yellow-bird.

The *Salix sericea* at Island rock is out, also the *S. cordata* off Prichard's, both apparently with *S. alba.* But I have not yet compared them (for date) *quite* accurately enough. I think I can pretty well

distinguish the *sericea* by the grayness of the female catkins, twig and all, but am not sure I have seen the staminate. Neither am I sure that I see the staminate *S. cordata.* Those at Prichard's are apparently all female. There are many staminate ones now in full bloom in the Wheeler meadow, I suspect like that of the railroad causeway, male and female side by side, five rods north of *S. alba;* also male, west side below ring-post *(vide* May 10th), or they may be staminate plants of *S. cordata,* or some perhaps of *S. sericea. Vide* how many different kinds of leaves and mark them six weeks hence. *Vide* if those just off the north end of Holden Wood (Conantum) are all *S. cordata*, for there are many staminate ones like the last-named; also *vide* that one on the north side of the road and root fence beyond brook on Comer road (perhaps like the railroad one), male and female now a little past prime. All these willows blossom when the early willows, which bloom before leafing, are going to seed.

Large white maples are leafing.

I see, near the top of the bank at the further end of the first hemlocks, dirty-white fungi in nests, each about three quarters of an inch [in] diameter, without any thick rind which peels off. Each one is burst a little at top, and is full of dust of a yellowish rotten-stone color, which is perfectly dry and comes forth like a puff of smoke on being pinched, now after four days of rain, before the fair weather has come, and though each one is nearly half full of water. This dust certainly has but little affinity for moisture and might be of use in some cases.

I leave my boat in Hosmer's poke-logan and walk up the bank. A bluebird's nest and five eggs in a hollow apple tree three feet from ground near the old bank swallow pit, made with much stubble and dried grass. Can see the bird sitting from without.

There are a great many large flat black cockroach(?)- like beetles floating and paddling on the flood on the meadows, which have perhaps fallen in in the night (if not washed out of the grass); also a few of the thick dull reddish-brown ones.

May 12. A glorious day.

P. M. — Walked round by Dennis's and Hollowell place with Alcott.

It is suddenly very warm. A *washing* day, with a slight haze accompanying the strong, warm wind. I see, in the road beyond Luther Hosmer's, in different places, two bank swallows which were undoubtedly killed by the four days' northeast rain we have just had.

Puffer says he has seen two or three dead sparrows also. The sudden heat compels us to sit in the shade at the bars above Puffer's, whence we hear the first bobolink. How suddenly the birds arrive after the storm, — even yesterday before it was fairly over, — as if they had foreseen its end! How much life the note of the bobolink imparts to the meadow! I see a cultivated cherry in bloom, and Prichard's Canada plum will probably bloom to-morrow. The river is higher than yesterday, about the same as when highest before this spring, and goes no higher. Thus attains its height the day after the rain.

May 13. Hear a warbling vireo. Dandelions by roadside; probably several days in some places.

P. M. — Up river to Kalmia glauca Swamp.

In the swallows' holes behind Dennis's, I find two more dead bank swallows, and one on the sand beneath, and the feathers of two more which some creature has eaten. This makes at least seven dead bank swallows in consequence of the long, cold northeast rain. A male harrier, skimming low, had nearly reached this sandpit before he saw me and wheeled. Could it have been he that devoured the swallows?

These swallows were 10 ¾ + alar extent, 4 ¾ inches long; a wing 4¾ + by 1¾+. Above they were a light brown on their backs, wings blackish, beneath white, with a dark-brown band over the breast and again white throat and side of neck; bill small and black; reddish-brown legs, with long, sharp, slender claws. It chanced that each one of two I tried weighed between five and six sixteenths of an ounce, or between five and six drams avoirdupois. This seems to be the average weight, or say six drams because they have pined a little. A man who weighs one hundred and fifty pounds weighs sixty-four hundred times as much as one. The wing of one contains about seven square inches, the body about five, or whole bird nineteen. If a man were to be provided with wings, etc., in proportion to his weight,

they would measure about 844 square feet, and one wing would cover 311 feet, or be about 33 feet long by 14 wide. This is to say nothing of his muscles.

The *Kalmia glauca* will not open for some days at least.

Mrs. Ripley told me last night that Hill said the toads rang till they died if their call was not answered or attended to.

At the swamp, hear the *yorrick* of Wilson's thrush; the tweezer-bird or *Sylvia Americana.* Also the oven-bird sings. Caterpillars' nests on an apple two inches [in] diameter. Downy amelanchier just out at Lupine Bank; elsewhere, *maybe*, a day or two.

Where my sap has dried on the white birch bark it has now turned a bright light red. What a variety of colors it assumes!

Potter has a remarkable field of mulleins, sown as thickly as if done with a machine (under Bear Garden Hill). I remarked them last year. William Wheeler thinks the seed lies in the ground an indefinite period ready to come up. I thought that it might have been introduced with his grain when it was sown lately. Wheeler says that many a pasture, if you plow it up after it has been lying still ten years, will produce an abundant crop of wormwood, and its seeds must have lain in the ground. Why do not the chemists in their analyses of soils oftener mention the seeds of plants? Would not a careful analysis of old pasture sod settle the question?

I suspect that I can throw a little light on the fact that when a dense pine wood is cut down oaks, etc., may take its place. There were only pines, no other tree. They are cut off, and, after two years have elapsed, you see oaks, or perhaps a few other hard woods, springing up with scarcely a pine amid them, and you wonder how the acorns could have lain in the ground so long without decaying. There is a good example at Loring's lot. But if you look through a thick pine wood, even the exclusively pitch pine ones, you will detect many little oaks, birches, etc., sprung probably from seeds carried into the thicket by squirrels, etc., and blown thither, but which are overshadowed and choked by the pines. This planting under the shelter of the pines may be carried on annually, and the plants annually die, but when the pines are cleared off, the oaks, etc., having got just the start they want, and now secured favorable conditions, immediately spring up to trees. Scarcely enough

allowance has been made for the agency of squirrels and birds in dispersing seeds.

At the Kalmia Swamp, the parti-colored warbler, and was that *switter switter switter switter swit'* also by it?

May 14. Air full of golden robins. Their loud clear note betrays them as soon as they arrive. Yesterday and to-day I see half a dozen tortoises on a rail, — their first appearance in numbers. Catbird amid shrub oaks. Female red-wing. Flood tells me he saw cherry-birds on the 12th of April in Monroe's garden.

May 15. A fog this morning. Our peach out.

P. M. — To beeches.

As I sat by the Riordan crossing, thought it was the tanager I heard? I think now, only because it is so early, that it may have been the yellow-throat vireo.

See also, for a moment, in dry woods, a warbler with blue-slate head and apparently all yellow beneath for a minute, nothing else conspicuous; note slightly like tseep, tseep, tseep, tseep, tsit sitter ra-re-ra, the last fast, on maples, etc. Maybe I heard the same yesterday.

Northern wild red cherry out, cut by railroad; maybe day or two elsewhere. At Heywood Spring I see a clumsy woodchuck, now, at 4 p. M., out feeding, gray or grizzly above, brown beneath. It runs, or waddles, to its hole two or three rods off, and as usual pauses, listening, at its entrance till I start again, then dives in.

Viola cucullata abundant now. Just on the brink of this Heywood Spring, I find what may be the Stellaria borealis (if it is not the longifolia, but it is not in cymes like that; only a single flower to each axil, now at least), though Bigelow makes its calyx-divisions nerveless. These are three-nerved, and one flower, at least, has five (!) styles. It has been out perhaps several days. Some of the flowers are without petals, others with those very deeply cleft or divided white petals. The others *may* have pollen.

Strawberry well out; how long? On *Amelanchier Botryapium*, many narrow dark bronze-colored beetles (say three fourths inch long) coupled and at same time eating the flowers, calyx and all. Night-warbler. Hickory leafets not so large as beech. Beech leaves

two inches long. Say it has leafed a day or two. White birch pollen. Beech not out yet.

Checker-berries very abundant on south side of Pine Hill, by pitch pine wood. Now is probably best time to gather them.

Cleared out the Beech Spring, which is a copious one. So I have done some service, though it was a wet and muddy job. Cleared out a spring while you have been to the wars. Now that warmer days make the traveller thirsty, this becomes an important work. This spring was filled and covered with a great mass of beech leaves, amid and beneath which, damp and wet as they were, were myriads of snow-fleas and also their white exuviæ; the latter often whitening a whole leaf, mixed with live ones. It looks as if for coolness and moisture 14 — which the snow had afforded — they were compelled to take refuge here.

Cerasus pumila, south side Pine Hill, not yet by Cut woods. Perceive *some* of that delicious meadow fra grance coming over the railroad causeway. Measured a chestnut stump cut last winter on Pine Hill; twenty-five inches in diameter and fifty-six rings.

May 16. Rainy day.

May 17. Rain still or lowering.

P. M. — To my boat at Cardinal Shore, thence to Lee's Cliff.

Kingbird. The beech twigs *I* gathered the 15th show anthers to-day in chamber; so it probably blossoms to-day or to-morrow in woods. Vaccinium vacillans apparently a day or two at least. Veronica serpyllifolia abundant now on banks, erected. Maryland yellow-throat heard afar in meadows, as I go along the road towards Hubbard's Bridge. It is warm, but still overcast and sprinkling occasionally, near the end of the rain, and the birds are very lively. *A* goldfinch twitters over.

In the dry lupine bank pasture, about fifteen rods from the river, apparently travelling up the hill, I see a box tortoise, the first I have found in Concord. Beside being longer (its upper shell five and one half by four and one fourth inches), it is much flatter and more oblong, less oval, than the one I found on Cape Cod last July. Especially it is conspicuously broader and flatter forward. The two

rear marginal plates have a triangular sinus between them while the Cape Cod ones come to a point.

The fifth and sixth marginal plates do not project by their edges beyond the shell. The yellow marks are much narrower, and more interrupted and like Oriental characters, than in the Cape Cod one. The sternum also is less oval, uniformly blackish-brown except a few slight bone-[?] or horn-colored blotches, while the Cape Cod one is light-yellow with a few brown blotches. The scales of the sternum in this are much less sharp-angled than in the Cape Cod one. The sternum more hollow or depressed.

The tail about three eighths of an inch long only, beyond the anus (?). The bill is very upright, somewhat like this: — A beak like any Cæsar's. Fore legs covered orange-colored scales.

Hind ones mostly brown or bronze with a few orange spots. Beside the usual hiss, uttered in the evening as I was carrying it, a single, as it were involuntary, squeak much like a croaking frog. Iris, bright light red, or rather vermilion, remarkable. Head, brown above with yellow spots; orange beneath and neck.

The river is about a foot lower than on the 13th, notwithstanding yesterday's and to-day's rain.

At the Kalmia Swamp, see and hear the redstart, very lively and restless, flirting and spreading its reddish tail. The sylvias — S. Americana and redstart and summer yellowbird, etc. — are very lively there now after the rain, in the warm, moist air, amid the hoary bursting buds of maples, oaks, etc.

I stand close on the edge of the swamp, looking for the kalmia. Nothing of its flower to be seen yet. The rhodora *there* will open in a day or two.

Meanwhile I hear a loud hum and see a splendid male hummingbird coming zigzag in long tacks, like a bee, but far swifter, along the edge of the swamp, in hot haste. He turns aside to taste the honey of the *Andromeda calyculata* (already visited by bees) within a rod of me. This golden-green gem. Its burnished back looks as if covered with green scales dusted with gold. It hovers, as it were stationary in the air, with an intense humming before each little flower-bell of the humble *Andromeda calyculata,* and inserts its long tongue in each, turning toward me that splendid ruby on its breast,

that glowing ruby. Even this is coal-black in some lights! There, along with me in the deep, wild swamp, above the andromeda, amid the spruce. Its hum was heard afar at first, like that of a large bee, bringing a larger summer. This sight and sound would make me think I was in the tropics, — in Demerara or Maracaibo.

Nemopanthes on that very swamp-edge. *Vaccinium corymbosum* (?) or the high blueberry.

Hear the first veery note and doubtless the *Muscicapa olivacea.* The *Sylvia Americana* (parti-colored warbler, etc.) is very numerous there, darting about amid the hoary buds of the maples and oaks, etc. It seems the most restless of all birds, blue more [or] less deep above, with yellow dust on the back, yellow breast, and white beneath (the male with bright-orange throat, and some with a rufous crescent on breast); wings and tail, dark, black, with two white bars or marks, dark bill and legs.

At Lee's the *Turritis stricta* pods three inches long, and plant two and a half feet high by measure. Get some to press. *Myosotis stricta* above there, maybe several days. *Ranunculus bulbosus* a day or two at least. *Arenaria serpyllifolia.*

Mrs. Ripley showed me, from her son Gore in Minnesota, a few days ago, the first spring flower of the prairie there, a hairy-stemmed, slender-divisioned, and hary-involucred, six-petalled blue flower, probably a species of hepatica. No leaves with it. Not described in Gray.

Yellow columbine well out at Lee's, one rod from rock, one rod east of ash.

How plainly we are a part of nature! For we live like the animals around us. All day the cow is cropping the grass of yonder meadow, appropriating, as it were, a part of the solid earth into herself, except when she rests and chews the cud; and from time to time she wends her way to the river and fills her belly with that. Her food and drink are not scarce and precious, but the commonest elements of which nature is composed. The dry land in these latitudes, except in woods and deserts, is almost universally clothed with her food, and there are inland seas, ready mixed, of the wine that she loves. The Mississippi is her drink, the prairie grass her food.

The shrub oak and some other oak leafets, just expanding, now

begin to be pretty.

Within the shell of my box turtle, in the cavity between its thighs and its body, were small dry leaves and seeds, showing where it laid. From these I should say it had come from amidst the alders.

May 18. Ed. Emerson says he saw at Medford yesterday many ground-birds' nests and eggs under apple trees.

R. W. E.'s black currant (which the wild *Ribes floridum* is said to be much like), maybe a day.

R. W. E. says that Agassiz tells him he has had turtles six or seven years, which grew so little, compared with others of the same size killed at first, that he thinks they may live four or five hundred years.

P. M. — To Kalmia Swamp.

Go across fields from R. W. E.'s to my boat at Cardinal Shore. In A. Wheeler's stubble-field west of Deep Cut, a female (?) goldfinch on an oak, without any obvious black, is mewing incessantly, the note ending rather musically. When I get over the fence, a flock of twenty or more, male and female, rise from amid the stubble, and, alighting on the oaks, sing pleasantly all together, in a lively manner.

Going along the Spring Path, hear an oft-repeated *tchip tchar*, *tchip tchar*, etc., or *tchip tcharry* (this is a common note with birds) from a large bird on a tree-top, a sort of flaxen olive. Made me think of a female rose-breasted grosbeak, though we thought the beak more slender.

On the surface of the water amid the maples, on the Holden Wood shore where I landed, I noticed some of the most splendid iridescence or opalescence from some oily matter, where the water was smooth amid the maples, that I ever saw. It was where some sucker or other fish, perchance, had decayed. The colors are intense blue and crimson, with dull golden. The whole at first covering seven or eight inches, but broken by the ripples I have made into polygonal figures like the fragments of a most wonderfully painted mirror. These fragments drift and turn about, apparently, as stiffly on the surface as if they were as thick and strong as glass. The colors are in many places sharply defined in fine lines, making unaccountable figures, as if they were produced by a sudden crystallization. How much color or expression can reside in so thin a substance! With

such accompaniments does a sucker die and mix his juices with the river. This beauty Hke the rainbow and sunset sky marks the spot where his body has mingled with the elements. A somewhat similar beauty reappears painted on the clam's shell. Even a dead sucker suggests a beauty and so a glory of its own. I leaned over the edge of my boat and admired it as much as ever I did a rainbow or sunset sky. The colors were not faint, but strong and fiery, if not angry.

Found a young turtle about two inches long of a flat roundish form, with scales as rough as usual, but a dull reddish or yellowish spot in middle of each scale, and edges beneath were also a pinkish red. Can it be a young yellow-spot?

I have not noticed a tree sparrow since December!

A *Sylvia Americana,* — parti-colored warbler, — in the Holden Wood, sings a, *tshrea tshrea tshrea, tshre' tshritty tshrit*'.

One low *Kalmia glauca,* before any rhodora thereabouts. Several kalmias, no doubt, to-morrow. The rhodora there maybe to-morrow. Elsewhere I find it (on Hubbard's meadow) to-day.

The swamp is all alive with warblers about the hoary expanding buds of oaks, maples, etc., and amid the pine and spruce. They swarm like gnats now. They fill the air with their little *tshree tshree* sprayey notes. I see close by, hopping close up to the main stem of young white pines, what you would call a Maryland yellow-throat, but less chubby, yellow throat, beneath, and vent, and dark under tail, black side; but hear no note. Also another clear pure white beneath, and vent, and side-head; black above, finely marked with yellow; yellow bars on wings; and golden crown; black bill and legs; with a clear, sweet warble like *tche tche tche*, *tchut tchutter we.* Can this be a chestnut-sided warbler, and I not see the chestnut? Hopping amid oak twigs? I think I hear a yellow-throated vireo. Hear a tree-toad.

Sailed back on Hubbard's redstart path, and there saw a mud turtle draw in his head, of which I saw the half, about eight rods off. Pushed to the spot, where the water was about a foot deep, and at length detected him spread out on the bottom, his monstrous head and tail and legs outspread, probably directly under where he had appeared. At first, I suspect, I mistook him for a rock, for he was thickly covered with a short green moss-like conferva (?), — a venerable object, a true son of the meadow, suggesting what vigor!

what naturalness! Perchance to make the moss grow on your back without injuring your health! How many things can he sustain on his shell where the mosses grow? He looked like an antediluvian under that green, shaggy shell, tougher than the rock you mistake it for. No wonder the Indian reverenced him as a god. Think of the time when he was an infant. There is your native American, who was before Columbus, perchance. Grown, not gray, but green with the lapse of ages. Living with the life of the meadow. I took off my coat, stripped up my shirt-sleeve, and caught him by his great rough tail. He snapped at me and my paddle, striking his snout against the side of the boat till he made it bleed. Though I held him down with an oar for a lever and my foot on it, he would suddenly lift all together, or run out his head and knock the oar and my leg aside. He held up his head to me and, with his mouth wide open, hissed in his breathing like a locomotive for a quarter of an hour, and I could look straight down his monstrous gullet ten inches. The only way to hold him and paddle too was to turn him on his back, then, putting the end of a paddle under a seat, slant it over his sternum and press my foot on the other end. He was fourteen and one half inches long by twelve at the broadest places, and weighed twenty-five pounds and three ounces. The claws were an inch and a quarter long beyond the skin, and very stout. You had to exert yourself to turn him over on a plane surface, he held down so firmly with his claws, as if grown to it. He took my hand into his shell with his tail and took the skin off it. The sternum is broadest forward. This turtle was not roundish like the shell I have, but nearly an oblong square; nearly as long as that, but much less wide. The usual number of scallops behind.

I know of a young lady who, when riding, came across one in the road, which not wishing to run over, she got out and tried to drive it out of the way with her whip, but it "screamed" at and terrified her. A caravan could not make him budge under those circumstances.

E. Emerson finds half a dozen yellow violets. A hair-bird's nest building. I hear whip-poor-wills about R. W. E.'s.

May 19. Thick fog in the morning, which lasted late in the forenoon and left behind it rainy clouds for the afternoon.

P. M. — To Cedar Swamp.

Landed at Island Neck, and saw a small striped snake in the act of swallowing a *Rana palustris,* within three feet of the water. The snake, being frightened, released his hold, and the frog hopped off to the water. Hear and see a yellow-throated vireo, which methinks I have heard before. Going and coming, he is in the top of the same swamp white oak and singing indolently, *ullia — eelyay* and sometimes varied to *eelyee.* The tanager is now heard plainly and frequently.

I see running along the water's edge on the Island Neck, amid the twigs, a new bird, slender and somewhat warbler-like, but plainly a *Turdus*, with a deep, dark chocolate-brown back (apparently uniformly), apparently cream-colored beneath, handsomely and abundantly spotted with dark brown, vent white, light flesh-colored legs, yellowish or cream-colored line over eyes. Methinks it teetered or wagged its tail. Flew soon and was quite shy. I think it must have been the *Turdus aquations* from its dark chocolate-brown back and running along the water's edge. Feel pretty sure, yet that is said to have white (?) over eye. I lost it before I had examined fully. Quite a discovery. *Vide* golden-crowned thrush carefully.

Apple in bloom; some, no doubt, earlier. Nighthawk's squeak. Red-wing's nest made, and apparently a kingbird's (?), on black willow four feet above water.

As I sail up the reach of the Assabet above Dove Rock with a fair wind, a traveller riding along the highway is watching my sail while he hums a tune. How inspiring and elysian it is to hear when the traveller or the laborer from a call to his horse or the murmur of ordinary conversation rises into song! It paints the landscape suddenly as no agriculture, no flowery crop that can be raised. It is at once another land, the abode of poetry. I am always thus affected when I hear in the fields any singing or instrumental music at the end of the day. It implies a different life and pursuits than the ordinary. As he looked at my sail, I listened to his singing. Perchance they were equally poetic, and we repaid each other. Why will not men oftener advertise me of musical thoughts? The singer is in the attitude of one inviting the muse, — aspiring.

The Maryland yellow-throat amid the alders sings now, *whit-we-chee whit-we-chee whit-we-chee whit-whit*, the last two fast, or *whit*

alone, or none. Wood pewee. Woolly aphides on alder.

The *Smilacina trifolia* will apparently bloom to-morrow or next day.

Returning, stopped at Barrett's sawmill while it rained a little. Was also attracted by the music of his saw. He was sawing a white oak log; was about to saw a very ugly and knotty white oak log into drag plank, making an angle. Said that about as many logs were brought to his mill as ten years ago, — he did not perceive the difference, — but they were not so large, and perhaps they went further for them. I observed that he was not grinding. No, he said, it was the first day he had not had a grist, though he had plenty of water; probably because the farmers were busy planting. There [were] white oak, pine, maple, and walnut logs waiting to be sawed.

A bullfrog, sluggish, by my boat's place.

On the 13th I saw washed up to the edge of the meadow, this side of Clamshell, portions of one or two large bluish-white eggs, apparently a size larger than hens' eggs, which may have been laid last year by some wild fowl in the meadow.

If my friend would take a quarter part the pains to show me himself that he does to show me a piece of roast beef, I should feel myself irresistibly invited. He says, —

"Come and see
Roast beef and me."

I find the beef fat and well done, but him rare.

May 20. Fir-balsam (ours in grove) apparently two or three days, for it [is] almost entirely effete; cones white, one inch long nearly.

Was awaked and put into sounder sleep than ever early this morning by the distant crashing of thunder, and now, —

P. M. (to Beck Stow's), —

I hear it in mid-afternoon, muttering, crashing in the muggy air in mid-heaven, a little south of the village as I go through it, Hke the tumbHng down of piles of boards, and get a few sprinkles in the sun. Nature has found her hoarse summer voice again, Hke the lowing of a cow let out to pasture. It is Nature's rutting season. Even as the

birds sing tumultuously and glance by with fresh and brilliant plumage, so now is Nature's grandest voice heard, and her sharpest flashes seen. The air has resumed its voice, and the lightning, Hke a yellow spring flower, illumines the dark banks of the clouds. All the pregnant earth is bursting into Hfe Hke a mildew, accompanied with noise and fire and tumult. Some oestrus stings her that she dashes headlong against the steeples and bellows hollowly, making the earth tremble. She comes dropping rain Hke a cow with overflowing udder. The winds drive her; the dry fields milk her. It is the famiHar note of another warbler, just arrived, echoing amid the roofs.

I see, on a locust in the locust *sic*\ burying-ground, the *Sylvia striata*, or black-poll warbler, busily picking about the locust buds and twigs. Black head and above, with olive (green) wings and two white bars; white all beneath, with a very distinct black line from throat to shoulders; flesh-colored legs; bill, dark above, light beneath. Hear no note. Saw it well.

At Moore's Swamp on Bedford road, myriads of pollywogs half an inch long darken or blacken the shore, chiefly head as yet. Bank swallows are very lively about the low sand-bank just beyond, in which are fifty holes.

I now see distinctly the chestnut-sided warbler (of the 18th and 17th), by Beck Stow's. It is very lively on the maples, birches, etc., over the edge [of] the swamp. Sings *eech eech eech* \ *wichy wichy* \ *tchea* or *itch itch itch* | *witty witty* | *tchea.* Yet this note I represented on the 18th by *tche tche tche* | *tchut tchutter we.*

The andromeda has apparently been out several days, but no buck-bean there yet, nor will for a day or two.

See and hear a stake-driver in the swamp. It took one short pull at its pump and stopped. Two marsh hawks, male and female, flew about me a long time, screaming, the female largest, with ragged wings, as I stood on the neck of the peninsula. This induced me to climb four pines, but I tore my clothes, got pitched all over, and found only squirrel; yet they have, no doubt, a nest thereabouts.

Haynes the carpenter calls that large glaucous puff that grows on the *Andromeda paniculata*, swamp-apple; says he has eaten as much as three bushels (!) of them when he was a boy, and likes them. That is what he was raised on.

After I got him home, I observed a large leech on the upper shell of my great turtle. He stoutly resisted being turned over, by sinking his claws into the ground; was aware that that was his weak side, and, when turned, would instantly run out his head and turn himself back. No wonder the Orientals rested the world on such a broad back. Such broad health and strength underlies Nature.

May 21. Wednesday. P. M. — To *Saw* Mill Brook.

Chelidonium. Rubus triflorus abundantly out at the Saw Mill Brook; how long? A robin's nest without mud, on a young white oak in woods, with three eggs. Saw two splendid rose-breasted grosbeaks with females in the young wood in Emerson's lot. What strong-colored fellows, black, white, and fiery rose-red breasts! Strong-natured, too, with their stout bills. A clear, sweet singer, like a tanager but hoarse somewhat, and not shy. The redstarts are inquisitive and hop near. The Polygonatum pubescens there, in shade, almost out; perhaps elsewhere already.

At the trough near Turnpike, near Hosmer's Spring, the (perhaps) Stellaria borealis of the 15th. I am still in doubt whether it is a stellaria or cerastium. This is quite smooth, four to five inches high, spreading and forking, with a single flower each fork, on a long peduncle; square-stemmed, oblong-lanceolate leaves, slightly ciliate and connate: ten stamens, five long, five short. Aspect of a smooth cerastium, but this has four to seven styles, oftenest perhaps five, all apetalous, except one petal shorter than the calyx; leaves one-nerved, sepals three-nerved! The bare and small plants are reddishstemmed. Can it be Stellaria longipes?

The buck-bean in Everett's Pool abundantly out, say four or five days. It is earlier than at B. Stow's. Myosotis laxa by Turnpike, near Hosmer Spring, may have been out several days; two or three at least.

May 22. P. M. — To Viola Muhlenbergii, which is abundantly out; how long? A small pale-blue flower growing in dense bunches, but in spots a little drier than the V. cucullata and blanda. Veronica peregrina, apparently several days. A yellow butterfly over the middle of the flooded meadow. Polygonatum pubescens at rock.

Aralia nudicaulis, apparently a day or two where heat is reflected from the rock on Island. Chokecherry and cratægus there in a day or two. The Cornus florida does not bloom this year. Hemlock and creeping juniper, not quite yet. The red and cream-colored cone-shaped staminate buds of the black spruce will apparently shed pollen in one to three days? They are nearly half an inch long.

I see beds anemones amid or under clumps of hazels, of this form a mass of their pretty leaves and flowers, five or six feet in diameter. I see a common Vaccinium vacillans (?),with a leaf much like that of the V. Pennsylvanicum, also the common V. vacillans with more rounded glaucous leaves.

I noticed a cobweb the other day, between the tholepins of my boat, which was perfectly black with those little fuzzy gnats which fly at that height and take shelter from wind in boats and the hke.

A little clammy hairy cerastium (?) (like a Cerastium *viscosum*, slender and erect), about three inches high, will open in a day or two on the rock near the bass.

May 23. P. M. — To Heywood Spring.

Sorrel well open on west side of railroad causeway against H. Wheeler's land. Noticed the earliest willow catkins turned to masses of cotton yesterday; also a little of the mouse-ear down begins to be loose. Hear often and distinctly, apparently from H. Wheeler's black spruce wood-lot, the *phe phee-ar* of the new muscicapa. Red-eye and wood thrush. Houstonias whiten the fields, and looked yesterday like snow, a sugaring of snow, on the side of Lee's Hill. Heard partridges drum yesterday and to-day. Observed the pads yesterday just begun to spread out on the surface with wrinkled edges and here and there a bullet-like bud; the red white lily pads still more rare as yet.

The stellaria at Heywood Spring must be the same with that near the E. Hosmer Spring, though the former has commonly fewer styles and rather slenderer leaves. It appears to be the *S. borealis*, though the leaves are *narrowly* lanceolate; has three to seven styles; a few petals (cleft almost to the bottom) or none; pods, some larger than the calyx and apparently ten-ribbed; petals, now about the length of the sepals.

After sunset on river.

A warm summer-like night. A bullfrog trumps once. A large devil's-needle goes by after sundown. The ring of toads is loud and incessant. It seems more prolonged than it is. I think it not more than two seconds in each case. At the same time I hear a low, stertorous, dry, but hard-cored note from some frog in the meadows and along the riverside; often heard in past years but not accounted for. Is it a *Rana palustris?*

Dor-bugs hum in the yard, — and were heard against the windows some nights ago. The cat is springing into the air for them.

May 24. Pratt gave me the wing of a sparrow (?) hawk which he shot some months ago. He was coming from his house to his shop early in the morning when he saw this small hawk, which looked like a pigeon, fly past him over the Common with a sparrow in his clutches, and alight about six feet up the south buttonwood in front of Tolman's. Having a small Maynard's revolver in his pocket, loaded with a ball size of a pea, he followed, and, standing twenty-two paces from the tree in the road, aimed and brought down both hawk and sparrow at a distance of about six rods, cutting off the wing of the former with the ball. This he confessed he could not do again if he should try a hundred times. It must be a sparrow hawk, according to Wilson and Nuttall, for the inner vanes of the primaries and secondaries are thickly spotted with brownish white.

Humphrey Buttrick says that he hears the note of the woodcock from the village in April and early in May (too late now); that there were some this year breeding or singing by the riverside in front of Abel Heywood's. He says that when you see one spring right up straight into the air, you may go to the spot, and he will surely come down again after some minutes to within a few feet of the same spot and of you. Has known a partridge to fly at once from one to two miles after being wounded (tracked them by the blood) without alighting. Says he has caught as many as a dozen partridges in his hands. He lies right down on them, or where he knows them to be, then passes his hands back and forth under his body till he feels them. You must not lift your body at all or they will surely squeeze out, and when you feel one must be sure you get hold of their legs or head, and not feathers merely.

To-day is suddenly overpoweringly warm. Thermometer at 1 p m., 94° in the shade! but in the afternoon it suddenly fell to 56, and it continued cold the next two days.

May 25. 10 a m. — To Fair Haven Pond with Blake and Brown.

I found five arrowheads at Clamshell Hill. Saw, just before, on the flat meadow on the right, feeding on the edge of the meadow just left bare, along with the peetweets, a bird a size larger with an apparently light-brown back, a ring or crescent of black on its breast and side of neck, and a black patch including the eye. Can it be the *Charadrius semipalmatus?* or else *Wilsonius?* It looks like the latter in Wilson's larger plates. It reminded me of the piping plover, but was not so white; and of the killdeer, but was not so large.

Pyrus on side of Fair Haven Hill, yesterday at least. Huckleberry there, yesterday also at least. On the Cliffs, orobanche; *Veronica arvensis,* the little one on the rocks there, well out. Also low blackberry on the rocks a day or two. Blackburnian warbler and rosebreasted grosbeak.

Lupines, apparently yesterday. Young phoebes in the Baker house. The bird flitted out as we entered. I reached to an old shelf and felt the warm but callow young. *Azalea nudiflora* in garden. Polygala, fringed, by path beyond Hubbard Grove; how long?

May 27. To Kalmia Swamp with Sanborn.

Fringüla melodia's nest in midst of swamp, with four eggs, made partly of usnea; two stories, *i.e.* upon an old nest, elevated one foot above the water; eggs with very dark blotches. Kalmia in prime, and rhodora. Apparently the oldest-blossomed kalmia the palest. Saw probably a deer mouse jumping off by the side of the swamp; short leaps of apparently ten inches. The pyrus (smooth-leaved) out apparently a day or two. See men fishing, one or two, and often perceived the meadow fragrance.

My three kinds of birch sap have now become more acid, especially the white and canoe birch. The black birch is milder and more agreeable. With sugar it is an agreeable drink. I prefer it to cream-o'-tartar water. This is the real birch wine.

May 28. Rainy.

To Painted-Cup Meadow.

Potentilla argentea, maybe several days. Trifolium pratense.

A seringo or yellow-browed (??) sparrow's nest about ten or twelve rods southwest of house-leek rock, between two rocks which are several rods apart northwest and southeast; four eggs. The nest of coarse grass stubble, lined with fine grass, and is two thirds at least covered by a jutting sod. Egg, bluish-white ground, thickly blotched with brown, yet most like a small groundbird's egg, rather broad at one end, pretty fresh.

A cricket creaks. *Hypoxis erecta*, maybe a day or two. *Thalictrum dioicum* abundantly out, apparently in prime, male and female, some effete, perhaps a week, near wall in Painted-Cup Meadow, fifteen to eighteen inches high.

I think it was a mass of young *Thalictrum Comuti* leaves which had that rank, dog-like scent. Painted-cup pollen a good while ago. Saw, under an apple tree, nearly half a pint of some white grub with a light-reddish head, like a small potato-worm, one inch long, and part of a snake-skin, making the greater part of the fæces of some animal, — chiefly the grubs, — a formless soft mass. Skunk?

May 29. P. M. — Ride to Painted-Cup Meadow.

Two *Arethusa bulbosa* at Hubbard's Close apparently a day or two. Golden senecio there, a day or two, at least. White clover. *Ranunculus repens* (sepals not recurved and leaves a spotted look), apparently a day.

Geum rivale, well out. Common cratægus, apparently some days. *Juniperus communis,* a day or two at least, probably more.

To return to Painted-Cup Meadow, I do not perceive the rank odor of *Thalictrum Comuti* expanding leaves to-day. How more than fugacious it is! Evidently this odor is emitted only at particular times. A cuckoo's note, loud and hollow, from a wood-side. Found a painted-cup with more yellow than usual in it, and at length Edith found one perfectly yellow. What a flowery place, a vale of Enna, is that meadow! Painted-cup, *Erigeron bellidifolius, Thalictrum dioicum, Viola Muhlenbergiiy* fringed polygala, buck-bean, pedicularis, orobanche, etc., etc. Where you find a rare flower, expect

to find more rare ones. Saw sanicle well flower-budded. Cherry-birds on the apple trees. Blue-eyed grass, probably to-morrow.

May 30. P. M. — To Linnæa Wood-lot.

Apparently this flower does not bloom there this year.

The lady's-slipper in pitch pine wood-side near J. Hosmer's Desert, probably about the 27th. That desert, small as it now is (for it is partly reclaimed by using pine boughs as a salve), is scored with circles (like that of Provincetown) made by the dry *Polygonum articulatum* blown about. It is but a lesser Sahara, and I cannot see it without being reminded that, in some parts of the globe, sand prevails like an ocean. What are those black masses of fibrous roots mixed with smaller dark-gray, cone-like tubers, on the sand?

Return *via* Clamshell. Yellow clover abundantly out, though the heads are small yet. Are they quite open? *Comandra umbellata,* apparently a day or two.

Frank Harding caught five good-sized chivin this cold and windy day from the new stone bridge. The biggest one was quite red or coppery; the others but slightly, except the head. Is it a peculiarity of age?

May 31. P. M. — To Clintonia Swamp (Hubbard's) Grove.

A ground-bird's nest *(melodia* or *graminea?),* with six of those oblong narrow gray [eggs] speckled with much brown at end. When I looked again half an hour after, one egg was hatched. The bird would steal out through the grass when I came within a rod, and then, after running a rod or two, take to wing. Tied a string about a low pyrus a rod or so to right of entrance to Hubbard's Pyrus Swamp and two feet west of a pitch pine stump, and pressed a twig of it. Clintonia. *Nuphar advena* first noticed; may have been out some time in *some* places, but just out in river. Pink, common wild, maybe two or three days.

Sundown. — To Hill and Island.

Have noticed within a week, from time to time, the water-line on the bushes along the shore — the water going down — unusually distinct, for while the exposed parts have leaved out, the lower are

quite bare and black.

Hemlock and creeping juniper, where had not bloomed the 22d, are now entirely out of bloom on the hill. How short their flower lasts!

Ranunculus Purshii, probably earlier in some places, but water high. That little cerastium on the rock at the Island, noticed the 22d, which probably opened about that time, is now out of bloom. It is about three inches high and has long pods, more than twice the length of the calyx, which turn upward. I have seen no petals. It *seems* to be the *C. nutans* (?), from size, erectness, and form of pods and leaves. It has viscid hairs or with glands at end. The red oak is so forward, compared with the rest, that it is more difficult to get a sprig in flower small enough (its leaves) to press.

As I return in the dusk, *many* nighthawks, with their great spotted wings, are circling low over the river, as the swallows were when I went out. They skim within a rod of me. After dusk these greater swallows come forth, and circle and play about over the water like those lesser ones, or perhaps making a larger circuit, also uttering a louder note. It would not be safe for such great birds to fly so near and familiarly by day. It has been *very* cold for two or three days, and to-night a frost is feared. The telegraph says it snowed in Bangor to-day. The hickory leaves are blackened by blowing in the cold wind.

JUNE, 1856

June 1. Horse-radish in yard, to-morrow.

Picked up an entire stemothærus shell yesterday, without scales. In the upper shell there appear to be six small segments of shell wholly dorsal, seventeen wholly lateral (nine in front), and twenty-two marginal, forty-five in all. The ribs, in this case spreading out and uniting to form a sharp and tight roof, suggest that ribs were the first rafters. So we turn our backs to the storm and shelter ourselves under this roof. The scales upon the shell answer to the shingles on the roof, breaking joints.

Saw the shell of another turtle, apparently a young painted turtle, one inch long, curiously wrinkled and turned up, like that found in Middleborough. This had been washed up on to meadow some weeks ago, apparently.

P. M. — To Walden.

Somewhat warmer at last, after several very cold, as well as windy and rainy, days. Was soothed and cheered by I knew not what at first, but soon detected the now more general creak of crickets. A striped yellow bug in fields. Most of the leaves of the *Polygonatum pubescens* which I gathered yesterday at Island had been eaten up by some creature.

A chewink's nest a rod and a half south of Walden road, opposite Goose Pond path, under a young oak, covered by overarching dry sedge; four eggs, *pretty* fresh. I am pretty sure the bird uttered the unusual hoarse and distressed note while I was looking at them.

Linaria Canadensis on Emerson Cliff. Rock-rose, a day or two there. Whiteweed by railroad at pond to-morrow. Cotton-grass, several days before the 29th May. Heard a quail whistle May 30th. The late cratægus on hill, about May 31st.

June 2. *Carum, i.e.* caraway, in garden. Saw most hummingbirds when cherries were in bloom, — on them.

P. M. — With R. W. E. to Perez Blood's auction.

Telescope sold for fifty-five dollars; cost ninety-five plus ten. See Camilla on rye, undulating light and shade; not 19th of April.

Returned by bridle-road. *Myrica cerifera*, possibly yesterday. Very few buds shed pollen yet; more, probably, to-day. Leaves nearly an inch long, and shoot and all no more. English hawthorn will open apparently in two days.

Agassiz tells his class that the intestinal worms in the mouse are not developed except in the stomach of the cat.

30 — p m. — To *Azalea nudiflora*, which is in prime. *Ranunculus recurvatus* the same; how long? White maple keys conspicuous.

In the first volume of Brewster's "Life of Newton" I read that with one of the early telescopes they could read the "Philosophical Transactions" at five hundred feet distance.

June 3. *Tuesday.* Surveying for John Hosmer beyond pail-factory.

Hosmer says that seedling white birches do not grow larger than your arm, but cut them down and they spring up again and grow larger.

While clearing a line through shrub oak, which put his eyes out, he asked, "What is shrub oak made for?" R. Hoar, I believe, bought that (formerly) pine lot of Loring's which is now coming up shrub oak. Hosmer says that he will not see any decent wood there as long as he lives. H. says he had a lot of pine in Sudbury, which being cut, shrub oak came up. He cut and burned and raised rye, and the next year (it being surrounded by pine woods on three sides) a dense growth of pine sprang up.

As I have said before, it seems to me that the squirrels, etc., disperse the acorns, etc., amid the pines, they being a covert for them to lurk in, and when the pines are cut the fuzzy shrub oaks, etc., have the start. If you cut the shrub oak soon, probably pines or birches, maples, or other trees which have light seeds will spring next, because squirrels, etc., will not be likely to carry acorns into open land. If the pine wood had been surrounded by white oak, probably that would have come up after the pine.

While running a line in the woods, close to the water, on the southwest side of Loring's Pond, I observed a chickadee sitting quietly within a few feet. Suspecting a nest, I looked and found it in a small hollow maple stump which was about five inches in diameter and two feet high. I looked down about a foot and could just discern

the eggs. Breaking off a little, I managed to get my hand in and took out some eggs. There were seven, making by their number an unusual figure as they lay in the nest, a sort of egg rosette, a circle around with one (or more) in the middle. In the meanwhile the bird sat silent, though rather restless, within three feet. The nest was very thick and warm, of average depth, and made of the bluish-slate rabbit's (?) fur. The eggs were a perfect oval, five eighths inch long, white with small reddish-brown or rusty spots, especially about larger end, partly developed. The bird sat on the remaining eggs next day. I called off the boy in another direction that he might not find it.

Plucked a white lily pad with rounded sinus and lobes in Loring's Pond, a variety.

Picked up a young wood tortoise, about an inch and a half long, but very orbicular. Its scales very distinct, and as usual very finely and distinctly sculptured, but there was no orange on it, only buff or leather-color on the sides beneath. So the one of similar rounded form and size and with distinct scales but faint yellow spots on back must have been a young spotted turtle, I think, after all.

June 4. Surveying for J. Hosmer.

Very warm.

While running a line on the west edge of Loring's Pond, south of the brook, found, on a hummock in the open swamp, in the midst of bushes, at the foot of a pitch pine, a nest about ten inches over, made of dry sedge and moss. I think it must have been a duck's nest. This pond and its islets, half flooded and inaccessible, afford excellent places.

Anthony Wright says that he used to get slippery elm bark from a place southwest of Wetherbee's Mill, about ten rods south of the brook. He says there was once a house at head of hollow next beyond Clamshell. Pointed out the site of "Perch" Hosmer's house in the small field south of road this side of Cozzens's; all smooth now. Dr. Heywood worked over him a fortnight, while the perch was dissolving in his throat. He got little compassion generally, and the nickname "Perch" into the bargain. Think of going to sleep for fourteen nights with a perch, his fins set and his scales (!), dissolving in your throat!! What dreams! What waking thoughts! Also showed

where one Shaw, whom he could just remember, used to live, in the low field north of Dennis's bam, and also another family in another house by, him.

English hawthorn from Poplar Hill blossoms in house.

June 5. *Thursday.* P. M. — To Indian Ditch.

Achillea Millefolium. Black cherry, apparently yesterday. The *Muscicapa Cooperi* sings *pe pe pe',* sitting on the top of a pine, and shows white rump (?), etc., unlike kingbird.

Return by J. Hosmer Desert.

Everywhere now in dry pitch pine woods stand the red lady's-slippers over the red pine leaves on the forest floor, rejoicing in June, with their two broad curving green leaves, — some even in swamps. Uphold their rich, striped red, drooping sack. This while rye begins to wave richly in the fields.

A brown thrasher's nest with four eggs considerably developed, under a small white pine on the old north edge of the desert, lined with root-fibres. The bird utters its peculiar *tchuck* near by.

Pitch pine out, the first noticed on low land, *maybe* a day or two. Froth on pitch pine.

A blue jay's nest on a white pine, eight feet from ground, next to the stem, of twigs lined with root-fibres; three fresh eggs, dark dull greenish, with dusky spots equally distributed all over, in Hosmer (?) pines twenty-seven paces east of wall and fifty-seven from factory road by wall. Jay screams as usual. Sat till I got within ten feet at first.

A cuckoo's nest with three light bluish-green eggs partly developed, short with rounded ends, nearly of a size; in the thicket up railroad this side high wood, in a black cherry that had been lopped three feet from ground, amid the thick sprouts; a nest of nearly average depth (?), of twigs lined with *green* leaves, pine-needles, etc., and edged with some dry, branchy weeds. The bird stole off silently at first. Five rods south of railroad.

I must call that cerastium of May 22d *C. nutans* (??), at least for the present, though I do not see grooves in stem. Oakes, in his catalogue in Thompson's "History of Vermont," says it is not found in northeast out of that State. The pods of the common one also turn

upward. It is about four flowered; no petals; pods, which have formed in tumbler, more than twice but not thrice as long as calyx, bent down nearly at right angles with peduncles and then *curving upward.* The common cerastium is in tufts, spreading, a darker green and much larger, hairy but not glutinous, pods but little longer than calyx (as yet) and upright.

June 6. P. M. — To Andromeda Ponds.

Cold mizzling weather.

In the large circular hole or cellar at the turntable on the railroad, which they are repairing, I see a starnosed mole endeavoring in vain to bury himself in the sandy and gravelly bottom. Some inhuman fellow has cut off his tail. It is blue-black with much fur, a very thick, plump animal, apparently some four inches long, but he occasionally shortens himself a third or more. Looks as fat as a fat hog. His fore feet are large and set sidewise or on their edges, and with these he shovels the earth aside, while his large, long, starred snout is feeling the way and breaking ground. I see deep indentations in his fur where his eyes are situated, and once I saw distinctly his eye open, a dull blue (?) black bead, not so very small, and he very plainly noticed my movements two feet off. He was using his eye as plainly as any creature that I ever saw. Yet Emmons says it is a question whether their eyes are not merely rudimentary. I suppose this was the *Condylura macroura*, since that is most common, but only an inch of its tail was left, and that was quite stout. I carried him along to plowed ground, where he buried himself in a minute or two.

Still see cherry-birds in flocks of five or six. A catbird-nest on shore of Andromeda and in shrub oak, three feet high, twigs and bark shreds lined with root-fibres; three eggs. Those nests in the andromeda are blackbird's. Many sound the alarm while I am wading through the swamp. Noticed one with three eggs.

That willow, male and female, opposite to Trillium Woods on the railroad, I find to be the *Salix rostrata*, or long-beaked willow, one of the *ochre-flowered* (I had remarked the peculiar yellow of its flowers) willows (*fulvæ)* of Barratt. It is now just beginning to open its long beaks. The *S. cordata* is another of the ochre-flowered ones.

How well suited the lining of a bird's nest, not only for the

comfort of the young, but to keep the eggs from breaking! Fine elastic grass stems or root-fibres, pine-needles, or hair, or the like. These tender and brittle things which you can hardly carry in cotton lie there without harm.

J. Hosmer, who is prosecuting Warner for flowing his land, says that the trees are not only broken off when young by weight of ice, but, being rubbed and barked by it, become warty or bulge out there.

June 8. We have had six days either rain-threatening or rainy, the last two somewhat rainy or mizzling.

P. M. — To Cedar Swamp.

Pulled up a yellow lily root, four feet long and branching, two and a half inches [in] diameter and about same size at each end where it had broken off, tree-like. Broken off, it floats. Great white rootlets put out all along it.

I find no *Andromeda racemosa* in flower. It is dead at top and slightly leafed below. Was it the severe winter, or cutting off the protecting evergreens? It grows four or five rods from knoll near a sawed stump between two large red maple clumps. The three-leaved Solomon's-seal has almost entirely done, while the two leaved is quite abundant. *Stellaria longifolia* opposite Barbarea Shore not yet out. It is obviously different from what I call *S. borealis*, much more tall (one foot high) and upright, with branches ascending (not spreading) (the other grows in a dense mass at Comer Spring); leaves longer and more linear, and not at all ciliate like the other; stem much sharper-angled, almost winged; flower-buds more long and slender; and grows in high grass and is later.

I observe in a mass of damp shavings and leaves and sand there, in the shade, a little prostrate willow just coming into flower, perhaps a black willow. Pulling it up, I find it to be a twig about sixteen inches long, two thirds buried in the damp mass. This was probably broken off by the ice, brought down, washed up, and buried like a layer there; and now, for two thirds its length, it has put out rootlets an inch or two long abundantly, and leaves and catkins from the part above ground. So vivacious is the willow, availing itself of every accident to spread along the river's bank. The ice that strips it only disperses it the more widely. It never says die. May I be as vivacious

as a willow. Some species are so brittle at the base of the twigs that they break on the least touch, but they are as tough above as tender at base, and these twigs are only thus shed like seeds which float away and plant themselves in the first bank on which they lodge. I commonly litter my boat with a shower of these black willow twigs whenever I run into them.

A kingbird's nest on a black cherry, above Barbarea Shore, loosely constructed, with some long white rags dangling; one egg. At Cedar Swamp, saw the pe-pe catching flies like a wood pewee, darting from its perch on a dead cedar twig from time to time and returning to it. It appeared to have a black crown with some crest, yellowish (?) bill, gray-brown back, black tail, two faint whitish bars on wings, a dirty cream-white throat, and a gray or ash white breast and beneath, whitest in middle.

I had noticed when coming up the river two or three dead suckers, one with a remarkable redness about the anal fins; and this reminded me of the ephemerae. It was the 2d of June, 1854, that I observed them in such numbers. When I returned to my boat, about five, the weather being mizzling enough to require an umbrella, with an easterly wind and dark for the hour, my boat being by chance at the same place where it was in'54, I noticed a great flight of ephemerae over the water, though not so great as that. The greater part were flying down-stream against the wind, but if you watched one long enough you would see him suddenly turn at length and fly swiftly back up the stream. They advanced against the wind faster than I floated along. They were not coupled nor coupling, — I only noticed two coupled, — but flew, most of them, with their bodies curved, or more, and from time to time each one descended to the water and touched it, or rested on it a second or two, sometimes several minutes. They were generally able to rise, but very often before it arose, or not being able to rise, it was seized by a fish. While some are flying down they are met by others coming up. The water was dimpled with the leaping fish. They reach about ten or fifteen feet high over the water, and I also saw a stream of them about as thick over a narrow meadow a dozen rods from the water in the woods. The weather was evidently unfavorable, what with the wind and the rain, and they were more or less confined to the shore, hovering high

over the bushes and trees, where the wind was strong over the river. I had not noticed any on leaves. At one place, against Dodge's Brook, where they were driven back by a strong head wind at a bend, more than usual were wrecked on the water and the fishes were leaping more numerously than elsewhere. The river was quite alive with them, and I had not thought there were so many in it, — great black heads and tails continually thrust up on all sides of my boat. You had only to keep your eye on a floating fly a minute to see some fishy monster rise and swallow it with more or less skill and plashing. Some skillfully seized their prey without much plashing, rising in a low curve and just showing their backs; others rose up perpendicularly, half their length out of water, showing their black backs or white bellies or gleaming sides; others made a noisy rush at their prey and leaped entirely out of water, falling with a loud plash. You saw twenty black points at once. They seemed to be suckers; large fish, at any rate, and probably various kinds. What a sudden surfeit the fishes must have!

They are of various sizes, but generally their solid bodies about three quarters of an inch long or less, yellowish tinge, transparent, with rows of brown spots; wings gauze-like, with a few opaque brown spots.

June 9. P. M. — To Comer Spring.

Without an umbrella, thinking the weather settled at last. There are some large cumuli with glowing downy cheeks floating about. Now I notice where an elm is in the shadow of a cloud, — the black elm-tops and shadows of June. It is a dark eyelash which suggests a flashing eye beneath. It suggests houses that lie under the shade, the repose and siesta of summer noons, the thunder-cloud, bathing, and all that belongs to summer. These veils are now spread here and there over the village. It suggests also the creak of crickets, a June sound now fairly begun, inducing contemplation and philosophic thoughts, — the sultry hum of insects.

A yellowbird's nest in a poplar on Hubbard's Bridge causeway; four fresh eggs; ten feet high, three rods beyond fence. *Veronica scutellata* (how long?) at Comer Spring. Compelled to squat under a bank and stand under a wood-pile through a shower.

6.30 p m. — Up Assabet.

Again, about seven, the ephemeræ came out, in numbers as many as last night, now many of them coupled, even tripled; and the fishes leap as before.

A young robin abroad.

June 10. 8 a m. — Getting lily pads opposite Badger's.

Already the pads are much eaten before they are grown, and underneath, on the under side of almost every one, are the eggs of various species of insect, some so minute as to escape detection at first, in close, flat, straight-sided nests.

The yellow lily and kalmiana are abundantly out. The under sides of the pads, their stems, and the *Ranunculus Purshii* and other water-plants are thickly covered and defiled with the sloughs, perhaps of those little fuzzy gnats (in their first state) which have so swarmed over the river. It is quite difficult to clean your specimens of them.

P. M. — To Dugan Desert.

Comus alternifolia a day or two, up railroad; maybe longer elsewhere. *Spergularia rubra* by railroad, it having been dug up last year, and so delayed.

The cuckoo of June 5th has deserted her nest, and I find the fragments of egg-shells in it; probably because I found it.

Oxalis freshly out; how long? Apparently but two or three days. I find *some* linnæa well out, after all, within a rod of the top of the hill, apparently two or three days. If it flowered more abundantly, probably it would be earlier. Chewink's nest with four young in the dry sprout-land of Loring's thick wood that was, under a completely overarching tuft of dry sedge grass. I hear the huckleberry-bird now add to its usual strain *a-tea tea tea tea tea.*

A painted tortoise laying her eggs ten feet from the wheel-track on the Marlborough road. She paused at first, but I sat down within two feet, and she soon resumed her work. Had excavated a hollow about five inches wide and six long in the moistened sand, and cautiously, with long intervals, she continued her work, resting always on the same spot her fore feet, and never looking round, her eye shut all but a narrow slit. Whenever I moved, perhaps to brush off a mosquito,

she paused. A wagon approached, rumbling afar off, and then there was a pause, till it had passed and long, long after, a tedious, *naturlangsam* pause of the slow-blooded creature, a sacrifice of time such as those animals are up to which slumber half a year and live for centuries. It was twenty minutes before I discovered that she was not making the hole but filling it up slowly, having laid her eggs. She drew the moistened sand under herself, scraping it along from behind with both feet brought together, the claws turned inward. In the long pauses the ants troubled her (as mosquitoes me) by running over her eyes, which made her snap or dart out her head suddenly, striking the shell. She did not dance on the sand, nor finish covering the hollow quite so carefully as the one observed last year. She went off suddenly (and quickly at first), with a slow but sure instinct through the wood toward the swamp.

The clustered blackberry of Dugan Desert not yet out, nor apparently for two or three days. Sweet viburnum apparently two or three days at most, by Warren Miles's, Nut Meadow Pond.

In a hollow apple tree, hole eighteen inches deep, young pigeon woodpeckers, large and well feathered. They utter their squeaking hiss whenever I cover the hole with my hand, apparently taking it for the approach of the mother. A strong, rank fetid smell issues from the hole.

Ripe strawberries, even in a meadow on sand thrown out of a ditch, hard at first to detect amid the red radical leaves.

The flower-buds of late there have now that rank smell. Lambkill out, at Clamshell. The *Cratcegus Crus-Galli* is out of bloom. *Arenaria serpyllifolia* is out of bloom at Clamshell.

Side-flowering sandwort abundantly out this side of Dugan Spring. Solanum well out, by Wood's Bridge.

June 11. P. M. — To Flint's Pond.

The locust in graveyard shows but few blossoms yet. It is very hot this afternoon, and that peculiar stillness of summer noons now reigns in the woods. I observe and appreciate the shade, as it were the shadow of each particular leaf on the ground. I think that this peculiar darkness of the shade, or of the foliage as seen between you and the sky, is not accounted for merely by saying that we have not

yet got accustomed to clothed trees, but the leaves are rapidly acquiring a darker green, are more and more opaque, and, besides, the sky is lit with the intensest light. It reminds me of the thunder-cloud and the dark eyelash of summer. Great cumuli are slowly drifting in the intensely blue sky, with glowing white borders. The red-eye sings incessant, and the more indolent yellow-throat vireo, and the creeper, and perhaps the redstart? or else it is the parti-colored warbler.

I perceive that scent from the young sweet-fern shoots and withered blossoms which made the first settlers of Concord to faint on their journey.

Saw yesterday a *great* yellow butterfly with black marks.

See under an apple tree, at entrance of Goose Pond Path from Walden road, a great fungus with hollow white stem, eight or nine inches high, whose black funereal top has melted this morning, leaving a black centre with thin white scales on it. All the cistuses are shut now that I see, and also the veiny-leaved hieracium with one leaf on its stem, not long open. I notice no white lily pads near the bathing-rock in Flint's Pond. See a bream's nest two and a quarter feet [in] diameter, laboriously scooped out, and the surrounding bottom for a diameter of eight feet (!!) comparatively white and clean, while all beyond is mud and leaves, etc., and a very large green and cupreous bream with a red spot on the operculum is poised over the centre, while half a dozen shiners are hovering about, apparently watching a chance to steal the spawn.

A partridge with young in the Saw Mill Brook path. Could hardly tell what kind of creature it was at first, it made such a noise and fluttering amid the weeds and bushes. Finally ran off with its body flat and wings somewhat spread.

Utricularia vulgaris very abundant in Everett's Pool. A beautiful grass-green snake about fifteen inches long, light beneath, with a yellow space under the eyes along the edge of the upper jaw.

The *Rubus triflorus* apparently out of bloom at Saw Mill, before the high blackberry has begun.

Rice tells me he found a turtle dove's nest on an apple tree near his farm in Sudbury two years ago, with white eggs; so thin a bottom you could see the eggs through.

June 12. P. M. — To Conantum on foot.

Sophia has sent me, in a letter from Worcester, part of an orchis in bloom, apparently *Platanthera Hookeri* (?), or smaller round-leafed orchis, from the Hermitage Wood, so called, northeast of the town; but the two leaves are elliptical. *Utricularia vulgaris* was abundantly out yesterday in Everett's Pool; how long? Sidesaddle-flower numerously out now. Apparently a small pewee nest on apple in Miles's meadow. Bird on, and not to be frightened off, though I throw sticks and climb the tree to near her.

June 13. *Friday.* To Worcester.

See the common iris in meadow in Acton. Brown shows me from his window the word "guano" written on the grass in afield near the hospital, say three quarters of a mile distant. It was one of the lions of Worcester last year, and I can now read some of the letters distinctly, so permanent are the effects of the guano. The letters may be two or more rods long, and the green is darker and more luxuriant. (On the side of a hill.)

June 14. Walk to Hermitage Woods with Sophia and aunts. *Uvularia perfoliata* very common there; now out of bloom. *Rhamnus cathartica*, common buckthorn, naturalized in those woods, now going out of bloom. It is dioecious, twelve feet high, north side. Maple-leaved viburnum out a day or more there apparently. Mallows abundantly out in street.

June 15. Mrs. Brown reads a letter from John Downs in Philadelphia to Mr. Brown, in which he remembers his early youth in Shrewsbury and the pout accompanied by her young. A Miss Martha Le Barron describes to me a phosphorescence on the beach at night in Narragansett Bay. They wrote their names with some minute creatures on the sand.

P. M. — To some woods southwest of Worcester.

The moist bass bark just stripped from a sapling swells very like a cucumber. All three of us were struck by it. A night-flowering cereus opens three or four times at a Mrs. Newton's while I am there. Once

it opened at about 9 p m., and closed and drooped and came to an end like a wet rag wrung out, at daylight. Transient as my mushroom. Was about a foot in diameter, but an ordinary stem, like the turkey's feet. Diervilla well out.

June 16. Saw at the Natural History Rooms a shell labelled *Haliotis splendens,* apparently same with mine from Ricketson's son, with holes and green reflections.

To Purgatory in Sutton: by railroad to Wilkinsonville in the northeast corner of Sutton (thirty cents) and by buggy four or five miles to Purgatory in the south or southeast part of the town, some twelve miles from Worcester.

The stream rising from the bottom of it must empty into the Blackstone, perhaps through the Mumford River. Sutton is much wooded. The woman at the last house told [of] an animal seen in the neighborhood last year. Well, she "had no doubt that there had been a bad animal about." A Mr. Somebody, who could be relied on, between there and Sutton Centre, had been aroused by [a] noise early one morning, and, looking out, saw this animal near a wood-pile in his yard, as big as a good-sized dog. He soon made off, making nothing of the walls and fences, before he and his sons got their guns ready. They raised part of the town, a body of shoemakers, and surrounded a swamp into which it was supposed to have entered, but they did not dare to go into it. Also a strange large track was seen where it crossed the road.

Found at the very bottom of this Purgatory, where it was dark and damp, on the steep moss and fern covered side of a rock which had fallen into it, a wood thrush's nest. Scarcely a doubt of the bird, though I saw not its breast fairly. Heard the note around, and the eggs (one of which I have) correspond. Nest of fine moss from the rock (hypnum?), and lined with pine-needles; three eggs, fresh.

Found in the Purgatory the panicled elder (*Sambucm* pubens), partly gone to ribbed seed, but some in flower, new to me; *Polygonum cilinode* (?), not yet in flower; moose-wood or striped maple; and also, close by above, *Actæa alba*, out of bloom; and a chestnut oak common. Cow-wheat numerously out. Heard around, from within the Purgatory, not only Wilson's thrush, but evergreen-

forest note and tanager; and saw chip-squirrels within it.

June 17. Go to Blake's.

Indigo-bird on his trees.

A. M. — Ride with him and Brown and Sophia round a part of Quinsigamond Pond into Shrewsbury.

The southerly end of the pond covered for a great distance with pads of yellow and white lily. Measured one of the last: nine and seven eighths inches long by nine and six eighths, with sharp lobes, etc., and a reddish petiole. Small primrose well out; how long? The cedar swamp, source of Assabet, must be partly in Grafton, as well as Westboro near railroad, according to a farmer in Shrewsbury.

P. M. — Went to Rev. Horace James's reptiles (Orthodox).

He had, set up, a barred owl, without horns and a little less than the cat owl. Also a large lobe-footed bird which I think must have been a large grebe, killed in Fitchburg. He distinguished the *Rana halecina* in the alcohol by more squarish (?) spots. Showed me the horned frog (?), (or toad?); also alive in bottle, with moss and water, the violet-colored salamander *(S. venenosa)* with yellow spots (five or six inches long), probably same I found in stump at Walden; and, in spirits, smaller, the *S. erythronota*, with a conspicuous red back. What looked like mine, or the common one in springs here, was *Triton niger.* I think he said Holbrook made the water ones tritons and land ones salamanders. Another small one, all red, with spots; another with a line of red spots on each side; and others. He finds a variety of *Emys guttata* with striated scales (mentioned by Holbrook and Storer). Saw a common box turtle shell with initials in sternum. One thought that whatever was cut in the scale was renewed in the new scale. Saw, in spirits, the *Heterodon platyrhinus* from Smithfield, R. I., fiat-snouted, somewhat like a striped snake; and a very small brown snake. James gave me some of the spawn of a shellfish from a string of them a foot long.

At Natural History Rooms, a great cone from a southern pine and a monstrous nutshell from the East Indies (?); seed of the *Lodoicea Sechellarurum* Seychelles Islands.

June 18. Hale says the tiarella grows here, and showed it me pressed; also *Kalmia glauca* formerly, hobble-bush still, and yellow lady's-slipper near the Quarry.

June 19. Looked at a collection of the rarer plants made by Higginson and placed at the Natural History Rooms. Among which noticed: —

Ranunculus Purshii varieties a and b, with no difference apparent, unless in upper leaves being more or less divided.

Ribes lacustre, or swamp gooseberry, with a loose raceme such as I have not seen, from White Mountains.

A circæa, or enchanter's-nightshade, with a very large raceme and with longer branchlets than I have seen, methinks.

Calla palustris, very different from the *Peltandra Virginica.*

Cerastium arvense, with linear leaves, quite new to me.

Smilacina stellata, from Dr. Harris, very different from the *racemosa,* being simple.

Ledum latifolium, from White Mountains, rather broader-leafed than mine from Maine.

Barbarea sativa, from Cambridge, apparently like my *B. vulgaris.*

Is the *Smilacina racemosa* with such long lower branchlets peculiar, there in Worcester? I saw several in woods.

On way to Concord see mountain laurel out in Lancaster. Had seen none out in Worcester.

June 20. *Friday.* A. M. — To Baker Farm with Ricketson.

A very hot day.

Two *Sternothœrus odoratus* by heap in Sanborn's garden, one making a hole for its eggs, the rear of its shell partly covered. See a great many of these out to-day on ground and on willows.

Swamp-pink out apparently two or three days at Clamshell Ditch. Late thalictrum apparently a day or two there. Archangelica apparently two or three days.

A phœbe nest, second time, with four cream-white eggs. Got one. The second brood in the same nest. Saw a snap-turtle out in sun on tussock opposite Bittern Cliff. Probably the water was too warm for

him. They had at Middlesex House, yesterday, snuff flavored with ground or pulverized black birch bark.

Walking under an apple tree in the little Baker Farm peach orchard, heard an incessant shrill musical twitter or peeping, as from young birds, over my head, and, looking up, saw a hole in an upright dead bough, some fifteen feet from ground. Climbed up and, finding that the shrill twitter came from it, guessed it to be the nest of a downy woodpecker, which proved to be the case, — for it reminded me of the hissing squeak or squeaking hiss of young pigeon woodpeckers, but this was more musical or bird-like. The bough was about four and a half inches in diameter, and the hole perfectly circular, about an inch and a quarter in diameter. Apparently nests had been in holes above, now broken out, higher up. When I put my fingers in it, the young breathed their shrill twitter louder than ever. Anon the old appeared, and came quite near, while I stood in the tree, keeping up an incessant loud and shrill scolding note, and also after I descended; not to be relieved.

Potentilla Norvegica; apparently petals blown away. Five young phcebes in a nest, apparently upon a swallow-nest, in Conant's old house, just ready to fly. *Rudbechia hirta* budded.

June 21. P. M. — To Walden.

Much pine pollen is washed up on the northwest side of the pond. Must it not have come from pines at a distance? Very hot day, as was yesterday, — 98° at 2 p m., 99° at 3, and 128° in sun. Nighthawks numerously squeak at 5 p m. and boom. Saw them fly low and touch the water like swallows over Walden. Find a dozen of the hydropeltis out, apparently several days. My canoe birch wine smells and tastes like mead considerably. All my birch wines are now more acid and very good indeed with sugar. Am surprised to see it effervesce, all white with white sugar only, like a soda-water.

June 22. *Sunday.* P. M. — To Walden.

Ricketson says that they say at New Bedford that the song sparrow says, *Maids*, *maids*, *maids*, — *hang on your tea-kettle-ettle-ettle-ettle-ettle.*

R. W. E. imitates the wood thrush by *he willy willy — ha willy*

willy — O willy O. The woods still resound with the note of my tweezer-bird, or *Sylvia Americana.*

June 23. To New Bedford with Ricketson.

In R.'s mowing, apparently lucerne, out some days. His son Walton showed me one of four perfectly white eggs taken from a hole in an apple tree eight feet from ground. I examined the hole. He had seen a bluebird there, and I saw a blue feather in it and apparently a bluebird's nest. Were not these the eggs of a downy woodpecker laid in a bluebird's nest? They were all gone now.

Bay-wings sang morning and evening about R.'s house, often sitting on a bean-pole and dropping down and running and singing on the bare ground amid the potatoes. Its note somewhat like Come, *here here*, *there there*,

29 — quick quick quick (fast), — or I'm gone.

Prinos lævigatus common and just begun to bloom behind R.'s house.

June 24. To Sassacowen Pond and to Long Pond.

Common yellow thistle abundant about R.'s; open a good while. Maryland yellow-throats very common in bushes behind his house; nest with young. American holly now in prime. The light-colored masses of mountain laurel were visible across Sassacowen. A kingbird's nest just completed in an apple tree.

Lunched by the spring on the Brady farm in Freetown, and there it occurred to me how to get clear water from a spring when the surface is covered with dust or insects. Thrust your dipper down deep in the middle of the spring and lift it up quickly straight and square. This will heap up the water in the middle so that the scum will run off.

We were surrounded by whiteweed. The week before I had seen it equally abundant in Worcester (in many fields the flowers placed in one plane would more than cover the surface), and here as there each flower had a dark ring of small black insects on its disk. Think of the many dense white fields between here and there, aye and for a thousand miles around, and then calculate the amount of insect life of one obscure species!

Went off to Nelson's Island (now Briggs's) in Long Pond by a

long, very narrow bar (fifty rods as I paced it), in some places the water over shoes and the sand commonly only three or four feet wide. This is a noble island, maybe of eight or ten acres, some thirty feet high and just enough wooded, with grass ground and grassy hollows. There was a beech wood at the west end, where R.'s son Walton found an arrowhead when they were here before, and the hemlocks resounded with the note of the tweezer-bird *(Sylvia Americana).* There were many ephemerae half dead on the bushes. R. dreams of residing here.

June 25. An abundance of the handsome corncockle *(Lychnis),* apparently in prime, in midst of a rye-field, together with morning-glories by the Acushnet shore. Black-grass in bloom, partly done. A kind of rush (?) with terete leaves and a long spike of flowers, one to two feet high, *somewhat* like a loose plantain spike. It inclines to grow in circles a foot or more in diameter. Seaside plantain and rosemary, not long out. *Veronica arvensis* one foot high (!) on the shore there. *Spergularia rubra* var *marina.*

P. M. — Called at Thomas A. Greene's in New Bedford, said to be best acquainted with the botany of this vicinity (also acquainted with shells, and somewhat with geology). In answer to my question what were the rare or peculiar plants thereabouts, he looked over his botany deliberately and named the *Aletris farinosa*, or star-grass; the *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* (probably *intcrrupta* of Gray), which he thought was now gone; *Proserpinaca pectinacea,* at the shallow pond in Westport where I went last fall with Ricketson; *Panax trifolium*. That chenopodium-like plant on the salt-marsh shore, with hastate leaves, mealy under sides, is *Atriplex patula*, not yet out.

Brewer, in a communication to Audubon (as I read in his hundred(?)-dollar edition), makes two kinds of song sparrows, and says that Audubon has represented one, the most common about houses, with a spot in the centre of the breast, and Wilson the other, more universally spotted on the breast. The latter's nest will be two feet high in a bush and sometimes covered over and with an arched entrance and with six eggs (while the other has not more than five), larger and less pointed than the former's and apparently almost wholly rusty-brown. This builds further from houses.

June 26. *Thursday.* In Loudon's "Encyclopaedia of Agriculture" *far* (of the Romans) is translated Indian corn or *zea!*

According to Audubon's and Wilson's plates, the *Fringilla passerina* has a for the most part clear yellowish-white breast, but the Savannah sparrow no conspicuous yellow on shoulder, a yellow brow, and white crown line. Rode to Sconticut Neck or Point in Fair Haven, five or six miles, and saw, apparently, the *F. savanna* near their nests (my seringo note), restlessly flitting about me from rock to rock within a rod. Distinctly yellow-browed and spotted breast, not like plate of *passerina.* Audubon says that the eggs of the Savannah sparrow "are of a pale bluish color, softly mottled with purplish brown," and those of the yellow-winged sparrow are "of a dingy white, sprinkled with brown spots." The former is apparently my seringo's egg of May 28th. Is not Nuttall mistaken when he describes the notes of the Savannah sparrow in March in Georgia as "very long, piping, and elevated" and says that they sometimes have a note like a cricket? Audubon refers to the last note only.

Saw a farmer on the Neck with one of Palmer's patent wooden legs. He went but little lame and said that he did his own mowing and most of his ordinary farm work, though plowing in the present state of his limb, which had not yet healed, wrenched him some. He had lost a leg just below the knee, and was supported mainly on his thigh above the stump.

The older houses about New Bedford, as on this neck (and one a hundred years old is an old one), have commonly stone chimneys, which are agreeable to my eye and built with more taste than brick ordinarily, *i.e.* more elaborately. Yet they are now pulled down and brick substituted, or else concealed with a coat of mortar!

This neck, like the New Bedford country generally, is very flat to my eye, even as far inland as Middleborough. When R. decided to take another road home from the latter place, because it was less hilly, I said I had not observed a hill in all our ride. I found on the rocky and rather desolate extremity of this point the common *Oxalis stricta* on the seashore, abundant, going to seed; apparently carrots (?) naturalized; atriplex not yet out; beach pea, still out and going to seed. An abundance of the small iris in the field near by. It was thick

weather, after a drizzling forenoon, and we could just see across Buzzard's Bay from the point to Falmouth. Mattapoisett was the point next above on this side. I had been expecting to find the aletris about New Bedford, and when taking our luncheon on this neck what should I see rising above the luncheon-box, between me and R., but what I knew must be the *Aletris farinosa;* not yet out, but one near by would open apparently in two or three days.

I was struck by the number of quails thereabouts, and elsewhere in this vicinity. They keep up an incessant whistling these days, as also about R.'s house, within a stone's throw of it; and I several times saw them in the middle of the road in front of his house, in coveys, and on the road fence there. Also saw cow-birds in flocks on the road there. Around R.'s shanty was heard an incessant whistling of quails, and, morning and evening, the strain of the bay-wing, and some rather feeble purple finches, young males without the purple, dark-colored.

Talked with a farmer by name of Slocum, hoeing on the Neck, a rather dull and countrified fellow for our neighborhood, I should have said. Asked him, by chance, about getting to Cuttyhunk, if it was safe to cross the bay in a whale-boat. Yes, or "Ye-e-s," his boat was only some twelve feet long and went over two or three times a year. His relations lived there. Perhaps he understood navigating here. Well, he'd been round the world considerably. "Have you been master of a whaler?" Yes; he'd been to most all parts of the world.

Heard of, and sought out, the hut of Martha Simons, the only pure-blooded Indian left about New Bedford. She lives alone on the narrowest point of the Neck, near the shore, in sight of New Bedford. Her hut stands some twenty-five rods from the road on a small tract of Indian land, now wholly hers. It was formerly exchanged by a white man for some better land, then occupied by Indians, at Westport, which he wanted. So said a Quaker minister, her neighbor. The squaw was not at home when we first called. It was a little hut not so big as mine. *Vide* sketch by R., with the bay not far behind it. No garden; only some lettuce amid the thin grass in front, and a great white pile of clam and quahog shells one side. She ere long came in from the seaside, and we called again. We knocked and walked in, and she asked us to sit down. She had half an acre of the real tawny

Indian face, broad with high cheek-bones, black eyes, and straight hair, originally black but now a little gray, parted in the middle. Her hands were several shades darker than her face. She had a peculiarly vacant expression, perhaps characteristic of the Indian, and answered our questions listlessly, without being interested or implicated, mostly in monosyllables, as if hardly present there. To judge from her physiognomy, she might have been King Philip's own daughter. Yet she could not speak a word of Indian, and knew nothing of her race. Said she had lived with the whites, gone out to service to them when seven years old. Had lived part of her life at Squaw Betty's Neck, Assawampsett Pond. Did she know Sampson's? She'd ought to; she'd done work enough there. She said she was sixty years old, but was probably nearer seventy. She sat with her elbows on her knees and her face in her hands and that peculiar vacant stare, perhaps looking out the window between us, not repelling us in the least, but perfectly indifferent to our presence.

She was born on that spot. Her grandfather also lived on the same spot, though not in the same house. He was the last of her race who could speak Indian. She had heard him pray in Indian, but could only understand "Jesus Christ." Her only companion was a miserable tortoise-shell kitten which took no notice of us. She had a stone chimney, a small cooking-stove without fore legs, set up on bricks within it, and a bed covered with dirty bed-clothes. Said she hired out her field as pasture; better for her than to cultivate it. There were two young heifers in it. The question she answered with most interest was, "What do you call that plant?" and I reached her the aletris from my hat. She took it, looked at it a moment, and said, "That's husk-root. It's good to put into bitters for a weak stomach." The last year's light-colored and withered leaves surround the present green star like a husk. This must be the origin of the name. Its root is described as intensely bitter. I ought to have had my hat full of plants.

A conceited old Quaker minister, her neighbor, told me with a sanctified air, "I think that the Indians were human beings; dost thee not think so?" He only convinced me of his doubt and narrowness.

June 27. P. M. — Went with R. and his boys in the Steamer Eagle's Wing, with a crowd and band of music, to the northeast end

of Naushon, "Woods Hole," some fifteen miles from New Bedford; about two hours going. Talked with a Mr. Congdon, cashier of a bank and a vegetarian. Saw all the Elizabeth Isles, going and coming. They are mostly bare, except the east end of Naushon. This island is some seven miles long, by one to two wide. I had some two and a half hours there. I was surprised to find such a noble primitive wood, chiefly beech, such as the English poets celebrate, and oak (black oak, I think), large and spreading like pasture oaks with us, though in a wood. The ground under the beeches was covered with the withered leaves and peculiarly free from vegetation. On the edge of a swamp I saw great tupelos running up particularly tall, without lower branches, two or three feet in diameter, with a rough light-colored bark. Noticed a thorn, perhaps cockspur, with an undivided leaf, gooseberries, stag-horn sumach, not in bloom. Most of the passengers expected to find strawberries. Saw a common wild grape-vine running over a beech, which was apparently flattened out by it, which vine measured, at six feet from ground, twenty-three inches in circumference. It was large below, where it had already forked. At five feet from ground it divided into three great branches. It did not rise directly, but with a great half-spiral sweep or *anguish.* No sight could be more primeval. It was partly or chiefly dead. This was in the midst of the woods, by a path-side. Just beyond we started up two deer.

I suppose the white gull I saw and heard (somewhat like the sound of the small mackerel gull of the Cape) at Naushon was the *Sterna hirundo*, or great tern, with long forked tail. A Mr. Wall, artist, at New Bedford, told me of a high pine wood or swamp some miles down Naushon with "storks' nests" (!)in the pines. Were they blue herons?

Naushon is said to be part of the township of Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard, and to belong to Mr. Swain of New Bedford and Forbes of Boston; some say to Swain alone.

Walton Ricketson went down in a schooner the next day again, and found the pond near Swain's well stocked with pickerel, of which he caught many in a few hours.

Returning, I caught sight of Gay Head and its lighthouse with my glass, between Pasque and Nashawena. This lighthouse, according to

Congdon, who says he measured it trigonometrically, is not more than one hundred and fifty feet above the sea. The passages between the islands are called "holes." Quick's is one. Cuttyhunk was very plain. Congdon said that he was there about thirty years ago, but could see no traces of Gosnold there, and does not believe there are any. Captain Slocum (of the day before), who has relations there, never saw any. Mr. Wall said that there was one old gentleman still alive, a Mr. Howland, who went on there with Belknap, who could tell all about it. The island is cultivated.

June 28. *Lamium amplexicaule* still out behind R.'s shanty. I picked up two arrowheads amid oyster and clam shells by a rock at the head of the creek opposite R.'s. One was of peculiar — form, quite blunt and small, of quartz, apparently to knock over small game without breaking the skin.

P. M. — I paddled up the Acushnet, about a mile above the paper-mill, as far as the ruined mill, in Walton's skiff with Arthur R. (Walton was named from I. Walton, the angler, and Arthur from Dana's hero in "Sun not set yet," etc.) I never saw such an abundance of peltandra as borders that sluggish and narrow stream, in bunches alternating with pickerel-weed; leaves of very various forms and sizes.

June 29. *Sunday.* P. M. — Bathed in the creek, which swarms with terrapins, as the boys called them. I find no account of them in Storer!! They put their heads out and floated about just like the *Emys picta*, and often approached and played (?) with each other. Some were apparently seven or eight inches long and of a yellowish color. A man by the riverside told us that he had two young ducks which he let out to seek their food along the riverside at low tide that morning. At length he noticed that one remained stationary amid the grass or salt weeds and something prevented its following the other. He went to its rescue and found its foot shut tightly in a quahog's shell amid the grass which the tide had left. He took up all together, carried to his house, and his wife opened the shell with a knife, released the duck, and cooked the quahog. Bathed again near Dogfish Bar. It was warm and dirty water, muddy bottom. I probably found an Indian's

bone at Throgg's Point, where their bodies have been dug up.

June 30. *Monday.* A. M. — To Middleborough ponds in the new town of Lakeville (some three years old). What a miserable name! It should have been Assawampsett or, perchance, Sanacus, if that was the name of the Christian Indian killed on the pond. By the roadside, Long Plain, North Fairhaven, observed a tupelo seven feet high with a rounded top, shaped like an umbrella, eight feet [in] diameter, spreading over the wall, and the main stem divided suddenly at two feet only below the top, where it was six inches in diameter!

On the right hand in the old orchard near the Quitticus Ponds, heard and at last saw my tweezer-bird, which is extremely restless, flitting from bough to bough and apple tree to apple tree. Its note like *ah*, *zre zre zre*, *zritter zritter zrit'*. *Sylvia Americana*, parti-colored warbler, with golden-green reflections on the back, two white bars on wings, all beneath white, large orange mark on breast, bordered broadly with lemon yellow, and yellow throat. These were making the woods ring in Concord when I left and are very common hereabouts.

Saw a haymaker with his suspenders crossed before as well as behind. A valuable hint, which I think I shall improve upon, since I am much troubled by mine slipping off my shoulders.

Borrowed Roberts's boat, shaped like a pumpkin-seed, for we wished to paddle on Great Quitticus. We landed and lunched on Haskell's Island, which contains some twenty-five or thirty acres. Just beyond this was Reed's Island, which was formerly cultivated, the cattle being swum across, or taken over in a scow. A man praised the soil to me and said that rye enough had been raised on it to cover it six inches deep. At one end of Haskell's Island was apparently a piece of primitive wood, — beech, hemlock, etc. Under the first I found some low, dry brown plants, perhaps beech-drops and the like, two species, but saw none of this year. One who formerly owned Reed's Island said that a man once lived on Haskell's Island and had a hennery there. The tweezer-birds were lively in the hemlocks.

Rode on to the old Pond Meeting-house, whence there is a fine view of Assawampsett. It is probably the broadest lake in the State. Uriah (?) Sampson told me it was about eight or ten feet deep in the

middle, but somewhat deeper about the sides. The main outlet of these ponds is northeast, by Taunton River, though there is some connection with the Mattapoisett River, and Assonet River drains the neighborhood of Long Pond on the west.

Two men spoke of loon's eggs on a rocky isle in Little Quitticus. I saw the Lobelia Dortmanna in bloom in the last.

A southwest breeze springs up every afternoon at this season, comparatively cool and refreshing from the sea.

As we were returning, a Mr. Sampson was catching perch at the outlet from Long Pond, where it emptied into Assawampsett with a swift current. The surface of the rippling water there was all alive with yellow perch and white ones, "whole schools showing their snouts or tails as they rose for the young alewives which appeared to be passing out of the brook. These, some of which I have in spirits, were about an inch and a half long. Sampson fished with these for bait, trailing or jerking it along the surface exactly as for pickerel, and the perch bit very fast. He showed me one white perch. It was a broader fish than the yellow, but much softer-scaled and generally preferred. He said they would not take the hook after a certain season. He swept out some young alewives (herring) with a stick on to the shore, and among them were young yellow perch also an inch and a half long, with the transverse bands perfectly distinct. I have some in spirit. The large ones were devouring these, no doubt, together with the alewives. Is not June the month when most of our freshwater fish are spawned?

JULY, 1856

July 1. P. M. — Paddled on the Acushnet.

Passed through some schools of fishes which were rippling the surface about us in midstream.

The back fins, very long and sharp, projected two or three inches above water. Walton said afterward that they were menhaden.

July 2. Return to Concord.

Looked at the birds in the Natural History Rooms in Boston. Observed no white spots on the sparrow hawk's wing, or on the pigeon or sharp-shinnèd hawk's. Indeed they were so closed that I could not have seen them. Am uncertain to which my wing belongs. May I not have seen the white-crowned sparrow in company with the white-throated? They are much alike. Yet Wilson says they rarely associate. The hemlock and pine warbler are much alike. Is it possible I have confounded them?

July 3. P. M. — To Assabet River.

In the main stream, at the Rock, I am surprised to see flags and pads, laying the foundation of an islet in the middle, where I had thought it deep before. Apparently a hummock lifted by ice sunk there in the spring, and this may be the way in which many an island has been formed in the river.

I scare up one or two woodcocks in different places by the shore, where they are feeding, and in a meadow. They go off with a whistling flight. Can see where their bills have probed the mud.

See a stemothærus on a small stump two feet over water. I approach and take hold of it, but cannot easily remove it. It appears to be shrunk on, withering away and dying there. It barely moves its head and eyes slightly, and its flippers look very much shrunken, yet it tumbles off after I leave. Apparently a male. I notice afterward, on succeeding days, many of them resting thus sluggishly, and find that I can approach and handle them and leave them as I found them. They appear much more sluggish than the other kinds now, though they were active enough in the spring. The tortoises improve every

rock, and willow slanting over the water, and every floating board and rail. You will see one on the summit of a black willow stump several feet high, and two or more part way up. Some tumble from a height of five or six feet into the water before you. Even the great snap-turtle puts his head out and climbs up a rock on the bank with the rest.

July 5. A. M. — To Loring's Pond.

Pink-colored yarrow. *Epilobium coloratum*, a day or more. Young partridges (with the old bird), as big as robins, make haste into the woods from off the railroad. Plucked some large luscious purple pyrus berries. Lactuca some days out.

Borrowed Witherell's boat and paddled over Loring's Pond. A kingbird's nest in fork of a button-bush five feet high on shore (not saddled on); three young just hatched and one egg.

Much of this pond is now very shallow and muddy and crowded with pads, etc. I can hardly push through them. Yet I can see no more white lily pads shaped as that appears to have been which I found here a few weeks since. Many pickerel dart away from amidst the pads, and in one place I see one or two great snap-turtles.

I notice two varieties (?), perhaps, of *Asclepias Cornuti* now out, one on the railroad meadow this side the Brooks Crossing, the other beyond the first mile-post above. The last has broader leaves and blunter and more decidedly mucronate, and pedicels and peduncles quite downy, the former little more than twice the length of the petals. The other has narrower and mote pointed leaves, peduncles and pedicels but little downy comparatively, the latter more than three times the length of the petals and not so numerous as in the other. *Vide* their pods, if spiny, by and by.

The *Spergularia rubra* was not open in the morning when I passed up, at 8 or 9 a m., but was opened when I returned at noon, but closed again at 5 P. m.

The notes of bam swallows, perhaps with their young, are particularly loud now and almost metallic, like that of a mackerel gull.

The large evening-primrose below the foot of our garden does not open till some time between 6.0 and 8 p. M. or sundown. It was not

open when I went to bathe, but freshly out in the cool of the evening at sundown, as if enjoying the serenity of the hour.

July 6. P. M. — To Assabet Bath.

Campanula aparinoidesy roadside opposite centaurea, several days. Early low blueberries ripe.

Crossed the river at bath place. On the sandy bank opposite, saw a wood tortoise voraciously eating sorrel leaves, under my face. In A. Hosmer's ice-bared meadow south of Turnpike, hear the distressed or anxious *peet* of a peetweet, and see it hovering over its young, half grown, which runs beneath and suddenly hides securely in the grass when but few feet from me. White avens, evidently Bigelow's *Geum album* (which Gray makes only a variety of *G. Virginianum)y* a good while, very rough and so much earlier than the *G. Virginianum* that only one flower remains. The heads have attained their full size, with twisted tails to the awns, while the other will not open for some days. I think Bigelow must be right. *Lysimachia lanceolata,* a day or two. *Rhus typhina* in our yard; how long? Did not see it out in New Bedford ten days ago. There is a young red mulberry in the lower hedge beneath the celtis.

G. Emerson says the sweet-briar was doubtless introduced, yet, according to Bancroft, Gosnold found it on the Elizabeth Isles.

July 7. I see a difference now between the alder leaves near Island and edge of meadow westward, on Hill; the former slightly downy beneath, the latter (apparently *Alnus serrulata)* green and smooth but yet *not pointed at base.* Do I not see a taller kind of wool-grass in that birch meadow east of Hill?

P. M. — To Gowing's Swamp.

The purple finch still sings over the street. The sagittaria, large form, is out, roadside, Moore's Swamp. The *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* is almost entirely out of bloom, and the berries are as big as small huckleberries (while the *V. macrocarpon* is in full bloom, and no berries appear on it). It must therefore have begun about the 1st of June. Saw the *Kalmia glauca* by the small cranberry, betrayed by its two-edged twig. The snake-head arethusa is now abundant amid the cranberries there.

July 8. 3 P. m. — To Baker Farm by boat.

River down to lower side of long rock.

When I landed on Hosmer flat shore, started a large water adder, apparently running on the bank. It ran at once into the river and was lost under the pads. *Ranunculus reptans* is abundantly out at mouth of brook, Baker shore. Is that small sparganium there, now abundantly out, about eighteen inches high, with leaves narrow and convex below, concave above, the same species with the larger? Some in press.

Got the downy woodpecker's nest, some days empty.

Find several large and coarse *Potentilla arguta*, two and a half feet high and more, at Bittern Cliff, nearly out of bloom. Flowers in crowded corymbs. They are *white*, not yellow, as Gray calls them. In the side-

hill wood-lot (or spring wood-lot) behind, where the wood was cut last winter, poke-leaved milkweed *(Asclepias phytolaccoides*), apparently a day or two, and *Circœa alpina*, some days, a foot high with opaque leaves and *bracts* (in press). This I find to be the same with the small, also bracted, one at Corner Spring (whose leaves were perhaps more transparent when in shade, but which now grows larger in sun).

Sophia saw this afternoon two great snap-turtles fighting near the new stone bridge, making a great commotion in the river and not regarding the spectators, she and another, and a teamster who stopped his team to observe them.

Sam Wheeler, who did not know there were snap-turtles here, says he saw opposite to his boardinghouse, on the sidewalk, in New York, the other day, a green turtle which weighed seven hundred and twenty pounds, which in a short time dropped eggs enough to fill a vessel some feet in diameter. He partook of some of the soup made of it, and there were several eggs in it, which were luscious.

After Jules Gerard, the lion-killer, had hunted lions for some time, and run great risk of losing his life, though he struck the lions in the right place with several balls, the lions steadily advancing upon him even though they had got a death-wound, he discovered that it was not enough to be brave and take good aim, — that his balls, which

were of lead, lacked penetration and were flattened against the lions' bones; and accordingly he sent to France and obtained balls which were pointed with steel and went through and through both shoulder-blades. So I should say that the weapons or balls which the Republican Party uses lacked penetration, and their foe steadily advances nevertheless, to tear them in pieces, with their well-aimed balls flattened on his forehead.

In Gerard's book I find, according to a Mohammedan tradition, "when the lion roars, he says, 'Ya rabbi, ma tecallot mi a la ed-dâbèome,' which signifies 'Seignior, deliver to my power the wicked only, and let the good go free.'"

July 10. Yesterday a heavy rain.

A. M. — To Laurel Glen.

Chenopodium album, by railroad. Succory a week or more, by railroad causeway. *Stackys aspera* well out two or three days, low ground. *Chimaphila umbellata,* some days. *Pyrola elliptica,* how long? *P. chlorantha* done, near part of Cut woods. P. *rotundifolia* (how long?), Cut woods hollow. *Galium triflorum* of Bigelow (?), prostrate, from one centre, Laurel Glen hillside; how long? But the branches are not three-flowered, but have three pedicels and one, two, or all of them (commonly but one) are subdivided into two. Also *G. circœzans* gone to seed. I have pressed apparently *Galium lanceolatum*. *Sericocarpus conyzoides*, Deep Cut path.

Asclepias obtusifolia, which was out well on the 5th, has a bloom, and the curved horns are *elevated* above the flower..

See and hear young bam swallows about.

5 p. M. — Up Assabet.

As I was bathing under the swamp white oaks at 9 — P. M., *heard a suppressed sound often repeated, like, perhaps, the working of beer through a bung-hole, which I already suspected to [be] produced by owls. I was uncertain whether it was far or near. Proceeding a dozen rods up-stream on the south side, toward where a catbird was incessantly mewing, I found myself suddenly within a rod of a gray screech owl sitting on an alder bough with horns erect, turning its head from side to side and up and down, and peering at me in that same ludicrously solemn and complacent way that I had noticed in*

one in captivity. Another, more red, also homed, repeated the same warning sound, or apparently call to its young, about the same distance off, in another direction, on an alder. When they took to flight they made some noise with their wings. With their short tails and squat figures they looked very clumsy, all head and shoulders. Hearing a fluttering under the alders, I drew near and found a young owl, a third smaller than the old, all gray, without obvious horns, only four or five feet distant. It flitted along two rods, and I followed it. I saw at least two or more young. All this was close by that thick hemlock grove, and they perched on alders and an apple tree in the thicket there. These birds kept opening their eyes when I moved, as if to get clearer sight of me. The young were very quick to notice any motion of the old, and so betrayed their return by looking in that direction when they returned, though I had not heard it. Though they permitted me to come so near with so much noise, as if bereft of half their senses, they at [once] noticed the coming and going of the old birds, even when I did not. There were four or five owls in all. I have heard a somewhat similar note, further off and louder, in the night.

I find (July 14th) (and it has been out some days), at Muhlenbergii Brook, circæas which are distinctly branched and with *large* leaf-like bracts, some nearly two feet high. Yet they are evidently the same species that I have found before, and I think that there is but one hereabouts, say *C. alpina,* which, however, is poorly described by Gray and inadequately by Bigelow. It is from four or five (in shade) to, as here, about two feet high (in sun); is never pubescent, but quite smooth, round-stemmed, swelling at the joints, more or less branched, in large specimens sometimes very much so *(vide* pressed one), with bracts quite small and slender in small ones, and very large and leaf-like (two on a common axillary branch) in large plants; leaves opaque in open places, heart-shaped, *rather* slightly and distantly toothed, of the large specimens, at least, *not* shining.

July 11. A. M. — To Tarbell Swamp Hill all day with W. E. C.

Landed at path end, Great Meadows. No haying there yet. In the now isolated ditches, etc., there [are] thousands of little pouts about one inch long, more or less. The water is muddy, and I see no old ones. They are rather difficult to catch (like minnows generally, but

less so), but I got two and have them in spirit. I scare up several apparent snipes (?), which go off with a *crack.* They are rather heavy-looking, like woodcocks, but have gray breasts. Are probing the meadow. Quite numerous there. The *Ludwigia sphærocarpa,* which had been out apparently a week on the 6th of August, 1855, shows hardly a sign of a flower yet. So it will hardly open before August 1st. The grass on the islets in those pools is much flattened in many places by the turtles, which lie out sunning on it. They tumble in before me, and by the sound and marks of one I suspect it a snap-turtle. They are commonly *E. picta.*

Bathed and lunched under the oak at Tarbell's first shore. It is about as cool a place as you can find, where you get the southwest breeze from over the broad meadow, for it draws through the valley behind. While sitting there, saw, some twenty-five rods up-stream, amid the pads on the south side, where we had passed, several apparently young ducks, which soon disappeared again in the meadow-grass. Saw them hereabouts August 6th last year. They regularly breed hereabouts, and the broad meadow affords lurking-places. The meadow is so broad and level that you see shadows of clouds on it as on the sea. A great snap-turtle floated by us with his head out, in midstream, reconnoitring us. Rambled over the hill at angle. Allium out some time on the shore. I have only seen it here, methinks, and on the Assabet shores.

Hear now the *link* of bobolinks, and see quite a flock of red-wing blackbirds and young (?). The water milkweed, or *Asclepias pulchra.*

July 12. P. M. — Down Turnpike to Red Lily Meadow.

Hear the plaintive note of young bluebirds, a reviving and gleaming of their blue ray. In Moore's meadow by Turnpike, see the vetch in purple patches weighing down the grass, as if a purple tinge were reflected there. White vervain. Smooth sumach, apparently yesterday. Rue is beginning now to whiten the meadows on all hands. The *Ranunculus aquatilis* appears to be about done, though it may have been submerged by the rain of yesterday. I see hardly one freshly open, and it [is] quite moist and lowering yet. By the myosotis ditch there, is an abundance of *Galium trifidum* (apparently *obtusum* or *latifolium*, in press). It is densely massed and quite

prickly, with three corolla-lobes. As yet I think I have observed only two varieties of *G. trifidum,* smooth and rough. *Lactuca sanguinea,* some time, with dark-purple stem, widely branched. *Pycnanthemum muticum* and the narrow-leaved, not long.

In the still wet road on the hill, just beyond Lincoln bound, a short-tailed shrew *(Sorex brevicaudus* of *Say),* dead after the rain. I have found them thus three or four times before. It is 4½ inches long; tail 1 +; head and snout, 1 +. Roundish body. Lead-color above, somewhat lighter beneath, with a long snout, 3/8- inch beyond lower jaw, incisors black, delicate light-colored (almost silvery) mustachial bristles, and also from lower lip; nose emarginate; nails long and slender a purple bar across each; ears white and concealed in the fur; the nostrils plainly perforated, though Emmons says that in the specimens of *Sorex* he had seen he could detect no perforations with a microscope. It has a peculiar but not *very* strong muskiness. There was an insect-wing in its mouth. Its numerous teeth distinct. Have I not commonly noticed them dead after rain? I am surprised to read in Emmons that it was first observed in Missouri, and that he has "not been able to meet with it" and doubts its existence in the State; retains it on the authority of former catalogues; says it nests on the surface and is familiar with water. In spirits.

Red lilies in prime, single upright fiery flowers, their throats how splendidly and *variously* spotted, hardly two of quite the same hue and not two spotted alike, — leopard-spotted, — averaging a foot or more in height, amid the huckleberry and lambkill, etc., in the moist, meadowy pasture.

Apparently a bluebird's egg in a woodpecker's hole in an apple tree, second brood, just laid. In collection. Parsnip at Bent's orchard; how long? Also on July 5th, almost out. Agrimony well out. Chestnut in prime. See *Lysimachia quadrifolia* with from three to five (or six?) leaves in a whorl. *Iberis umbellata*, candytuft, roadside,Tuttle's, naturalized; how long? New plant.

July 13. P. M. — To Comer Spring.

Orchis lacera, apparently several days, lower part of spike, willow-row, Hubbard side, opposite Wheildon's land. See quite a large flock of chattering red-wings, the flight of first broods.

Thimble-berries are now fairly ripe and abundant along walls, to be strung on herd's-grass, but not much flavor to them; honest and wholesome. See where the mowers have plucked them. Gather the large black and blackening ones. No drought has shrivelled them this year.

Heard yesterday a sharp and loud ker-pheet, I think from a surprised woodchuck, amid bushes, — the sif-fleur. Reminds me somewhat of a peetweet, and also of the squeak of a rabbit, but much louder and sharper. And all is still.

Hubbard's meadow — or I will call it early meadow 30 — aster, some days, now rather slender and small-bushed. Drosera longifolia and also rotundifolia, some time. Polygala sanguinea, some time, Hubbard's Meadow Path; say meadow-paths and banks. Saw and heard two or three redstarts at Redstart Woods, where they probably have nests. Have noticed bright-red geranium and pyrus leaves a week or more.

In Hubbard's euphorbia pasture, cow blackbirds about cows. At first the cows were resting and ruminating in the shade, and no birds were seen. Then one after another got up and went to feeding, straggling into the midst of the field. With a chattering appeared a cowbird, and, with a long slanting flight, lit close to a cow's nose, within the shadow of it, and watched for insects, the cow still eating along and almost hitting it, taking no notice of it. Soon it is joined by two or three more birds.

An abundance of spurry in the half-grown oats adjoining, apparently some time out. Yellow lily, how long? Am surprised to see an Aster lœvis, out a day or two, in road on sandy bank. Goldfinches twitter over. Hydrocotyle, some time.

July 14. P. M. — To Muhlenbergii Brook.

Anthony Wright found a lark's nest with fresh eggs on the 12th in E. Hubbard's meadow by ash tree, — two nests, probably one a second brood. *Nasturtium hispidum* (?), apparently three or four days. See and hear martins twittering *on the elms* by riverside. Bass out about two days at Island. There is a pyrus twenty feet high with small fruit at Assabet Spring.

Noli-me-tangere already *springs* at Muhlenbergii Brook, some

days. Saw apparently my little ruby (?) crested wren (?) on the weeds there. Senecio long gone to seed and dispersed. Canada thistle some time on Huckleberry Pasture-side beyond. Ceratophyllum with a dense whorl of twelve little oval red-dotted apparent flower-buds (?) in an axil.

While drinking at Assabet Spring in woods, noticed a cherry-stone on the bottom. A bird that came to drink must have brought it half a mile. So the tree gets planted!

July 15. P. M. — To Hubbard's Close and Walden.

Carrots by railroad, how long? I notice the froth concealing a grub, not only on trees and bushes, but on *Potentilla Norvegica, Lechea* (great-fruited), etc., etc., *Pycnanthemum muticum*, even *Lobelia inflata*, red clover, *Aster puniceus.* This spots my clothes when going through bushes. Both small hypericums, *Cana-dense* and *mutilum*, apparently some days at least by Stow's ditch. Bobolinks are heard — their *link*, *link* — above and amid the tall rue which now whitens the *meadows. Checkerberry, a day or two.* Spiranthes gracilis *well out, in dry, slender grass by roadside. I do not notice the krigia out in my afternoon walks, and so it is not known by many, but in the morning its disk is very commonly seen.*

When I crossed the entrance to the pond meadow on a stick, a pout ran ashore and was lodged so that I caught it in the grass, apparently frightened. While I held it, I noticed another, very large one approach the shore very boldly within a few feet of me. Going in to bathe, I caught a pout on the bottom within a couple of rods of the shore. It seemed sick. Then, wading into the shallow entrance of the meadow, I saw a school of a thousand little pouts about three quarters of an inch long without any attending pout, and now have no doubt that the pout I had caught (but let go again) was tending them, and the large one was the father, apparently further off. The mother had perhaps gone into deep water to recruit after her air-bath. The young were pretty shy; kept in shallow water, and were taking pretty good care of themselves. If the water should suddenly fall, they might be caught in the meadow.

Ludvrigia altemifolia *not quite; in a day or two.*

Amid the high grass or rushes by that meadow-side started a

water adder. It was about three feet long, but large round in proportion, with about one hundred and forty abdominal plates and a long, slender tail. It was black above, with indistinct transverse brown bands. Under its head white; first half of belly white, with triangular or conical dark brown-red marks on sides; the white gradually becomes more narrow and yellowish for the latter half of the abdomen, bordered by more numerous and still darker reddish marks, becoming confluent and alternating with silvery ones, giving a handsome regularly mottled or spotted look. The silvery thus across the belly: The barred part dark-reddish. Under the tail no reddish. CORYLUS ROSTRATA differs from — common in the twig being smooth and not glandular-hairy. *Scutellaria galericulataf* some time. *Polygonum sagittatum*, almost.

That green *sponge* plant gathered yesterday is remarkably slow to dry; though it has been many hours exposed to the sun and wiped with many papers and has been a whole day exposed to the air, it is far from dry yet. It is more pungent and strong-scented than ever and sickens me to stay in the room with a little of it.

July 16. Sium out not long. I see many young shiners (?) (they have the longitudinal bar), one to two and a half inches long, and young breams two or three inches long and quite broad. *Geum Virginianum,* apparently two or three days.

See several bullfrogs lying fully out on pads at 5 p m. They trump well these nights.

It is remarkable how a copious rain, raising the river a little, flattens down the heart-leaf and other weeds at bathing-places.

July 17. Found a great many insects in white lilies which opened in pan this forenoon, which had never opened before. What regular and handsome petals! regularly concave toward the inside, and calyx hooked at tip.

P. M. — To Water Dock Meadow and Linnæa Hillside..

Hear a new note from bank swallows when going over the Hosmer pastures, a sort of *screep screep*, shrill and like what I have referred to the bam swallow. They are probably out with young.

Ludwigia palustris and ilysanthes have been out apparently some

time on the flat Hosmer shore or meadow, where the surface has been laid bare by the ice. There, too, the *Hypericum Sarothra* has pushed up abundantly. I see many young toads hopping about on that bared ground amid the thin weeds, not more than five eighths to three quarters of an inch long; also young frogs a little larger. Horse-mint out at Clamshell, apparently two or three days.

Bathed at Clamshell. See great schools of minnows, apparently shiners, hovering in the clear shallow next the shore. They seem to choose such places for security. They take pretty good care of themselves and are harder to catch with the hands than you expect, darting out of the way at last quite swiftly. Caught three, however, between my hands. They have brighter golden irides, all the abdomen conspicuously pale-golden, the back and half down the sides pale-brown, a broad, distinct black band along sides (which methinks marks the shiner), and comparatively transparent beneath behind vent. When the water is gone I am surprised to see how they can skip or spring from side to side in my cup-shaped two hands for a long time. This to enable them to get off floating planks or pads on the shore when in fright they may have leaped on to them. But they are very tender, and the sun and air soon kill them. If there is any water in your hand they will pass out through the smallest crack between your fingers. They are about three quarters of an inch long generally, though of various sizes.

Half a dozen big bream come quite up to me, as I stand in the water. They are not easily scared in such a case.

The large skunk-cabbage fruit looks quite black now where the haymakers have passed. Stooping to drink at the Hosmer Spring, I saw a hundred caddis-cases, of light-colored pebbles, at the bottom, and a dozen or twenty crawled half-way up the side of the tub, apparently on their way out to become perfect insects.

Cows in their pasture, going to water or elsewhere, make a track four or five inches deep and frequently not more than ten inches wide.

The great water dock has been out some days at least. Its valves are quite small at first, but lower leaves *pointed.* I hear in the meadow there a faint incessant z-ing sound, as of small locusts in the meadow-grass. Under the oak in Brown's moraine pasture, by Water

Dock Meadow, a great arum more than three feet high, like a tropical plant, in open land, with leafets more than a foot long. There is rich-weed there, apparently not quite out.

Going up the hillside, between J. P. Brown's and rough-cast house, am surprised to see great plump ripe low blackberries. How important their acid (as well as currants) this warm weather! It is 5 p m. The wood thrush begins to sing.

A very warm afternoon. Thermometer at 97° at the Hosmer Desert. I hear the early locust. I have come to collect birds* nests. The thrasher's is apparently made partly beneath the surface, some dirt making its sides. I find the nests by withered twigs and leaves broken off in the spring, but commonly nearly concealed by the recent growth. The jay's nest had been filled with white oak leaves. Not one could have been blown into it. On Linnæa Hill many thimble-berries and some raspberries.

Evening by river to Ed. Hosmer's. Hear at distance the hum of bees from the bass with its drooping flowers at the Island, a few minutes only before sunset. It sounds like the rumbling of a distant train of cars. Returning after ten, by moonlight, see the bullfrogs lying at full length on the pads where they trump.

July 18. P. M. — To Wheeler meadow to look at willows.

Again scare up a woodcock, apparently *seated* or sheltered in shadow of ferns in the meadow on the cool mud in the hot afternoon. *Rosa Carolina*, some time, at edge of Wheeler meadow near Island Neck.

You see almost everywhere on the muddy river bottom, rising toward the surface, first, the coarse multifid leaves of the *Ranunculus Purshii*, now much the worse for the wear; second, perhaps, in coarseness, the ceratophyllum, standing upright; third, perhaps, the *Bidens Beckii*, with its leafets at top; then the *Utricu-laria vulgaris*, with its black or green bladders, and the two lesser utricularias in many places.

July 19. P. M. — Marlborough Road *via* railroad and Dugan wood-lot.

A box tortoise, killed a good while, on the railroad, at Dogwood

Swamp; quite dry now. This the fourth I have ever found: first one, alive, in Truro; second one, dead, on shore of Long Pond, Lakeville; third one, alive, under Fair Haven Hill; and fourth, this. This appeared to have been run over, but both upper and under shells were broken into several pieces each, in 7io case on the fine of the serrations or of the edges of the scales (proving that they are as strong one way as the other), but at various angles across them, which, I think, proves it to have been broken while the animal was alive or fresh and the shell not dry. I picked up only the after half or two thirds and one foot. The upper shell was at the widest place four and three eighths inches. It was broken irregularly across the back, from about the middle of the second lateral scale from the front on the left to the middle of the third lateral on the right, and was, at the angle of the marginal scales, about sixteen fortieths to seventeen fortieths of an inch thick, measured horizontally. The sides under the lateral scales and half the dorsal were from four to five fortieths of an inch thick. The thinnest part was about three eighths of an inch from middle of back on each side, directly between the spring of the sides [?], where it was but little more than two fortieths thick. So nature makes an arch. I have about half the sternum, the rear of it at one point reaching to the hinge. It is thickest vertically just at the side hinges, where it is one fourth thick; thinnest three eighths from this each side, where it is one eighth thick; and thence thickens to the middle of the sternum, where it [is] seven and a half fortieths thick. The upper shell in this case *(vide* May 17, 1856) is neither pointed nor notched behind, but quite straight. The sternum and the *lower* parts of the marginal scales are chiefly dark-brown. The marking above is sufficiently like that of the Cape Cod specimen, with a still greater proportion of yellow, now faded to a yellowish brown.

On Linnæa Hills, sarsaparilla berries. *Lobelia inflata*, perhaps several days; little white glands (?) on the edges of the leaves. On the under side of a *Lobelia spicata* leaf, a sort of *loose-spun* cocoon, about five eighths of an inch long, of golden-brown silk, beneath which silky mist a hundred young spiders swam.

Examined painted tortoise eggs of June 10th. One of those great spider(?)-holes made there since then, close to the eggs. The eggs are large and rather pointed, methinks at the larger end. The young

are half developed. Fleets of yellow butterflies on road. Small white rough-coated puffballs (?) in pastures. Appear not to have two coats like that of Potter's Path, *q v.*

As I come by the apple tree on J. P. B.'s land, where I heard the young woodpeckers hiss a month or so ago, I now see that they have flown, for there is a cobweb over the hole.

Plucked a handful of gooseberries at J. P. B.'s bush, probably ripe some time. It is of fair size, red-purple and greenish, and apparently like the first in garden, except it is not slightly bristly like that, nor has so much flavor and agreeable tartness. Also the stalk is not so prickly, but for the most part has one small prickle where ours has three stout ones. Our second gooseberry is more purple (or dark-purple with bloom) and the twig less prickly than the wild. Its flavor is insipid and in taste like the wild.

It is the *Hypericum ellipticum* and *Canadense* (linearleaved) whose *red* pods are noticed now.

On the sand thrown out by the money-diggers, I found the first ripe blackberries thereabouts. The heat reflected from the sand had ripened them earlier than elsewhere. It did not at first occur to me what sand it was, nor that I was indebted to the money-diggers, or their Moll Pitcher who sent them hither, for these blackberries. I am probably the only one who has got any fruit out of that hole. It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. Looking up, I observed that they had dug another hole a rod higher up the hill last spring (for the blackberries had not yet spread over it), and had partly filled it up again. So the result of some idler's folly and some spiritualist's nonsense is that I get my blackberries a few days the earlier.

The downy woodpecker's nest which I got July 8th was in a dead and partly rotten upright apple bough four and three quarters inches [in] diameter. Hole *perfectly* elliptical (or oval) one and two sixteenths by one and five sixteenths inches; whole depth below it eight inches. It is excavated directly inward about three and a half inches, with a conical roof, also arching at back, with a recess in one side on level with the hole, where the bird turns. Judging from an old hole in the same bough, directly above, it enlarges directly to a diameter of two and one fourth to two and one half inches, not in this case descending exactly in the middle of the bough, but leaving one

side not a quarter of an inch thick. At the hole it is left one inch thick. At the nest it is about two and three eighths inches [in] diameter. I find nothing in the first but bits of rotten wood, remains of insects, etc., when I tip it up, — for I cannot see the bottom, — yet in the old one there is also quite a nest of fine stubble (?), bark shred (?), etc., mixed with the bits of rotten wood.

July 20. P. M. — Up Assabet.

Button-bush, apparently two or three days.

I suspect that those very variously formed leaves in and about woods which come to naught — like the sium in deep water — are of the nabalus.

Caught a middle-sized copper-colored devil's-needle (with darker spots on wings), sluggish, on a grass stem, with many dark-colored elliptical eggs packed closely to outside, under its breast.

July 21. P. M. — To A. Wheeler's grape meadow.

Mimulus, not long. *Hypericum corymbosum*, a day or two. Rusty cotton-grass, how long?

The small hypericums are open only in the forenoon. Pursley, also, in our garden opens *now* not till 8 a m., and shuts up before 12 m.

The flat euphorbia is now in prime on the sandy path beyond Potter's Desert, five-finger fungus path.

Plucked a handful of huckleberries from one bush! The *Vactinium vacillans* thick enough to go picking, and probably for a day or two in some places. Low blackberries thick enough to pick in some places, three or four days. Thimble-berries about the 12th, and *V. Pennsylvanicum* much longer.

These hot afternoons I go panting through the close sprout-lands and copses, as now from Cliff Brook to Wheeler meadow, and occasionally come to sandy places a few feet in diameter where the partridges have dusted themselves. Gerard, the lion-killer of Algiers, speaks of seeing similar spots when tracking or patiently waiting the lion there, and his truth in this particular is a confirmation of the rest of his story. But his pursuit dwarfs this fact and makes it seem trivial. Shall not my pursuit also contrast with the trivialness of the

partridges' dusting? It is interesting to find that the same phenomena, however simple, occur in different parts of the globe. I have found an arrowhead or two in such places even. Far in warm, sandy woods in hot weather, when not a breath of air is stirring, I come upon these still sandier and warmer spots where the partridges have dusted themselves, now all still and deserted, and am not relieved, yet pleased to find that I have been preceded, by any creature.

Grapes ready to stew.

Mr. Russell writes me to-day that he visited the locality of the *Magnolia glauca* the 18th, on Cape Ann, and saw lingering still a few flowers and flower-buds.

It is quite open and rising above the bushes.

The brook cress might be called river cress, for it is very abundant rising above the surface in all the shallower parts of the river.

Verbena hastata, apparently several days.

Sonchus, some time.

This has been a peculiarly fine afternoon. When I looked about casually, was surprised at the fairness of the landscape. Though warm, it is clear and fresh, and the air imparts to all surfaces a peculiar fine glaucous color, full of light, without mistiness, like the under side of the *Salix lucida* (?) leaves at present. Not only the under sides of the leaves, but the very afternoon landscape, has become glaucous. Now, when the fashionable world goes to Saratoga, Nahant, and Newport, we frequent our oldest haunts with new love and reverence and sail into new ports with each fresh varnish of the air.

July 23. 9 A. m. — Up river for *Nuphar Kalmiana* with Russell.

Pasture thistle, not long. *Hypericum Sarothra*, not long, or perhaps some days. *Antennaria margaritacea. Scutellaria lateriflora*, apparently some days.

R. says that my five-finger fungus is the *Lycoperdon stellatum* and can be found now. I find it in some places. (It is different from the white rough-coated puffball now found.) It was exhibited lately in Boston as the "resurrection plant"(!!) to compete with the one imported from Palestine. That what I have called fresh-water sponge is such, *Spongea fluviatilis*, and, like the marine, is uncertain whether

vegetable or animal. When burned it leaves a mass of white spicula which have been mistaken for infusoria! Thinks the dry brown last-year's plant I brought from Haskell's Island, Lakeville, the *Epiphegus.* That the *Rubus Canadensis*, low blackberry, is not found far west of us. That there is described — he thinks in Hooker's English Flora — a certain massing up of a conferva similar to that of my eriocaulon balls. Has seen a Mexican species, allied to the potato, cultivated hereabouts, which became a weed, — would not become larger than a walnut. Speaks of the young pouts *with their bladders attached*, accompanied by the old. That the berries of the celtis are pleasant to taste, those of the sassafras abominable. Showed me the *Dulichium spathaceum*, leaves in three ranks, so common along river, now in bloom; also the *Carex lupulina* (?) or *retrorsa* (?), hop sedge, with the inflated perigynia. Said that those reddish clusters of buds on a rush or carex were enlarged by disease. That the two white cotton-grasses (*Eriophorum*) were probably but one species, taller and shorter; also the two wool-grasses Scirpus — Trichophorum [sic] were probably but one species, the tall and short. That there was an account of the lecheas by Tuckerman in *Silli-man's Journal.*

P. M. — To Walden for hydropeltis.

A young stemothærus which R. picked up recently dead, on the shore of the pond, was one and one sixteenth inches long, — the upper shell, — probably therefore a last year's one, or not yet one year old. Very high and sharp back, but broader than old. No hook to upper bill.

That fern leaf on my coal (?) is probably the *Neuropteris* as figured in Richardson's Botany.

Saw at Hydropeltis Meadow a small bullfrog in the act of swallowing a young but pretty sizable apparently *Rana palustris*, such as now hop about, an inch and a half long. He took it down head foremost, and as the legs were slowly taken in, — stuffing himself, — for the legs were often straightened out, — I wondered what satisfaction it could be to the larger to have that cold slimy fellow, entire, lying head to tail within him! I sprang to make him disgorge, but it was too late to save him. Though I tossed the bullfrog out of the water, the *palustris* was entombed. So little while had he been in the light when he fell into that recess! Bathing in Walden, I

find the water considerably colder at the bottom while I stand up to my chin, but the sandy bottom much warmer to my feet than the water. The heat passes *through* the water with[out] being absorbed by it much. The hydropeltis leaves so crowded they cannot lie flat, but their edges show (a good part [of] the under side) as if blown up by wind.

The water adder killed on the 15th and left hanging on a twig has decayed wonderfully. I perceive no odor, and it is already falling to pieces. I can see most of its ribs and through and through in many directions!! It is already mere skin and skeleton, as empty as [a] flute. I can count the bare ribs, and it [is] inoffensive to the smell.

See apparently young goldfinches about, very *freshly* bright golden and black.

The small potamogeton, *heterophyllus* (?) or *hybridus* (?), out some time. *Ludwigia altemifolia,* five or six days.

July 24. P. M. — To Flint's Pond.

Solidago stricta, Ingraham Path, well out, some days. *Ghimaphila maculata*, three flowers, apparently but few days, while the *umbellata* is quite done there. Leaves just shooting up. See those light-bordered dark spots on tall and other goldenrod leaves (fungi (?) says Russell). In the low Flint's Pond Path, beyond Britton's, the tall rough goldenrod makes a thicket higher than my head. Many hazelnut burs now look rough and reddish about the base. Tobacco-pipe much blackened, out a long time.

I find, at the shallow stone wharf shore, three balls in good condition, walking about half the length of that shore. Methinks it was about a week earlier than this that they were found last year. There is on the surface of the water, washed up and floating about, a good deal of the eriocaulon, loosened up, perhaps, by pouts or other creatures, and also some other *fine* weeds with it. Yet the eriocaulon has but just begun to bloom! So also the vallisneria has washed up some time in river. There is also a very fine rush (?) on the bottom there like hair. Is that a little submerged kind of utricularia or ranunculus on the sandy bottom in shallow water there, looking thin and dissolving from above, like a conferva? — like little regular green masses of conferva?

The red lilies are completely out of bloom now at Smith's meadow pasture, but the yellow ones are still very abundant in the meadows. The *Ranunculus Purshii* is now very hard to meet with. Saw one double flower with sixteen petals (at least) in two rows. Time to get seeds of it. Hardhack well out, how long? The small purple fringed orchis, apparently three or four days at least. The fall has already come to skunk-cabbage and hellebore. Their yellow and black decaying leaves and stems now cover the floor of the swamps which they recently clothed in early green. The *Lobelia Dortmanna* still, but no full spikes. It is apparently the worse for the wear. The oldest stems of it are covered here and there with apparently the red ova of some insect. Some *Gnaphalium uliginosum* going to seed; how long?

July 25. *Friday.* A. M. — Up river to see hypericums out.

Lycopus Virginicus, with its runners, perhaps some days, in Hosmer Flat Meadow. Whorled utricularia very abundantly out, apparently in its prime. *Lysimachia ciliata* some days. The *Hieracium Canadense* grows by the road fence in Potter's hydrocotyle field, some seven or eight inches high, in dense tufts!

The haymakers getting in the hay from Hubbard's meadow tell me the cock says we are going to have a long spell of dry weather or else very wet. "Well, there's some difference between them," I answer; "how do you know it?"

"I just heard a cock crow at noon, and that's a sure sign it will either be very dry or very wet."

The *Hypericum perforatum*, *corymbosum*, and *ellipticum* are not open this forenoon, but the *angulosum*, *Canadense*, *mutilum*, and *Sarothra* are partly curled up (their petals) even by 9 A.M.; perhaps because it is very warm, for day before yesterday, methinks, I saw the *mutilum* and *Sarothra* open later.

The street is now strewn with bark under the buttonwood at the brick house. Has not the hot weather taken the bark off?

The air begins to be thick and almost smoky.

July 26. Saturday. 5 A. M. — Up Assabet.

The sun's disk is seen round and red for a long distance above the

horizon, through the thick but cloudless atmosphere, threatening heat, — hot, dry weather.

At five the lilies had not opened, but began about 5.5 and were abundantly out at six.

Arranged the hypericums in bottles this morning and watched their opening.

The *H. angulosum* (?) has a pod one-celled (with three parietal placentae), conical, oblong, acute, at length longer than the sepals, purple. (The *Canadense* has from three to five (!) placentae and the *mutilum* three to four (!), as I find, notwithstanding Gray.) Styles three, short, distinct, and spreading; stamens twenty, more or less, obscurely clustered. Petals oblong. (Do not see the single lateral tooth mentioned by Eaton.) Corolla twelve to fourteen fortieths of an inch in diameter. It is strict, slender, ten to twenty inches high; stem sharply four-angled, like *Canadense*, and cyme as naked or more so. The large ones make a singularly *compact* (flat-topped) corymb, of many narrow pods at last. Leaves oblong-lanceolate or linear-lanceolate, commonly blunt, but often gradually tapering and acute, broadest near the base and clasping, one to one and a half inches long by one eighth to three eighths wide, black-dotted beneath. Ground neither very dry nor very moist. It differs from Canadense, which it resembles, in being a larger plant every way, narrower in proportion to height, having more stamens, and in the form of its leaves.

Corolla of mutilum nine to eleven fortieths of an inch in diameter; Canadensey twelve to thirteen fortieths; corymbosum eighteen fortieths.

The corymbosum in chamber shut up at night. All but Sarothra, which may not be advanced enough, (I have no elodea), opened by 5 a m., corymbosum and angulo-sum very fairly; but mutilum, Canadense, and angulo-sum curled and shut up by 9 a m.!! The corymbosum shut up in afternoon. The ‘perforatum and ellipticum alone were open all day. The four lesser ones are very shy to open and remain open very little while, this weather at least. I suspect that in the fields, also, they are open only very early or on cloudy days. H. Canadense and mutilum are often fifteen inches high.

The largest and most conspicuous purple pods are those of the ellipticum. Those of the angulosum and Canadense are smaller and

more pointed; are also purple, and the mutilum perhaps duller purple and less conspicuous.

The pod of the ellipticum, when cut, smells like a bee. The united styles arm it like a beak or spine. This appears to be the most nearly out of bloom of all. I am surprised that Gray says it is somewhat fourangled. It is distinctly two-angled and round between.

The Hubbard aster may be the A. Tradescanti.

The large potamogeton off Dodd's seems to be the natans, from size of nutlets, etc. Then there is the second, off Clamshell, a long time out. And the third, heterophyllus (?), or what I have called hybridus, also long out.

Drank up the last of my birch wine. It is an exceedingly grateful drink now, especially the aromatic, meadlike, apparently checkerberry-flavored one, which on the whole I think must be the black birch. It is a surprisingly high-flavored drink, thus easily obtained, and considering that it had so little taste at first. Perhaps it would have continued to improve.

P. M. — To Poorhouse Pasture.

Nettle, some time. Ambrosia botrys, apparently a few days. A. Radula, ditch by pasture, several days apparently. Lycopus sinuatus, some time.

I see young larks fly pretty well before me.

Smaller bur-reed (Sparganium Americanum), judging from form of stigma (ovate and oblique), yet the leaves are almost entirely concave (!), Stow's ditch. Is this the same with that in river? How long?

It is very still and sultry this afternoon, at 6 p. M. even. I cannot even sit down in the pasture for want of air, but must keep up and moving, else I should suffocate. Thermometer ninety-seven and ninety-eight to-day. The pig pants and melts in his pen, and water must be cast on him.

Agassiz says he has discovered that the haddock, *a deep-sea* FISHY is viviparous.

July 27. *Lobelia cardinalis*, three or four days, with similar white glands (?) on edges of leaves as in *L. spicata.* Why is not this noticed? *Comus sericea* about done.

As I was paddling by Dodge's Brook, a great devil's-needle lit on my paddle, between my hands. It was about three inches long and three and a half in spread of wings, without spots, black and yellow, with green eyes (?). It kept its place within a few inches of my eyes, while I was paddling some twenty-five rods against a strong wind, clinging closely. Perhaps it chose that place for coolness this hot day.

To-day, as yesterday, it is more comfortable to be walking or paddling at 2 and 3 P. m., when there is wind, but at five the wind goes down and it is very still and suffocating.

I afterward saw other *great* devil's-needles, the forward part of their bodies light-blue and very stout.

The *Stellaria longifolia* is out of bloom and drying up. *Vide* some of this date pressed.

At Bath Place, above, many yellow lily pads are left high and dry for a long time, in the zizania hollow, a foot or more above the dry sand, yet with very firm and healthy green leaves, almost the only ones not eaten by insects now.

This river is quite low. The yellow lilies stand up seven or eight inches above the water, and, opposite to Merriam's, the rocks show their brown backs very thick (though some are concealed), like sheep and oxen lying down and chewing the cud in a meadow. I frequently run on to one — glad when it's the smooth side — and am tilted up this way or that, or spin round as on a central pivot. They bear the red or blue paint from many a boat, and here their moss has been rubbed off.

Ceratophyllum is now apparently in bloom commonly, with its crimson-dotted involucre.

I am surprised to find kalmiana lilies scattered thinly all along the Assabet, a few *small*, commonly reddish pads in middle of river, but I see no flowers. It is their great bluish waved (some green) radical leaves which I had mistaken for those of the heart-leaf, the floating leaves being so small. These and vallisneria washed up some time. The radical leaves of the heart-leaf are very small and rather triangular.

I see, on a rock in midstream, a peetweet within a foot of a turtle, both eying me anxiously within two rods, but not minding each other.

Zizania scarce out some days at least.

July 28. At 1.0 a thunder-shower, which was much needed, the com having rolled and trees suffered.

3. — p. M. — To Climbing Fern.

Virgin's-bower, apparently two or three days. *Nabalus albus*, a day or two.

Sand cherry ripe. The fruit droops in umble-like clusters, two to four peduncles together, on each side the axil of a branchlet or a leaf. Emerson and Gray call it dark-red. It is black when ripe. Emerson, Gray, and Bigelow speak of it as rare in this State! It is common enough here. I have seen it as abundant as anywhere on Weir (or Ware) Hill in Sudbury, Bigelow's own town. Cherry three eighths of an inch [in] diameter, peduncle seven sixteenths long. Emerson calls it eatable! On Linnæa Hill. By factory road clearing, the small rough sunflower, two or three days. *Gerardia flava*, apparently several days. *Cicuta bulbosa,* several days. Richweed at Brown's oak, several days (since 16th; say 22d).

July 29. Rhexia. Probably would be earlier if not mowed down. What I have called *Hieracium Gronovii,* with three cauline leaves and without veins, has achenia like *H. venosum;* so I will give it up. Its radical leaves are very hairy beneath, especially along midrib. Another smart rain, with lightning.

Pratt gave me a chimney swallow's nest, which he says fell down Wesson's chimney with young in it two or three days ago. As it comes to me, it is in the form of the segment of the circumference of a sphere whose diameter is three and a half inches, the segment being two plus wide, one side, of course, longer than the other. It bears a little soot on the inner side. It may have been placed against a slanting part of the chimney, or perhaps some of the outer edge is broken off. It is composed wholly of stout twigs, one to two inches long, one sixteenth to one eighth inch [in] diameter, held quasi cob' fashion, so as to form a sort of basketwork one third to one half inch thick, without any lining, at least in this, but very open to the air. These twigs, which are quite knubby, seem to be of the apple, elm, and the like, and are firmly fastened together by a very conspicuous

whitish semi-transparent glue, which is laid on pretty copiously, sometimes extending continuously one inch. It reminds me of the edible nests of the Chinese swallow. Who knows but their edibleness is due to a similar glue secreted by the bird and used still more profusely in building its nests? The chimney swallow is said to break off the twigs as it flies.

Pratt says he one day walked out with Wesson, with their rifles, as far as Hunt's Bridge. Looking downstream, he saw a swallow sitting on a bush very far off, at which he took aim and fired with ball. He was surprised to see that he had touched the swallow, for it flew directly across the river toward Simon Brown's barn, always descending toward the earth or water, not being able to maintain itself; but what surprised him most was to see a second swallow come flying behind and repeatedly strike the other with all his force beneath, so as to toss him up as often as he approached the ground and enable him to continue his flight, and thus he continued to do till they were out of sight. Pratt said he resolved that he would never fire at a swallow again.

Looked at a Sharp's rifle, a Colt's revolver, a Maynard's, and a Thurber's revolver. The last fires fastest (by a steady pull), but not so smartly, and is not much esteemed.

July 30. P. M. — To Rudbeckia laciniata via Assabet.

Amaranthus hybridus and *albus,* both some days at" least; first apparently longest.

This is a perfect dog-day. The atmosphere thick, mildewy, cloudy. It is difficult to dry anything. The sun is obscured, yet we expect no rain. Bad hay weather. The streams are raised by the showers of yesterday and day before, and I see the farmers turning their black-looking hay in the flooded meadows with a fork. The water is suddenly clear, as if clarified by the white of an egg or lime. I think it must be because the light is reflected downward from the overarching dog-day sky. It assists me very much as I go looking for the cerato-phyllum, potamogetons, etc. All the secrets of the river bottom are revealed. I look down into sunny depths which before were dark. The wonderful clearness of the water, enabling you to explore the river bottom and many of its secrets now, exactly as if

the water had been clarified. This is our compensation for a heaven concealed. The air is close and still. Some days ago, before this weather, I saw haymakers at work dressed simply in a straw hat, boots, shirt, and pantaloons, the shirt worn like a frock over their pants. The laborer cannot endure the contact with his clothes.

I am struck with the splendid crimson-red under sides of the white lily pads where my boat has turned them, at my bath place near the Hemlocks. For these pads, *i.e.* the white ones, are but little eaten yet.

Rudbeckia laciniata, perhaps a week. When I have just rowed about the Island a green bittern crosses in my rear with heavy flapping flight, its legs dangling, not observing me. It looks deep slate-blue above, yellow legs, whitish streak along throat and breast, and slowly plows the air with its prominent breast-bone, like the stake-driver.

July 31. *Thursday*. P. M. — To Decodon Pond.

Erigeron Canadensis, some time. Alisma mostly gone to seed. Thoroughwort, several days. Penthorum, a good while. Trichostema has now for some time been springing up in the fields, giving out its aromatic scent when bruised, and I see one ready to open.

For a morning or two I have noticed dense crowds of little tender whitish parasol toadstools, one inch or more in diameter, and two inches high or more, with simple plaited wheels, about the pump platform; first fruit of this dog-day weather.

Measured a *Rudbeckia hirta* flower; more than three inches and three eighths in diameter.

As I am going across to Bear Garden Hill, I see much *white Polygala sanguinea* with the red in A. Wheeler's meadow (next to Potter's). Also much of the *Bartonia tenella,* which has been out some days at least, five rods from ditch, and three from Potter's fence.

Went through Potter's *Aster Radula* swamp this dog-day afternoon. As I make my way amid rank weeds still wet with the dew, the air filled with a decaying musty scent and the z-ing of small locusts, I hear the distant sound of a flail, and thoughts of autumn occupy my mind, and the memory of past years. Some late rue leaves on a broken twig have turned all a uniform clear purple.

How thick the berries — low blackberries, *Vaccinium vacillans,* and huckleberries — on the side of Fair Haven Hill! The berries are large, for no drought has shrunk them. They are very abundant this year to compensate for the want of them the last. The children should grow rich if they can get eight cents a quart for blackberries, as they do.

Again I am attracted by the hoary, as it were misty morning light on the base of the upper leaves of the velvety *Pycnanthemum incanum.* It is the most interesting of this genus here. The smooth sumach is pretty generally crimson-berried on the Knoll, and its lower leaves are scarlet-tipped (though there are some blossoms yet), but the *Rhus copallina* there is not yet out. See dense fields of the great epilobium now in its prime, like soldiers in the meadow, resounding with the hum of bees. The butterflies are seen on the pearly everlasting, etc., etc. *Hieracium paniculatum* by *Gerardia quercifolia* path in woods under Cliffs, two or three days. Elodea two and a half feet high, how long? The flowers at 3 P. in nearly shut, cloudy as it is. Yet the next day, later, I saw some open, I think.

Another short-tailed shrew dead in the wood-path. Near Well Meadow, hear the distant scream of a hawk, apparently anxious about her young, and soon a large apparent hen-hawk (?) comes and alights on the very top of the highest pine there, within gunshot, and utters its angry scream. This a sound of the season when they probably are taking their first (?) flights.

See yellow Bethlehem-star still.

As I look out through the woods westward there, I see, sleeping and gleaming through the stagnant, misty, glaucous dog-day air, *i.e.* blue mist, the smooth silvery surface of Fair Haven Pond. There is a singular charm about it in this setting. The surface has a dull, gleaming polish on it, though draped in this glaucous mist.

The *Solidago gigantea* (?), three-ribbed, out a long time at Walden shore by railroad, more perfectly out than any solidago I have seen. I will call this *S. gigantea*, yet it has a yellowish-green stem, slightly pubescent above, and leaves slightly rough to touch *above*, rays small, about fifteen.

Mine must be the *Aster Radula* (if any) of Gray, yet the scales of the involucre are not appressed, but *rather* sub-squamose, nor is it

rare. Pursh describes it, or the *Radula*, as *white-flowered*, and mentions several closely allied species.

Waded through the northernmost Andromeda Pond. Decodon not nearly out *there.*

Did I not see some kind of sparrow about the shore, with yellow beneath?

Mountain cranberries apparently full grown, many at least.

AUGUST, 1856

Aug. 1. To Ludwigia sphœrocarpa.

Burdock, several days at least. Erechthites, apparently two or three days, by Peter's Path, end of Cemetery, the middle flowers first. Crotalaria in fine lechea field, how long? Still out, and some pods fully grown. Liatris will apparently open in a day or two. *Diplopappus umbellatus* at Peter's wall. *Desmodium Canadense*, some time; several great stems five feet high, a little spreading.

Since July 30th, inclusive, we have had perfect dog-days without interruption. The earth has suddenly [become] invested with a thick musty mist. The sky has become a mere fungus. A thick blue musty veil of mist is drawn before the sun. The sun has not been visible, except for a moment or two once or twice a day, all this time, nor the stars by night. Moisture reigns. You cannot dry a napkin at the window, nor press flowers without their mildewing. You imbibe so much moisture from the atmosphere that you are not so thirsty, nor is bathing so grateful as a week ago. The burning heat is tempered, but as you lose sight of the sky and imbibe the musty, misty air, you exist as a vegetable, a fungus. Unfortunate those who have not got their hay. I see them wading in overflowed meadows and pitching the black and mouldy swaths about in vain that they may dry. In the meanwhile, vegetation is becoming rank, vines of all kinds are rampant. Squashes and melons *are said* to grow a foot in a night. But weeds grow as fast. The com unrolls. Berries abound and attain their full size. Once or twice in the day there is an imperfect gleam of yellow sunlight for a moment through some thinner part of the veil, reminding us that we have not seen the sun so long, but no blue sky is revealed. The earth is completely invested with cloudlike wreaths of vapor (yet fear no rain and need no veil), beneath which flies buzz hollowly and torment, and mosquitoes hum and sting as if they were born of such an air. The drooping spirits of mosquitoes revive, and they whet their stings anew. Legions of buzzing flies blacken the furniture. (For a week *at least* have heard that snapping sound under pads.) We have a dense fog every night, which lifts itself but a short distance during the day. At sundown I see it curling up from the river

and meadows. However, I love this moisture in its season. I believe it is good to breathe, wholesome as a vapor bath. Toadstools shoot up in the yards and paths.

The Great Meadows being a little wet, — hardly so much as usual, — I took off my shoes and went barefoot some two miles through the cut-grass, from Peter's to Sphærocarpa Pools and backward by river. Very little grass cut there yet. The cut-grass is bad for tender feet, and you must be careful not to let it draw through your hands, for it will cut like a fine saw.

I was surprised to see dense beds of rhexia in full bloom there, apparently on hummocks a rod in diameter left by the ice, or in long ridges mixed with ferns and some *Lysimachia lanceolatay* arrowhead, etc. They make a splendid show, these brilliant rose-colored patches, especially in the neighborhood of Copan. It is about the richest color to be seen now. Yet few ever see them in this perfection, unless the haymaker who levels them, or the birds that fly over the meadow. Far in the broad wet meadows, on the hummocks and ridges, these bright beds of rhexia turn their faces to the heavens, seen only by the bitterns and other meadow birds that fly over. We, dwelling and walking on the dry upland, do not suspect their existence. How obvious and gay to those creatures that fly over the meadow! Seen only by birds and mowers. These gay standards otherwise unfurled in vain.

Snake-head arethusa still in the meadow there. *Ludwigia sphærocarpa* apparently a week out, a foot and a half to two feet high.

Aug. 2. P. M. — To Hill.

A green bittern comes, noiselessly flapping, with stealthy and inquisitive looking to this side the stream and then that, thirty feet above the water. This antediluvian bird, creature of the night, is a fit emblem of a dead stream like this Musketicook. This especially is the bird of the river. There is a sympathy between its sluggish flight and the sluggish flow of the stream, 8. — its slowly lapsing flight, even like the rills of Musketicook and my own pulse sometimes.

Very common now are the few green emerald leafets of the *Bidens Bechii*, which will ere long yellow the shallow parts.

Acalypha, apparently not long. Dodder, not long (not out 27th of July at railroad bridge), say four or five days. A three-ribbed goldenrod by small apple, by wall at foot east side of Hill *(S. gigantea?* or one of the two preceding), not nearly out. It differs from *my gigantea* apparently only in the leaves being *perfectly smooth* above and the stem smooth and pink [?] glaucous (excepting a *little* pubescence near the top). Very tall. *Vide* it by and by.

The lower leaves of some catnep are now of that delicate lake or claret color. Some waxwork leaves have felt the heat and slight drought. Their green is spotted with yellow, distinct yellow and green; others a very delicate clear yellow; others faded quite white.

Aug. 3. *Sunday*. P. M. — To Lee's Cliff by river.

Landing at flat shore. The sium and sarothra apparently now in prime. The central umbel of the sium going or gone to seed. The whorled utricularia is open all day. The *Hypericum ellipticum* is apparently out of bloom, there at least.

At length from July 30th inclusive the cloud-like wreaths of mist of these dog-days lift somewhat, and the sun shines out more or less, a short time, at 3 p. M.

The sun coming out when I am off Clamshell, the abundant small dragon-flies of different colors, bright-blue and lighter, looped along the floating vallisneria, make a very lively and gay appearance. I fancy these bright loops adorn or set forth the river like triumphal arches for my procession, stretching from side to side. The floating vallisneria is very thick at the shallow bends. I see many of its narrow, erect, spoon-shaped tops.

Comus altemifolia berries ripe, as I go from Holden Swamp shore to Miles Swamp. They are in open cymes, dull-blue, somewhat depressed globular, tipped with the persistent styles, yet already, as usual, mostly fallen. But handsomer far are the pretty (bare) red peduncles and pedicels, like fairy fingers spread. They make a show at a distance of a dozen rods even. Something light and open about this tree, but a sort of witch's tree nevertheless.

The purple utricularia abundant, but I did not chance to notice it July 25th. At Bittern Cliff again lucky enough to find *Polygonum tenue*, apparently out but a short time, say one week at most. Have

marked the spot by a stone from the wall; further north than formerly. *Selaginella rupestris* (?) shows yellow fruit now at Bittern Cliff. *Gerardia quercifolia*, three to four feet high, out there, apparently two or three days. Yet none of the leaves I have are twice pinnatifid. Pennyroyal there, apparently some days. *Diplopappus corni-folius*, some time. *Desmodium acuminatum* a long time out and also gone to seed. *Lespedeza hirta*, Blackberry Steep, how long? High blackberries beginning; a few ripe. Parietaria a foot high, some time, under the slippery elm.

What is that tall (four feet), long-bearded grass, now nearly ripe, under this end of Lee's Cliff?

I see blackened haycocks on the meadows. Think what the farmer gets with his hay, — what his river-meadow hay consists of, — how much of fern and osier and sweet-gale and *Polygonum hydropiperoides* and rhexia (I trust the cattle love the scent of it as well as I) and lysimachia, etc., etc., and rue, and sium and cicuta. In a meadow now being mown I see that the ferns and small osiers are as thick as the grass. If modem farmers do not collect elm and other leaves for their cattle, they do thus mow and cure the willows, etc., etc., to a considerable extent, so that they come to large bushes or trees only on the edge of the meadow.

Two small ducks (probably wood ducks) flying south. Already grown, and at least looking south!! It reminds me of the swift revolution of the seasons.

Our river is so sluggish and smooth that sometimes I can trace a boat that has passed half an hour before, by the bubbles on its surface, which have not burst. I have known thus which stream another party had gone up long before. A swift stream soon blots out such traces.

Cjrsium lanceolatum at Lee's Cliff, apparently some days. Its leaves are long-pointed and a much darker green than those of the pasture thistle. On the under sides of its leaves I noticed very large ants attending peculiar large dark-colored aphides, for their milch cows.

The prevailing willow off Holden Swamp is *sericea*-like, but the leaf is narrow, more shining above, and merely glaucous beneath, longer-petioled, the serra-tures not so much bent toward the point.

The twigs not nearly so brittle at the base, but bringing away strings of bark. Stipules probably fallen or inconspicuous. Can it be *S. petiolaris?* and is it the same with that above Hemlocks, north side? Or is it *S. lueida? Vide* in press.

Edge of grain-field next Bittern Cliff Wood, common spurge; and, with it, apparently the same, half ascendant and covered or spotted with a minute fungus.

Aug. 4. P. M. — Carried party a-berrying to Conantum in boat.

Lespedeza violacea, perhaps the largest-leafed variety, leafets one inch by one third inch, petioled, well out on side of Blackberry Steep.

Scare up a young apparently summer duck, floating amid the pads, and the same again, coming within gunshot. I think it young because it is not very shy.

Have heard the alder *cricket* some days. The turning-point is reached.

Conantum hillside is now literally black with berries. What a profusion of this kind of food Nature provides, as if to compensate for the scarcity last year! Fortunate that these cows in their pasture do not love them, but pass them by. The blackberries are already softening, and of all kinds there are many, many more than any or all creatures can gather. They are literally five or six species deep. First, away down in the shade under all you find, still fresh, the great very light blue *(i e* with a very thick blue bloom) *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* in heavy clusters, that early ambrosial fruit, delicate-flavored, thin-skinned, and cool, — Olympian fruit; then, next above, the still denser bunches and clusters of V. vacillans, of various varieties, firm and sweet, solid food; and, rising above these, large blue and also shining black huckleberries (Gaylussacia resinosa) of various flavors and qualities; and over all runs rampant the low blackberry (Rubus Canadensis), weighing down the thicket with its wreaths of black fruit. Also here and there the high blackberry, just beginning, towers over all. You go daintily wading through this thicket, picking, perchance, only the biggest of the blackberries — as big as your thumb — and clutching here and there a handful of huckleberries or blueberries, but never, perchance, suspecting the

delicious cool blue-bloomed ones under all. This favorable moist weather has expanded some of the huckleberries to the size of bullets. Each patch, each bush, seems fuller and blacker than the last. Such a profusion, yet you see neither birds nor beasts eating them, unless ants and the huckleberry-bug! I carried my hands full of bushes to the boat, and, returning, the two ladies picked fully three pints from these alone, casting the bare bushes into the stream.

Aug. 5. A. M. — On river.

Mikania a day or two. Polygonum amphibium in water, slightly hairy, well out. Polygonum orientale, how long?

P. M. — To house-leek via Assabet Bath.

Trichostema, maybe several days in some places. Nightshade berries, how long?

When I crossed the new stone bridge a great water adder lay on it, full five feet long and nearly as big round as my arm. It turned and ran along, with a coarse grating rustle, to the end of the railing, and then dropped deliberately head foremost from the last abutment, full nine feet, to the gravelly ground, amid the osiers, making a loud sound when he struck; at once took to the water, and showed his head amid the pads. I also saw another similar one at House-leek Rock.

Centaurea well out, how long? Aster dumosus, apparently a day or two, with its large conspicuous flower-buds at the end of the branchlets and linear-spatulate involucral scales.

A[t] haunted house site, as at Bittern Cliff grain-field, I see much apparent Euphorbia maculata semi-erect in the grass. Eupatorium pubescens, by Pear Path.

I now find an abundance of the clustered rubus ripe. It is not large and has a clammy, subacid taste, but some are very sweet. Clusters generally drooping.

Now, at 4 p m. this dog-day, cloudy weather, the Hypericum mutilum is abundantly open in the Solidago lanceolata path, sometimes fifteen inches high, while the Canadense and angulatum are shut. S. lanceolata, some days. S. nemoralis, two or three days.

Choke-cherries near House-leek Rock begin to be ripe, though still red. They are scarcely edible, but their beauty atones for it. See

those handsome racemes of ten or twelve cherries each, dark glossy red, semitransparent. You love them not the less because they are not quite palatable. Along fences or hedgerows.

To my surprise one house-leek (apparently Semper-*vivum tectorum* of Dewey) has shot up twenty-two inches high and is apparently nearly out, though the petals are erect, not spread. The stem is clothed with the same thick leaves, only smaller and lessening upward and forming a column about one and a half inches in diameter (with the leaves). The top is a broad raceme (?), about eight inches wide and two thirds as long, of eleven long, spreading, and recurved branches, lined with flowers on the upper side only. These consist of twelve to thirteen lanceolate calyx-segments and as many still longer dull-purple petals and about twenty pistils within and short stamens around them. It is a strange but rather stately cactus-like plant. The children call the pretty clusters of radical leaves hen and chickens. In this case the radical leaves are withered, and a fusiform root sustains the flower. This one is not on the bare rock, but lower amid the huckleberry bushes.

At the Assabet stone bridge, apparently freshly in flower, — though it may have been out nearly as long as the *androsæmifolium*, — apparently the *Apocynum cannabinum* var *hypericifolium* (?). The tallest is four feet high. The flowers very small (hardly more than an eighth of an inch in diameter), the segments of the corolla not revolute but nearly erect. There are twenty to thirty flowers at end of a branch. The divisions of the calyx are longer than in the common, long ovate. Yet it differs from Gray's *hypericifolium* in having flowers rose-streaked within like the common, the cymes *not* shorter than the leaves, and the tube of the corolla rather longer than the divisions of the calyx. The leaves are hardly more downy or heart-shaped below than the common. Hypericifolium is a separate species in Pursh and some others. And the branches are less ascending than the common, making an angle of about 62° with the stem (the four lower), while three of the lower of a common one make an angle of 44°.

Aug. 6. Copious and continuous rain in the night, deluging, soaking rain, with thunder and lightning, beating down the crops; and

this morning it is cooler and clearer and windier.

P. M. — To Walden.

The wind, or motion of the air, makes it much cooler on the railroad causeway or hills, but in the woods it is as close and melting as before. Solidago altissima, a small specimen, a day or two. Apios tuberosa, some days. Rubus hispidus ripe. Middle umbels of the bristly aralia ripe. Desmodium nudiflorum, some timé out at Peak. It is sometimes three feet high! Holly berries ripe. Clethra, how long? Some anychia shows green seed. Desmodium rotundifolium, some days at least. Cynoglossum Morisoni mostly gone to seed, roadside, at grape-vine just beyond my bean-field. Some is five feet high. Aster maerophyllus, apparently two or three days, at hillside, under beaked hazel. Eupatorium purpureum at Stow's Pool, apparently several days, but more common there the tall hollow one, whorled to top, also out. Hear a nuthatch. Hieracium scabrum.

Artificial, denaturalized persons cannot handle nature without being poisoned. If city-bred girls visit their country cousins, — go a-berrying with them, — they are sure to return covered with blueberry bumps at least. They exhaust all the lotions of the country apothecary for a week after. Unnamable poisons infect the air, as if they were pursued by imps. I have known those who forbade their children going into the woods at all.

Aug. 7. Kemp, perhaps a week.

Heard this forenoon what I thought at first to be children playing on pumpkin stems in the next yard, but it turned out to be the new steam-whistle music, what they call the Calliope (!) in the next town. It sounded still more like the pumpkin stem near at hand, only a good deal louder. Again I mistook it for an instrument in the house or at the door, when it was a quarter of a mile off, from habit locating it by its loudness. At Acton, six miles off, it sounded like some new seraphim in the next house with the blinds closed. All the milkmen and their horses stood still to hear it. The horses stood it remarkably well. It was not so musical as the ordinary whistle.

P. M. — With a berry party, ride to Conantum.

At Blackberry Steep, apparently an early broad-leafed variety of *Desmodium paniculatum,* two or three days. This and similar plants

are common there and may almost name the place. The *D. rotundifoUum* is there abundant; also, beside, *Lespedeza hirta* and *capitata*, the elliptic-oblong *L. violacea* and the *angus-tata*, as also at Heywood Peak. All these plants seem to love a dry open hillside, a steep one. Are rarely upright, but spreading, wand-like. Aster patens, a day or more. Inula, some time. Mulgedium, perhaps a fortnight. Eupatorium sessilifolium, apparently about August 5th. I suspect that I see but one species of smooth-stemmed grape as yet.

I must contrast the Galium circœzans and pilosum *(?)* more carefully. Vide if the first ever has purple flowers. The only difference, perhaps, that I yet notice is that the leaves of the latter are scarcely three-nerved and are more rounded or obovate, and it is a later plant.

I see that common gall on goldenrods now on an S. cæsia.

The river has been raised by the rain, and water stands still in low grass ground. The leaves in low land, as of the mulgedium, are white with mildew, owing [to] the continued dampness of dog-days. One mulgediunf at Comer Spring is at least ten feet high and hollow all the way.

Those who have weak eyes complain of the darkness of the late dog-days.

Aug. 8. Rain, lightning, and thunder all day long in torrents. The ground was already saturated on the night of the 5th, and now it fills all gutters and low grounds. No sooner has one thunder-shower swept over and the sky begun to light up a little, than another darkens the west. We were told that lightning cleared the air and so cleared itself, but now we lose our faith in that theory, for we have thunder[-shower] after thunder-shower and lightning is become a drug. Nature finds it just as easy to lighten the last time as at first, and we cannot believe that the air was so very impure.

5. — P. M. — When I came forth, thinking to empty my boat and go a-meditating along the river, — for the full ditches and drenched grass forbade other routes, except the highway, — and this is one advantage of a boat, — I learned to my chagrin that Father's pig was gone. He had leaped out of the pen some time since his breakfast, but his dinner was untouched. Here was an ugly duty not to be shirked,

— a wild shoat that weighed but ninety to be tracked, caught, and penned, — an afternoon's work, at least (if I were lucky enough to accomplish it so soon), prepared for me, quite different from what I had anticipated. I felt chagrined, it is true, but I could not ignore the fact nor shirk the duty that lay so near to me. Do the duty that lies nearest to thee. I proposed to Father to sell the pig as he was running (somewhere) to a neighbor who had talked of buying him, making a considerable reduction. But my suggestion was not acted on, and the responsibilities of the case all devolved on me, for I could run faster than Father. Father looked to me, and I ceased to look to the river. Well, let us see if we can track him. Yes, this is the corner where he got out, making a step of his trough. Thanks to the rain, his tracks are quite distinct. Here he went along the edge of the garden over the water and muskmelons, then through the beans and potatoes, and even along the front-yard walk I detect the print of his divided hoof, his two sharp toes (*ungulæ*). It's a wonder we did not see him. And here he passed out under the gate, across the road, — how naked he must have felt! — into a grassy ditch, and whither next? Is it of any use to go hunting him up unless you have devised some mode of catching him when you have found? Of what avail to know where he has been, even where he is? He was so shy the little while we had him, of course he will never come back; he cannot be tempted by a swillpail. Who knows how many miles off he is! Perhaps he has taken the back track and gone to Brighton, or Ohio! At most, probably we shall only have the satisfaction of glimpsing the nimble beast at a distance, from time to time, as he trots swiftly through the green meadows and corn-fields. But, now I speak, what is that I see pacing deliberately up the middle of the street forty rods off? It is *he.* As if to tantalize, to tempt us to waste our afternoon without further hesitation, he thus offers himself. He roots a foot or two and then lies down on his belly in the middle of the street. But think not to catch him a-napping. He has his eyes about, and his ears too. He has already been chased. He gives that wagon a wide berth, and now, seeing me, he turns and trots back down the street. He turns into a front yard. Now if I can only close that gate upon him ninety-nine hundredths of the work is done, but ah! he hears me coming afar off, he foresees the danger, and, with swinish cunning and speed, he

scampers out. My neighbor in the street tries to head him; he jumps to this side the road, then to that, before him; but the third time the pig was there first and went by. "Whose is it?" he shouts. "It's ours." He bolts into that neighbor's yard and so across his premises. He has been twice there before, it seems; he knows the road; see what work he has made in his flower-garden! He must be fond of bulbs. Our neighbor picks up one tall flower with its bulb attached, holds it out at arm's length. He is excited about the pig; it is a subject he is interested in. But where is [he] gone now? The last glimpse I had of him was as he went through the cow-yard; here are his tracks again in this corn-field, but they are lost in the grass. We lose him; we beat the bushes in vain; he may be far away. But hark! I heard a grunt. Nevertheless for half an hour I do not see him that grunted. At last I find fresh tracks along the river, and again lose them. Each neighbor whose garden I traverse tells me some anecdote of losing pigs, or the attempt to drive them, by which I am not encouraged. Once more he crosses our first neighbor's garden and is said to be in the road. But I am not there yet; it is a good way off. At length my eyes rest on him again, after three quarters of an hour's separation. There he trots with the whole road to himself, and now again drops on his belly in a puddle. Now he starts again, seeing me twenty rods [off], deliberates, considers which way I want him to go, and goes the other. There was some chance of driving him along the sidewalk, or letting him go rather, till he slipped under our gate again, but of what avail would that be? How corner and catch him who keeps twenty rods off? He never lets the open side of the triangle be less than half a dozen rods wide. There was one place where a narrower street turned off at right angles with the main one, just this side our yard, but I could not drive him past that. Twice he ran up the narrow street, for he knew I did not wish it, but though the main street was broad and open and no traveller in sight, when I tried to drive him past this opening he invariably turned his piggish head toward me, dodged from side to side, and finally ran up the narrow street or down the main one, as if there were a high barrier erected before him. But really he is no more obstinate than I. I cannot but respect his tactics and his independence. He will be he, and I may be I. He is not unreasonable because he thwarts me, but only the more reasonable. He has a strong will. He

stands upon his idea. There is a wall across the path not where a man bars the way, but where he is resolved not to travel. Is he not superior to man therein? Once more he glides down the narrow street, deliberates at a comer, chooses wisely for him, and disappears through an openwork fence eastward. He has gone to fresh gardens and pastures new. Other neighbors stand in the doorways but half sympathizing, only observing, "Ugly thing to catch."

"You have a job on your hands." I lose sight of him, but hear that he is far ahead in a large field. And there we try to let him alone a while, giving him a wide berth.

At this stage an Irishman was engaged to assist. "I can catch him," says he, with Buonapartean confidence. He thinks him a family Irish pig. His wife is with him, bareheaded; and his little flibbertigibbet of a boy, seven years old. "Here, Johnny, do you run right off there" (at the broadest possible angle with his own course). "Oh, but he can't do anything."

"Oh, but I only want him to tell me where he is, — to keep sight of him." Michael soon discovers that he is not an Irish pig, and his wife and Johnny's occupation are soon gone. Ten minutes afterward I am patiently tracking him step by step through a corn-field, a near-sighted man helping me, and then into garden after garden far eastward, and finally into the highway, at the graveyard; but hear and see nothing. One suggests a dog to track him. Father is meanwhile selling him to the blacksmith, who also is trying to get sight of him. After fifteen minutes since he disappeared eastward, I hear that he has been to the river twice far on [?] the north, through the first neighbor's premises. I wend that way. He crosses the street far ahead, Michael behind; he dodges up an avenue. I stand in the gap there, Michael at the other end, and now he tries to corner him. But it is a vain hope to corner him in a yard. I see a carriage-manufactory door open. "Let him go in there, Flannery." For once the pig and I are of one mind; he bolts in, and the door is closed. Now for a rope. It is a large barn, crowded with carriages. The rope is at length obtained; the windows are barred with carriages lest he bolt through. He is resting quietly on his belly in the further comer, thinking unutterable things.

Now the course recommences within narrower limits. Bump,

bump, bump he goes, against wheels and shafts. We get no hold yet. He is all ear and eye. Small boys are sent under the carriages to drive him out. He froths at the mouth and deters them. At length he is stuck for an instant between the spokes of a wheel, and I am securely attached to his hind leg. He squeals deafeningly, and is silent. The rope is attached to a hind leg. The door is opened, and the *driving* commences. Roll an egg as well. You may drag him, but you" cannot drive him. But he is in the road, and now another thunder-shower greets us. I leave Michael with the rope in one hand and a switch in the other and go home. He seems to be gaining a little westward. But, after long delay, I look out and find that he makes but doubtful progress. A boy is made to face him with a stick, and it is only when the pig springs at him savagely that progress is made homeward. He will be killed before he is driven home. I get a wheelbarrow and go to the rescue. Michael is alarmed. The pig is rabid, snaps at him. We drag him across the barrow, hold him down, and so, at last, get him home.

If a wild shoat like this gets loose, first track him if you can, or otherwise discover where he is. Do not scare him more than you can help. Think of some yard or building or other inclosure that will hold him and, by showing your forces — yet as if uninterested parties 9. — fifteen or twenty rods off, let him of his own accord enter it. Then slightly shut the gate. Now corner and tie him and put him into a cart or barrow.

All progress in driving at last was made by facing and endeavoring to switch him from home. He rushed upon you and made a few feet in the desired direction. When I approached with the barrow he advanced to meet it with determination.

So I get home at dark, wet through and supperless, covered with mud and wheel-grease, without any rare flowers.

To the eyes of men there is something tragic in death. We hear of the death of any member of the human family with something more than regret, — not without a slight shudder and feeling of commiseration. The churchyard is a *grave* place.

Aug. 9. *Saturday*. Notwithstanding the very copious rain, with lightning, on the night of August 5th and the deluge which fell

yesterday, raising the river still higher, it rained again and again with very vivid lightning, more copiously than ever, last night, and without long intervals all this day. Few, if any, can remember such a succession of thunder-storms merged into one long thunder-storm, lasting almost continuously (the storm does) two nights and two days. We are surprised to see that it can lighten just as vividly, thunder just as loud, rain just as copiously at last as at first.

P. M. — Up Assabet.

The river is raised about two feet! My boat is nearly even full, though under the willows. The water stands nearly a foot over the highest part of the large flat rock by Island. There is more current. The pads are drowned; hardly one to be seen afloat; the utmost length of their tethers does not permit them to come within a foot or ten inches of the surface. They lay smoothly on the top before, with considerable spare coil beneath; now they strain in vain toward the surface. All the *Bidens Beckii* is drowned too, and will be delayed, if not exterminated for this year. The water is cool to the bather after so much rain.

The notes of the wood pewee and warbling vireo are more prominent of late, and of the goldfinch twittering over. Does the last always utter his twitter when ascending? These are already feeding on the thistle seeds.

Again I am surprised to see the *Apocynum cannabinum* close to the rock at the Island, several plants, apparently not more than ten days out; say July 25th, including the ones I saw before. The flowers of this are white, with divisions of the corolla erect or nearly so, corolla not one eighth of an inch wide, calyx-segments lanceolate, pointed, *as long as* the tube of the corolla. I now notice that *all* the branches are about equally upright, and hence the upper ones are much more upright than the upper ones of the *A. androsæmifolium.* The plant is inclined to be taller and narrower than that, perhaps because it grows by water. The leaves are more oblong or lanceolate and pointed, the downiness and petioles about the same with that of the common; in this case, none heart-shaped. The one found the 5th was between this and the common, a rose-streaked one, in fact colored like the common; this, a *white* one with still longer calyx-segments and no heart-shaped leaves. This is rather smooth. Say,

then, for that of the 5th and this, they are varieties of the *A. cannabinum.*

I scare up a couple of wood ducks separately, undoubtedly birds bred and dispersed about here. The rise of the river attracts them.

What I have called *Aster corymbosus* out a day, above Hemlocks. It has eight to twelve white rays, smaller than those of the *macrophyllus*, and a dull-red stem commonly. It differs from Gray's *corymbosus* in the achenia being apparently *not* slender, not opening in July, and there being no need of distinguishing it from *A. macrophyllus;* from his *cordifolius* in the rays *not* being numerous, nor the panicled heads very numerous (sometimes pretty numerous), and the rays not pale-blue. Perhaps I must call it *A. cordifolius*, yet the lower and principal petioles are naked (Gray makes them so commonly!), not at all winged, though the upper are. Found one individual at Miles Swamp whose lower petioles were winged. Its petioles (the lower) are only sometimes winged here. The flowers of *A. macrophyllus* are white with a very slight bluish tinge, in a coarse flat-topped corymb. Flowers nine to ten eighths of an inch in diameter. *A. cordifolius* flowers six eighths of an inch [in] diameter.

Aug. 10. *Sunday.* The weather is fair and clear at last. The dog-days over at present, which have lasted since July 30th.

P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill and Walden.

Fragrant everlasting, maybe some days.

Rhus copallina not yet for two or three days. The *Pycnanthemum incanum*, the handsomest of the pycnanthemums, grows also at the west end [of] the Knoll with the *R. copallina.* All the upper leaves are equally hoary there in the light. The corymbs are an inch across, and the flowers large and very prettily purple-spotted. They are swarming with great wasps of different kinds, and bees.

Hear the wood thrush still.

I go across lots like a hunting dog. With what tireless energy and abandonment they dash through the brush and up the sides of hills! I meet two white foxhounds, led by an old red one. How full of it they are! How their tails work! They are not tied to paths; they burst forth from the thickest shrub oak lot, and immediately dive into another as the fox did.

There are more varieties of blackberries between the low and the high than I take notice of. *Vide* that kind in the Well Meadow Field.

The fine (early sedge?) grass in the frosty hollows about Walden (where no bushes have sprung up) looks like an unkempt head.

Vemonia, how long?

The river has been rising all day. It is between two and a half and three feet higher than ten days ago. Even the white umbels of the sium are drowned, except here and there where they stand over the water. It is within nine and a half inches of the top of Hoar's wall at 6 p. M. The meadows have quite a springlike look, yet the grass conceals the extent of the flood. It appears chiefly where it is mown. Yet a quarter part as much rain would have raised the river more in the spring, so much of it was soaked up by the thirsty earth.

Aug. 11. This morning the river is an inch and a half higher, or within eight inches of the top of Hoar's wall.

The other evening, returning down the river, I think I detected the convexity of the earth within a short distance. I saw the western landscape and horizon, reflected in the water fifty rods behind me, all lit up with the reflected sky, though it was a narrow [?] picture. A stroke of my oar and the dark intervening water was interposed like a dark, opaque wall. Moving my head a few inches up or down produced the same effect; i.e., by raising my head three inches I could partially oversee the plane of the water at that point, which was otherwise concealed by the slightest convexity.

P. M. — Walk to Conantum with Mr. Bradford. He gives me a sprig of *Cassia Marilandica,* wild senna, found by Minot Pratt just below Leighton's by the roadside. How long? P. thought it in prime August 10th. *Aster 'puniceus* a day or more. A new sunflower at Wheeler's Bank, this side Corner Spring, which I will call the *tall* rough sunflower; opened say August 1st (?). (I saw it out the 7th.) It does not correspond exactly to any described. Stem three to six feet high, branched at top, purple with a bloom, roughish, especially the peduncles. Leaves opposite, except a few small ones amid the branches, thick, ovate or ovate-lanceolate, taper-pointed, three-nerved, obscurely and remotely toothed, rough above, smooth and whitish below, abruptly contracted into margined petioles. Scales of

the involucre lanceolate, taper-pointed, subequal, exceeding the disk, ciliate; rays eight or nine, one and a half or more inches long, chaff black. Edge of meadow.

Measured a mulgedium, eight feet three inches long and hollow all the way. Some boy had fixed an archangelica stem so as to conduct the water at the spring close by. Elder-berries in a day or two. I see some *Hypericum angulosum* turned a delicate clear purple. *Polygonum dumetorum* at Bittern Cliff, one flower gone to seed (!); say day or two.

7 P. m. — The river has risen about two inches today, and is now within six inches of the top of Hoar's wall.

Aug. 12. 11 a m. — To Hill.

The *Hypericum mutilum* is well out at this hour. The river is now at a standstill, some three feet above its usual level. The pickerel-weed is all covered, and lilies, and much of the button-bush and mikania. It is as great an accident as can befall these flowers.

It is novel to behold this great, full tide in which you perceive some current by the eddies, in which no snarl of weeds is seen. So different from that Potamogeton River, where you caught a crab at every stroke of the oar, and farmers drove their hay-carts across. Instead of watery gleaming fields of potamogetons in which the boatman was entangled, and drifting vallisneria on which the dragon-flies alighted, I see a deep full river on which vessels may float, and I feel at a distance from *terra firma* when on its bosom.

P. M. — To Moore's Swamp.

Gerardia purpurea, two or three days. The mula gedium in that swamp is very abundant and a very stately plant, so erect and soldier-like, in large companies, rising above all else, with its very regular long, sharp, elliptic head and bluish-white flowers.

Again I examine that very strict solidago, which perhaps I must call wand-stemmed. Perhaps it is only a swamp variety of *S. stricta*, yet the leaves are thicker and darker(?)-green, and the upper commonly broader, often elliptic, pointed, less recurved and not wavy. Stem and head is *now* commonly much more strict and branches more erect, and racemes less one-sided, but in larger and maturer ones they are at length recurving and forming a pyramid like

S. stricta. Rays are fewer and broader, five or six; stem reddish, with apparently more branchlets or leafets in axils.

Am surprised to see still a third species or variety of helianthus (which may have opened near August 1st, say only a week). Only the first flowers out. At edge of the last clearing south of spring. I cannot identify it. It has very short but not margined petioles; leaves narrower than yesterday's, and rough beneath as well as above. The outer scales of involucre a little the longest; but I think this of little importance, for the involucre of the *H. divarieatus* is very variable, hardly two alike; rays about ten. In some respects it is most like *H. strumosus*, but not downy beneath.

The bruised leaves of these helianthuses are rather fragrant.

It is thick, smoky, dog-day weather again. Bradford speaks of the dog's-tooth violet as a plant which disappears early.

The *Aster patens* is very handsome by the side of Moore's Swamp on the bank, — large flowers, more or less purplish or violet, each commonly (four or five) at the end of a long peduncle, three to six inches long, at right angles with the stem, giving it an open look. Snake-head, or chelone. On the edge of the ditch opposite the spring, *Epilobium coloratum,* and also what I must call *E. palustre* of Willdenow and Pursh and Eaton. It is smooth or smoothish, leaves somewhat toothed or subdenticulate, peduncle one inch long, flowers white.

The most interesting domes I behold are not those of Oriental temples and palaces, but of the toadstools. On this knoll in the swamp they are little pyramids of Cheops or Cholula, which also stand on the plain, very delicately shaded off. They have burst their brown tunics as they expanded, leaving only a clear-brown apex, and on every side these swelling roofs or domes are patched and shingled with the fragments, delicately shaded off thus into every tint of brown to the edge. As if this creation of a night would thus imitate the weather-stains of centuries. Toads' temples. So charming is gradation!

Gerardia pedicularia, how long?

What a wilderness of weeds is Moore's Swamp now!

Tall rough goldenrods, erechthites, poke, Aster Radula, dogwood, etc., etc. It looks as if the potatoes which grew there would be

poisonous.

An arrowhead in Peter's Path. How many times I have found an arrowhead by that path, as if that had been an Indian trail! Perchance it was, for some of the paths we travel are much older than we think, especially some which the colored race in our midst still use, for they are nearest to the Indian trails. The Emerson children say that Aralia nudicaulis berries are good to eat.

The leaves of Sericocarpus conyzoides are fragrant when bruised. Black cherries ripe.

Labor Lost. — For one of this generation to talk with a man of the old school. You might have done a solid work the meanwhile with a contemporary. I thought of this when I saw Neighbor B., the worthy man! and thought of my interviews with him. If I could only get the parish clerk to read what I have to say to him!

Saw the primrose open at sundown. The corolla burst part way open and unfolded rapidly; the sepals flew back with a smart spring. In a minute or two the corolla was opened flat and seemed to rejoice in the cool, serene light and air.

Lespedeza capitata, not long.

The sarothra — as well as small hypericums generally 10. — has a lemon scent.

The late rains have tried the roofs severely. Tenants have complained to their landlords, and now I see carpenters setting up their staging and preparing to shingle on various sides.

Aug. 13. *P.* M. — To Conantum.

Beck says of the small circæa (G. alpina), "Many botanists consider this a mere variety of the preceding." I am not sure but it is more deeply toothed than the large. Its leaves are of the same color with those of the large at Bittern Cliff, but more decidedly toothed; q v. Why does it not grow larger at Comer Spring?

The root of the Polygala verticillata also has the checkerberry odor.

In Bittern Cliff Woods that (apparently) very oblong elliptical leafed Lespedeza violacea (?), growing very loose and open on a few long petioles, one foot high by four or five inches wide. Is this because it grows in woods? It is not in bloom.

Is there not now a prevalence of aromatic herbs in prime? — The polygala roots, blue-curls, wormwood, pennyroyal, Solidago odor a, rough sunflowers, horse-mint, etc., etc. Does not the season require this tonic?

I stripped off a shred of Indian hemp bark and could not break it. It is as strong as anything of the kind I know.

Aug. 14. P. M. — To Flint's Pond via Saw Mill Brook.

Aster Tradescanti, apparently a day or two. Hypopitys, just beyond the last large (two-stemmed) chestnut at Saw Mill Brook, about done. Apparently a funguslike plant. It erects itself in seed. Gymnadenia nearer the brook, how long? Is that slender erect shrub near oak stump at Saw Mill Comus circinata?

Solidago odora abundantly out.

The low wood-paths are strewn with toadstools now, and I begin to perceive their musty scent, — great *tumbae*, or, as R. W. E. says, *tuguria*, — *crowding* one another by the path-side when there was not a fellow in sight; great towers that have fallen and made the plain shake; ponderous wheels that have lost their fellows, broken their axles, abandoned by the toady or swampy teamsters. Some whose eaves have been nibbled apparently by turtles. Ricketson says he saw a turtle eating a toadstool once. Some great dull-yellow towers, — towers of strength, to judge from their mighty columns, — like the South African honey-birds' (?) nests.

The recent heavy rains have caused many leaves to fall, especially chestnut. They already spot the ground, rapidly yellowing and very handsomely spotted. I never weary of their colors. I see those eye-spots on the low hickory leaves also. All the Flint's Pond wood-paths are strewn with these gay-spotted chestnut leaves, and the changing sarsaparilla leaves begin to yellow the forest floor.

Sedum Telephium, some time. Flowering blackberry still. A short elliptic-leaved *Lespedeza violacea,* loose and open in Veery Nest Path, at Flint's Pond. In press.

On roadside heap at Emerson's, a portulaca with leaves one inch wide and seven petals (!) instead of five.

Meet a little boy with six young blind mice in his hat, which

Horatio Watts has given [him]. He did not find them till he came to fork over and turn the hay. There were six of these little brown blind meadow mice (I suppose *Arvicola hirsutus?),* with short tails and blunt muzzles and great heads, looking like little bulldogs. The nest was open on the surface amid the roots of the grass; of dried grass, like a bird's, three and a half inches [in] diameter, with a gallery or two leading from it. Watts said these were the kind that clung to the mother! But why did they not? Sometimes find nine of them.

Aug. 15. *Friday.* P. M. — To Minot Pratt's.

Pratt is collecting his parsnip seed. This the second or third cutting. It takes three cuttings, the central umbellets ripening first. It takes a sharp knife not to shake out the seeds, and, as it is, enough to seed ten times the ground is lost. Almost every one is poisoned, says P., by this work. The skin comes off the back of the hand, making tanned hands look white-spotted. This from handling the parsnip in its second year only. Great rank poisonous-looking and really poisonous parsnips gone to seed. It is not quite time to cut the carrot seed.

Aug. 16. What a variety of old garden herbs — mints, etc. — are naturalized along an old settled road, like this to Boston which the British travelled! And then there is the site, apparently, of an old garden by the tan-yard, where the spearmint grows so rankly. I am intoxicated with the fragrance. Though I find only one new plant (the cassia), yet old acquaintances grow so rankly, and the spearmint intoxicates me so, that I am bewildered, as it were by a variety of new things. An infinite novelty. All the roadside is the site of an old garden where fragrant herbs have become naturalized, — hounds-tongue, bergamot, spearmint, elecampane, etc. I see even the tiger lily, with its bulbs, growing by the roadside far from houses (near Leighton's graveyard). I think I have found many new plants, and am surprised when I can reckon but one. A little distance from my ordinary walk and a little variety in the growth or luxuriance will produce this illusion. By the discovery of one new plant all bounds seem to be infinitely removed.

Am frequently surprised to find how imperfectly water-plants are

known. Even good shore botanists are out of their element on the water. I would suggest to young botanists to get not only a botany-box but a boat, and know the water-plants not so much from the shore as from the water side.

My plants in press are in a sad condition; mildew has invaded them during the late damp weather, even those that were nearly dry. I find more and other plants than I counted on. Very bad weather of late for pressing plants. Give me the dry heat of July. Even growing leaves out of doors are spotted with fungi now, much more than mine in press.

Aug. 25. The farmers commonly say that the spring floods, being of cold water, do not injure the grass like later ones when the water is warm, but I suspect it is not so much owing to the warmth of the water as to the age and condition of the grass and whatever else is exposed to them. They say that if you let the water rise and stand some time over the roots of trees in warm weather it will kill them. This, then, may be the value of these occasional freshets in August: they steam and kill the shrubs and trees which had crept into the river meadows, and so keep them open perpetually, which, perchance, the spring floods alone might not do. It is commonly supposed that our river meadows were much drier than now originally, or when the town was settled. They were probably drier before the dam was built at Billerica, but if they were much or at all drier than now originally, I ask what prevented their being converted into maple swamps? Maples, alders, birches, etc., are creeping into them quite fast on many sides at present. If they had been so dry as is supposed they would not have been open meadows. It seems to be true that high water in mid-summer, when perchance the trees and shrubs are in a more tender state, kills them. It "steams" them, as it does the grass; and maybe the river thus asserts its rights, and possibly it would still to great extent, though the meadows should be considerably raised. Yet, I ask, why do maples, alders, etc., at present border the stream, though they do not spring up to any extent in the open meadow? Is it because the immediate bank is commonly more firm as well as higher (their seeds also are more liable to be caught there), and where it is low they are protected by willows and button-bushes, which can

bear the flood? Not even willows and button-bushes prevail in the Great Meadows, — though many of the former, at least, spring up there, — except on the most elevated parts or hummocks. The reason for this cannot be solely in the fact that the water stands over them there a part of the year, because they are still more exposed to the water in many places on the shore of the river where yet they thrive. Is it then owing to the soft character of the ground in the meadow and the ice tearing up the meadow so extensively? On the immediate bank of the river that kind of sod and soil is not commonly formed which the ice lifts up. Why is the black willow so strictly confined to the bank of the river? What is the use, in Nature's economy, of these occasional floods in August? Is it not partly to preserve the meadows open?

I was suggesting yesterday, as I have often before, that the town should provide a stone monument to be placed in the river, so as to be surrounded by water at its lowest stage, and a dozen feet high, so as to rise above it at its highest stage; on this feet and inches to be permanently marked; and it be made some one's duty to record each high or low stage of the water. Now, when we have a remarkable freshet, we cannot tell surely whether it is higher than the one thirty or sixty years ago or not. It would be not merely interesting, but often practically valuable, to know this. Reuben Rice was telling me to-night that the great freshet of two or three years ago came, according to his brother Israel, within two inches of one that occurred about forty years ago. I asked how he knew. He said that the former one took place early (February?), and the surface froze so that boys skated on it, and the ice marked a particular apple tree, girdled it, so that it is seen to this day. But we wish to speak more confidently than this allows. It is important when building a causeway, or a bridge, or a house even, in some situations, to know exactly how high the river has ever risen. It would need to be a very large stone or pile of stones, which the ice could not move or break. Perhaps one corner of a bridge abutment would do.

Aug. 26. Tuesday. More wind and quite cold this morning, but very bright and sparkling, autumn-like air, reminding of frosts to be apprehended, also tempting abroad to adventure. The fall cricket —

or is it alder locust? — sings the praises of the day.

So about 9 A.M. up river to Fair Haven Pond.

I rest and take my lunch on Lee's Cliff, looking toward Baker Farm. What is a New England landscape this sunny August day? A weather-painted house and barn, with an orchard by its side, in midst of a sandy field surrounded by green woods, with a small blue lake on one side. A sympathy between the color of the weather-painted house and that of the lake and sky. I speak not of a country road between its fences, for this house lies off one, nor do I commonly approach them from this side. The weather-painted house. This is the New England color, homely but fit as that of a toadstool.

Aug. 28. I open the painted tortoise nest of June 10th, and find a young turtle partly out of his shell. He is already wonderfully strong and precocious. Though those eyes never saw the light before, he watches me very warily, even at a distance. With what vigor he crawls out of the hole I have made, over opposing weeds! He struggles in my fingers with great strength; has none of the tenderness of infancy. His whole snout is convex, and curved like a beak. Having attained the surface, he pauses and warily watches me.

Meanwhile a striped squirrel sits on the wall across the road under a pine, eying me, with his cheek-pouches stuffed with nuts and puffed out ludicrously, as if he had the mumps, while the wall is strewn with the dry brown husks of hazelnuts he has stripped. A bird, perhaps a thrasher, in the pine close above him is hopping restlessly and scolding at him.

June, July, and August, the tortoise eggs are hatching a few inches beneath the surface in sandy fields. You tell of active labors, of works of art, and wars the past summer; meanwhile the tortoise eggs underlie this turmoil. What events have transpired on the lit and airy surface three inches above them! Sumner knocked down; Kansas living an age of suspense. Think what is a summer to them! June, July, and August, — the livelong summer, — what are they with their heats and fevers but sufficient to hatch a tortoise in. Be not in haste; mind your private affairs. Consider the turtle. Perchance you have worried yourself, despaired of the world, meditated the end of life, and all things seemed rushing to destruction; but nature has

steadily and serenely advanced with a turtle's pace. Has not the tortoise also learned the true value of time?

Aug. 30. I have come out this afternoon a-cranberrying, chiefly to gather some of the small cranberry, *Vaccinium Oxycoccus*, which Emerson says is the common cranberry of the north of Europe. This was a small object, yet not to be postponed, on account of imminent frosts, *i.e.*, if I would know this year the flavor of the European cranberry as compared with our larger kind. I thought I should like to have a dish of this sauce on the table at Thanksgiving of my own gathering. I could hardly make up my mind to come this way, it seemed so poor an object to spend the afternoon on. I kept foreseeing a lame conclusion, — how I should cross the Great Fields, look into Beck Stow's, and then retrace my steps no richer than before. In fact, I expected little of this walk, yet it did pass through the side of my mind that somehow, on this very account (my small expectation), it would turn out well, as also the advantage of having some purpose, however small, to be accomplished, — of letting your deliberate wisdom and foresight in the house to some extent direct and control your steps. If you would really take a position outside the street and daily life of men, you must have deliberately planned your course, you must have business which is not your neighbors' business, which they cannot understand. For only absorbing employment prevails, succeeds, takes up space, occupies territory, determines the future of individuals and states, drives Kansas out of your head, and actually and permanently occupies the only desirable and free Kansas against all border ruffians. The attitude of resistance is one of weakness, inasmuch as it only faces an enemy; it has its back to all that is truly attractive. You shall have your affairs, I will have mine. You will spend this afternoon in setting up your neighbor's stove, and be paid for it; I will spend it in gathering the few berries of the *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* which Nature produces here, before it is too late, and *be paid for it also* after another fashion. I have always reaped unexpected and incalculable advantages from carrying out at last, however tardily, any little enterprise which my genius suggested to me long ago as a thing to be done, — some step to be taken, however slight, out of the usual course.

How many schools I have thought of which I might go to but did not go to! expecting foolishly that some greater advantage or schooling would come to me! It is these comparatively cheap and private expeditions that substantiate our existence and batten our lives, as, where a vine touches the earth in its undulating course, it puts forth roots and thickens its stock. Our employment generally is tinkering, mending the old worn-out teapot of society. Our stock in trade is solder. Better for me, says my genius, to go cranberrying this afternoon for the *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* in Gowing's Swamp, to get but a pocketful and learn its peculiar flavor, aye, and the flavor of Gowing's Swamp and of *life* in New England, than to go consul to Liverpool [*as Nathaniel Hawthorne had done*] and get I don't know how many thousand dollars for it, with no such flavor. Many of our days should be spent, not in vain expectations and lying on our oars, but in carrying out deliberately and faithfully the hundred little purposes which every man's genius must have suggested to him. Let not your life be wholly without an object, though it be only to ascertain the flavor of a cranberry, for it will not be only the quality of an insignificant berry that you will have tasted, but the flavor of your life to that extent, and it will be such a sauce as no wealth can buy.

Both a conscious and an unconscious life are good. Neither is good exclusively, for both have the same source. The wisely conscious life springs out of an unconscious suggestion. I have found my account in travelling in having prepared beforehand a list of questions which I would get answered, not trusting to my interest at the moment, and can then travel with the most profit. Indeed, it is by obeying the suggestions of a higher light within you that you escape from yourself and, in the transit, as it were see with the unworn sides of your eye, travel totally new paths. What is that pretended life that does not take up a claim, that does not occupy ground, that cannot build a causeway to its objects, that sits on a bank looking over a bog, singing its desires?

However, it was not with such blasting expectations as these that I entered the swamp. I saw bags of cranberries, just gathered and tied up, on the banks of Beck Stow's Swamp. They must have been raked out of the water, now so high, before they should rot. I left my shoes

and stockings on the bank far off and waded bare-legged through rigid andromeda and other bushes a long way, to the soft open sphagnous centre of the swamp.

I found these cunning little cranberries lying high and dry on the firm uneven tops of the sphagnum, — their weak vine considerably on one side, — sparsely scattered about the drier edges of the swamp, or sometimes more thickly occupying some little valley a foot or two over, between two mountains of sphagnum. They were of two varieties, judging from the fruit. The one, apparently the ripest, colored most like the common cranberry but more scarlet, *i.e.* yellowish-green, blotched or checked with dark scarlet-red, commonly pear-shaped; the other, also pear-shaped, or more bulged out in the middle, thickly and finely dark-spotted or peppered on yellowish-green or straw-colored or pearly ground, and with a tinge of purple. A singular difference. The grayish speckled variety was particularly novel and pretty, though not easy to detect. It lay here and there snugly sunk in the sphagnum, whose drier parts it exactly resembled in color, just like some kind of swamp sparrows' eggs in their nest. I was obliged with my finger carefully to trace the slender pedicel through the moss to its vine, when I would pluck the whole together. Like jewels worn on, or set in, these sphagnous breasts of the swamp, — swamp pearls, call them.

I waded quite round the swamp for an hour, my bare feet in the cold water beneath, and it was a relief to place them on the warmer surface of the sphagnum. I filled one pocket with each variety, but sometimes, being confused, crossed hands and put them into the wrong pocket.

I enjoyed this cranberrying very much, notwithstanding the wet and cold, and the swamp seemed to be yielding its crop to me alone, for there are none else to pluck it or to value it. I told the proprietor once that they grew here, but he, learning that they were not abundant enough to be gathered for the market, has probably never thought of them since. I am the only person in the township who regards them or knows of them, and I do not regard them in the light of their pecuniary value. I have no doubt I felt richer wading there with my two pockets full, treading on wonders at every step, than any farmer going to market with a hundred bushels which he has

raked, or hired to be raked. I got further and further away from the town every moment, and my good genius seemed to have smiled on me, leading me hither, and then the sun suddenly came out clear and bright, but it did not warm my feet. I would gladly share my gains, take one, or twenty, into partnership and get this swamp with them, but I do not know an individual whom this berry cheers and nourishes as it does me. When I exhibit it to them I perceive that they take but a momentary interest in it and commonly dismiss it from their thoughts with the consideration that it cannot be profitably cultivated. You could not get a pint at one haul of a rake, and Slocum would not give you much for them. But I love it the better partly for that reason even. I fill a basket with them and keep it several days by my side. If anybody else — any farmer, at least — should spend an hour thus wading about here in this secluded swamp, barelegged, intent on the sphagnum, filling his pocket only, with no rake in his hand and no bag or bushel on the bank, he would be pronounced insane and have a guardian put over him; but if he 'll spend his time skimming and watering his milk and selling his small potatoes for large ones, or generally in skinning flints, he will probably be made guardian of somebody else.

I noticed also a few small peculiar-looking huckle-berries hanging on bushes amid the sphagnum, and, tasting, perceived that they were hispid, a new kind to me. *Gaylussacia dumosa* var. *hirtella* (perhaps just after *resinosa*), though Gray refers it to a "*sandy* low soil" and says nothing of the hispid fruit. Has a small black hairy or hispid berry, shining but insipid and inedible, with a tough, hairy skin left in the mouth; has very prominent calyx-lobes.

I seemed to have reached a new world, so wild a place that the very huckleberries grew hairy and were inedible. What's the need of visiting far-off mountains and bogs, if a half-hour's walk will carry me into such wildness and novelty? But why should not as wild plants grow here as in Berkshire, as in Labrador? Is Nature so easily tamed? Is she not as primitive and vigorous here as anywhere? How does this particular acre of secluded, unfrequented, useless (?) quaking bog differ from an acre in Labrador? Has any white man ever settled on it? Does any now frequent it? Not even the Indian comes here now. I see that there are some square rods within twenty

miles of Boston just as wild and primitive and unfrequented as a square rod in Labrador, as unaltered by man. Here grows the hairy huckleberry as it did in Squaw Sachem's day and a thousand years before, and concerns me perchance more than it did her. I have no doubt that for a moment I experience exactly the same sensations as if I were alone in a bog in Rupert's Land, and it saves me the trouble of going there; for what in any case makes the difference between being here and being there but many such little differences of flavor and roughness put together? Rupert's Land is recognized as much by one sense as another. I felt a shock, a thrill, an agreeable surprise in one instant, for, no doubt, all the possible inferences were at once drawn, with a rush, in my mind, — I could be in Rupert's Land and supping at home within the hour! This beat the railroad. That wild hairy huckleberry, inedible as it was, was equal to a domain secured to me and reaching to the South Sea. That was an unexpected harvest. I hope you have gathered as much, neighbor, from your corn and potato fields. I have got in my huckleberries. I shall be ready for Thanksgiving. It is in vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brain and bowels, the primitive vigor of Nature in us, that inspires that dream. I shall never find in the wilds of Labrador any greater wildness than in some recess in Concord, *i.e.* than I import into it. A little more manhood or virtue will make the surface of the globe anywhere thrillingly novel and wild. That alone will provide and pay the fiddler; it will convert the district road into an untrodden cranberry bog, for it restores all things to their original primitive flourishing and promising state.

A cold white horizon sky in the north, forerunner of the fall of the year. I go to bed and dream of cranberry-pickers far in the cold north. With windows partly closed, with continent concentrated thoughts, I dream. I get my new experiences still.

Better it is to go a-cranberrying than to go a-huckleberrying. For that is cold and bracing, leading your thoughts beyond the earth, and you do not surfeit on crude or terrene berries. It feeds your spirit, now in the season of white twilights, when frosts are apprehended, when edible berries are mostly gone.

Those small gray sparrow-egg cranberries lay so prettily in the recesses of the sphagnum, I could wade for hours in the cold water

gazing at them, with a swarm of mosquitoes hovering about my bare legs, — but at each step the friendly sphagnum in which I sank protected my legs like a buckler, — not a crevice by which my foes could enter.

I see that all is not garden and cultivated field and crops, that there are little oases of wildness in the desert of our civilization, wild as a square rod on the moon, supposing it to be uninhabited. I believe almost in the personality of such planetary matter, feel something akin to reverence for it, can even worship it as terrene, titanic matter extant in my day. We are so different we admire each other, we healthily attract one another. I love it as a maiden. These spots are meteoric, aerolitic, and such matter has in all ages been worshipped. Aye, when we are lifted out of the slime and film of our habitual life, we see the whole globe to be an aerolite, and reverence it as such, and make pilgrimages to it, far off as it is. How happens it that we reverence the stones which fall from another planet, and not the stones which belong to this, — another globe, not this, — heaven, and not earth?

If I could, I would worship the parings of my nails. I would fain improve every opportunity to wonder and worship, as a sunflower welcomes the light. The more thrilling, wonderful, divine objects I behold in a day, the more expanded and immortal I become.

Aug. 31. Sunday. P.M. — To Hubbard Bath Swamp by boat.

There sits one by the shore who wishes to go with me, but I cannot think of it. I must be fancy-free. I would rather attend to him earnestly for half an hour, on shore or elsewhere, and then dismiss him. He thinks I could merely take him into my boat and then not mind him. He does not realize that I should by the same act take him into my mind, where there is no room for him, and my bark would surely founder in such a voyage as I was contemplating. I know very well that I should never reach that expansion of the river I have in my mind, with him aboard with his broad terrene qualities. He would sink my bark (not to another sea) and never know it. I could better carry a heaped load of meadow mud and sit on the thole-pins. There would be more room for me, and I should reach that expansion of the river nevertheless.

I could better afford to take him into bed with me, for then I might, perhaps, abandon him in my dreams. Ah! you are a heavy fellow, but I am well disposed. If you could go without going, then you might go. It is because I trust that I shall ere long depart from your thoughts, and so you from mine, that I am encouraged to set sail at all. I make haste to put several meanders and some hills between us.

What is getting into a man's carriage when it is full, compared with putting your foot in his mouth and popping right into his mind without considering whether it is occupied or not?

The *Viburnum nudum* berries are now in prime, a handsome rose-purple. I brought home a bunch of fifty-three berries, all of this color, and the next morning thirty were turned dark purple. In this state they are soft and just edible, having somewhat of a cherry flavor, not a large stone.

A painted tortoise shedding its scales.

Sept. 1. P.M. — With R.W.E. to Saw Mill and *Solidago odora*.

He has just had four of his fir trees next his house cut, they shaded his windows so. They were set out by Coolidge, E. thinks twenty-eight years ago.

We go admiring the pure and delicate tints of fungi on the surface of the damp swamp there, following up along the north side of the brook past the right of the old camp. There are many very beautiful lemon-yellow ones of various forms, some shaped like buttons, some becoming finely scalloped on the edge, some club-shaped and hollow, of the most delicate and rare but decided tints, contrasting well with the decaying leaves about them. There are others also pure white, others a wholesome red, others brown, and some even a light indigo-blue above and beneath and throughout. When colors come to be taught in the schools, as they should be, both the prism (or the rainbow) and these fungi should be used by way of illustration, and if the pupil does not learn colors, he may learn fungi, which perhaps is better. You almost envy the wood frogs and toads that hop amid such gems.

I think it stands about thus with asters and golden-rods now: —

The early meadow aster is either quite withered or much the

worse for the wear, partly on account of the freshet.

Diplopappus cornifolius, not seen of late.

D. umbellatus, perhaps in prime or approaching it, but not much seen.

A. patens, apparently now in prime and the most abundant of the larger asters.

[*Etc. — 23 more, plus footnotes and cross-references, with long follow-up lists on Sept. 24 and Oct. 8.*]

Sept. 2. Clear bright days of late, with a peculiar sheen on the leaves, — light reflected from the surface of each one, for they are grown and worn and washed smooth at last, no infantile downiness on them. A sheeny light reflected from the burnished leaves as so many polished shields, and a steady creak from the locusts these days. Frank Harding has caught a dog-day locust which lit on the bottom of my boat, in which he was sitting, and *z*-ed there. When you hear him you have got to the end of the alphabet and may imagine the &. It has a mark somewhat like a small writing *w* on the top of its thorax.

I think we may detect that some sort of preparation and faint expectation preceded every discovery we have made. We blunder into no discovery but it will appear that we have prayed and disciplined ourselves for it. Some years ago I sought for Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*) hereabouts in vain, and concluded that it did not grow here. A month or two ago I read again, as many times before, that its blossoms were very small, scarcely a third as large as those of the common species, and for some unaccountable reason this distinction kept recurring to me, and I regarded the size of the flowers I saw, though I did not believe that it grew here; and in a day or two my eyes fell on it, aye, in three different places, and different varieties of it. Also, a short time ago, I was satisfied that there was but one kind of sunflower (*divaricatus*) indigenous here. Hearing that one had found another kind, it occurred to me that I had seen a taller one than usual lately, but not so distinctly did I remember this as to name it to him or even fully remember it myself. (I rather remembered it afterward.) But within that hour my genius conducted me to where I had seen the tall plants, and it was the other man's new

kind. The next day I found a third kind, miles from there, and, a few days after, a fourth in another direction.

It commonly chances that I make my most interesting botanical discoveries when I am in a thrilled and expectant mood, perhaps wading in some remote swamp where I have just found something novel and feel more than usually remote from the town. Or some rare plant which for some reason has occupied a strangely prominent place in my thoughts for some time will present itself. My expectation ripens to discovery. I am prepared for strange things.

The botanist refers you, for wild and we presume wild plants, further inland or westward to so many miles from Boston, as if Nature or the Indians had any such preferences. Perchance the ocean seemed wilder to them than the woods. As if there were primarily and essentially any more wildness in a western acre than an eastern one!

Sept. 4. Butterflies in road a day or two. The crackling flight of grasshoppers. The grass also is all alive with them, and they trouble me by getting into my shoes, which are loose, and obliging me to empty them occasionally.

I believe it was this morning there was quite a fog.

We see no effects of frost yet in garden, but hear a rumor of a little somewhere. First muskmelon gathered.

Sept. 10. When the water is lowest, the river is contracted to sixteen feet here, and Peters's, an old history of Connecticut, says it was so condensed that you could not thrust a crowbar into it. It did me good to read his wholesale hearty statements, — strong, living, human speech, so much better than the emasculated modern histories, like Bancroft's and the rest, cursed with a style. I would rather read such histories, though every sentence were a falsehood, than our dull emasculated reports which bear the name of histories. The former, having a human breath and interest behind them, are nearer to nature and to truth, after all. The historian is required to feel a human interest in his subject and to so express it.

Sept. 15. Monday. Sophia says, bringing company into my

sanctum, by way of apology, that I regard the dust on my furniture like the bloom on fruits, not to be swept off.

Sept. 21. Find, for first time in Concord, *Solanum nigrum*, berries apparently just ripe, by a rock northwest of corydalis. Thus I have within a week found in Concord two of the new plants I found up-country. Such is the advantage of going abroad, — to enable you to detect your own plants. I detected them first abroad, because there I was *looking for* the *strange*.

Sept. 22. A rainy day. Tried some pennyroyal tea, but found it too medicinal for my taste. Yet I collect these herbs, biding the time when their use shall be discovered.

SEPT. 23. Rainy day.

Sept. 29. I can hardly clamber along the grape cliff now without getting my clothes covered with desmodium ticks. Though you were running for your life, they would have time to catch and cling to your clothes. You pause at a convenient place and spend a long time picking them off, which it took so short a time to attach. They will even cling to your hand as you go by. They cling like babes to the mother's breast, by instinct. These almost invisible nets, as it were, are spread for us, and whole coveys of desmodium and bidens seeds and burs steal transportation out of us. I have found myself often covered, and had to spend a quarter of an hour or more picking them off at some convenient place; and so they got just what they wanted, deposited in another place.

Oct. 2. I am amused to see four little Irish boys only five or six years old getting a horse in a pasture, for their father apparently, who is at work in a neighboring field. They have all in a row got hold of a very long halter and are leading him. All wish to have a hand in it. It is surprising that he obeys such small specimens of humanity, but he seems to be very docile, a real family horse. At length, by dint of pulling and shouting, they get him into a run down a hill, and though he moves very deliberately, scarcely faster than a walk, all but the

one at the end of the line soon cut and run to right and left, without having looked behind, expecting him to be upon them. They haul up at last at the bars, which are down, and then the family puppy, a brown pointer (?), about two-thirds grown, comes bounding to join them and assist. He is as youthful and about as knowing as any of them. The horse marches gravely behind, obeying the faint tug at the halter, or honestly stands still from time to time, as if not aware that they are pulling at all, though they are all together straining every nerve to start him. It is interesting to behold this faithful beast, the oldest and wisest of the company, thus implicitly obeying the lead of the youngest and weakest.

Oct. 5. It is well to find your employment and amusement in simple and homely things. These wear best and yield most. I think I would rather watch the motions of these cows in their pasture for a day, which I now see all headed one way and slowly advancing, — watch them and project their course carefully on a chart, and report all their behavior faithfully, — than wander to Europe or Asia and watch other motions there; for it is only ourselves that we report in either case, and perchance we shall report a more restless and worthless self in the latter case than in the first.

Oct. 14. A sudden change in the weather after remarkably warm and pleasant weather. Rained in the night, and finger-cold to-day. Your hands instinctively find their way to your pockets. Leaves are fast falling, and they are already past their brightness, perhaps earlier than usual on account of wet. Any flowers seen now may be called late ones. I see perfectly fresh succory, not to speak of yarrow, a *Viola ovata*, some *Polygala sanguinea*, autumnal dandelion, tansy, etc., etc.

Oct. 16. Found amid the sphagnum on the dry bank on the south side of the Turnpike, just below Everett's meadow, a rare and remarkable fungus, such as I have heard of but never seen before. The whole height six and three quarters inches, two thirds of it being buried in the sphagnum. It may be divided into three parts, pileus, stem, and base, — or scrotum, for it is a perfect phallus. One

of those fungi named *impudicus*, I think. In all respects a most disgusting object, yet very suggestive. It is hollow from top to bottom, the form of the hollow answering to that of the outside. The color of the outside white excepting the pileus, which is olive-colored and somewhat coarsely corrugated, with an oblong mouth at tip about one eighth of an inch long, or, measuring the white lips, half an inch. Longest diameter at base one and a half inches, at top (on edge of pileus) fifteen sixteenths of an inch. Short diameters in both cases about two thirds as much. It is a delicate white cylinder of a finely honeycombed and crispy material about three sixteenths of an inch thick, or more, the whole very straight and regular. The base, or scrotum, is of an irregular bag form, about one inch by two in the extremes, consisting of a thick trembling gelatinous mass surrounding the bottom of the stem and covered with a tough white skin of a darker tint than the stem. The whole plant rather frail and trembling. There was at first a very thin delicate white collar (or *volva*?) about the base of the stem above the scrotum. It was as offensive to the eye as to the scent, the cap rapidly melting and defiling what it touched with a fetid, olivaceous, semiliquid matter. In an hour or two the plant scented the whole house wherever placed, so that it could not be endured. I was afraid to sleep in my chamber where it had lain until the room had been well ventilated. It smelled like a dead rat in the ceiling, in all the ceilings of the house. Pray, what was Nature thinking of when she made this? She almost puts herself on a level with those who draw in privies.

Oct. 17. Frost has now within three or four days turned almost all flowers to woolly heads, — their November aspect.

Some trees, as small hickories, appear to have dropped their leaves instantaneously, as at a signal, as a soldier grounds arms. The ground under such reflects a blaze of light from now crisped yellow leaves. Down they have come on all sides, as if touched by fairy fingers. Boys are raking leaves in the street, if only for the pleasure of dealing with such clean, crisp substances.

Oct. 19. I have often noticed the inquisitiveness of birds, as the other day of a sparrow, whose motions I should not have supposed to

have any reference to me, if I had not watched it from first to last. I stood on the edge of a pine and birch wood. It flitted from seven or eight rods distant to a pine within a rod of me, where it hopped about stealthily and chirped awhile, then flew as many rods the other side and hopped about there a spell, then back to the pine again, as near me as it dared, and again to its first position, very restless all the while. Generally I should have supposed that there was more than one bird, or that it was altogether accidental, — that the chipping of this sparrow eight or ten rods away had no reference to me, — for I could see nothing peculiar about it. But when I brought my glass to bear on it, I found that it was almost steadily eying me and was all alive with excitement.

DEC. 1. P.M. — By path around Walden.

With this little snow of the 29th there is yet pretty good sledding, for it lies solid.

I see the old pale-faced farmer out again on his sled now for the five-thousandth time, — Cyrus Hubbard, a man of a certain New England probity and worth, immortal and natural, like a natural product, like the sweetness of a nut, like the toughness of hickory. He, too, is a redeemer for me. How superior actually to the faith he professes! He is not an office-seeker. What an institution, what a revelation is a man! We are wont foolishly to think that the creed which a man professes is more significant than the fact he is. It matters not how hard the conditions seemed, how mean the world, for a man is a prevalent force and a new law himself. He is a system whose law is to be observed. The old farmer condescends to countenance still this nature and order of things. It is a great encouragement that an honest man makes this world his abode. He rides on the sled drawn by oxen, world-wise, yet comparatively so young, as if they had seen scores of winters. The farmer spoke to me, I can swear, clean, cold, moderate as the snow. He does not melt the snow where he treads. Yet what a faint impression that encounter may make on me after all! Moderate, natural, true, as if he were made of earth, stone, wood, snow. I thus meet in this universe kindred of mine, composed of these elements. I see men like frogs; their peeping I partially understand.

I go by Hayden's and take A. Wheeler's wood-path to railroad.

Slate-colored snowbirds flit before me in the path, feeding on the seeds on the snow, the countless little brown seeds that begin to be scattered over the snow, so much the more obvious to bird and beast. A hundred kinds of indigenous grain are harvested now, broad-cast upon the surface of the snow. Thus at a critical season these seeds are shaken down on to a clean white napkin, unmixed with dirt and rubbish, and off this the little pensioners pick them. Their clean table is thus spread a few inches or feet above the ground. Will wonder become extinct in me? Shall I become insensible as a fungus?

A ridge of earth, with the red cockscomb lichen on it, peeps out still at the rut's edge. The dear wholesome color of shrub oak leaves, so clean and firm, not decaying, but which have put on a kind of immortality, not wrinkled and thin like the white oak leaves, but full-veined and plump, as nearer earth. Well-tanned leather on the one side, sun-tanned, color of colors, color of the cow and the deer, silver-downy beneath, turned toward the late bleached and russet fields. What are acanthus leaves and the rest to this? Emblem of my winter condition. I love and could embrace the shrub oak with its scanty garment of leaves rising above the snow, lowly whispering to me, akin to winter thoughts, and sunsets, and to all virtue. Covert which the hare and the partridge seek, and I too seek. What cousin of mine is the shrub oak? How can any man suffer long? For a sense of want is a prayer, and all prayers are answered. Rigid as iron, clean as the atmosphere, hardy as virtue, innocent and sweet as a maiden is the shrub oak. In proportion as I know and love it, I am natural and sound as a partridge. I felt a positive yearning toward one bush this afternoon. There was a match found for me at last. I fell in love with a shrub oak. Tenacious of its leaves, which shrivel not but retain a certain wintry life in them, firm shields, painted in fast colors a rich brown. The deer mouse, too, knows the shrub oak and has its hole in the snow by the shrub oak's stem.

Now, too, I remark in many places ridges and fields of fine russet or straw-colored grass rising above the snow, and beds of empty straw-colored heads of ever-lasting and ragged-looking Roman wormwood.

The blue-curls' chalices stand empty, and waiting evidently to be

filled with ice.

I see great thimble-berry bushes rising above the snow, with still a rich, rank bloom on them, as in July. Hypæthral mildew, elysian fungus! To see the bloom on a thimble-berry stem lasting into midwinter! What a salve that would make, collected and boxed!

No, I am a stranger in your towns. I am not at home at French's, or Lovejoy's, or Savery's. I can winter more to my mind amid the shrub oaks. I have made arrangements to stay with them.

The shrub oak, lowly, loving the earth and spreading over it, tough, thick-leaved; leaves firm and sound in winter and rustling like leather shields; leaves fair and wholesome to the eye, clean and smooth to the touch. Tough to support the snow, not broken down by it. Well-nigh useless to man. A sturdy phalanx, hard to break through. Product of New England's surface. Bearing many striped acorns.

I have seen more chestnuts in the streets of New York than anywhere else this year, large and plump ones, roasting in the street, roasting and popping on the steps of banks and exchanges. Was surprised to see that the citizens made as much of the nuts of the wild-wood as the squirrels. Not only the country boys, all New York goes a-nutting. Chestnuts for cabmen and newsboys, for not only are squirrels to be fed.

Well named *shrub oak*. Low, robust, hardy, indigenous. Well known to the striped squirrel and the partridge and rabbit. The squirrel nibbles its nuts sitting upon an old stump of its larger cousins. What is Peruvian bark to your bark? How many rents I owe to you! how many eyes put out! how many bleeding fingers! How many shrub oak patches I have been through, stooping, winding my way, bending the twigs aside, guiding myself by the sun, over hills and valleys and plains, resting in clear grassy spaces! I love to go through a patch of shrub oak in a bee-line, where you tear your clothes and put your eyes out.

Dec. 2. P.M. — Got in my boat, which before I had got out and turned up on the bank. It made me sweat to wheel it home through the snow, I am so unused to the work of late.

Then walked up the railroad. The clear straw-colored grass and

some weeds contrasting with the snow it rises above. Saw little in this walk. Saw Melvin's lank bluish-white black-spotted hound, and Melvin with his gun near, going home at eve. He follows hunting, praise be to him, as regularly in our tame fields as the farmers follow farming. Persistent Genius! How I respect him and thank him for him! I trust the Lord will provide us with another Melvin when he is gone. How good in him to follow his own bent, and not continue at the Sabbath-school all his days! What a wealth he thus becomes in the neighborhood! Few know how to take the census. I thank my stars for Melvin. I think of him with gratitude when I am going to sleep, grateful that he exists, — that Melvin who is such a trial to his mother. Yet he is agreeable to me as a tinge of russet on the hillside. I would fain give thanks morning and evening for my blessings. Awkward, gawky, loose-hung, dragging his legs after him. He is my contemporary and neighbor. He is one tribe, I am another, and we are not at war.

I saw but little in my walk. Saw no bird, only a crow's track in the snow.

As for the sensuality in Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," I do not so much wish that it was not written, as that men and women were so pure that they could read it without harm.

Dec. 3. Mizzles and rains all day, making sloshy walking which sends us all to the shoemaker's. Bought me a pair of cowhide boots, to be prepared for winter walks. The shoemaker praised them because they were made a year ago. I feel like an armed man now. The man who has bought his boots feels like him who has got in his winter's wood. There they stand beside me in the chamber, expectant, dreaming of far woods and woodpaths, of frost-bound or sloshy roads, or of being bound with skate-straps and clogged with ice-dust.

How I love the simple, reserved countrymen, my neighbors, who mind their own business and let me alone, who never waylaid nor shot at me, to my knowledge, when I crossed their fields, though each one has a gun in his house! For nearly twoscore years I have known, at a distance, these long-suffering men, whom I never spoke to, who never spoke to me, and now feel a certain tenderness for

them, as if this long probation were but the prelude to an eternal friendship. What a long trial we have withstood, and how much more admirable we are to each other, perchance, than if we had been bedfellows! I am not only grateful because Veias, and Homer, and Christ, and Shakespeare have lived, but I am grateful for Minott, and Rice, and Melvin, and Goodwin, and Puffer even. I see Melvin all alone filling his sphere, in russet suit, which no other could fill or suggest. He takes up as much room in nature as the most famous.

Six weeks ago I noticed the advent of chickadees and their winter habits. As you walk along a wood-side, a restless little flock of them, whose notes you hear at a distance, will seem to say, "Oh, there he goes! Let's pay our respects to him." And they will flit after and close to you, and naïvely peck at the nearest twig to you, as if they were minding their own business all the while without any reference to you.

Dec. 4. Saw and heard cheep faintly one little tree sparrow, the neat chestnut crowned and winged and white-barred bird, perched on a large and solitary white birch. So clean and tough, made to withstand the winter. This color reminds me of the upper side of the shrub oak leaf. I love the few homely colors of Nature at this season, — her strong wholesome browns, her sober and primeval grays, her celestial blue, her vivacious green, her pure, cold, snowy white.

In the sprout-land by the road, in the woods this side of C. Miles's, much gray goldenrod is mixed with the shrub oak. It reminds me of the color of the rabbits which run there. Thus Nature feeds her children chiefly with color. I have no doubt that it is an important relief to the eyes which have long rested on snow, to rest on brown oak leaves and the bark of trees. We want the greatest variety within the smallest compass, and yet without glaring diversity, and we have it in the colors of the withered oak leaves. The white, so curled and shrivelled and *pale*; the black (?), more flat and glossy and darker brown; the red, much like the black, but *perhaps* less dark, and less deeply cut. The scarlet still occasionally retains some blood in its veins.

Sophia says that just before I came home Min caught a mouse and was playing with it in the yard. It had got away from her once or

twice, and she had caught it again; and now it was stealing off again, as she lay complacently watching it with her paws tucked under her, when her friend Riordan's stout but solitary cock stepped up inquisitively, looked down at it with one eye, turning his head, then picked it up by the tail and gave it two or three whacks on the ground, and giving it a dexterous toss into the air, caught it in its open mouth, and it went head foremost and alive down his capacious throat in the twinkling of an eye, never again to be seen in this world, Min, all the while, with paws comfortably tucked under her, looking on unconcerned. What matters it one mouse more or less to her? The cock walked off amid the currant bushes, stretched his neck up, and gulped once or twice, and the deed was accomplished, and then he crowed lustily in celebration of the exploit. Min sits composedly sentinel, with paws tucked under her, a good part of her days at present, by some ridiculous little hole, the possible entryway of a mouse. She has a habit of stretching or sharpening her claws on all smooth hair-bottomed chairs and sofas, greatly to my mother's vexation.

When I bought my boots yesterday, Hastings ran over his usual rigmarole. Had he any stout old-fashioned cowhide boots? Yes, he thought he could suit me. "There's something that 'll turn water about as well as anything. Billings had a pair just like them the other day, and he said they kept his feet as dry as a bone. But what's more than that, they were made above a year ago upon honor. They are just the thing, you may depend on it. I had an eye to you when I was making them." "But they are too soft and thin for me. I want them to be thick and stand out from my foot." "Well, there is another pair, maybe a little thicker. I'll tell you what it is, these were made of dry hide."

Both were warranted single leather and not split. I took the last. But after wearing them round this cold day I found that the little snow which rested on them and melted wet the upper leather through like paper and wet my feet, and I told H. of it, that he might have an offset to Billings's experience. "Well, you can't expect a new pair of boots to turn water at first. I tell the farmers that the time to buy boots is at midsummer, or when they are hoeing their potatoes, and the pores have a chance to get filled with dirt."

My first botany, as I remember, was Bigelow's "Plants of Boston and Vicinity," which I began to use about twenty years ago, looking chiefly for the popular names and the short references to the localities of plants, even without any regard to the plant. I also learned the names of many, but without using any system, and forgot them soon. I was not inclined to pluck flowers; preferred to leave them where they were, liked them best there. I was never in the least interested in plants in the house. But from year to year we look at Nature with new eyes. About half a dozen years ago I found myself again attending to plants with more method, looking out the name of each one and remembering it. I began to bring them home in my hat, a straw one with a scaffold lining to it, which I called my botany-box. I never used any other, and when some whom I visited were evidently surprised at its dilapidated look, as I deposited it on their front entry table, I assured them it was not so much my hat as my botany-box. I remember gazing with interest at the swamps about those days and wondering if I could ever attain to such familiarity with plants that I should know the species of every twig and leaf in them, that I should be acquainted with every plant (excepting grasses and cryptogamous ones), summer and winter, that I saw. Though I knew most of the flowers, and there were not in any particular swamp more than half a dozen shrubs that I did not know, yet these made it seem like a maze to me, of a thousand strange species, and I even thought of commencing at one end and looking it faithfully and laboriously through till I knew it all. I little thought that in a year or two I should have attained to that knowledge without all that labor. Still I never studied botany, and do not to-day systematically, the most natural system is still so artificial. I wanted to know my neighbors, if possible, — to get a little nearer to them. I soon found myself observing when plants first blossomed and leafed, and I followed it up early and late, far and near, several years in succession, running to different sides of the town and into the neighboring towns, often between twenty and thirty miles in a day. I often visited a particular plant four or five miles distant, half a dozen times within a fortnight, that I might know exactly when it opened, beside attending to a great many others in different directions and some of them equally distant, at the same time. At the same time I had an eye for birds and

whatever else might offer.

Dec. 5. It is a perfectly cloudless and simple winter sky. A white moon, half full, in the pale or dull blue heaven and a whiteness like the reflection of the snow, extending up from the horizon all around a quarter the way up to the zenith. This at 4 P.M. About the sun it is only whiter than elsewhere, or there is only the faintest possible tinge of yellow there.

There are a great many walnuts on the trees, seen black against the sky, and the wind has scattered many over the snow-crust. It would be easier gathering them now than ever.

My themes shall not be far-fetched. I will tell of homely every-day phenomena and adventures. Friends! Society! It seems to me that I have an abundance of it, there is so much that I rejoice and sympathize with, and men, too, that I never speak to but only know and think of. What you call bareness and poverty is to me simplicity. God could not be unkind to me if he should try. I love the winter, with its imprisonment and its cold, for it compels the prisoner to try new fields and resources. I love best to have each thing in its season only, and enjoy doing without it at all other times. It is the greatest of all advantages to enjoy no advantage at all. I find it invariably true, the poorer I am, the richer I am. I have never got over my surprise that I should have been born into the most estimable place in all the world, and in the very nick of time, too.

Dec. 6. On all sides, in swamps and about their edges and in the woods, the bare shrubs are sprinkled with buds, more or less noticeable and pretty, their little gemmæ or gems, their most vital and attractive parts now, almost all the greenness and color left, greens and salads for the birds and rabbits. Our eyes go searching along the stems for what is most vivacious and characteristic, the concentrated summer gone into winter quarters. For we are hunters pursuing the summer on snow-shoes and skates, all winter long. There is really but one season in our hearts.

Dec. 7. Sunday. P.M. — Take my first skate to Fair Haven Pond.

It takes my feet a few moments to get used to the skates. I see the

track of one skater who has preceded me this morning. This is the first skating. I keep mostly to the smooth ice about a rod wide next the shore commonly, where there was an overflow a day or two ago. Now I go shaking over hobbly places, now shoot over a bridge of ice only a foot wide between the water and the shore at a bend, — Hubbard Bath, — always so at first there. I am confined to a very narrow edging of ice in the meadow, gliding with unexpected ease through withered sedge, but slipping sometimes on a twig; again taking to the snow to reach the next ice, but this rests my feet; straddling the bare black willows, winding between the button-bushes, and following narrow threadings of ice amid the sedge, which bring me out to clear fields unexpectedly. Occasionally I am obliged to take a few strokes over black and thin-looking ice, where the neighboring bank is springy, and am slow to acquire confidence in it, but, returning, how bold I am! Where the meadow seemed only sedge and snow, I find a complete ice connection.

At Cardinal Shore, as usual, there is a great crescent of hobbly ice, where, two or three days ago, the north-west wind drove the waves back up-stream and broke up the edge of the ice. This crescent is eight or ten rods wide and twice as many long. It is like skating over so many rails, or the edges of saws.

That grand old poem called Winter is round again without any connivance of mine. I see with surprise the pond a dumb white surface of ice speckled with snow, just as so many winters before, where so lately were lapsing waves or smooth reflecting water. It seemed as if winter had come without any interval since midsummer, and I was prepared to see it flit away by the time I again looked over my shoulder. It was as if I had dreamed it. But I see that the farmers have had time to gather their harvests as usual, and the seasons have revolved as slowly as in the first autumn of my life. The winters come now as fast as snowflakes. It is wonderful that old men do not lose their reckoning. It was summer, and now again it is winter. Nature loves this rhyme so well that she never tires of repeating it. So sweet and wholesome is the winter, so simple and moderate, so satisfactory and perfect, that her children will never weary of it. What a poem! an epic in blank verse, enriched with a million tinkling rhymes. It is solid beauty. It has been subjected to the vicissitudes of

millions of years of the gods, and not a single superfluous ornament remains. The severest and coldest of the immortal critics have shot their arrows at and pruned it till it cannot be amended.

DEC. 8. Thermometer at 8 A.M. 8° above zero. Probably the coldest day yet.

Bradford, in his "History of the Plymouth Plantation," remembering the condition of the Pilgrims on their arrival in Cape Cod Bay the 11th of November, 1620, Old Style (page 79): "Which way soever they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects. For summer being done, all things stand upon them with a weather-beaten face; and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue." Such was a New England November in 1620 to Bradford's eyes, and such, no doubt, it would be to his eyes in the country still. However, it required no little courage to found a colony here at that season of the year.

The earliest mention of anything like a glaze in New England that I remember is in Bradford's "History of the Plymouth Plantation," page 83, where he describes the second expedition with the shallop from Cape Cod Harbor in search of a settlement, the 6th of December, O.S. "The weather was very cold, and it froze so hard as the spray of the sea lighting on their coats, they were as if they had been glazed." Bradford was one of the ten principal ones. That same night they reached the bottom of the Bay and saw the Indians cutting up a blackfish. Nature has not changed one iota.

Dec. 9. The northwest wind, meeting the current in an exposed place, produces that hobbly ice which I described at Cardinal Shore day before yesterday. This is the case in this place every year, and no doubt this same phenomenon occurred annually at this point on this river a thousand years before America was discovered. This regularity and permanence make these phenomena more interesting to me.

Dec. 10. It is remarkable how suggestive the slightest drawing as a memento of things seen. For a few years past I have been

accustomed to make a rude sketch in my journal of plants, ice, and various natural phenomena, and though the fullest accompanying description may fail to recall my experience, these rude outline drawings do not fail to carry me back to that time and scene. It is as if I saw the same thing again, and I may again attempt to describe it in words if I choose.

It has been a warm, clear, glorious winter day, the air full of that peculiar vapor. How short the afternoons! I hardly get out a couple of miles before the sun is setting. The nights are light on account of the snow, and, there being a moon, there is no distinct interval between the day and night.

Bradford, in his "History of the Plymouth Plantation," written between 1630 and 1650, uses, on page 235, the word "kilter," speaking of guns being out of kilter, proving that this is an old word; yet it is not in my dictionaries.

Dec. 15. I still recall to mind that characteristic winter eve of December 9th; the cold, dry, and wholesome diet my mind and senses necessarily fed on, — oak leaves, bleached and withered weeds that rose above the snow, the now dark green of the pines, and perchance the faint metallic chip of a single tree sparrow; the hushed stillness of the wood at sundown, aye, all the winter day; the short boreal twilight; the smooth serenity and the reflections of the pond, still alone free from ice; the melodious hooting of the owl, heard at the same time with the yet more distant whistle of a locomotive, more aboriginal, and perchance more enduring here than that, heard above the voices of all the wise men of Concord, as if they were not (how little he is Anglicized!); the last strokes of the woodchopper, who presently bends his steps homeward; the gilded bar of cloud across the apparent outlet of the pond, conducting my thoughts into the eternal west; the deepening horizon glow; and the hasty walk homeward to enjoy the long winter evening. The hooting of the owl! That is a sound which my red predecessors heard here more than a thousand years ago. It rings far and wide, occupying the spaces rightfully, — grand, primeval, aboriginal sound. There is no whisper in it of the Buckleys, the Flints, the Hosmers who recently squatted here, nor of the first parish, nor of Concord Fight, nor of the last

town meeting.

Mrs. Moody very properly calls eating nuts "a mouse-like employment." It is quite too absorbing; you can't read at the same time, as when you are eating an apple.

Dec. 17. When I returned from the South the other day, I was greeted by withered shrub oak leaves which I had not seen there. It was the most homely and agreeable object that met me. I found that I had no such friend as the shrub oak hereabouts. A farmer once asked me what shrub oaks were made for, not knowing any use they served. But I can tell him that they do me good. They never did any man harm that I know.

Dec. 18. 12 M. Start for Amherst, N.H.

A very cold day. Thermometer at 8 A.M. –8°.

At my lecture, the audience attended to me closely, and I was satisfied; that is all I ask or expect generally. Not one spoke to me afterward, nor needed they. I have no doubt that they liked it, in the main, though few of them would have dared say so, provided they were conscious of it. Generally, if I can only get the ears of an audience, I do not care whether they say they like my lecture or not. I think I know as well as they can tell. At any rate, it is none of my business, and it would be impertinent for me to inquire. The stupidity of most of these country towns, not to include the cities, is in its innocence infantile. Lectured in basement (vestry) of the orthodox church, and I trust helped to undermine it.

Dec. 19. Withered leaves! this is our frugal winter diet, instead of the juicy salads of spring and summer. I think I could write a lecture on "Dry Leaves," carrying a specimen of each kind that hangs on in the winter into the lecture-room as the heads of my discourse. They have long hung to some extent in vain, and have not found their poet yet. The pine has been sung, but not, to my knowledge, the shrub oak. Most think it is useless. The citizen who has just bought a sprout-land on which shrub oaks alone come up only curses it. But it serves a higher use than they know.

Dec. 24. More snow in the night and to-day, making nine or ten inches.

P.M. — To Walden and Baker Farm with Ricketson, it still snowing a little.

It was very pleasant walking thus before the storm was over, in the soft, subdued light.

Dec. 25. Take long walks in stormy weather or through deep snows in the fields and woods, if you would keep your spirits up. Deal with brute nature. Be cold and hungry and weary.

Dec. 28. I thrive best on solitude. If I have had a companion only one day in a week, unless it were one or two I could name, I find that the value of the week to me has been seriously affected. It dissipates my days, and often it takes me another week to get over it.

Dec. 29. We must go out and re-ally ourselves to Nature every day. We must make root, send out some little fibre at least, even every winter day. I am sensible that I am imbibing health when I open my mouth to the wind. Staying in the house breeds a sort of insanity always. Every house is in this sense a hospital. A night and a forenoon is as much confinement to those wards as I can stand. I am aware that I recover some sanity which I had lost almost the instant that I come abroad.

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Jan. 4. After spending four or five days surveying and drawing a plan incessantly, I especially feel the necessity of putting myself in communication with nature again, to recover my tone, to withdraw out of the wearying and unprofitable world of affairs. The things I have been doing have but a fleeting and accidental importance, however much men are immersed in them, and yield very little valuable fruit. I would fain have been wading through the woods and fields and conversing with the sane snow. I thus from time to time break off my connection with eternal truths and go with the shallow stream of human affairs, grinding at the mill of the Philistines; but when my task is done, with never-failing confidence I devote myself to the infinite again. It would be sweet to deal with men more, I can imagine, but where dwell they? Not in the fields which I traverse.

Jan. 7. I should not be ashamed to have a shrub oak for my coat-of-arms.

It is bitter cold, with a cutting northwest wind. The pond is now a plain snow-field, but there are no tracks of fishers on it. It is too cold for them. The surface of the snow there is finely waved and grained, giving it a sort of slaty fracture, the appearance which hard, dry *blown* snow assumes. All animate things are reduced to their lowest terms. This is the fifth day of cold, blowing weather.

There is nothing so sanative, so poetic, as a walk in the woods and fields even now, when I meet none abroad for pleasure. In the street and in society I am almost invariably cheap and dissipated, my life is unspeakably mean. No amount of gold or respectability would in the least redeem it, — dining with the Governor or a member of Congress!! But alone in distant woods or fields, I come to myself, I once more feel myself grandly related, and that cold and solitude are friends of mine. I suppose that this value, in my case, is equivalent to what others get by churchgoing and prayer. I thus dispose of the superfluous and see things as they are, grand and beautiful. I have told many that I walk every day about half the daylight, but I think they do not believe it. I wish to get the Concord, the Massachusetts,

the America, out of my head and be sane a part of every day. If there are missionaries for the heathen, why not send them to me? I wish to know something; I wish to be made better. I wish to forget, a considerable part of every day, all mean, narrow, trivial men (and this requires usually to forego and forget all personal relations so long), and therefore I come out to these solitudes, where the problem of existence is simplified. I enter some glade in the woods, perchance, where a few weeds and dry leaves alone lift themselves above the surface of the snow, and it is as if I had come to an open window. I see out and around myself. Our *skylights* are thus far away from the ordinary resorts of men. I am not satisfied with ordinary windows. I must have a true *skylight*. My true sky light is on the outside of the village. It is as if I always met in those places some grand, serene, immortal, infinitely encouraging, though invisible, companion, and walked with him. There at last my nerves are steadied, my senses and my mind do their office. I am aware that most of my neighbors would think it a hardship to be compelled to linger here one hour, especially this bleak day, and yet I receive this sweet and ineffable compensation for it. It is the most agreeable thing I do. Truly, my coins are uncurrent with them.

I love and celebrate nature, even in detail, merely because I love the scenery of these interviews and translations. I love to remember every creature that was at this *club*. I thus get off a certain social scurf and scaliness. I do not consider the other animals brutes in the common sense. I am attracted toward them undoubtedly because I never heard any nonsense from them. I have not convicted them of folly, or vanity, or pomposity, or stupidity, in dealing with me. Their vices, at any rate, do not interfere with me. My fairies invariably take to flight when a man appears upon the scene. In a caucus, a meeting-house, a lyceum, a club-room, there is nothing like it in my experience. But away out of the town, on Brown's scrub oak lot, which was sold the other day for six dollars an acre, I have company such as England cannot buy, nor afford. This society is what I live, what I survey, for. I subscribe generously to *this* — all that I have and am.

There, in that Well Meadow Field, perhaps, I feel in my element again, as when a fish is put back into the water. I wash off all my

chagrins. All things go smoothly as the axle of the universe. I can remember that when I was very young I used to have a dream night after night, over and over again, which might have been named Rough and Smooth. All existence, all satisfaction and dissatisfaction, all event was symbolized in this way. Now I seemed to be lying and tossing, perchance, on a horrible, a fatal rough surface, which must soon, indeed, put an end to my existence, though even in the dream I knew it to be the symbol merely of my misery; and then again, suddenly, I was lying on a delicious smooth surface, as of a summer sea, as of gossamer or down or softest plush, and life was such a luxury to live. My waking experience *always* has been and is such an alternate Rough and Smooth. In other words it is Insanity and Sanity.

This snow which fell last Saturday so moist and heavy is now surprisingly dry and light and powdery. In the wood-path between the Well Meadow Field and the Cliff, it is all scored with the tracks of leaves that have scurried over it. Some might not suspect the cause of these fine and delicate traces, for the cause is no longer obvious. Here and there is but a leaf or two to be seen in the snow-covered path. The myriads which scampered here are now at rest perhaps far on one side. I have listened to the whispering of the dry leaves so long that whatever meaning it has for my ears, I think that I must have heard it.

Going down path to the spring, I see where some fox (apparently) has passed down it, and though the rest of the broad path is else perfectly unspotted white, each track of the fox has proved a trap which has caught from three or four to eight or ten leaves each, snugly packed; and thus it is reprinted.

Jan. 8. Miss Minott tells me that she does not think her brother George has ever been to Boston more than once (though she tells me he says he has been twice), and certainly not since 1812. He was born in the Casey house, *i.e.* the same in which C. lived. Casey was a Guinea negro. Casey used to weep in his latter days when he thought of his wife and two children in Africa from whom he was kidnapped. The house he now lives in is about sixty years old, was moved from beside Casey's to where it now stands before it was roofed. Minott says he has lived where he now does as much as sixty years. He has

not been up in town for three years, on account of his rheumatism. Does nothing whatever in the house but read the newspapers and few old books they have, the Almanac especially, and hold the cats, and very little indeed out of the house. Is just able to saw and split the wood.

Jan. 11. Began snowing yesterday afternoon, and it is still snowing this forenoon.

The other day a man came "just to get me to run a line in the woods." This is the usual request. "Do you know where one end of it is?" I asked. (It was the Stratton lot.) "No," said he, "I don't know either end; that is what I want to find." "Do you know either of the next sides of the lot?" Thinking a moment, he answered, "No." "Well, do you know any one side of the whole lot, or any corner?" After a little hesitation he said that he did not. Here, then, was a wood-lot of half a dozen acres, well enough described in a deed dated 1777, courses and distances given, but he could not tell exactly in what part of the universe any particular part of it was, but he expected me to find out. This was what he understood by "running." On the strength of this deed he had forbidden a man to chop wood somewhere.

Frequently, when my employer does not know where his land lies, and has put into my hands an ancient and tattered piece of paper called his deed, which throws no light at all on the question, he turns away, saying, "I want you to make it all right. Give me all that belongs to me."

There was wit and even poetry in the negro's answer to the man who tried to persuade him that the slaves would not be obliged to work in heaven. "Oh, you g' way, Massa. I know better. If dere 's no work for cullud folks up dar, dey 'll *make* some fur 'em, and if dere 's nuffin better to do, dey 'll make 'em *shub de clouds along*. You can't fool this chile, Massa."

I was describing the other day my success in solitary and distant woodland walking outside the town. I do not go there to get my dinner, but to get that sustenance which dinners only preserve me to enjoy, without which dinners are a vain repetition. But how little men can help me in this! only by having a kindred experience. Of

what use to tell them of my happiness?

Jan. 20. At R.W.E.'s this evening, at about 6 P.M., I was called out to see Eddy's cave in the snow. It was a hole about two and a half feet wide and six feet long, into a drift, a little winding, and he had got a lamp at the inner extremity. I observed, as I approached in a course at right angles with the length of the cave, that the mouth of the cave was lit as if the light were close to it, so that I did not suspect its depth. Indeed, the light of this lamp was remarkably reflected and distributed. The snowy walls were one universal reflector with countless facets. I think that one lamp would light sufficiently a hall built of this material. The snow about the mouth of the cave within had the yellow color of the flame to one approaching, as if the lamp were close to it. We afterward buried the lamp in a little crypt in this snow-drift and walled it in, and found that its light was visible, even in this *twilight*, through fifteen inches' thickness of snow. The snow was all aglow with it. If it had been darker, probably it would have been visible through a much greater thickness. But, what was most surprising to me, when Eddy crawled into the extremity of his cave and shouted at the top of his voice, it sounded ridiculously faint, as if he were a quarter of a mile off, and at first I could not believe that he spoke loud, but we all of us crawled in by turns, and though our heads were only six feet from those outside, our loudest shouting only amused and surprised them. Apparently the porous snow drank up all the sound. The voice was, in fact, muffled by the surrounding snow walls, and I saw that we might lie in that hole screaming for assistance in vain, while travellers were passing along twenty feet distant. It had the effect of ventriloquism. So you only need make a snow house in your yard and pass an hour in it, to realize a good deal of Esquimau life.

Jan. 22. I never knew it to make such a business of snowing and bring so little to pass. The air is filled, so that you cannot see far against it, *i.e.* looking north-northwest, yet but an inch or two falls all day.

I asked Minott about the Cold Friday. He said, "It was plaguy cold; it stung like a wasp." He remembers seeing them toss up water

in a shoemaker's shop, usually a very warm place, and when it struck the floor it was frozen and rattled like so many shot. Old John Nutting used to say, "When it is cold it is a sign it's going to be warm," and "When it's warm it's a sign it's going to be cold."

Jan. 23. The coldest day that I remember recording, clear and bright, but very high wind, blowing the snow. Ink froze. Had to break the ice in my pail with a hammer. Thermometer at 6.45 A.M., –18°; at 10.30, –14° (Smith's, –20°; Wilds', –7°, the last being in a more sheltered place); at 12.45, –9°; at 4 P.M., –5 ½°; at 7.30 P.M., –8°. I may safely say that –5° has been the highest temperature to-day by our thermometer.

Walking this afternoon, I notice that the face inclines to stiffen, and the hands and feet get cold soon. On first coming out in very cold weather, I find that I breathe fast, though without walking faster or exerting myself any more than usual.

Jan. 24. Thermometer about 6.30 A.M. in the bulb!! Would have stood at –26° if the thermometer had been long enough.

Feb. 3. To Fitchburg to lecture.

Though the snow was not deep, I noticed that an unbroken snow-crust stretched around Fitchburg, and its several thousand inhabitants had been confined so long to the narrow streets, some of them a track only six feet wide. Hardly one individual had anywhere departed from this narrow walk and struck out into the surrounding fields and hills. If I had had my cowhide boots, I should not have confined myself to those narrow limits, but have climbed some of the hills. It is surprising to go into a New England town in midwinter and find its five thousand inhabitants all living thus on the limits, confined at most to their narrow moose-yard in the snow. Scarcely here and there has a citizen stepped aside one foot to let a sled pass. And almost as circumscribed is their summer life, going only from house to shop and back to house again. It is as if some vigilance committee had given notice that if any should transgress those narrow limits he should be outlawed and his blood should be upon his own head. You don't see where the inhabitants get sufficient exercise, unless they

swing dumb-bells down cellar.

Feb. 4. Yet along that sled-track (*vide* the 3d) they will have their schools and lyceums and churches, like the snow-heaps crowded up by the furrow, and consider themselves liberally educated, notwithstanding their narrow views and range. And the bare track that leads to the next town and seaboard, only six inches' breadth of iron rails! and a one-eighth-inch wire in the air!

Sometimes when, in conversation or a lecture, I have been grasping at, or even standing and reclining upon, the serene and everlasting truths that underlie and support our vacillating life, I have seen my auditors standing on their *terra firma*, the quaking earth, crowded together on their Lisbon Quay, and compassionately or timidly watching my motions as if they were the antics of a rope-dancer or mountebank pretending to walk on air; or here and there one creeping out upon an overhanging but cracking bough, unwilling to drop to the adamantine floor beneath, or perchance even venturing out a step or two, as if it were a dangerous kittly-bender, timorously sounding as he goes. So the other day, as I stood on Walden, drinking at a puddle on the ice, which was probably two feet thick, and thinking how lucky I was that I had not got to cut through all that thickness, I was amused to see an Irish laborer on the railroad, who had come down to drink, timidly tiptoeing toward me in his cowhide boots, lifting them nearly two feet at each step and fairly trembling with fear, as if the ice were already bending beneath his ponderous body and he were about to be engulfed. "Why, my man," I called out to him, "this ice will bear a loaded train, half a dozen locomotives side by side, a whole herd of oxen," suggesting whatever would be a weighty argument with him. And so at last he fairly straightened up and quenched his thirst. It was very ludicrous to me, who was thinking, by chance, what a labor it would be to get at the water with an axe there and that I was lucky to find some on the surface.

Though the farmer has been all winter teaming wood along the river, the timid citizen that buys it, but who has not stepped out of the road, thinks it all kittly-benders there and warns his boys not to go near it.

Feb. 6. One who has seen them tells me that a covey of thirteen quails daily visits Hayden's yard and barn, where he feeds them and can almost put his hands on them.

Thermometer at noon 52°.

Winckelmann says in his "History of Ancient Art," vol. i, page 95: "I am now past forty, and therefore at an age when one can no longer sport freely with life. I perceive, also, that a certain delicate spirit begins to evaporate, with which I raised myself, by powerful soarings, to the contemplation of the beautiful."

Feb. 8. I see one of those great ash-colored puffballs with a tinge of purple, open like a cup, four inches in diameter. Though it is but just brought to light from beneath the deep snow, and the last two days have been misty or rainy without sun, it is just as dry and dusty as ever, and the drops of water rest on it, at first undetected, being coated with its dust, looking like unground pearls. I brought it home and held it in a basin of water. To my surprise, when held under water it looked like a mass of silver or melted lead, it was so coated with air, and when I suffered it to rise, — for it had to be kept down by force, — instead of being heavy like a sponge which has soaked water, it was as light as a feather, and its surface perfectly dry, and when touched it gave out its dust the same as ever. It was impossible to wet. It seems to be encased in a silvery coat of air which is water-tight. The water did not penetrate into it at all, and running off as you lifted it up, it was just as dry as before, and on the least jar floating in dust above your head.

And now another friendship is ended. I do not know what has made my friend doubt me, but I know that in love there is no mistake, and that every estrangement is well founded. But my destiny is not narrowed, but if possible the broader for it. The heavens withdraw and arch themselves higher. I am sensible not only of a moral, but even a grand physical pain, such as gods may feel, about my head and breast, a certain ache and fullness. My life is like a stream that is suddenly dammed and has no outlet; but it rises the higher up the hills that shut it in, and will become a deep and silent lake. Perchance there is none beside who knows us for a god, and none whom we know for such. Each man and woman is a veritable

god or goddess, but to the mass of their fellows disguised. There is only one in each case who sees through the disguise. That one who does not stand so near to any man as to see the divinity in him is truly alone.

Feb. 18. Another remarkably warm and pleasant day. The snow is nearly all gone, and it is so warm and springlike that I walk over to the hill, listening for the note of the bluebird or other comer. The very grain of the air seems to have undergone a change and is ready to split into the form of the bluebird's warble. Methinks if it were visible, or I could cast up some fine dust which would betray it, it would take a corresponding shape. The bluebird does not come till the air consents and his wedge will enter easily. The air over these fields is a foundry full of moulds for casting bluebirds' warbles. Any sound uttered now would take that form, not of the harsh, vibrating, rending scream of the jay, but a softer, flowing, curling warble, like a purling stream or the lobes of flowing sand and clay.

What a poem is this of spring, so often repeated! I am thrilled when I hear it spoken of, — as the *spring* of such a year, that fytte of the glorious epic.

Feb. 20. What is the relation between a bird and the ear that appreciates its melody, to whom, perchance, it is more charming and significant than to any else? Certainly they are intimately related, and the one was made for the other. It is a natural fact. If I were to discover that a certain kind of stone by the pond-shore was affected, say partially disintegrated, by a particular natural sound, as of a bird or insect, I see that one could not be completely described without describing the other. I am that rock by the pond-side.

What is hope, what is expectation, but a seed-time whose harvest cannot fail, an irresistible expedition of the mind, at length to be victorious?

March 18. I meet Goodwin paddling up the still, dark river on his first voyage to Fair Haven for the season, looking for muskrats and from time to time picking drift-wood — logs and boards, etc. — out of the water and laying it up to dry on the bank, to eke out his wood-

pile with. Says that when you hear a woodpecker's *rat-tat-tat-tat-tat* on a dead tree it is a sign of rain. While Emerson sits writing in his study this still, overcast, moist day, Goodwin is paddling up the still, dark river. Emerson burns twenty-five cords of wood and fourteen (?) tons of coal; Goodwin perhaps a cord and a half, much of which he picks out of the river. He says he'd rather have a boat leak some for fishing.

March 24. If you are describing any occurrence, or a man, make two or more distinct reports at different times. Though you may think you have said all, you will to-morrow remember a whole new class of facts which perhaps interested most of all at the time, but did not present themselves to be reported. If we have recently met and talked with a man, and would report our experience, we commonly make a very partial report at first, failing to seize the most significant, picturesque, and dramatic points; we describe only what we have had time to digest and dispose of in our minds, without being conscious that there were other things really more novel and interesting to us, which will not fail to recur to us and impress us suitably at last. How little that occurs to us in any way are we prepared at once to appreciate! We discriminate at first only a few features, and we need to reconsider our experience from many points of view and in various moods, to preserve the whole fruit of it.

March 26. Stopped at Farrar's little stithy. He is making two nuts to mend a mop with, and when at length he has forged and filed them and cut the thread, he remarks that it is a puttering job and worth a good deal more than he can charge. He has sickness in the house, a daughter in consumption, which he says is a flattering disease, up one day and down the next. Seeing a monstrous horseshoe nailed against his shop inside, with a little one within it, I asked what that was for. He said that he made the big one when he was an apprentice (of three months' standing) for a sign, and he picked up the little one the other day in the road and put it within it for the contrast. But he thought that the big one was hardly too big for one of the fore feet of the horse Columbus, which he had seen.

The first croaking frogs, the hyla, the white maple blossoms, the

skunk-cabbage, and the alder's catkins are observed about the same time.

Farrar spoke of horses driven "tantrum."

Are not March and November *gray* months?

Men will hardly believe me when I tell them of the thickness of snow and ice at this time last year.

March 27. I would fain make two reports in my Journal, first the incidents and observations of to-day; and by to-morrow I review the same and record what was omitted before, which will often be the most significant and poetic part. I do not know at first what it is that charms me. The men and things of to-day are wont to lie fairer and truer in to-morrow's memory.

I saw quail-tracks some two months ago, much like smaller partridge-tracks.

Men talk to me about society as if I had none and they had some, as if it were only to be got by going to the sociable or to Boston.

March 28. Often I can give the truest and most interesting account of any adventure I have had after years have elapsed, for then I am not confused, only the most significant facts surviving in my memory. Indeed, all that continues to interest me after such a lapse of time is sure to be pertinent, and I may safely record all that I remember.

No.

This is very similar to if not the same with that represented in London's *Encyclopædia* and called "*Phallus impudicus*, Stinking Morel, very fetid."

He since tells me *once*.

April 23. I saw at Ricketson's a young woman, Miss Kate Brady, twenty years old, her father an Irishman, a worthless fellow, her mother a smart Yankee. The daughter formerly did sewing, but now keeps school for a livelihood. She was born at the Brady house, I think in Freetown, where she lived till twelve years old and helped her father in the field. There she rode horse to plow and was knocked off the horse by apple tree boughs, kept sheep, caught fish, etc., etc. I

never heard a girl or woman express so strong a love for nature. She purposes to return to that lonely ruin, and dwell there alone, since her mother and sister will not accompany her; says that she knows all about farming and keeping sheep and spinning and weaving, though it would puzzle her to shingle the old house. There she thinks she can "live free." I was pleased to hear of her plans, because they were quite cheerful and original, not professedly reformatory, but growing out of her love for "Squire's Brook and the Middleborough ponds." A strong love for outward nature is singularly rare among both men and women. The scenery immediately about her homestead is quite ordinary, yet she appreciates and can use that part of the universe as no other being can. Her own sex, so tamely bred, only jeer at her for entertaining such an idea, but she has a strong head and a love for good reading, which may carry her through. I would by no means discourage, nor yet particularly encourage her, for I would have her so strong as to succeed in spite of all ordinary discouragements.

It is very rare that I hear one express a strong and imperishable attachment to a particular scenery, or to the whole of nature, — I mean such as will control their whole lives and characters. They alone are naturalized, but most are tender and callow creatures that wear a house as their outmost shell and must get their lives insured when they step abroad from it. They are lathed and plastered in from all natural influences, and their delicate lives are a long battle with the dyspepsia. The others are fairly rooted in the soil, and are the noblest plant it bears, more hardy and natural than sorrel. Children of the Golden Age. Hospitals and almshouses are not their destiny. When I hear of such an attachment in a reasonable, a divine, creature to a particular portion of the earth, it seems as if then first the earth succeeded and rejoiced, as if it had been made and existed only for such a use. How rarely a man's love for nature becomes a ruling principle with him, like a youth's affection for a maiden, but more enduring! All nature is my bride. That nature which to one is a stark and ghastly solitude is a sweet, tender, and genial society to another.

April 24. Scudding over the Great Meadows, I see the now red crescents of the red maples in their prime round about, above the gray stems. The willow osiers require to be seen endwise the rows, to

get an intense color. The clouds are handsome this afternoon: on the north, some dark, windy clouds, with rain falling thus beneath: — but it is chiefly wind; southward, those summer clouds in numerous isles, light above and dark-barred beneath. Now the sun comes out and shines on the pine hill west of Ball's Hill, lighting up the light-green pitch pines and the sand and russet-brown lichen-clad hill. That is a very New England landscape. Buttrick's yellow farmhouse near by is in harmony with it.

April 25. It is cool and windy this afternoon. Some sleet falls, but as we sit on the east side of Smith's chestnut grove, the wood, though so open and leafless, makes a perfect lee for us, apparently by breaking the force of the wind. A dense but bare grove of slender chestnut trunks a dozen rods wide is a perfect protection against this violent wind, and makes a perfectly calm lee.

I find that I can very easily make a convenient box of the birch bark, at this season at least, when the sap is running, to carry a moss or other thing in safely. I have only to make three cuts and strip off a piece from a clear space some ten inches long, and then, rolling it up wrong side outward, as it naturally curls backward as soon as taken off (the dry side shrinking, the moist swelling) and so keeps its place, I bend or fold the ends back on it, as if it were paper, and so close them, and, if I please, tie it round with a string of the same bark. This is resilient or elastic, and stands out from a plant, and also is not injured by moisture like paper. This box dries yellow or straw-colored, with large clouds of green derived from the inner bark.

The dense, green, rounded beds of mosses in springs and old water-troughs are very handsome now, — intensely cold green cushions.

April 26. P.M. — Up Assabet to White Cedar Swamp.

See on the water over the meadow, north of the boat's place, twenty rods from the nearest shore and twice as much from the opposite shore, a very large striped snake swimming. It swims with great case, and lifts its head a foot above the water, darting its tongue at us. A snake thus met with on the water appears far more monstrous, not to say awful and venomous, than on the land. It is

always something startling and memorable to meet with a serpent in the midst of a broad water, careering over it. But why had this one taken to the water? Is it possible that snakes ever hibernate in meadows which are subject to be overflown? This one when we approached swam toward the boat, apparently to rest on it, and when I put out my paddle, at once coiled itself partly around it and allowed itself to be taken on board. It did not hang down from the paddle like a dead snake, but stiffened and curved its body in a loose coil about it.

This snake was two feet and eleven inches long; the tail alone, seven and a quarter. There were one hundred and forty-five large abdominal plates, besides the three smaller under the head, and sixty-five pairs of caudal scales. The central stripe on the back was not bright-yellow, as Storer describes, but a pale brown or clay-color. Beneath the tail in centre, a dark, somewhat greenish line.

This snake was killed about 2 P.M.; *i.e.*, the head was perfectly killed then; yet the posterior half of the body was apparently quite alive and would curl strongly around the hand at 7 P.M. It had been hanging on a tree in the meanwhile.

I have the same objection to killing a snake that I have to the killing of any other animal, yet the most humane man that I know never omits to kill one.

I see a great many beetles, etc., floating and struggling on the flood.

We sit on the shore at Wheeler's fence, opposite Merriam's. At this season still we go seeking the sunniest, most sheltered, and warmest place. C. says this is the warmest place he has been in this year. We are in this like snakes that lie out on banks. By and by we shall seek the shadiest and coolest place. How well adapted we are to our climate! In the winter we sit by fires in the house; in spring and fall, in sunny and sheltered nooks; in the summer, in shady and cool groves, or over water where the breeze circulates. Thus the average temperature of the year just suits us.

A great part of our troubles are literally domestic or originate in the house and from living indoors. I could write an essay to be entitled "Out of Doors," — undertake a crusade against houses. What a different thing Christianity preached to the house-bred and to a

party who lived out of doors! Also a sermon is needed on economy of fuel. What right has my neighbor to burn ten cords of wood, when I burn only one? Thus robbing our half-naked town of this precious covering. Is he so much colder than I? It is expensive to maintain him in our midst. One man makes a little of the driftwood of the river or of the dead and refuse (unmarketable!) of the forest suffice, and Nature rejoices in him. Another, Herod-like, requires ten cords of the best of young white oak or hickory, and he is commonly esteemed a virtuous man. He who burns the most wood on his hearth is the least warmed by the sight of it growing. Leave the trim wood-lots to widows and orphan girls. Let men tread gently through nature.

May 3. Sunday. A remarkably warm and pleasant morning.

Now, thinks many a one, is the time to paddle or push gently far up or down the river. It will be a grand forenoon for a cruise, to explore these meadow shores and inundated maple swamps which we have never explored. Now we shall be recompensed for the week's confinement to shop or garden.

Up and down the town, men and boys that are under subjection are polishing their shoes and brushing their go-to-meeting clothes. I, a descendant of Northmen who worshipped Thor, spend my time worshipping neither Thor nor Christ; a descendant of Northmen who sacrificed men and horses, sacrifice neither men nor horses. I care not for Thor nor for the Jews. I sympathize not to-day with those who go to church in newest clothes and sit quietly in straight-backed pews. I sympathize rather with the boy who has none to look after him, who borrows a boat and paddle and in common clothes sets out to explore these temporary vernal lakes. I meet such a boy paddling along under a sunny bank, with bare feet and his pants rolled up above his knees, ready to leap into the water at a moment's warning. Better for him to read "Robinson Crusoe" than Baxter's "Saints' Rest."

May 4. Perhaps the most generally interesting event at present is a perfectly warm and pleasant day. It affects the greatest number, the well out of doors and the sick in chambers. No wonder the weather is the universal theme of conversation.

A warm rain; and the ring of the toads is heard all through it.

May 8. Within a week I have had made a pair of corduroy pants, which cost when done $1.60. They are of that peculiar clay-color, reflecting the light from portions of their surface. They have this advantage, that, beside being very strong, they will look about as well three months hence as now, — or as ill, some would say. Most of my friends are disturbed by my wearing them. I can get four or five pairs for what one ordinary pair would cost in Boston, and each of the former will last two or three times as long under the same circumstances. The tailor said that the stuff was not made in this country; that it was worn by the Irish at home, and now they would not look at it, but others would not wear it, durable and cheap as it is, because it is worn by the Irish. Moreover, I like the color on other accounts. Anything but black clothes. The birds and beasts are not afraid of me now. A mink came within twenty feet of me the other day as soon as my companion had left me, and if I had had my gray sack on as well as my corduroys, it would perhaps have come quite up to me.

May 21. Rains still, more or less, all day.

I saw yesterday a parrot exceedingly frightened in its cage at a window. It rushed to the bars and struggled to get out. A piece of board had been thrown from the window above to the ground, which probably the parrot's instinct had mistaken for a hawk. Their eyes are very open to danger from above.

May 23. Tortoises out again abundantly. Each particularly warm and sunny day brings them out on to every floating rail and stump. I count a dozen within three or four feet on a rail. It is a tortoise day.

The first goldfinch twitters over, and at evening I hear the *spark* of a nighthawk.

May 26. My mother was telling to-night of the sounds which she used to hear summer nights when she was young and lived on the Virginia Road, — the lowing of cows, or cackling of geese, or the beating of a drum as far off as Hildreth's, but above all Joe Merriam whistling to his team, for he was an admirable whistler. Says she

used to get up at midnight and go and sit on the door-step when all in the house were asleep, and she could hear nothing in the world but the ticking of the clock in the house behind her.

May 29. The sun came out an hour or more ago, rapidly drying the foliage, and for the first time this year I noticed the little shades produced by the foliage which had expanded in the rain, and long narrow dark lines of shade along the hedges or willow-rows. It was like the first bright flashings of an eye from under dark eyelashes after shedding warm tears.

Soon I hear the low all-pervading hum of an approaching hummingbird circling above the rock, which afterward I mistake several times for the gruff voices of men approaching, unlike as these sounds are in some respects, and I perceive the resemblance even when I know better. Now I am sure it is a hummingbird, and now that it is two farmers approaching. But presently the hum becomes more sharp and thrilling, and the little fellow suddenly perches on an ash twig within a rod of me, and plumes himself while the rain is fairly beginning. He is quite out of proportion to the size of his perch. It does not acknowledge his weight.

With all this opportunity, this comedy and tragedy, how near all men come to doing nothing! It is strange that they did not make us more intense and emphatic, that they do not goad us into some action. Generally, with all our desires and restlessness, we are no more likely to embark in any enterprise than a tree is to walk to a more favorable locality. The seaboard swarms with adventurous and rowdy fellows, but how unaccountably they train and are held in check! They are as likely to be policemen as anything. The Americans are very busy and adventurous sailors, but all in somebody's employ, — as hired men. I have not heard of one setting out in his own bark, if only to run down our own coast on a voyage of adventure or observation, on his own account.

May 31. That central meadow and pool in Gowing's Swamp is its very navel, *omphalos*, where the umbilical cord was cut that bound it to creation's womb. Methinks every swamp tends to have or suggests such as interior tender spot. The sphagnous crust that surrounds the

pool is pliant and quaking, like the skin or muscles of the abdomen; you seem to be slumping into the very bowels of the swamp.

June 5. I am interested in each contemporary plant in my vicinity, and have attained to a certain acquaintance with the larger ones. They are cohabitants with me of this part of the planet, and they bear familiar names. Yet how essentially wild they are! as wild, really, as those strange fossil plants whose impressions I see on my coal. Yet I can imagine that some race gathered those too with as much admiration, and knew them as intimately as I do these, that even they served for a language of the sentiments. Stigmariæ stood for a human sentiment in that race's flower language. Chickweed, or a pine tree, is but little less wild. I assume to be acquainted with these, but what ages between me and the tree whose shade I enjoy! It is as if it stood substantially in a remote geological period.

June 6. This is June, the month of grass and leaves. The deciduous trees are investing the evergreens and revealing how dark they are. Already the aspens are trembling again, and a new summer is offered me. I feel a little fluttered in my thoughts, as if I might be too late. Each season is but an infinitesimal point. It no sooner comes than it is gone. It has no duration. It simply gives a tone and hue to my thought. Each annual phenomenon is a reminiscence and prompting. Our thoughts and sentiments answer to the revolutions of the seasons, as two cog-wheels fit into each other. We are conversant with only one point of contact at a time, from which we receive a prompting and impulse and instantly pass to a new season or point of contact. A year is made up of a certain series and number of sensations and thoughts which have their language in nature. Now I am ice, now I am sorrel. Each experience reduces itself to a mood of the mind. I see a man grafting, for instance. What this imports chiefly is not apples to the owner or bread to the grafter, but a certain mood or train of thought to my mind. That is what this grafting is to me. Whether it is anything at all, even apples or bread, to anybody else, I cannot swear, for it would be worse than swearing *through glass*. For I only see those other facts as through a glass darkly.

Cratægus Crus-Galli, maybe a day. Early iris. *Viburnum Lentago*,

a day or more. Krigias, with their somewhat orange yellow, spot the dry hills all the forenoon and are very common, but as they are closed in the afternoon, they are but rarely noticed by walkers.

June 8. Mother was saying to-day that she bought no new clothes for John until he went away into a store, but made them of his father's old clothes, which made me say that country boys could get enough cloth for their clothes by robbing the scarecrows. So little it need cost to live.

June 10. In Julius Smith's yard, a striped snake (so called) was running about this forenoon, and in the afternoon it was found to have shed its slough, leaving it halfway out a hole, which probably it used to confine it in. It was about in its new skin. Many creatures — devil's-needles, etc., etc. — cast their sloughs now. Can't I?

June 12. Friday. 8.30 A.M. — Set out for CAPE COD.

June 18. Thursday. From Traveller's Home to Small's in Truro.

A mizzling and rainy day with thick driving fog; a drizzling rain, or "drisk," as one called it.

June 20. This was the third foggy day. It is a serious objection to visiting or living on the Cape that you lose so many days by fog. From time to time the sun almost or quite shines, and you can see half a mile, or to Provincetown even, and then, against all your rules, it thickens up again. An inlander would think it was going to clear up twenty times when it may last a week. I have now visited the Cape four times in as many different years, once in October, twice in June, and once in July, having spent in all about one month there, and about one third the days were foggy, with or without rain. According to Alden (in Massachusetts Historical Collections, vol. v, First Series, page 57), Nantucket was discovered by a famous old Indian giant named Maushop, who waded the sea to it, and there filling his pipe with "poke," his smoke made fog. Whence that island is so much in the fog, and the aborigines on the opposite portion of the Cape, seeing a fog over the water at a distance, would say, "There

comes old Maushop's smoke."

The Cape people with whom I talked very generally denied that it was a phenomenon in any degree peculiar to the Cape. They said that it was just such weather at Boston. Indeed, some denied that it was fog at all. They said with some asperity that it was rain. Yet more rain would have fallen in a smart shower in the country in twenty minutes than in these five days on the Cape. When I got home I found that there had been an abundance of cloudy weather and rain within a week, but not one foggy day in Concord.

July 2. Calla palustris (with its convolute point like the cultivated) at the south end of Gowing's Swamp. Having found this in one place, I now find it in another. Many an object is not seen, though it falls within the range of our visual ray, because it does not come within the range of our intellectual ray, *i.e.*, we are not looking for it. So, in the largest sense, we find only the world we look for.

July 11. I see more berries than usual of the *Rubus triflorus* in the open meadow near the southeast corner of the Hubbard meadow blueberry swamp. Call it, perhaps, Cymbidium Meadow. They are dark shining red and, when ripe, of a very agreeable flavor and somewhat of the raspberry's *spirit*.

Thermometer at 93°+ this afternoon.

July 12. I drink at every cooler spring in my walk these afternoons and love to eye the bottom there, with perchance a luxurious frog cooling himself next my nose. Sometimes the farmer, foreseeing haying, has been prudent enough to sink a tub in one, which secures a clear deep space. It would be worth the while, methinks, to make a map of the town with all the good springs on it, indicating whether they were cool, perennial, copious, pleasantly located, etc. The farmer is wont to celebrate the virtues of some one on his own farm above all others. Some cool rills in the meadows should be remembered also, for some such in deep, cold, grassy meadows are as cold as springs. I have sometimes drank warm or foul water, not knowing such cold streams were at hand. By many a spring I know where to look for the dipper or glass which some mower has left.

When a spring has been allowed to fill up, to be muddied by cattle, or, being exposed to the sun by cutting down the trees and bushes, to dry up, it affects me sadly, like an institution going to decay. Sometimes I see, on one side the tub, — the tub overhung with various wild plants and flowers, its edge almost completely concealed even from the searching eye, — the white sand freshly cast up where the spring is bubbling in. Often I sit patiently by the spring I have cleaned out and deepened with my hands, and see the foul water rapidly dissipated like a curling vapor and giving place to the cool and clear. Sometimes I can look a yard or more into a crevice under a rock, toward the sources of a spring in a hillside, and see it come cool and copious with incessant murmuring down to the light. There are few more refreshing sights in hot weather.

I find many strawberries deep in the grass of the meadow near this Hosmer Spring; then proceed on my way with reddened and fragrant fingers, till it gets washed off at new springs. It is exceedingly sultry this afternoon, and few men are abroad. The cows stand up to their bellies in the river, lashing their sides with their tails from time to time.

July 13. I sometimes awake in the night and think of friendship and its possibilities, a new life and relation to me, which perhaps I had not experienced for many months. Such transient thoughts have been my nearest approach to realization of it, thoughts which I know of no one to communicate to. I suddenly erect myself in my thoughts, or find myself erected, infinite degrees above the possibility of ordinary endeavors, and see for what grand stakes the game of life may be played. I catch an echo of the great strain of Friendship played somewhere, and feel compensated for months and years of commonplace. It is as if I were serenaded, and the highest and truest compliments were paid me. The universe gives me three cheers.

Friendship is the fruit which the year should bear; it lends its fragrance to the flowers, and it is in vain if we get only a large crop of apples without it.

July 15. When I entered the woods there, I was at once pursued by a swarm of those wood flies which gyrate around your head and

strike your hat like rain-drops. As usual, they kept up with me as I walked, and gyrated about me still, as if I were stationary, advancing at the same time and receiving reinforcements from time to time. Though I switched them smartly for half a mile with some indigo-weed, they did not mind it in the least, but though I knocked down many of them, they soon picked themselves up and came on again. They had a large black spot on their wings and some yellowish rings about their abdomens. They keep up a smart buzzing all the while. They did not once sting, though they endeavored sometimes to alight on my face. What they got by their perseverance I do not know, — unless it were a switching.

Aug. 10. How meanly and miserably we live for the most part! We escape fate continually by the skin of our teeth, as the saying is. We are practically desperate. What kind of gift is life unless we have spirits to enjoy it and taste its true flavor? if, in respect to spirits, we are to be forever cramped and in debt? Have the gods sent us into this world, — to this *muster*, — to do chores, hold horses, and the like, and not given us any spending money?

I heard some ladies the other day laughing about some one of their *help* who had *helped* herself to a real hoop from off a hogshead for her gown. I laughed too, but which party do you think I laughed at? Is n't hogshead as good a word as crinoline?

Sept. 9. The cones are now all flowing with pitch, and my hands are soon so covered with it that I cannot easily cast down the cones where I would, they stick to my hands so. I cannot touch the basket, but carry it on my arm; nor can I pick up my coat, which I have taken off, unless with my teeth, or else I kick it up and catch it on my arm. Thus I go from tree to tree, from time to time rubbing my hands in brooks and mud-holes, in the hope of finding something that will remove pitch like grease, but in vain. It is the stickiest work I ever did. I do not see how the squirrels that gnaw them off and then open them scale by scale keep their paws and whiskers clean. They must know of, or possess, some remedy for pitch that we know nothing of. How fast I could collect cones, if I could only contract with a family of squirrels to cut them off for me! The cones collected in my

chamber have a strong spirituous scent, almost rummy, or like a molasses hogshead, agreeable to some.

Sept. 12. Saturday. P.M. — To Owl Swamp.

In an open part of the swamp, started a very large wood frog, which gave one leap and squatted still. I put down my finger, and, though it shrank a little at first, it permitted me to stroke it as long as I pleased. Having passed, it occurred to me to return and cultivate its acquaintance. To my surprise, it allowed me to slide my hand under it and lift it up, while it squatted cold and moist on the middle of my palm, panting naturally. I brought it close to my eye and examined it. It was very beautiful seen thus nearly, not the dull dead-leaf color which I had imagined, but its back was like burnished bronze armor defined by a varied line on each side, where, as it seemed, the plates of armor united. It had four or five dusky bars which matched exactly when the legs were folded, showing that the painter applied his brush to the animal when in that position, and reddish-orange soles to its delicate feet. There was a conspicuous dark-brown patch along the side of the head, whose upper edge passed directly through the eye horizontally, just above its centre, so that the pupil and all below were dark and the upper portion of the iris golden. I have since taken up another in the same way.

Sept. 18. Friday. P.M. — Round Walden with C. We started a pack of grouse, which went off with a whir like cannon-balls.

Sept. 24. Thursday. I saw a red squirrel run along the bank under the hemlocks with a nut in its mouth. He stopped near the foot of a hemlock, and, hastily pawing a hole with his fore feet, dropped the nut, covered it up, and retreated part way up the trunk of the tree, all in a few moments. I approached the shore to examine the deposit, and he, descending betrayed no little anxiety for his treasure and made two or three motions to recover the nut before he retreated. Digging there, I found two pignuts joined together, with their green shells on, buried about an inch and a half in the soil, under the red hemlock leaves. This, then, is the way forests are planted. This nut must have been brought twenty rods at least and was buried at just

the right depth. If the squirrel is killed, or neglects its deposit, a hickory springs up.

P.M. — I walked to that very dense and handsome white pine grove east of Beck Stow's Swamp. It is about fifteen rods square, the trees large, ten to twenty inches in diameter. It is separated by a wall from another pine wood with a few oaks in it on the southeast, and about thirty rods north and west are other pine and oak woods. Standing on the edge of the wood and looking through it, — for it is quite level and free from underwood, *mostly* bare, red-carpeted ground, — you would have said that there was not a hardwood tree in it, young or old, though I afterward found on one edge a middling-sized sassafras, a birch, a small tupelo, and two little scarlet oaks, but, what was more interesting, I found, on looking closely over its floor, that, alternating with thin ferns and small blueberry bushes, there was, as often as every five feet, a little oak, three to twelve inches high, and in one place I found a green acorn dropped by the base of a tree. I was surprised, I confess, to find my own theory so perfectly proved. These oaks, apparently, find such a locality unfavorable to their growth as long as the pines stand.

Sept. 25. The red maple has fairly begun to blush in some places by the river. I see one, by the canal behind Barrett's mill, all aglow against the sun. These first trees that change are most interesting, since they are seen against others still freshly green, — such brilliant red on green. I go half a mile out of my way to examine such a red banner.

As I came round the island, I took notice of that little ash tree on the opposite shore. It has been cut or broken off about two feet from the ground, and seven small branches have shot up from its circumference, all together forming a perfectly regular oval head about twenty-five feet high and very beautiful. With what harmony they work and carry out the idea of the tree, one twig not straying farther on this side than its fellow on that! That the tree thus has its idea to be lived up to, and, as it were, fills an invisible mould in the air, is the more evident, because if you should cut away one or all but one, the remaining branch or branches would still in time form a head in the main similar to this.

Brought home my first boat-load of wood.

Sept. 28. I planted six seeds sent from the Patent Office and labelled, I think, "*Poitrine jaune grosse*" (large yellow pumpkin (or squash?)).

Two came up, and one bore a squash which weighs 123½lbs.

the other bore four, 1 weighing 72¾ 2d weighing 54 3d weighing 37¾ 4th weighing 21¾ 309¾ Who would have believed that there was 310 pounds of *poitrine jaune grosse* in that corner of our garden? Yet that little seed found it.

Sept. 30. According to the Upanishads, "As water, when rained down on elevated ground, runs scattered off in the valleys, so ever runs after difference a person who beholds attributes different (from the soul)."

"As pure water, which is thrown down on pure ground, remains alike, so also, O Gautama, is the soul of the thinker who knows."

Minott says he is seventy-five years old.

He says that that tall clock which still ticks in the corner belonged to old John Beatton, who died before he was born; thought it was two hundred years old!! Some of the rest of the furniture came from the same source. I read on John Beatton's tombstone near the powder-house that he died in 1776, aged seventy-four.

Oct. 3. How much more agreeable to sit in the midst of old furniture like Minott's clock and secretary and looking-glass, which have come down from other generations, than in that which was just brought from the cabinet-maker's and smells of varnish, like a coffin! To sit under the face of an old clock that has been ticking one hundred and fifty years, — there is something mortal, not to say immortal, about it! A clock that began to tick when Massachusetts was a province. Meanwhile John Beatton's heavy tombstone is cracked quite across and widely opened.

Oct. 5. P.M. — To Yellow Birch Swamp.

I hear the alarum of a small red squirrel. I see him running by fits and starts along a chestnut bough toward me. His head looks

disproportionately large for his body, like a bulldog's, perhaps because he has his chaps full of nuts. He chirrups and vibrates his tail, holds himself in, and scratches along a foot as if it were a mile. He finds noise and activity for both of us. It is evident that all this ado does not proceed from fear. There is at the bottom, no doubt, an excess of inquisitiveness and caution, but the greater part is make-believe and a love of the marvellous. He can hardly keep it up till I am gone, however, but takes out his nut and tastes it in the midst of his agitation. "*See there, see there*," says he, "who's that? O dear, what shall I do?" and makes believe run off, but does n't get along an inch, — lets it all pass off by flashes through his tail, while he clings to the bark as if he were holding in a race-horse. He gets down the trunk at last on to a projecting knot, head downward, within a rod of you, and chirrups and chatters louder than ever. Tries to work himself into a fright. The hind part of his body is urging the forward part along, snapping the tail over it like a whip-lash, but the fore part, for the most part, clings fast to the bark with desperate energy. *Squirr*, "to throw with a jerk," seems to have quite as much to do with the name as the Greek *skia oura*, shadow and tail.

Oct. 6. Think what a change, unperceived by many, has within a month come over the landscape! Then the general, the universal, hue was green. Now see those brilliant scarlet and glowing yellow trees in the lowlands a mile off! Or see that crowd in the swamp half a mile through, all vying with one another, a blaze of glory. We are not prepared to believe that the earth is now so particolored, and would present to a bird's eye such distinct masses of bright color. A great painter is at work. The very pumpkins yellowing in the fields become a feature in the landscape, and thus they have shone, maybe, for a thousand years here.

I have just read Ruskin's "Modern Painters." I am disappointed in not finding it a more out-of-door book, for I have heard that such was its character, but its title might have warned me. He does not describe Nature as Nature, but as Turner painted her, and though the work betrays that he has given a close attention to Nature, it appears to have been with an artist's and critic's design. How much is written about Nature as somebody has portrayed her, how little about Nature

as she is, and chiefly concerns us, *i.e.* how much prose, how little poetry!

Oct. 7. I do not see what the Puritans did at that season when the maples blazed out in scarlet. They certainly could not have worshipped in groves then. Perhaps that is what they built meeting-houses and surrounded them with horse-sheds for.

It is the reign of crickets now. You see them gliding busily about over all sunny surfaces. They sometimes get into my shoes; but oftener I have to empty out the seeds of various shrubs and weeds which I have been compelled to transport.

When I turn round half-way up Fair Haven Hill, by the orchard wall, and look northwest, I am surprised for the thousandth time at the beauty of the landscape, and I sit down to behold it at my leisure. I think that Concord affords no better view. It is always incredibly fair, but ordinarily we are mere objects in it, and not witnesses of it.

I do not know how to entertain one who can't take long walks. The first thing that suggests itself is to get a horse to draw them, and that brings us at once into contact with stablers and dirty harness, and I do not get over my ride for a long time. I give up my forenoon to them and get along pretty well, the very elasticity of the air and promise of the day abetting me, but they are as heavy as dumplings by mid-afternoon. If they can't walk, why won't they take an honest nap and let me go in the afternoon? But, come two o'clock, they alarm me by an evident disposition to sit. In the midst of the most glorious Indian-summer afternoon, there they sit, breaking your chairs and wearing out the house, with their backs to the light, taking no note of the lapse of time.

As I sat on the high bank at the east end of Walden this afternoon, at five o'clock, I saw, by a peculiar intention or dividing of the eye, a very striking subaqueous rainbow-like phenomenon. A passer-by might, perhaps would, have noticed that the bright-tinted shrubs about the high shore on the sunny side were reflected from the water; but, unless on the alert for such effects, he would have failed to perceive the full beauty of the phenomenon. Unless you look for reflections, you commonly will not find them. Those brilliant shrubs, which were from three to a dozen feet in height, were all reflected,

dimly so far as the details of leaves, etc., were concerned, but brightly as to color, and, of course, in the order in which they stood, — scarlet, yellow, green, etc.; but, there being a slight ripple on the surface, these reflections were not true to their height though true to their breadth, but were extended downward with mathematical perpendicularity, three or four times too far, forming sharp pyramids of the several colors, gradually reduced to mere dusky points. The effect of this prolongation of the reflection was a very pleasing softening and blending of the colors, especially when a small bush of one bright tint stood directly before another of a contrary and equally bright tint. It was just as if you were to brush firmly aside with your hand or a brush a fresh line of paint of various colors, or so many lumps of friable colored powders. There was, accordingly, a sort of belt, as wide as the whole height of the hill, extending downward along the whole north or sunny side of the pond, composed of exceedingly short and narrow inverted pyramids of the most brilliant colors intermixed. I have seen, indeed, similar inverted pyramids in the old drawings of tattooing about the waists of the aborigines of this country. Walden, too, like an Indian maiden, wears this broad rainbow-like belt of brilliant-colored points or cones round her waist in October. The color seems to be reflected and re-reflected from ripple to ripple, losing brightness each time by the softest possible gradation, and tapering toward the beholder, since he occupies a mere point of view. This is one of the prettiest effects of the autumnal change.

Oct. 9. It has come to this, — that the lover of art is one, and the lover of nature another, though true art is but the expression of our love of nature. It is monstrous when one cares but little about trees but much about Corinthian columns, and yet this is exceedingly common.

Oct. 10. You see now in sprout-lands young scarlet oaks of every degree of brightness from green to dark scarlet. It is a beautifully formed leaf, with its broad, free, open sinuses, — worthy to be copied in sculpture. A very agreeable form, a bold, deep scallop, as if the material were cheap. Like tracery.

Oct. 11. This is the seventh day of glorious weather. Perhaps these might be called Harvest Days. Within the week most of the apples have been gathered; potatoes are being dug; corn is still left in the fields, though the stalks are being carried in. Others are ditching and getting out mud and cutting up bushes along fences, — what is called "brushing up," — burning brush, etc.

These are cricket days.

Oct. 12. I see a very distant mountain house in a direction a little to the west of Carlisle, and two elms in the horizon on the right of it. Measuring carefully on the map of the county, I think it must be the Baptist Church in North Tewksbury, within a small fraction of fourteen miles from me. I think that this is the greatest distance at which I have seen an elm without a glass. There is another elm in the horizon nearly north, but not so far. It looks very much larger than it is. Perhaps it looms a little. The elm, I think can be distinguished further than any other tree.

This was what those scamps did in California. The trees were so grand and venerable that they could not afford to let them grow a hair's breadth bigger, or live a moment longer to reproach themselves. They were so big that they resolved they should never be bigger. They were so venerable that they cut them right down. It was not for the sake of the wood; it was only because they were very grand and venerable.

Oct. 14. P.M. — To White Pond.

Another, the tenth of these memorable days. We have had some fog the last two or three nights, and this forenoon it was slow to disperse, dog-day-like, but this afternoon it is warmer even than yesterday. I should like it better if it were not so warm. I am glad to reach the shade of Hubbard's Grove; the coolness is refreshing. It is indeed a golden autumn. These ten days are enough to make the reputation of any climate. A tradition of these days might be handed down to posterity. They deserve a notice in history, in the history of Concord. All kinds of crudities have a chance to get ripe this year. Was there ever such an autumn? And yet there was never such a

panic and hard times in the commercial world. The merchants and banks are suspending and failing all the country over, but not the sand-banks, solid and warm, and streaked with bloody blackberry vines. You may run upon them as much as you please, — even as the crickets do, and find their account in it. They are the stockholders in these banks, and I hear them creaking their content. In these banks, too, and such as these, are my funds deposited, a fund of health and enjoyment. Their (the crickets) prosperity and happiness and, I trust, mine do not depend on whether the New York banks suspend or no. Invest, I say, in these country banks. Let your capital be simplicity and contentment. Withered goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*) is no failure, like a broken bank, and yet in its most golden season nobody counterfeits it. Nature needs no counterfeit-detector. I have no compassion for, nor sympathy with, this miserable state of things. Banks built of granite, after some Grecian or Roman style, with their porticoes and their safes of iron, are not so permanent, and cannot give me so good security for capital invested in them, as the heads of withered hardhack in the meadow. I do not suspect the solvency of these. I know who is their president and cashier.

I take all these walks to every point of the compass, and it is always harvest-time with me. I am always gathering my crop from these woods and fields and waters, and no man is in my way or interferes with me. My crop is not their crop. I am not gathering beans and corn. Do they think there are no fruits but such as these? I am a reaper; I am not a gleaner.

On the causeway I pass by maples here and there which are bare and smoke-like, having lost their brilliant clothing; but there it lies, nearly as bright as ever, on one side on the ground, making nearly as regular a figure as lately on the tree. I should rather say that I first observed the trees thus flat on the ground like a permanent colored and substantial shadow, and they alone suggested to look for the trees that had borne them.

Looking now toward the north side of the pond, I perceive that the reflection of the hillside seen from an opposite hill is not so broad as the hillside itself appears, owing to the different angle at which it is seen. The reflection exhibits such an aspect of the hill, *apparently*, as you would get if your eye were placed at that part of the surface of

the pond where the reflection seems to be. In this instance, too, then, Nature avoids repeating herself. Not even reflections in still water are like their substances as seen by us. Is the reflection of a hillside, however, such an aspect of it as can be obtained by the eye directed to the hill itself from any single point of view? If not, then the reflection is never a true copy or repetition of its substance, but a new composition, and this may be the source of its novelty and attractiveness, and of this nature, too, may be the charm of an echo. I doubt if you can ever get Nature to repeat herself exactly.

Oct. 15. Rain at last, and end of the remarkable days. The springs and rivers have been very low.

Our staghorn sumach has just become a very rich scarlet. So, apparently, has the large one at Mrs. Simmonds's. They are later than the others; a yellower scarlet, almost orange.

It is another example of the oddity of the Orientals that yellow "is in the east a regal color, more especially so in China, where it is exclusively royal." (Field on Colors, 139.) Further west it was purple, regal and imperial.

The river lower this morning than before this year. Concord Bank has suspended.

Oct. 16. I see a delicate pale brown-bronze wood frog. I think I can always take them up in my hand. They, too, vary in color, like the leaves of many species of plants at present, having now more yellow, now more red; and perhaps for the same reason.

What is acorn-color! Is it not as good as chestnut?

Oct. 18. I should say that the autumnal change and brightness of foliage began fairly with the red maples (not to speak of a very few premature trees in water) September 25th, and ends this year, say generally October 22d, or maybe two or three days earlier. The fall of the leaf, in like way, began fairly with the fall of the red maple leaves, October 13th, and ended at least as early as when the pitch pines had *generally* fallen, November 5th (the larches are about a week later). The red maples are now fairly bare, though you may occasionally see one full of leaves.

So gradually the leaves fall, after all, — though individuals will be completely stripped in one short windy rain-storm, — that you scarcely miss them out of the landscape; but the earth grows more bare, and the fields more hoary, and the heavy shadows that began in June take their departure, November being at hand.

Oct. 20. P.M. — To the Easterbrooks Country.

I had gone but little way on the old Carlisle road when I saw Brooks Clark, who is now about eighty and bent like a bow, hastening along the road, barefooted, as usual, with an axe in his hand; was in haste perhaps on account of the cold wind on his bare feet. When he got up to me, I saw that besides the axe in one hand, he had his shoes in the other, filled with knurly apples and a dead robin. He stopped and talked with me a few moments; said that we had had a noble autumn and might now expect some cold weather. I asked if he had found the robin dead. No, he said, he found it with its wing broken and killed it. He also added that he had found some apples in the woods, and as he had n't anything to carry them in, he put 'em in his shoes. They were queer-looking trays to carry fruit in. How many he got in along toward the toes, I don't know. I noticed, too, that his pockets were stuffed with them. His old tattered frock coat was hanging in strips about the skirts, as were his pantaloons about his naked feet. He appeared to have been out on a scout this gusty afternoon, to see what he could find, as the youngest boy might. It pleased me to see this cheery old man, with such a feeble hold on life, bent almost double, thus enjoying the evening of his days. Far be it from me to call it avarice or penury, this childlike delight in finding something in the woods or fields and carrying it home in the October evening, as a trophy to be added to his winter's store. Oh, no; he was happy to be Nature's pensioner still, and birdlike to pick up his living. Better his robin than your turkey, his shoes full of apples than your barrels full; they will be sweeter and suggest a better tale. Like an old squirrel shuffling to his hole with a nut.

This old man's cheeriness was worth a thousand of the church's sacraments and *memento mori*'s. It was better than a prayerful mood. It proves to me old age as tolerable, as happy, as infancy. I was glad

of an occasion to suspect that this afternoon he had not been at "work" but living somewhat after my own fashion (though he did not explain the axe), — had been out to see what nature had for him, and now was hastening home to a burrow he knew, where he could warm his old feet. If he had been a young man, he would probably have thrown away his apples and put on his shoes when he saw me coming, for shame. But old age is manlier; it has learned to live, makes fewer apologies, like infancy. This seems a very manly man. I have known him within a few years building stone wall by himself, barefooted.

Warren Brown, who owns the Easterbrooks place, the west side the road, is picking barberries. Allows that the soil thereabouts is excellent for fruit, but it is so rocky that he has not patience to plow it. That is the reason this tract is not cultivated.

There was Melvin, too, a-barberrying and nutting. He had got two baskets, one in each hand, and his game-bag, which hung from his neck, all full of nuts and barberries, and his mouth full of tobacco. Trust him to find where the nuts and berries grow. He is hunting all the year and he marks the bushes and the trees which are fullest, and when the time comes, for once leaves his gun, though not his dog, at home, and takes his baskets to the spot.

What a wild and rich domain that Easterbrooks Country! Not a cultivated, hardly a cultivatable field in it, and yet it delights all natural persons, and feeds more still. Such great rocky and moist tracts, which daunt the farmer, are reckoned as unimproved land, and therefore worth but little; but think of the miles of huckleberries, and of barberries, and of wild apples, so fair, both in flower and fruit, resorted to by men and beasts; Clark, Brown, Melvin, and the robins, these, at least, were attracted thither this afternoon.

Wesson is so gouty that he rarely comes out-of-doors, and is a spectacle in the street; but he loves to tell his old stories still! How, when he was stealing along to get a shot at his ducks, and was just upon them, a red squirrel sounded the alarm, *chickaree chickaree chickaree*, and off they went; but he turned his gun upon the squirrel to avenge himself.

Oct. 21. I see a robin eating prinos berries. Is not the robin the principal berry-eating bird nowadays? There must be more about the barberry bushes in Melvin's Preserve than anywhere.

It is pitiful to see a man of sixty, a philosopher, perchance, inquiring for a bearing apple orchard for sale. If he must have one, why did he not set it out when he was thirty? How mean and lazy, to be plucking the fruit of another man's labor. The old man I saw yesterday lives on peaches and milk in their season, but then he planted them.

Is not the poet bound to write his own biography? Is there any other work for him but a good journal? We do not wish to know how his imaginary hero, but how he, the actual hero, lived from day to day.

That big swamp white oak limb or tree which I found prostrate in the swamp was longer than my boat and tipped it well. These old stumps stand like anchorites and yogees, putting off their earthy garments, more and more sublimed from year to year, ready to be translated, and then they are ripe for my fire. I administer the last sacrament and purification.

Oct. 22. Ground pretty white with frost. The stiffened and frosted weeds and grass have an aggrieved look. The lately free-flowing blades of grass look now like mourning tresses sculptured stiffly in marble; they lie stiff and dishevelled. A very narrow strip of ice has formed along the riverside, in which I see a pad or two, wearing the same aggrieved look, like the face of the child that cried for spilt milk, its summer irrevocably gone.

P.M. — As I go through the woods now, so many oak and other leaves have fallen the rustling noise somewhat disturbs my musing. However, Nature in this may have intended some kindness to the ducks, which are now loitering hereabouts on their migration southward, mostly young and inexperienced birds, for, as they are feeding in Goose Pond, for instance, the rustling of the leaves betrays the approach of the sportsman and his dog, or other foe; so perhaps the leaves on the ground protect them more than when on the trees.

What a perfect chest the chestnut is packed in! With such wonderful care Nature has secluded and defended these nuts, as if

they were her most precious fruits, while diamonds are left to take care of themselves. First it bristles all over with sharp green prickles, some nearly half an inch long, like a hedgehog rolled into a ball; these rest on a thick, stiff, bark-like rind, one sixteenth to one eighth of an inch thick, which, again, is most daintily lined with a kind of silvery fur or velvet plush one sixteenth of an inch thick, even rising in a ridge between the nuts, like the lining of a casket in which the most precious commodities are kept. The chest is packed quite full; half-developed nuts are the waste paper used in the packing, to fill the vacancies. At last Frost comes to unlock this chest; it alone holds the true key.

Such is the cradle, thus daintily lined, in which they have been rocked in their infancy. See how tenderly it has been reared before its green and tender skin hardened into a shell. The October air comes in, and the light too, and proceed to paint the nuts that clear, handsome reddish (?) brown which we call chestnut. Nowadays the brush that paints chestnuts is very active. It is entering into every open bur over the stretching forests' tops for hundreds of miles, without horse or ladder, and putting on rapid coats of this wholesome color. Otherwise the boys would not think they had got perfect nuts. And that this may be further protected, perchance, both within the bur and afterward, the nuts themselves are partly covered toward the top, where they are first exposed, with that same soft velvety down. And then Nature drops it on the rustling leaves, a *done* nut, prepared to begin a chestnut's course again. Within itself, again, each individual nut is lined with a reddish velvet, as if to preserve the seed from jar and injury in falling and, perchance, from sudden damp and cold, and, within that, a thin white skin enwraps the germ. Thus it is lining within lining and unwearied care, — not to count closely, six coverings at least before you reach the contents!

But it is a barbarous way to jar the tree, and I trust I do repent of it. Gently shake it only, or let the wind shake it for you. You are gratified to find a nut that has in it no bitterness, altogether palatable.

Oct. 23. Sal Cummings, a thorough countrywoman, conversant with nuts and berries, calls the soapwort gentian "blue vengeance," mistaking the word. A masculine wild-eyed woman of the fields.

Somebody has her daguerreotype. When Mr. —— was to lecture on Kansas, she was sure "she wa'n't going to hear him. None of her folks had ever had any."

Oct. 24. P.M. — To Smith's chestnut grove.

I get a couple of quarts of chestnuts by patiently brushing the thick beds of leaves aside with my hand in successive concentric circles till I reach the trunk; more than half under one tree. I believe I get more by resolving, where they are reasonably thick, to pick all under one tree first. Begin at the tree and brush the leaves with your right hand in toward the stump, while your left holds the basket, and so go round and round it in concentric circles, each time laying bare about two feet in width, till you get as far as the boughs extend. You may presume that you have got about all then. It is best to reduce it to a system. Of course you will shake the tree first, if there are any on it. The nuts lie commonly two or three together, as they fell.

I find one of those small, hard, dark-brown millipede worms partly crawled into a hole in a chestnut.

I find my account in this long-continued monotonous labor of picking chestnuts all the afternoon, brushing the leaves aside without looking up, absorbed in that, and forgetting better things awhile. My eye is educated to discover anything on the ground, as chestnuts, etc. It is probably wholesomer to look at the ground much than at the heavens. As I go stooping and brushing the leaves aside by the hour, I am not thinking of chestnuts merely, but I find myself humming a thought of more significance. This occupation affords a certain broad pause and opportunity to start again afterward, — turn over a new leaf.

I hear the dull thump of heavy stones against the trees from far through the rustling wood, where boys are ranging for nuts.

Oct. 26. Hard rain in the night and almost steady rain through the day, the second day.

A driving east or northeast storm. I can see through the drisk only a mile. The river is getting partly over the meadows at last, and my spirits rise with it. Methinks this rise of the waters must affect every thought and deed in the town. It qualifies my sentence and life. I trust

there will appear in this Journal some flow, some gradual filling of the springs and raising of the streams, that the accumulating grists may be ground. I see two great fish hawks (*possibly* blue herons) slowly beating northeast against the storm, by what a curious tie circling ever near each other and in the same direction, as if you might expect to find the very motes in the air to be paired; two long undulating wings conveying a feathered body through the misty atmosphere, and this inseparably associated with another planet of the same species I can just glimpse their undulating lines. Damon and Pythias they must be. The waves beneath, which are of kindred form, are still more social, multitudinous, énÆriymon. Where is my mate, beating against the storm with me?

These regular phenomena of the seasons get at last to be — they were *at first*, of course — simply and plainly phenomena or phases of my life. The seasons and all their changes are in me. I see not a dead eel or floating snake, or a gull, but it rounds my life and is like a line or accent in its poem. Almost I believe the Concord would not rise and overflow its banks again, were I not here. After a while I learn what my moods and seasons are. I would have nothing subtracted. I can imagine nothing added. My moods are thus periodical, not two days in my year alike. The perfect correspondence of Nature to man, so that he is at home in her!

At the hewing-place on the flat above, many sparrows are flitting past amid the birches and sallows. They are chiefly *Fringilla hyemalis*. How often they may be seen thus flitting along in a straggling manner from bush to bush, so that the hedgerow will be all alive with them, each uttering a faint *chip* from time to time, as if to keep together, bewildering you so that you know not if the greater part are gone by or still to come. One rests but a moment on the tree before you and is gone again. You wonder if they know whither they are bound, and how their leader is appointed.

Those sparrows, too, are thoughts I have. They come and go; they flit by quickly on their migrations, uttering only a faint *chip*, I know not whither or why exactly. One will not rest upon its twig for me to scrutinize it. The whole copse will be alive with my rambling thoughts, bewildering me by their very multitude, but they will be all gone directly without leaving me a feather.

Spring is brown; summer, green; autumn, yellow; winter, white; November, gray.

Oct. 27. The third day of steady rain; wind northeast.

I go up the river as far as Hubbard's Second Grove, in order to share the general commotion and excitement of the elements, — wind and waves and rain. I sailed swiftly, standing up and tipping my boat to make a keel of its side, though at first it was hard to keep off a lee shore. I looked for cranberries drifted up on the lee side of the meadows, but saw few. It was exciting to feel myself tossed by the dark waves and hear them surge about me. The reign of water now begins, and how it gambols and revels! Waves are its leaves, foam its blossoms. How they run and leap in great droves, deriving new excitement from each other! Schools of porpoises and blackfish are only more animated waves and have acquired the gait and game of the sea itself.

The fall (strictly speaking) is approaching an end in this probably annual northeast storm. Thus the summer winds up its accounts. The winter's wood is bargained for and being hauled. This storm reminds men to put things on a winter footing. There is not much more for the farmer to do in the fields.

The real facts of a poet's life would be of more value to us than any work of his art. Shakespeare has left us his fancies and imaginings, but the truth of his life, with its becoming circumstances, we know nothing about. The writer is reported, the liver not at all. But we want the basis of fact, of an actual life, to complete our Shakespeare, as much as a statue wants its pedestal.

Oct. 28. I look up and see a male marsh hawk with his clean-cut wings, that has just skimmed past above my head, — not at all disturbed, only tilting his body a little, now twenty rods off, with demi-semi-quaver of his wings. He is a very neat flyer. Steady as a planet in its orbit, with his head bent down, but on second thought that small sprout-land seems worthy of a longer scrutiny, and he gives one circle backward over it. His scream is somewhat like the whinnering of a horse, if it is not rather a *split squeal*. It is a hoarse, tremulous breathing forth of his winged energy. But why is it so

regularly repeated at that height? Is it to scare his prey, that he may see by its motion where it is, or to inform its mate or companion of its whereabouts? Now he crosses the at present broad river steadily, deserving to have one or two rabbits at least to swing about him. What majesty there is in this small bird's flight! The hawks are large-souled.

Oct. 29. There is a large square-sided black rock, say five or six feet high, eight long, and five wide, on Mrs. Ripley's shore, wedged close between two small elms, and your first thought on seeing it is that it has according to some law occupied that space between the trees, not reflecting that it is more ancient than the trees by a geological period, and that the latter have but recently sprung up under its protection. I thought the rock had been accurately fitted into that space.

There are some things of which I cannot at once tell whether I have dreamed them or they are real; as if they were just, perchance, establishing, or else losing, a real basis in my world. This is especially the case in the early morning hours, when there is a gradual transition from dreams to waking thoughts, from illusions to actualities, as from darkness, or perchance moon and star light, to sunlight. Dreams are real, as is the light of the stars and moon, and theirs is said to be a *dreamy* light. Such early morning thoughts as I speak of occupy a debatable ground between dreams and waking thoughts. They are a sort of permanent dream in my mind. At least, until we have for some time changed our position from prostrate to erect, and commenced or faced some of the duties of the day, we cannot tell what we have dreamed from what we have actually experienced.

This morning, for instance, for the twentieth time at least, I thought of that mountain in the easterly part of our town (where no high hill actually is) which once or twice I had ascended, and often allowed my thoughts alone to climb. I now contemplate it in my mind as a familiar thought which I have surely had for many years from time to time, but whether anything could have reminded me of it in the middle of yesterday, whether I ever before remembered it in broad daylight, I doubt. I can now eke out the vision I had of it this

morning with my old and yesterday forgotten dreams.

My way up used to lie through a dark and unfrequented wood at its base, — I cannot now tell exactly, it was so long ago, under what circumstances I first ascended, only that I shuddered as I went along (I have an indistinct remembrance of having been out overnight alone), — and then I steadily ascended along a rocky ridge half clad with stinted trees, where wild beasts haunted, till I lost myself quite in the upper air and clouds, seeming to pass an imaginary line which separates a hill, mere earth heaped up, from a mountain, into a superterranean grandeur and sublimity. What distinguishes that summit above the earthy line, is that it is unhandselled, awful, grand. It can never become familiar; you are lost the moment you set foot there. You know no path, but wander, thrilled, over the bare and pathless rock, as if it were solidified air and cloud. That rocky, misty summit, secreted in the clouds, was far more thrillingly awful and sublime than the crater of a volcano spouting fire.

This is a business we can partly understand. The perfect mountain height is already thoroughly purified. It is as if you trod with awe the face of a god turned up, unwittingly but helplessly, yielding to the laws of gravity. And are there not such mountains, east or west, from which you may look down on Concord in your thought, and on all the world? In dreams I am shown this height from time to time, and I seem to have asked my fellow once to climb there with me, and yet I am constrained to believe that I never actually ascended it. It chances, now I think of it, that it rises in my mind where lies the Burying-Hill. You might go through its gate to enter that dark wood, but that hill and its graves are so concealed and obliterated by the awful mountain that I never thought of them as underlying it. Might not the graveyards of the just always be hills, ways by which we ascend and overlook the plain?

But my old way down was different, and, indeed, this was another way up, though I never so ascended. I came out, as I descended, breathing the thicker air. I came out the belt of wood into a familiar pasture, and along down by a wall. Often, as I go along the low side of this pasture, I let my thoughts ascend toward the mount, gradually entering the stinted wood (Nature subdued) and the thinner air, and drape themselves with mists. There are ever two ways up: one is

through the dark wood, the other through the sunny pasture. That is, I reach and discover the mountain only through the dark wood, but I see to my surprise, when I look off between the mists from its summit, how it is ever adjacent to my native fields, nay, imminent over them, and accessible through a sunny pasture. Why is it that in the lives of men we hear more of the dark wood than of the sunny pasture?

A hard-featured god reposing, whose breath hangs about his forehead.

Oct. 30. There's a very large and complete circle round the moon this evening, which part way round is a faint rainbow. It is a clear circular space, sharply and mathematically cut out of a thin mackerel sky. You see no mist within it, large as it is, nor even a star.

Oct. 31. In the Lee farm swamp, by the old Sam Barrett mill site, I see two kinds of ferns still green and much in fruit, apparently the *Aspidium spinulosum* (?) and *cristatum* (?). They are also common in other swamps now. You are inclined to approach and raise each frond in succession, moist, trembling, fragile greenness. What means this persistent vitality, invulnerable to frost and wet? They stay as if to keep up the spirits of the cold-blooded frogs which have not yet gone into the mud; that the summer may die with decent and graceful moderation, gradually. Even in them I feel an argument for immortality. Death is so far from being universal. The same destroyer does not destroy all. How valuable they are (with the lycopodiums) for cheerfulness. Greenness at the end of the year, after the fall of the leaf, as in a hale old age. What virtue is theirs that enables them to resist the frost?

If you are afflicted with melancholy at this season, go to the swamp and see the brave spears of skunk-cabbage buds already advanced toward a new year. Their gravestones are not bespoken yet. Is it the winter of their discontent? Do they seem to have lain down to die, despairing of skunk-cabbagedom? "Up and at 'em," "Give it to 'em," "Excelsior," "Put it through," — these are their mottoes. Mortal human creatures must take a little respite in this fall of the year; their spirits do flag a little. There is a little questioning of

destiny, and thinking to go like cowards to where the "weary shall be at rest." But not so with the skunk-cabbage. Are these false prophets? Is it a lie or a vain boast underneath the skunk-cabbage bud, pushing it upward and lifting the dead leaves with it? They rest with spears advanced; they rest to shoot!

I say it is good for me to be here, slumping in the mud, a trap covered with withered leaves. See those green cabbage buds lifting the dry leaves in that watery and muddy place. There is no can't nor cant to them. They see over the brow of winter's hill. They see another summer ahead.

Nov. 2. P.M. — To Bateman's Pond.

Row up Assabet as far as the Pokelogan, thence on foot. It is very pleasant and cheerful nowadays, when the brown and withered leaves strew the ground and almost every plant is fallen or withered, to come upon a patch of polypody on some rocky hillside in the woods, where, in the midst of the dry and rustling leaves, defying frost, it stands so freshly green and full of life. The mere greenness, which was not remarkable in the summer, is positively interesting now. My thoughts are with the polypody a long time after my body has passed. Why is not this form copied by our sculptors instead of the foreign acanthus leaves and bays? The sight of this unwithering green leaf excites me like red at some seasons. Are not the wood frogs the philosophers who walk (?) in these groves? Methinks I imbibe a cool, composed, frog-like philosophy when I behold them. I don't care for acanthus leaves; they are far-fetched. I do love this form, however, and would like to see it painted or sculptured, whether on your marble or my butter. How fit for a tuft about the base of a column!

How contagious are boys' games! A short time ago they were spinning tops, as I saw and heard, all the country over. Now every boy has a stick curved at the end, a *hawkie* (?), in his hand, whether in yards or in distant lanes I meet them.

The form of the polypody is *strangely* interesting; it is even outlandish. Some forms, though common in our midst, are thus perennially foreign as the growths of other latitudes; there being a greater interval between us and their kind than usual. We all feel the

ferns to be further from us, essentially and sympathetically, than the phænogamous plants, the roses and weeds, for instance. It needs no geology nor botany to assure us of that. We feel it, and told *them* of it first. It is a fabulous, mythological form, such as prevailed when the earth and air and water were inhabited by those extinct fossil creatures that we find. It is contemporary with them, and affects as the sight of them.

Nov. 5. Sometimes I would rather get a transient glimpse or side view of a thing than stand fronting to it, — as those polypodies. The object I caught a glimpse of as I went by haunts my thoughts a long time, is infinitely suggestive, and I do not care to front it and scrutinize it, for I know that the thing that really concerns me is not there, but in my relation to that. That is a mere reflecting surface. It is not the polypody in my pitcher or herbarium, or which I may possibly persuade to grow on a bank in my yard, or which is described in botanies, that interests me, but the one that I pass by in my walks a little distance off, when in the right mood. Its influence is sporadic, wafted through the air to me. Do you imagine its fruit to stick to the back of the leaf all winter? At this season polypody is in the air. It is worth the while to walk in swamps now, to bathe your eyes with greenness. The terminal shield fern is the handsomest and glossiest green.

I think that the man of science makes this mistake, and the mass of mankind along with him: that you should coolly give your chief attention to the phenomenon which excites you as something independent on you, and not as it is related to you. The important fact is its effect on me. He thinks that I have no business to see anything else but just what he defines the rainbow to be, but I care not whether my vision of truth is a waking thought or dream remembered, whether it is seen in the light or in the dark. It is the subject of the vision, the truth alone, that concerns me. The philosopher for whom rainbows, etc., can be explained away never saw them. With regard to such objects, I find that it is not they themselves (with which the men of science deal) that concern me; the point of interest is somewhere *between* me and them (*i.e.* the objects).

Nov. 6. Very warm but rather cloudy weather, after rain in the night. Wind southwest. Thermometer on north of the house 70° at 12 M. Indian summer. The cocks crow in the soft air. They are very sensitive to atmospheric changes.

Nov. 7. P.M. — To Bateman's Pond with R.W.E.

Stedman Buttrick, speaking of R.W.E.'s. cow that was killed by lightning and not found for some days, said that they heard a "bellering" of the cows some days before they found her, and they found the ground much trampled about the dead cow; that that was the way with cows in such cases; if such an accident happened to one of their number, they would have spells of gathering around her and "bellering."

Minott adorns whatever part of nature he touches; whichever way he walks he transfigures the earth for me. If a common man speaks of Walden Pond to me, I see only a shallow, dull-colored body of water without reflections or peculiar color, but if Minott speaks of it, I see the green water and reflected hills at once, for he *has been* there. I hear the rustle of the leaves from woods which he goes through.

Nov. 8. About 10 A.M. a long flock of geese are going over from northeast to southwest, or parallel with the general direction of the coast and great mountain-ranges. The sonorous, quavering sounds of the geese are the voice of this cloudy air, — a sound that comes from directly between us and the sky, an aerial sound, and yet so distinct, heavy, and sonorous, a clanking chain drawn through the heavy air. I saw through my window some children looking up and pointing their tiny bows into the heavens, and I knew at once that the geese were in the air. It is always an exciting event. The children, instinctively aware of its importance, rushed into the house to tell their parents. These travellers are revealed to you by the upward-turned gaze of men.

P.M. — I have no doubt that a good farmer, who, of course, loves his work, takes exactly the same kind of pleasure in draining a swamp, seeing the water flow out in his newly cut ditch, that a child does in its mud dikes and water-wheels. Both alike love to play with

the natural forces.

Ah, my friends, I know you better than you think, and love you better, too. The day after never, we will have an explanation.

Nov. 9. Surveying for Stedman Buttrick and Mr. Gordon.

Jacob Farmer tells me that one Sunday he went to his barn, having nothing to do, and thought he would watch the swallows, republican swallows. The old bird was feeding her young, and he sat within fifteen feet, overlooking them. There were five young, and he was curious to know how each received its share; and as often as the bird came with a fly, the one at the door (or opening) took it, and then they all hitched round one notch, so that a new one was presented at the door, who received the next fly; and this was the invariable order, the same one never receiving two flies in succession. At last the old bird brought a very small fly, and the young one that swallowed it did not desert his ground but waited to receive the next, but when the bird came with another, of the usual size, she commenced a loud and long scolding at the little one, till it resigned its place, and the next in succession received the fly.

Nov. 14. This morning it was considerably colder than for a long time, and by noon very much colder than heretofore, with a pretty strong northerly wind. I find my hands stiffened and involuntarily finding their way to my pockets. No wonder that the weather is a standing subject of conversation, since we are so sensitive. If we had not gone through several winters, we might well be alarmed at the approach of cold weather. With this keener blast from the north, my hands suddenly fail to fulfill their office, as it were begin to die. What a story to tell an inhabitant of the tropics, — perchance that you went to walk, after many months of warmth, when suddenly the air became so cold and hostile to your nature, that it benumbed you so that you lost the use of some of your limbs, could not untie your shoe-strings or unbutton your clothes!

Such is the first freezing day. Such are the first advances of winter. The thermometer is 27° at 6 P.M. The mud in the street is stiffened under my feet this evening.

Nov. 18. The sunlight is a peculiarly thin and clear yellow, falling on the pale-brown bleaching herbage of the fields at this season. There is no redness in it. This is November sunlight. Much cold, slate-colored cloud, bare twigs seen gleaming toward the light like gossamer, pure green of pines whose old leaves have fallen, reddish or yellowish brown oak leaves rustling on the hillsides, very pale brown, bleaching, almost hoary fine grass or hay in the fields, akin to the frost which has killed it, and flakes of clear yellow sunlight falling on it here and there, — such is November.

In one light, these are old and worn-out fields that I ramble over, and men have gone to law about them long before I was born, but I trust that I ramble over them in a new fashion and redeem them.

In sickness all is deranged. I had yesterday a kink in my back and a general cold, and as usual it amounted to a cessation of life. I lost for the time my *rapport* or relation to nature. Sympathy with nature is an evidence of perfect health. You cannot perceive beauty but with a serene mind. The cheaper your amusements, the safer and saner. They who think much of theatres, operas, and the like, are beside themselves. Each man's necessary path, though as obscure and apparently uneventful as that of a beetle in the grass, is the way to the deepest joys he is susceptible of; though he converses only with moles and fungi and disgraces his relatives, it is no matter if he knows what is steel to his flint.

Nov. 20. In books, that which is most generally interesting is what comes home to the most cherished private experience of the greatest number. It is not the book of him who has travelled the farthest over the surface of the globe, but of him who has lived the deepest and been the most at home. If an equal emotion is excited by a familiar homely phenomenon as by the Pyramids, there is no advantage in seeing the Pyramids. It is on the whole better, as it is simpler, to use the common language. The poet has made the best roots in his native soil of any man, and is the hardest to transplant. If a man is rich and strong anywhere, it must be on his native soil. Here I have been these forty years learning the language of these fields that I may the better express myself. If I should travel to the prairies, I should much less understand them, and my past life would serve me but ill to describe

them. Many a weed here stands for more of life to me than the big trees of California would if I should go there. We only need travel enough to give our intellects an airing. In spite of Malthus and the rest, there will be plenty of room in this world, if every man will mind his own business. I have not heard of any planet running against another yet.

I observed this afternoon how some bullocks had a little sportiveness forced upon them. They were running down a steep declivity to water, when, feeling themselves unusually impelled by gravity downward, they took the hint even as boys do, flourished round gratuitously, tossing their hind quarters into the air and shaking their heads at each other, but what increases the ludicrousness of it to me is the fact that such capers are never accompanied by a smile. Who does not believe that their step is less elastic, their movement more awkward, for their long domesticity?

Nov. 24. P.M. — To Andromeda Ponds.
Cold Thanksgiving weather again, the pools freezing.

Nov. 25. A clear, cold, windy afternoon. The cat crackles with electricity when you stroke her, and the fur rises up to your touch.

This is November of the hardest kind, — bare frozen ground covered with pale-brown or straw-colored herbage, a strong, cold, cutting northwest wind which makes me seek to cover my ears, a perfectly clear and cloudless sky. The cattle in the fields have a cold, shrunken, shaggy look, their hair standing out every way, as if with electricity, like the cat's. Ditches and pools are fast skimming over, and a few slate-colored snowbirds, with thick, shuffling twitter, and fine-chipping tree sparrows flit from bush to bush in the otherwise deserted pastures. This month taxes a walker's resources more than any. For my part, I should sooner think of going into quarters in November than in the winter. If you do feel any fire at this season out of doors, you may depend upon it, it is your own. It is but a short time, these afternoons, before the night cometh, in which no man can walk. November Eat-heart, — is that the name of it? Not only the fingers cease to do their office, but there is often a benumbing of the faculties generally. You can hardly screw up your courage to take a

walk when all is thus tightly locked or frozen up and so little is to be seen in field or wood. Nature has herself become like the few fruits which she still affords, a very thick-shelled nut with a shrunken meat within. I am obliged to go abroad willfully and against my inclinations at first. The prospect looks so barren, so many springs are frozen up, not a flower perchance and but few birds left, not a companion abroad in all these fields for me, I am slow to go forth. I seem to anticipate a fruitless walk. I think to myself hesitatingly, Shall I go there, or there, or there? and cannot make up my mind to any route, all seem so unpromising, mere surface walking and fronting the cold wind, so that I have to force myself to it often and at random. But then I am often unexpectedly compensated, and the thinnest yellow light of November is more warming and exhilarating than any wine they tell of; and then the mite which November contributes becomes equal in value to the bounty of July. I may meet with something which interests me, and immediately it is as warm as in July.

Pools under the north sides of hills are frozen pretty thick. That cold one of Stow's is nearly an inch and a half thick. The roar of the wind in the trees over my head sounds as cold as the wind feels.

I shiver about awhile on Pine Hill, waiting for the sun to set. Methinks the air is dusky soon after four these days. The landscape looks darker than at any season, — like arctic scenery.

Indeed they can generally be treated so. Some are reddish, as burnished copper.

These nuts were there Oct. 8th. Gone Nov. 21st.

Begins now ten days of perfect Indian summer without rain; and the eleventh and twelfth days equally warm, though rainy.

Now *first think of it*, at this stage of my description, which makes it the more singularly symbolical. The interlineations on the last page were made before this.

Perchance that was the grave.

Nov. 27. Standing before Stacy's large glass windows this morning, I saw that they were gloriously ground by the frost. I never saw such beautiful feather and firlike frosting. His windows are filled with fancy articles and toys for Christmas and New-Year's presents,

but this delicate and graceful outside frosting surpassed them all infinitely. I saw countless feathers with very distinct midribs and fine pinnæ. Other crystals looked like pine plumes the size of life. If glass could be ground to look like this, how glorious it would be!

You can tell which shopman has the hottest fire within by the frost being melted off. I was never so struck by the gracefulness of the curves in vegetation, and wonder that Ruskin does not refer to frostwork.

Dec. 2. I find that, according to the deed of Duncan Ingraham to John Richardson in 1797, my old bean-field on Walden Pond then belonged to George Minott. (Minott thinks he bought it of an Allen.) This was Deacon George Minott, who lived in the house next below the East Quarter schoolhouse, and was a brother of my grandfather-in-law. He was directly descended from Thomas Minott, who, according to Shattuck, was secretary of the Abbot of Walden (!) in Essex and whose son George was born at Saffron Walden (!) and afterwards was one of the early settlers of Dorchester.

Dec. 7. Running the long northwest side of Richardson's Fair Haven lot. It is a fair, sunny, and warm day in the woods for the season. We eat our dinners on the middle of the line, amid the young oaks in a sheltered and very unfrequented place. I cut some leafy shrub oaks and cast them down for a dry and springy seat. As I sit there amid the sweet-fern, talking with my man Briney, I observe that the recent shoots of the sweet-fern — which, like many larger bushes and trees, have a few leaves in a tuft still at their extremities — toward the sun are densely covered with a bright, warm, silvery down, which looks like frost, so thick and white. Looking the other way, I see none of it, but the bare reddish twigs. Even this is a cheering and compensating discovery in my otherwise barren work. I get thus a few positive values, answering to the bread and cheese which make my dinner. I owe thus to my weeks at surveying a few such slight but positive discoveries.

Dec. 8. Staples says he came to Concord some twenty-four years ago a poor boy with a dollar and three cents in his pocket, and he

spent the three cents for drink at Bigelow's tavern, and now he's worth "twenty hundred dollars clear." He remembers many who inherited wealth whom he can buy out to-day. I told him that he had done better than I in a pecuniary respect, for I had only earned my living. "Well," said he, "that's all I've done, and I don't know as I've got much better clothes than you." I was particularly poorly clad then, in the woods; my hat, pants, boots, rubbers, and gloves would not have brought four-pence, and I told the Irishman that it was n't everybody could afford to have a fringe round his legs, as I had, my corduroys not preserving a selvage.

Dec. 27. One while we do not wonder that so many commit suicide, life is so barren and worthless; we only live on by an effort of the will. Suddenly our condition is ameliorated, and even the barking of a dog is a pleasure to us. So closely is our happiness bound up with our physical condition, and one reacts on the other.

I am disappointed by most essays and lectures. I find that I had expected the authors would have some life, some very private experience, to report, which would make it comparatively unimportant in what style they expressed themselves, but commonly they have only a talent to exhibit. The new magazine which all have been expecting may contain only another love story as naturally told as the last, perchance, but without the slightest novelty in it. It may be a mere vehicle for Yankee phrases.

1858

Jan. 1. There are many words which are genuine and indigenous and have their root in our natures, not made by scholars, and as well understood by the illiterate as others. There are also a great many words which are spurious and artificial, and can only be used in a bad sense, since the thing they signify is not fair and substantial, — such as the *church*, the *judiciary*, to *impeach*, etc., etc. They who use them do not stand on solid ground. It is in vain to try to preserve them by attaching other words to them as the *true* church, etc. It is like towing a sinking ship with a canoe.

I have lately been surveying the Walden woods so extensively and minutely that I now see it mapped in my mind's eye — as, indeed, on paper — as so many men's wood-lots, and am aware when I walk there that I am at a given moment passing from such a one's wood-lot to such another's. I fear this particular dry knowledge may affect my imagination and fancy, that it will not be easy to see so much wildness and native vigor there as formerly. No thicket will seem so unexplored now that I know that a stake and stones may be found in it. In these respects those Maine woods differed essentially from ours. There you are never reminded that the wilderness which you are threading is, after all, some villager's familiar wood-lot from which his ancestors have sledded their fuel for generations, or some widow's thirds, minutely described in some old deed, which is recorded, of which the owner has got a plan, too, and old bound marks may be found every forty rods if you will search. What a history this Concord wilderness which I affect so much may have had! How many old deeds describe it, — some particular wild spot, — how it passed from Cole to Robinson, and Robinson to Jones, and Jones finally to Smith, in course of years! Some have cut it over three times during their lives, and some burned it and sowed it with rye, and built walls and made a pasture of it, perchance. All have renewed the bounds and reblazed the trees many times. Here you are not reminded of these things. 'T is true the map informs you that you stand on land granted by the State to such an academy, or on Bingham's Purchase, but these names do not impose on you, for you

see nothing to remind you of the academy or of Bingham.

Jan. 3. About, in his lively "Greece and the Greeks," says, "These are the most exquisite delights to be found in Greece, next to, or perhaps before, the pleasure of admiring the masterpieces of art, — a little cool water under a genial sun." I have no doubt that this is true. Why, then, travel so far when the same pleasures may be found near home?

Going to the Andromeda Ponds, I was greeted by the warm brown-red glow of the *Andromeda calyculata* toward the sun. I see where I have been through, the more reddish under sides apparently being turned up. It is long since a human friend has met me with such a glow.

Jan. 6. I derive a certain excitement, not to be refused, even from going through Dennis's Swamp on the opposite side of the railroad, where the poison-dogwood abounds. It impresses me as the most fruitful shrub thereabouts. I cannot refrain from plucking it and bringing home some pretty sprigs.

I was feeling very cheap, nevertheless, reduced to make the most of dry dogwood berries. Very little evidence of God or man did I see just then, and life not as rich and inviting an enterprise as it should be, when my attention was caught by a snowflake on my coat-sleeve. It was one of those perfect, crystalline, star-shaped ones, six-rayed, like a flat wheel with six spokes, only the spokes were perfect little pine trees in shape, arranged around a central spangle. This little object, which, with many of its fellows, rested unmelting on my coat, so perfect and beautiful, reminded me that Nature had not lost her pristine vigor yet, and why should man lose heart? This was at mid-afternoon, and it has not quite ceased snowing yet (at 10 P.M.). We are rained and snowed on with gems. I confess that I was a little encouraged, for I was beginning to believe that Nature was poor and mean, and I was now convinced that she turned off as good work as ever. What a world we live in!

Jan. 11. *Monday. Rain, rain* — washes off almost every vestige of snow.

Jan. 23. Saturday. The wonderfully mild and pleasant weather continues. The ground has been bare since the 11th. There has been but little use for gloves this winter, though I have been surveying a great deal for three months. The sun, and cockcrowing, bare ground, etc., etc., remind me of March.

It is in vain to write on the seasons unless you have the seasons in you.

Jan. 24. Sunday. The river is broadly open, as usual this winter. But I do not quite like this warm weather and bare ground at this season. What is a winter without snow and ice in this latitude? The bare earth is unsightly. This winter is but unburied summer.

At Nut Meadow Brook the small-sized water-bugs are as abundant and active as in summer. I see forty or fifty circling together in the smooth and sunny bays all along the brook. This is something new to me. What must they think of this winter? It is like a child waked up and set to playing at midnight. At night, of course, they dive to the bottom and bury themselves, and if in the morning they perceive no curtain of ice drawn over their sky, and the pleasant weather continues, they gladly rise again and resume their gyrations in some sunny bay amid the alders and the stubble. But I fear for their nervous systems, lest this be too much activity, too much excitement. What a funny way they have of going to bed! They do not take a light and retire up-stairs; they go below. Suddenly it is heels up and heads down, and they go down to their muddy bed and let the unresting stream flow over them in their dreams. They go to bed in another element. What a deep slumber must be theirs, and what dreams, down in the mud there! So the insect life is not withdrawn far off, but a warm sun would soon entice it forth. Suppose you were to plot the course of one for a day; what kind of a figure would it make? Probably this feat too will one day be performed by science, that maid of all work. I see one chasing a mote, and the wave the creature makes always causes the mote to float away from it. I would like to know what it is they communicate to one another, they who appear to value each other's society so much. How many water-bugs make a quorum? How many hundreds

does their Fourier think it takes to make a complete bug? Where did they get their backs polished so? They will have occasion to remember this year, that winter when we were waked out of our annual sleep! What is their precise hour for retiring?

Jan. 27. Time never passes so quickly and unaccountably as when I am engaged in composition, *i.e.* in writing down my thoughts. Clocks seem to have been put forward.

Jan. 29. Found some splendid fungi on old aspens used for a fence; quite firm; reddish-white above and bright-vermilion beneath, or perhaps more scarlet, reflecting various shades as it is turned. It is remarkable that the upper side of this fungus, which must, as here, commonly be low on decaying wood, so that we look down on it, is not bright-colored nor handsome, and it was only when I had broken it off and turned it over that I was surprised by its brilliant color. This intense vermilion (?) face, which would be known to every boy in the town if it were turned upward, faces the earth and is discovered only by the curious naturalist. Its ear is turned down, listening to the honest praises of the earth. It is like a light-red velvet or damask.

Feb. 4. P.M. — To C. Miles Swamp.

There are many small spruce thereabouts, with small twigs and leaves, an abnormal growth, reminding one of strange species of evergreen from California, China, etc. I brought some home and had a cup of tea made, which, in spite of a slight piny or turpentine flavor, I thought unexpectedly good.

Feb. 18. George Minott tells me that he, when young, used often to go to a store by the side of where Bigelow's tavern was and kept by Ephraim Jones, — the Goodnow store. That was probably the one kept by my old trader. Told me how Casey, who was a slave to a man — Whitney — who lived where Hawthorne owns, — the same house, — before the Revolution, ran off one Sunday, was pursued by the neighbors, and hid himself in the river up to his neck till nightfall, just across the Great Meadows. He ran through Gowing's Swamp and came back that night to a Mrs. Cogswell, who lived

where Charles Davis does, and got something to eat; then cleared far away, enlisted, and was freed as a soldier after the war. Whitney's boy threw snowballs at him the day before, and finally C., who was chopping in the yard, threw his axe at him, and W. said he was an ugly nigger and he must put him in jail. He may have been twenty years old when stolen from Africa; left a wife and one child there. Used to say that he went home to Africa in the night and came back again in the morning; *i.e.*, he dreamed of home. Lived to be old. Called Thanksgiving "Tom Kiver."

Feb. 20. Snows all day. The most wintry day of the winter; yet not more than three inches on a level is fallen.

We hear the names of the worthies of Concord, — Squire Cuming and the rest, — but the poor slave Casey seems to have lived a more adventurous life than any of them. Squire Cuming probably never had to run for his life on the plains of Concord.

March 4. Thermometer 14° this morning, and this makes decent sleighing of the otherwise soft snow.

Father Rasle's dictionary of the Abenaki language amounts to a very concentrated and trustworthy natural history of that people, though it was not completed. What they have a word for, they have a thing for. A traveller may tell us that he *thinks* they used a pavement, or built their cabins in a certain form, or soaked their seed corn in water, or had no beard, etc., etc.; but when one gives us the word for these things, the question is settled, — that is a clincher. Let us know what words they had and how they used them, and we can infer almost all the rest. The lexicographer not only *says* that a certain people have or do a certain thing, but, being evidently a disinterested party, it may be allowed that he brings sufficient evidence to prove it. He does not so much assert as exhibit. He has no transient or private purpose to serve.

March 16. How conversant the Indian who lived out of doors, who lay on the ground, must have been with mouse-ear leaves, pine-needles, mosses, and lichens, which form the crust of the earth. No doubt he had names accordingly for many things for which we have

no popular names.

I walk in muddy fields, hearing the tinkling of newborn rills. Where the melted snow has made a swift rill in the rut of a cart-path, flowing over an icy bottom and between icy banks, I see, just below a little fall of one inch, a circular mass of foam or white bubbles nearly two inches in diameter, slowly revolving but never moving off. The swift stream at the fall appears to strike one side, as it might the side of a water-wheel, and so cause it to revolve, but in the angle between this and the fall, and half an inch distant, is another circle of bubbles, individually larger and more evanescent, only half an inch in diameter, revolving very rapidly in the opposite direction. The laws, perchance, by which the world was made, and according to which the systems revolve, are seen in full operation in a rill of melted snow.

March 18. 7 A.M. — By river.

How much more habitable a few birds make the fields! The note of the first bluebird in the air answers to the purling rill of melted snow beneath. It is eminently soft and soothing, and, as surely as the thermometer, indicates a higher temperature. It is the accent of the south wind, its vernacular. The song sparrow is more sprightly, mingling its notes with the rustling of the brash along the watersides, but it is at the same time more *terrene* than the bluebird. The first woodpecker comes screaming into the empty house and throws open doors and windows wide, calling out each of them to let the neighbors know of its return. I was not aware that the capacity to hear the woodpecker had slumbered within me so long. When the blackbird gets to a *conqueree* he seems to be dreaming of the sprays that are to be and on which he is to perch. The robin does not come singing, but utters a somewhat anxious or inquisitive peep at first. The song sparrow is immediately most at home of any that I have named. I see this afternoon as many as a dozen bluebirds on the warm side of a wood.

Each new year is a surprise to us. We find that we had virtually forgotten the note of each bird, and when we hear it again it is remembered like a dream, reminding us of a previous state of existence. How happens it that the associations it awakens are always

pleasing, never saddening; reminiscences of our sanest hours? The voice of nature is always encouraging.

I sit on the Cliff, and look toward Sudbury. How circumscribed are our walks, after all! With the utmost industry we cannot expect to know well an area more than six miles square, and yet we pretend to be travellers, to be acquainted with Siberia and Africa!

March 19. Another pleasant and warm day. Painted my boat this afternoon. These spring impressions are not repeated the same year, at least not with the same force, for the next day the same phenomenon does not surprise us. Our appetite has lost its edge. The other day the face of the meadow wore a peculiar appearance, as if it were beginning to wake up under the influence of the southwest wind and the warm sun, but it cannot again this year present precisely that appearance to me. I have taken a step forward to a new position and must see something else. You perceive, and are affected by, changes too subtle to be described.

March 20. In the sluiceway of Pole Brook, by the road just beyond, I found another kind of Indian pot. It was an eel-pot (?) or creel, a wattled basket or wickerwork, made of willow osiers with the bark on, very artfully. It was about four feet long and shaped thus: About a dozen (or more) willow sticks, as big as one's finger or larger, being set small end down in a circle, in a thin round board which made the bottom, and then smaller osiers interwoven at right angles with them, close and firm. Another funnel-shaped basket was secured within this, extending about half-way down it, as represented by the dotted lines, with an opening hardly two inches wide at the bottom, where only a dozen sharped sticks approached each other. There was a square door in the board bottom, by which the fishes could be taken out. This was set in that sluiceway, with the mouth or broad end down-stream, all sunk beneath the surface, the fishes being now evidently running up the brooks from the river and ponds, the ice being mostly gone out of the meadows and brooks. We raised this and found eight or ten small pickerel in it, the biggest a foot long, and one good-sized perch. It was pleasant to find that any were practicing such cunning art in the outskirts. I am not sure whether

this invention is Indian or derived from our own ancestors. "Creel" appears to be an old English word. But I have no doubt that the Indians used something very like this. How much more we might have learned of the aborigines if they had not been so reserved! Suppose they had generally become the laboring class among the whites, that my father had been a farmer and had an Indian for his hired man, how many aboriginal ways we children should have learned from them! It was very pleasant to meet with this kind of textile or basket in our walk, to know that some had leisure for other things than farming and town meeting, and that they felt the spring influence in their way. That man was not fitting for the State prison when he was weaving that creel. He was meditating a small poem in his way. It was equal to a successful stanza whose subject was spring.

We, too, are out, obeying the same law with all nature. Not less important are the observers of the birds than the birds themselves.

March 21. Warm rain, April-like, the first of the season, holding up from time to time, though always completely overcast.

This first spring rain is very agreeable. I love to hear the pattering of the drops on my umbrella, and I love also the wet scent of the umbrella.

March 29. By a pool southeast of Nathan Barrett's, see five or six painted turtles in the sun, — probably some were out yesterday, — and afterward, along a ditch just east of the pine hill near the river, a great many more, as many as twenty within a rod. I must have disturbed this afternoon one hundred at least. They have crawled out on to the grass on the sunny side of the ditches where there is a sheltering bank. Some have very broad yellow lines on the back; others are almost uniformly dark above. They hurry and tumble into the water at your approach, but several soon rise to the surface and just put their heads out to reconnoitre. Each trifling weed or clod is a serious impediment in their path, catching their flippers and causing them to tumble back. They never lightly skip over it. But then they have patience and perseverance, and plenty of time. The narrow edges of the ditches are almost paved in some places with their black

and muddy backs.

March 30. The frogs are now heard leaping into the ditches on your approach, and their dimple is seen. I find a smallish bullfrog (?) under my boat. I do not remember that I ever hear this frog in the river or ponds. They seem to be an early frog, peculiar to pools and small ponds in the woods and fields.

March 31. C. says he saw a great many wood turtles on the bank of the Assabet to-day. The painted and wood turtles have seemed to be out in surprising abundance at an unusually early date this year, but I think I can account for it. The river is remarkably low, almost at summer level. I am not sure that I remember it so low at this season. Now, probably, these tortoises would always lie out in the sun at this season, if there were any bank at hand to lie on. Ordinarily at this season, the meadows being flooded, together with the pools and ditches in which the painted turtles lie, there is no bank exposed near their winter quarters for them to come out on, and I first noticed them under water on the meadow. But this year it is but a step for them to the sunny bank, and the shores of the Assabet and of ditches are lined with them.

April 8. Surveying Kettell farm.

Polly Houghton comes along and says, half believing it, of my compass, "This is what regulates the moon and stars."

April 15. Having stood quite still on the edge of the ditch close to the north edge of the maple swamp some time, and heard a slight rustling near me from time to time, I looked round and saw a mink under the bushes within a few feet. It was pure reddish-brown above, with a blackish and somewhat bushy tail, a blunt nose, and somewhat innocent-looking head. It crept along toward me and around me, *within two feet*, in a semicircle, snuffing the air, and pausing to look at me several times. Part of its course when nearest me was in the water of the ditch. It then crawled slowly away, and I saw by the ripple where it had taken to the ditch again. Perhaps it was after a frog, like myself.

The naturalist accomplishes a great deal by patience, more perhaps than by activity. He must take his position, and then wait and watch. It is equally true of quadrupeds and reptiles. Sit still in the midst of their haunts.

April 18. Frogs are strange creatures. One would describe them as peculiarly wary and timid, another as equally bold and imperturbable. All that is required in studying them is patience. You will sometimes walk a long way along a ditch and hear twenty or more leap in one after another before you, and see where they rippled the water, without getting sight of one of them. You sit down on the brink and wait patiently for his reappearance. After a quarter of an hour or more he is sure to rise to the surface and put out his nose quietly without making a ripple, eying you steadily. At length he becomes as curious about you as you can be about him. He suddenly hops straight toward you, pausing within a foot, and takes a near and leisurely view of you. Perchance you may now scratch its nose with your finger and examine it to your heart's content, for it is become as imperturbable as it was shy before. You conquer them by superior patience and immovableness; not by quickness, but by slowness; not by heat, but by coldness.

April 19. Spend the day hunting for my boat, which was stolen. As I go up the riverside, I see a male marsh hawk hunting. He skims along exactly over the edge of the water, on the meadowy side, not more than three or four feet from the ground and winding with the shore, looking for frogs, for in such a tortuous line do the frogs sit. They probably know about what time to expect his visits, being regularly decimated. Particular hawks farm particular meadows. It must be easy for him to get a breakfast. Far as I can see with a glass, he is still tilting this way and that over the water-line.

May 1. The old *Salix sericea* is now all alive with the hum of honey-bees. This would show that it is in bloom. I see and hear one humblebee among them, inaugurating summer with his deep bass. May it be such a summer to me as it suggests. It sounds a little like mockery, however, to cheat me again with the promise of such

tropical opportunities. I have learned to suspect him, as I do all fortune-tellers. But no sound so brings round the summer again. It is like the drum of May training.

May 2. If I were to be a frog hawk for a month I should soon know some things about the frogs. How patiently they skim the meadows, occasionally alighting, and fluttering as if it were difficult ever to stand still on the ground. I have seen more of them than usual since I too have been looking for frogs.

May 4. I find hopping in the meadow a *Rana halecina*, much brighter than any I have seen this year. There is not only a vivid green halo about each spot, but the back is vivid light-green between the spots. I think this was not the case with any of the hundreds I saw a month ago!! Why??

Coming back, I talk with Witherell at William Wheeler's landing. He comes pushing Wheeler's square-ended boat down-stream with a fish-spear. Says he caught a snapping turtle in the river May 1st. He sits on the side of my boat by the shore a little while, talking with me. There is a hole in the knee of his pants as big as your hand, and he keeps passing his hand over this slowly, to hide his bare skin, which is sunburnt and the color of his face, though the latter is reddened by rum, of which his breath smells. But how intimate he is with mud and its inhabitants.

May 6. About 9 P.M. I went to the edge of the river to hear the frogs. Each shore of the river now for its whole length is all alive with this stertorous purring. In the mornings now, I hear no *R. palustris* and no hylodes, but a few toads still, but now, at night, all ring together, the toads ringing through the day, the hylodes beginning in earnest toward night and the *palustris* at evening. I think that the different epochs in the revolution of the seasons may perhaps be best marked by the notes of reptiles. They express, as it were, the very feelings of the earth or nature. They are perfect thermometers, hygrometers, and barometers.

No exercise implies more real manhood and vigor than joining thought to thought. How few men can tell what they have thought! I

hardly know half a dozen who are not too lazy for this. They cannot get over some difficulty, and therefore they are on the long way round. You conquer fate by thought. If you think the fatal thought of men and institutions, you need never pull the trigger. The consequences of thinking inevitably follow. There is no more Herculean task than to think a thought about this life and then get it expressed.

May 7. Plant melons.

I see a wood tortoise by the river there, half covered with the old withered leaves. Taking it up, I find that it must have lain perfectly still there for some weeks, for though the grass is all green about it, when I take it up, it leaves just such a bare cavity, in which are seen the compressed white roots of the grass only, as when you take up a stone. This shows how sluggish these creatures are. It lets the season slide.

May 9. A dandelion perfectly gone to seed, a complete globe, a system in itself.

May 12. Saw some unusually broad chestnut planks, just sawed, at the mill. Barrett said that they came from Lincoln; whereupon I said that I guessed I knew where they came from, judging by their size alone, and it turned out that I was right. I had often gathered the nuts of those very trees and had observed within a year that they were cut down. So it appears that we have come to this, that if I see any peculiarly large chestnuts at the sawmill, I can guess where they came from, even know them in the log.

May 14. 5.30 A.M. — Up railroad.

I discovered this morning that a large rock three feet in diameter was partially hollow, and broke into it at length with a stone in order to reach some large black crystals which I could partly see. I found that it had been the retreat of a squirrel, and it had left many nuts there. It had entered a small hole bristling with crystals, and there found a chamber or grotto a foot long at least, surrounded on all sides by crystals.

Celandine by cemetery.

May 16. A hummingbird yesterday came into the next house and was caught. Flew about our parlor to-day and tasted Sophia's flowers. In some lights you saw none of the colors of its throat. In others, in the shade the throat was a clear bright scarlet, but in the sun it glowed with splendid metallic, *fiery* reflections about the neck and throat. It uttered from time to time, as it flew, a faint squeaking chirp or chirrup. The hum sounded more hollow when it approached a flower. Its wings fanned the air so forcibly that you felt the cool wind they raised a foot off, and nearer it was very remarkable. Does not this very motion of the wings keep a bird cool in hot weather?

P.M. — To Flint's Pond.

Sat down in the sun but soon, hearing a slight rustling, I looked round and saw a very large black snake about five feet long on the dry leaves, about a rod off. When I moved, it vibrated its tail very rapidly and smartly, which made quite a loud rustling or rattling sound, reminding me of the rattlesnake, as if many snakes obeyed the same instinct as the rattlesnake when they vibrate their tails. Once I thought I heard a low hiss. Suddenly, as it moved along, it erected itself half its length, and when I thought it was preparing to strike at me, to my surprise it glided up a slender oak sapling about an inch in diameter at the ground and ten feet high. It moved up in a somewhat zigzag manner, availing itself of the branches, yet also in part spirally about the main stem. It finds a rest (or hold if necessary) for its neck or forward part of its body, moving crosswise the small twigs, then draws up the rest of its body. From the top of this little oak it passed into the top of a white pine of the same height an inch and a half in diameter at the ground and two feet off; from this into another oak, fifteen feet high and three feet from the pine; from this to another oak, three feet from the last and about the same height; from this to a large oak about four feet off and three or four inches in diameter, in which it was about fourteen feet from the ground; thence through two more oaks, a little lower, at intervals of four feet, and so into a white pine; and at last into a smaller white pine and thence to the ground. It moved quite deliberately for the most part, choosing its course from tree to tree with great skill, and resting from time to time while it

watched me, only my approach compelling it to move again. It surprised me very much to see it cross from tree to tree exactly like a squirrel, where there appeared little or no support for such a body. It would glide down the proper twig, its body resting at intervals of a foot or two, on the smaller side twigs, perchance, and then would easily cross an interval of two feet, sometimes in an ascending, sometimes a descending, direction. If the latter, its weight at last bent the first twig down nearer to the opposite one. It would extend its neck very much, as I could see by the increased width of the scales exposed, till its neck rested across the opposite twig, hold on all the while tightly to some part of the last twig by the very tip of its tail, which was curled round it just like a monkey's. I have hardly seen a squirrel *rest* on such slight twigs as it would rest on in mid-air, while its body stretched *clear* a foot at least between two trees. It was not at all like creeping over a coarse basketwork, but suggested long practice and skill, like the ropedancer's. There were no limbs for it to use comparable for size with its own body, and you hardly noticed the few slight twigs it rested on, as it glided through the air. When its neck rested on the opposite twig, it was, as it were, glued to it. It helped itself over or up them as surely as if it grasped with a hand. There were, no doubt, rigid kinks in its body when they were needed for support. It is a sort of endless hook, and, by its ability to bend its body in every direction, it finds some support on every side. Perhaps the edges of its scales give it a hold also. It is evident that it can take the young birds out of a sapling of any height, and no twigs are so small and pliant as to prevent it. I have no doubt that this snake could have reached many of the oriole-nests which I have seen. I noticed that in its anger its rigid neck was very much flattened or compressed vertically. At length it coiled itself upon itself as if to strike, and, I presenting a stick, it struck it smartly and then darted away, running swiftly down the hill toward the pond.

Yellow butterflies. Nabalus leaves are already up and coming up in the wood-paths.

May 17. When the hummingbird flew about the room yesterday, his body and tail hung in a singular manner between the wings, swinging back and forth with a sort of oscillating motion, not

hanging directly down, but yet pulsating or teetering up and down.

I see a chewink flit low across the road with its peculiar flirting, undulating motion.

It is remarkable how little way most men get in their account of the mysteries of nature. Puffer, after describing the habits of a snake or turtle, — some peculiarity which struck him in its behavior, — would say with a remarkable air as if he were communicating or suggesting something, possibly explaining something, "Now I take it *that* is Nature; Nature did that."

May 24. Monday. To New York by railroad.

In the evening, looked at the aquarium at Barnum's. The glass boxes with nothing but water (labelled fresh or salt) and pebbles seemed sufficiently interesting. The sea-anemones were new and interesting to me. The ferns, etc., under glass a fine parlor ornament.

May 25. Visited the Egyptian Museum.

The chariot wheel might have been picked out of a ditch in Carlisle, and the infant's shoe have been found with it.

June 2. 8.30 A.M. — Start for Monadnock. Blake joins me at Fitchburg. Arrived at Troy Station at 11.5 and shouldered our knapsacks, steering northeast to the mountain, some four miles off, — its top.

Almost without interruption we had the mountain in sight before us, — its sublime gray mass — that antique, brownish-gray, Ararat color. Probably these crests of the earth are for the most part of one color in all lands, that gray color of antiquity, which nature loves; color of unpainted wood, weather-stain, time-stain; not glaring nor gaudy; the color of all roofs, the color of things that endure, and the color that wears well; color of Egyptian ruins, of mummies and all antiquity; baked in the sun, done brown; not scarlet, like the crest of the bragging cock, but that hard, enduring gray; a terrene sky-color; solidified air with a tinge of earth.

Notwithstanding the newspaper and egg-shell left by visitors, these parts of nature are still peculiarly unhandselled and untracked. One, who was probably a blacksmith, had sculptured the emblems of

his craft, an anvil and hammer, beneath his name. Apparently a part of the regular outfit of mountain-climbers is a hammer and cold-chisel. It reminds what kinds of steeps do climb the false pretenders to fame, whose chief exploit is the carriage of the tools with which to inscribe their names. For speaking epitaphs they are, and the mere name is a sufficient revelation of the character. They are all of one trade, — stone-cutters, defacers of mountain-tops. "Charles & Lizzie!" Charles carried the sledge-hammer, and Lizzie the cold-chisel. Some have carried up a paint-pot, and painted their names on the rocks.

[*16 pages of nature notes on this trip, covering birds, flowers, rocks, bogs, toad spawn, spruce trees, lichens, pools, views, sandy or gravelly scars, and clouds (their height, their shadows).*]

Minott has known them to be set for musquash, and sometimes the musquash gnaw out, if not drowned.

[A Concord farmer's perspective: "Why, one morning I went out in my field across there to the river, and there, beside that little old mud pond, was standing *Da*-a-vid Henry, and he wasn't doin' nothin' but just standin' there — lookin' at that pond, and when I came back at noon, there he was standin' with his hands behind him just lookin' down into that pond, and after dinner when I come back again if there wasn't *Da*-a-vid standin' there just like as if he had been there all day, gazin' down into that *pond*, and I stopped and looked at him and I says, 'Da-a-vid Henry, what air you a-doin'?' And he didn't turn his head and he didn't look at me. He kept on lookin' down at that pond, and he said, as if he was thinkin' about the stars in the heavens, 'Mr. Murray, I'm a-studyin' — the habits — of the bullfrog!' And there that darned fool had been standin' — the livelong day — a-studyin' — the habits — of the bull-frog!" (Quoted in Mrs. Daniel Chester French, *Memories of a Sculptor's Wife*, 1928.)]

June 7. I sit in my boat in the twilight by the edge of the river. Toads are now in full blast along the river. Some sit quite out at the edge of the pads, and hold up their heads so high when they ring, and make such a large bubble, that they look as if they would tumble over backward. Bullfrogs now are in full blast. I do not hear other

frogs; their notes are probably drowned. I perceive that this generally is the rhythm of the bullfrog: *er* | *er-r* | *er-r-r* | (growing fuller and fuller and more tremendous) and then doubling, *er, er* | *er, err* | *er, er, er* | *er, er, er* | and finally *er, er, er, er* | *er, er, er, er*. Or I might write it *oorar* | *oorar* | *oorar* | *oorar-hah* | *oorar-hah hah* | *oorar hah hah hah*. What lungs, what health, what terrenity (if not serenity) it suggests! Seeing a large head, with its prominent eyes, projecting above the middle of the river, I found it was a bullfrog coming across. It swam under water a rod or two, and then came up to see where it was, or its way. It is thus they cross when sounds or sights attract them to more desirable shores.

Fireflies pretty numerous over the river, though we have had no thunder-showers of late. Mosquitoes quite troublesome here.

JUNE 12. Rains all day. Much water falls.

June 18. Coming across the level pasture west of E. Hubbard's swamp, toward Emerson's, I find a young *Emys insculpta*, apparently going to lay, though she had not dug a hole. It was four and a quarter inches long by three and a half wide, and altogether the handsomest turtle of this species, if not of any, that I have ever seen. It was quite fresh and perfect, without wound or imperfection; its claws quite sharp and slender, and the annual striæ so distinct on all the scales above and below that I could count them with ease. It was nine years old, though it would be like an infant among turtles, the successive striæ being perfectly parallel at equal distances apart. The sternum, with a large black spot on the rear angle of each scale and elsewhere a rich brown color, even reminded me of the turtle-shell of commerce. While its upper shell was of a uniform wholesome brown, very prettily marked indeed, not only by the outlines of the scales, but more distinctly by the lines of prominences raying out from the starting-point of each scale, perfectly preserved in each year's growth, a most elaborate coat of mail, worthy the lifelong labor of some reptilian Vulcan. This must have been a belle among the *E. insculpta*. Nevertheless I did discover that all the claws but one of one hind foot were gone! Had not a bird pecked them off? So liable are they to injury in their long lives. Then they are so well-

behaved; can be taken up and brought home in your pocket, and make no unseemly efforts to escape. The upper shell was remarkably spreading and curving upward on the rear edges.

June 20. I notice that when turtles are floating dead their necks and legs are stretched out. What kills them?

June 29. P.M. — To Walden.

Bathing in the cove by railroad. When I hold my head near the surface and look down, in two or three feet of water, the bottom appears concave, just as the sky does.

July 2. A.M. — Start for White Mountains in a private carriage with Edward Hoar.

Spent the noon close by the old Dunstable graveyard, by a small stream north of it.

Walked to and along the river and bathed in it.

What a relief and expansion of my thoughts when I come out to this broad river's shore! This vista was incredible there. Suddenly I see a broad reach of blue beneath, with its curves and headlands, liberating me from the more terrene earth. What a difference it makes whether I spend my four hours' nooning between the hills by yonder roadside, or on the brink of this fair river, within a quarter of a mile of that! This current allies me to all the world. Be careful to sit in an elevating and inspiring place. It is equal to a different season and country and creates a different mood. There is something in the scenery of a broad river equivalent to culture and civilization. Its channel conducts our thoughts as well as bodies to classic and famous ports, and allies us to all that is fair and great. I like to remember that at the end of half a day's walk I can stand on the bank of the Merrimack. It is just wide enough to interrupt the land and lead my eye and thoughts down its channel to the sea. A river is superior to a lake in its liberating influence. It has motion and indefinite length. A river touching the back of a town is like a wing, it may be unused as yet, but ready to waft it over the world. With its rapid current it is a slightly fluttering wing. River towns are winged towns.

[*This trip takes up 57 pages in the Journal, including Mt. Washington and Mt. Lafayette, treacherous fog, a badly sprained ankle, accidentally starting a scrub fire, "the grandest mountain view I ever got," and speculation about why peaks seem pyramidal from a distance, along with pages of botanical observation and reading notes.*]

July 18. Sunday. A marked difference when we enter Massachusetts, in roads, farms, houses, trees, fences, etc., — a great improvement, showing an older-settled country. In New Hampshire there is a greater want of shade trees, but long bleak or sunny roads from which there is no escape. What barbarians we are!

July 19. Get home at noon.

For such an excursion as the above, carry and wear: —

Three strong check shirts.
Two pairs socks.
Neck ribbon and handkerchief.
Three pocket-handkerchiefs.
One thick waistcoat.
One thin (or half-thick) coat.
One thick coat (for mountain).
A large, broad india-rubber knapsack, with a *broad* flap.
A flannel shirt.
India-rubber coat.
Three bosoms (to go and come in).
A napkin.
Pins, needles, thread.
A blanket.
A cap to lie in at night.
Tent (or a large simple piece of india-rubber cloth for the mountain tops?).
Veil and *gloves* (or enough millinet to cover all at night).
Map and compass.
Plant book and paper.
Paper and stamps.
Botany, spy-glass, microscope.

Tape, insect-boxes.

Jack-knife and clasp-knife.

Fish-line and hooks.

Matches.

Soap and dish-cloths.

Waste-paper and twine.

Iron spoon.

Pint dipper with a pail-handle added (not to put out the fire), and perhaps a bag to carry water in.

Frying-pan, only if you ride.

Hatchet (sharp), if you ride, and perhaps in any case on mountain, with a sheath to it.

Hard-bread (sweet crackers good); a moist, sweet plum cake very good and lasting; pork, corned beef or tongue, sugar, tea or coffee, and a little salt.

It is surprising how much more bewildering is a mountain-top than a level area of the same extent. Its ridges and shelves and ravines add greatly to its apparent extent and diversity. You may be separated from your party by only stepping a rod or two out of the path.

July 29. In the Chinese novel "Ju-Kiao-Li, or The Two Fair Cousins," I find in a motto to a chapter (quoted): "He who aims at success should be continually on his guard against a thousand accidents. How many preparations are necessary before the sour plum begins to sweeten!... But if supreme happiness was to be attained in the space of an hour, of what use would be in life the noblest sentiments?" (Page 227.) Also these verses on page 230: —

"Nourished by the study of ten thousand different works,

The pen in hand, one is equal to the gods.

Let not humility take its rank amongst virtues:

Genius never yields the palm that belongs to it."

Again, page 22, vol. ii: —

"If the spring did not announce its reign by the return of the leaves,

The moss, with its greenish tints, would find favor in men's eyes."

Aug. 6. I think that I speak impartially when I say that I have never met with a stream so suitable for boating and botanizing as the Concord, and fortunately nobody knows it. I know of reaches which a single country-seat would spoil beyond remedy, but there has not been any important change here since I can remember. The willows slumber along its shore, piled in light but low masses, even like the cumuli clouds above. We pass haymakers in every meadow, who may think that we are idlers. But Nature takes care that every nook and crevice is explored by some one. While they look after the open meadows, we farm the tract between the river's brinks and behold the shores from that side. We, too, are harvesting an annual crop with our eyes, and think you Nature is not glad to display her beauty to us?

This is pure summer; no signs of fall in this, though I have seen some maples, as above the Assabet Spring, already prematurely reddening, owing to the water.

Every board and chip cast into the river is soon occupied by one or more turtles of various sizes. The sternothærus oftenest climbs up the black willows, even three or more feet.

I hear of pickers ordered out of the huckleberry-fields, and I see stakes set up with written notices forbidding any to pick there. Some let their fields, or allow so much for the picking. *Sic transit gloria ruris*. We are not grateful enough that we have lived part of our lives before these evil days came. What becomes of the true value of country life? What if you must go to market for it? Shall things come to such a pass that the butcher commonly brings round huckleberries in his cart? It is as if the hangman were to perform the marriage ceremony, or were to preside at the communion table. Such is the inevitable tendency of *our* civilization, — to reduce huckleberries to a level with beef-steak.

Aug. 7. Saturday. P.M. — Up Assabet.

The most luxuriant groves of black willow, *as I recall them*, are on the inside curves, or on sandy capes between the river and a bay, or sandy banks parallel with the firmer shore. They also grow on both sides sometimes, where the river runs straight through stagnant meadows or swamps, — *e.g.* above Hollowell Bridge, — or on one

side, though straight, along the edge of a swamp, — as above Assabet Spring, — but rarely ever against a firm bank or hillside, the positive male shore. Measured the two largest of three below Dove Rock.

The *Sternothærus odoratus* knows them well, for it climbs highest up their stems, three or four feet or more nowadays, sometimes seven or eight along the slanting branches, and is frequently caught and hung by the neck in its forks. They do not so much jump as tumble off when disturbed by a passer. They will climb four feet up a stem not more than two inches in diameter, and yet undo all their work in an instant by tumbling off when your boat goes by. The trunk is covered with coarse, long, and thick upraised scales. It is this turtle's castle and path to heaven. He is on the upward road along the stem of the willow, and by its dark stem it is partially concealed.

How long will it be after we have passed before the mud tortoise has climbed to its perch again?

The author of the Chinese novel "Ju-Kiao-Li," some eight hundred years ago, appears to have appreciated the beauty of willows. Pe, his principal character, moved out of the city late in life, to a stream bordered with willows, about twenty miles distant, in order to spend the rest of his days drinking wine and writing verses there. He describes the eyebrow of his heroine as like a willow leaf floating on the surface of the water.

Aug. 8. Looking north from Hubbard's Bridge about 4 P.M., the wind being southeasterly, I am struck by the varied lights of the river. The wind, which is a considerable breeze, strikes the water by a very irregular serrated edge about mid-channel, and then abruptly leaves it on a distinct and regular meandering line, about eight feet from the outer edge of the pads on the west side. The rippled portion of the river is blue, the rest smooth, silvery. Thus to my eye the river is divided into five portions, — first the weedy and padded borders, then a smooth, silvery stripe, eight or ten feet wide, and next the blue rippled portion, succeeded by the broader silver, and the pads of the eastern side. How many aspects the river wears, depending on the height of the water, the season of the year and state of vegetation, the wind, the position of the sun and condition of the heavens, etc., etc.!

Apparently such is the angle at which the wind strikes the river from over the bushes that it falls about mid-channel, and then it is either obliged to leave it at a nearly similar angle on account of the opposite shore and bushes, or, perchance, the smoothing influence of the pads is felt to some distance beyond their edges. The line which separates the smooth from the rippled portion is as distinct and continuous as that which marks the edge of the pads. I think that there is more oily matter floating on the stiller sides of the river, and this too may have something to do with the above phenomenon. Then there is the watered appearance of the surface in a shower.

Aug. 11. The great bullfrogs, of various colors from dark brown to greenish yellow, lie out on the surface of these slimy pools or in the shallow water by the shore, motionless and philosophic. Toss a chip to one, and he will instantly leap and seize and drop it as quick. Motionless and indifferent as they appear, they are ready to leap upon their prey at any instant.

Aug. 12. When I came down-stairs this morning, it raining hard and steadily, I found an Irishman sitting with his coat on his arm in the kitchen, waiting to see me. He wanted to inquire what I thought the weather would be to-day! I sometimes ask my aunt, and she consults the almanac. So we shirk the responsibility.

It clears up before noon and is now very warm and clear. When I look at the sparrows on the fences, yellow-browed and bay-wings, they all have their bills open and are panting with heat. Apparently the end of the very wet weather we have had about a fortnight.

Aug. 13. As I am paddling up the north side above the Hemlocks, I am attracted by the singular shadows of the white lily pads on the rich-brown muddy bottom. It is remarkable how light tends to prevail over shadow there. It steals in under the densest curtain of pads and illustrates the bottom. The shadows of these pads, seen (now at 3 P.M.) a little one side, where the water is eighteen inches or two feet deep, are rarely orbicular or entire-edged or resembling the leaf, but are more or less perfect rosettes, generally of an oval form, with five to fifteen or more regularly rounded petals, open half-way to the

centre: or You cannot commonly re-fer the shadow to its substance but by touching the leaf with your paddle. Light knows a thousand tricks by which it prevails. Light is the rule, shadow the exception. The leaf fails to cast a shadow equal in area to itself. While it is a regular and almost solid disk, the shadow is a rosette or palmate, as if the sun, in its haste to illustrate every nook, shone round the shortest corner. Generally the two sharp angles of the pad are almost entirely eroded in the shadow. The shadows, too, have a slight halo about them. Such endless and varied play of light and shadow is on the river bottom! It is protean and somewhat weird even. The shadow of the leaf might be mistaken for that of the flower. The sun playing with a lily leaf draws the outline of a lily on the bottom with its shadow.

I landed in the Lee Wood. Perhaps those woods might be called Mantatukwet's, for he says he lived at the foot of Nawshawtuct about fifty years before 1684.

Aug. 14. Suggesting to C. an Indian name for one of our localities, he thought it had too many syllables for a place so near the middle of the town, — as if the more distant and less frequented place might have a longer name, less understood and less alive in its syllables.

To speak from recollection, the birds which I *have chanced to hear* of late are (running over the whole list): —

The squealing notes of young hawks.

Occasionally a red-wing's *tchuck*.

The *link* of bobolinks.

The *chickadee* and *phebe* note of the chickadees, five or six together occasionally.

The *fine* note of the cherry-bird, pretty often.

The twitter of the kingbird, pretty often.

The wood pewee, with its young, peculiarly common and prominent.

Only the *peep* of the robin.

The pine warbler, occasionally.

The bay-wing, pretty often.

The seringo, pretty often.

The song sparrow, often.

The field sparrow, often.

The goldfinch, a prevailing note, with variations into a fine song.

The ground-robin, *once* of late.

The flicker's cackle, *once* of late.

The nighthawk, as usual.

I have not been out early nor late, nor attended particularly to the birds. The more characteristic notes would appear to be the wood pewee's and the goldfinch's, with the squeal of young hawks. These might be called the pewee-days.

Aug. 15. Rain in the night and dog-day weather again, after two clear days. I do not like the name "dog-days." Can we not have a new name for this season? It is the season of mould and mildew, and foggy, muggy, often rainy weather.

The black willows are already being imbrowned. It must be the effect of the water, for we have had no drought.

Might not the potamogeton be called *waving weed*?

Aug. 16. In my boating of late I have several times scared up a couple of summer ducks of this year, bred in our meadows. They allowed me to come quite near, and helped to people the river. I have not seen them for some days. Would you know the end of our intercourse? Goodwin shot them, and Mrs. —— , who never sailed on the river, ate them. Of course, she knows not what she did. What if I should eat her canary? Thus we share each other's sins as well as burdens. The lady who watches admiringly the matador shares his deed. They belonged to me, as much as to any one, when they were alive, but it was considered of more importance that Mrs. —— should taste the flavor of them dead than that I should enjoy the beauty of them alive.

Talked with Minott, who sits in his wood-shed, having, as I notice, several seats there for visitors, — one a block on the sawhorse, another a patchwork mat on a wheelbarrow, etc., etc. His half-grown chickens which roost overhead, perch on his shoulder or knee. He tells me some of his hunting stories again. He always lays a good deal of stress on the kind of gun he used, as if he had bought a new one every year, when probably he never had more than two or

three in his life. In this case it was a "half-stocked" one, a little "cocking-piece," and whenever he finished his game he used the word "gavel," I think in this way, "gave him gavel," *i.e.* made him bite the dust, or settled him. He used to love to hear the goldfinches sing on the hemp which grew near his gate.

Aug. 17. Minott has only lately been reading Shattuck's "History of Concord," and he says that his account is not right by a jugful, that he does not come within half a mile of the truth, not as he has heard tell.

Aug. 18. Having left my note-book at home, I strip off a piece of birch bark for paper. It begins at once to curl up, yellow side out, but I hold that side to the sun, and as soon as it is dry it gives me no more trouble.

Heard a nuthatch.

Last evening one of our neighbors, who has just completed a costly house and front yard, the most showy in the village, illuminated in honor of the Atlantic telegraph. I read in great letters before the house the sentence "Glory to God in the highest." But it seemed to me that that was not a sentiment to be illuminated, but to keep dark about. A simple and genuine sentiment of reverence would not emblazon these words as on a signboard in the streets. They were exploding countless crackers beneath it, and gay company, passing in and out, made it a kind of housewarming. I felt a kind of shame for it, and was inclined to pass quickly by, the ideas of indecent exposure and cant being suggested. What is religion? That which is never spoken.

Aug. 22. P.M. — I have spliced my old sail to a new one, and now go out to try it in a sail to Baker Farm. It is a "square sail," some five feet by six. I like it much. It pulls like an ox, and makes me think there's more wind abroad than there is. The yard goes about with a pleasant force, almost enough, I would fain imagine, to knock me overboard. How sturdily it pulls, shooting us along, catching more wind than I knew to be wandering in this river valley! It suggests a new power in the sail, like a Grecian god. I can even worship it, after

a heathen fashion. And then, how it becomes my boat and the river, — a simple homely square sail, all for use not show, so low and broad! The boat is like a plow drawn by a winged bull. If I had had this a dozen years ago, my voyages would have been performed more quickly and easily. But then probably I should have lived less in them. I land on a remote shore at an unexpectedly early hour, and have time for a long walk there.

As for the beauty of the river's brim: now that the mikania begins to prevail the button-bush has done, the pontederia is waning, and the willows are already somewhat crisped and imbrowned (though the last may be none the worse for it); lilies, too, are as good as gone. So perhaps I should say that the brim of the river was in its prime about the 1st of August this year, when the pontederia and button-bush and white lilies were in their glory. The cyperus now yellows edges of pools and half-bare low grounds.

See one or two blue herons every day now, driving them far up or down the river before me.

Aug. 23. Cooler than ever. Some must have fires, and I close my window.

Everywhere in woods and swamps I am already reminded of the fall. I see the spotted sarsaparilla leaves and brakes, and, in swamps, the withering and blackened skunk-cabbage and hellebore, and, by the river, the already blackening pontederias and pipes. There is no plateau on which Nature rests at midsummer, but she instantly commences the descent to winter.

High blackberries now in their prime, their great racemes of shining black fruit, mixed with red and green, bent over amid the sweet-fern and sumach on sunny hillsides, or growing more rankly with larger fruit by rich roadsides and in lower ground.

Smooth sumach berries all turned crimson.

Emerson says that he and Agassiz and Company broke some dozens of ale-bottles, one after another, with their bullets, in the Adirondack country, using them for marks! It sounds rather Cockneyish. He says that he shot a peetweet for Agassiz, and this, I think he said, was the first game he ever bagged. He carried a double-barrelled gun, — rifle and shotgun, — which he bought for the

purpose, which he says received much commendation, — all parties thought it a very pretty piece. Think of Emerson shooting a peetweet (with shot) for Agassiz, and cracking an ale-bottle (after emptying it) with his rifle at six rods! They cut several pounds of lead out of the tree. It is just what Mike Saunders, the merchant's clerk, did when he was there.

Aug. 24. It is a strong but fitful northwest wind, stronger than before. Under my new sail, the boat dashes off like a horse with the bits in his teeth. Coming into the main stream below the island, a sudden flaw strikes me, and in my efforts to keep the channel I run one side under, and so am compelled to beach my boat there and bail it.

I am flattered because my stub sail frightens a haymakers' horse tied under a maple while his masters are loading. His nostrils dilate; he snorts and tries to break loose. He eyes with terror this white wind steed. No wonder he is alarmed at my introducing such a competitor into the river meadows.

Now and of late we remember hazel bushes, — we become aware of such a fruit-bearing bush. They have their turn, and every clump and hedge seems composed of them.

Aug. 28. Soaking rain last night, straight down. Especially the scarlet leaves of the cultivated cherry are seen to have fallen. When, as I go to the post-office this morning, I see these bright leaves strewing the moist ground on one side of the tree and blown several rods from it into a neighboring yard, I am reminded that I have crossed the summit ridge of the year and have begun to descend the other slope. The prospect is now toward winter. These are among the first-fruits of the leafy harvest.

Aug. 29. Has not the mind, too, its harvest? Do not some scarlet leaves of thought come scatteringly down, though it may be prematurely, some which, perchance, the summer's drought has ripened, and the rain loosened?

How hard one must work in order to acquire his language, — words by which to express himself! I have known a particular rush,

for instance, for at least twenty years, but have ever been prevented from describing some of its peculiarities, because I did not know its name nor any one in the neighborhood who could tell me it. With the knowledge of the name comes a distincter recognition and knowledge of the thing. That shore is now more describable, and poetic even. My knowledge was cramped and confined before, and grew rusty because not used, — for it could not be used. My knowledge now becomes communicable and grows by communication. I can now learn what others know about the same thing.

Sept. 6. On the hillside above Clamshell Ditch, grows that handsome grass of Sept. 1st (*vide* September 4th), evidently *Sorghum nutans* (*Andropogon* of Bigelow), chestnut beard grass, Indian grass, wood grass. It is much larger than what I saw before; is still abundantly in flower; four and a half feet high. It is a very handsome, wild-looking grass, well enough called Indian grass, and I should have named it with the other andropogons, August 26th. It stands like an Indian chief taking a last look at his beloved hunting-grounds. The expression of this grass haunted me for a week after I first passed and noticed it, like the glance of an eye.

Sept. 7. I turn Anthony's corner. It is an early September afternoon, melting warm and sunny; the thousands of grasshoppers leaping before you reflect gleams of light; a little distance off the field is yellowed with a Xerxean army of *Solidago nemoralis* between me and the sun; the earth-song of the cricket comes up through all; and ever and anon the hot z-ing of the locust is heard. (Poultry is now fattening on grasshoppers.) The dry deserted fields are one mass of yellow, like a color shoved to one side on Nature's palette. You literally wade in yellow flowers knee-deep.

What a contrast to sink your head so as to cover your ears with water, and hear only the confused noise of the rushing river, and then to raise your ears above water and hear the steady creaking of crickets in the aerial universe!

Sept. 9. It requires a different intention of the eye in the same

locality to see different plants, as, for example, *Juncaceæ* and *Gramineæ* even; *i.e.*, I find that when I am looking for the former, I do not see the latter in their midst. How much more, then, it requires different intentions of the eye and of the mind to attend to different departments of knowledge! How differently the poet and the naturalist look at objects! A man sees only what concerns him. A botanist absorbed in the pursuit of grasses does not distinguish the grandest pasture oaks. He as it were tramples down oaks unwittingly in his walk.

Sept. 29. Two blue herons, or "herns," as Goodwin calls them, fly sluggishly up the stream. Interesting even is a stake, with its reflection, left standing in the still river by some fisherman.

Again we have smooth waters, yellow foliage, and faint warbling birds, etc., as in spring. The year thus repeats itself.

Oct. 2. The garden is alive with migrating sparrows these mornings. The cat comes in from an early walk amid the weeds. She is full of sparrows and wants no more breakfast this morning, unless it be a saucer of milk, the dear creature. I saw her studying ornithology between the corn-rows.

Oct. 18. Let us have willows for spring, elms for summer, maples and walnuts and tupelos for autumn, evergreens for winter, and oaks for all seasons. What is a gallery in a house to a gallery in the streets! An avenue of elms as large as our largest, and three miles long, would seem to lead to some admirable place, though only Concord were at the end of it.

Oct. 19. A remarkably warm day. The thermometer says 74° at 1 P.M. This must be Indian summer.

P.M. — Ride to Sam Barrett's mill.

Am pleased again to see the cobweb drapery of the mill. Each fine line hanging in festoons from the timbers overhead and on the sides, and on the discarded machinery lying about, is covered and greatly enlarged by a coating of meal, by which its curve is revealed, like the twigs under their ridges of snow in winter. It is like the tassels and

tapestry of counterpane and dimity in a lady's bedchamber, and I pray that the cobwebs may not have been brushed away from the mills which I visit. All things in the mill wear the same livery or drapery, down to the miller's hat and coat. I knew Barrett forty rods off in the cranberry meadow by the meal on his hat.

Barrett's apprentice, it seems, makes trays of black birch and of red maple, in a dark room under the mill. I was pleased to see this work done here, a wooden tray is so handsome. You could count the circles of growth on the end of the tray, and the dark heart of the tree was seen at each end above, producing a semicircular ornament. To see the tree reappear on the table, instead of going to the fire or some equally coarse use, is some compensation for having it cut down.

Standing on Hunt's Bridge at 5 o'clock, the sun just ready to set, I notice that its light on my note-book is quite rosy or purple, though the sun itself and its halo are merely yellow, and there is no purple in the western sky. Perhaps I might have detected a purple tinge already in the eastern sky, had I looked, and I was exactly at that distance this side the sunset where the foremost of the rosy waves of light roll in the wake of the sun, and the white page was the most suitable surface to reflect it.

I was the more pleased with the sight of the trays because the tools used were so simple, and they were made by hand, not by machinery. They may make equally good pails, and cheaper as well as faster, at the pail-factory with the home-made ones, but that interests me less, because the man is turned partly into a machine there himself. In this case, the workman's relation to his work is more poetic, he also shows more dexterity and is more of a man. You come away from the great factory saddened, as if the chief end of man were to make pails; but, in the case of the countryman who makes a few by hand, rainy days, the relative importance of human life and of pails is preserved, and you come away thinking of the simple and helpful life of the man, — you do not turn pale at the thought, — and would fain go to making pails yourself.

Oct. 22. I can see the red of young oaks as far as the horizon on some sides.

I see, from the Cliffs, that color has run through the shrub oak

plain like a fire or a wave, not omitting a single tree, though I had not expected it, — large oaks do not turn so completely, — and now is for the most part burnt out for want of fuel, *i.e*. excepting the scarlet ones. The brown and chocolate colors prevail there.

These bright leaves are not the exception but the rule, for I believe that *all* leaves, even grasses, etc., etc., — *Panicum clandestinum*, — and mosses, as sphagnum, under favorable circumstances acquire brighter colors just before their fall. When you come to observe faithfully the changes of each humblest plant, you find, it may be unexpectedly, that each has sooner or later its peculiar autumnal tint or tints, though it may be rare and unobserved, as many a plant is at all seasons.

Oct. 24. A northeast storm, though not much rain falls to-day, but a fine driving mizzle or "drisk." This, as usual, brings the geese, and at 2.30 P.M. I see two flocks go over.

P.M. — To Woodis Park over Hill.

The brilliant autumnal colors are red and yellow and the various tints, hues, and shades of these. Blue is reserved to be the color of the sky, but yellow and red are the colors of the earth flower. Every fruit, on ripening, and just before its fall, acquires a bright tint. So do the leaves; so the sky before the end of the day, and the year near its setting. October is the red sunset sky, November the later twilight. Color stands for all ripeness and success. We have dreamed that the hero should carry his color aloft, as a symbol of the ripeness of his virtue.

That large hornets' nest which I saw on the 4th is now deserted, and I bring it home. But in the evening, warmed by my fire, two or three come forth and crawl over it, and I make haste to throw it out the window.

Oct. 26. Minott remembers how he used to chop beech wood. He says that when frozen it is hard and brittle just like glass, and you must look out for the chips, for, if they strike you in the face, they will cut like a knife.

He says that some call the stake-driver "belcher-squelcher," and some, "wollerkertoot." I used to call them "pump-er-gor′." Some say

"slug-toot."

I wear a thicker coat, my single thick fall coat, at last, and begin to feel my fingers cool early and late.

One shopkeeper has hung out woollen gloves and even thick buckskin mittens by his door, foreseeing what his customers will want as soon as it is finger-cold, and determined to get the start of his fellows.

Oct. 27. The bayonet rush has partly changed, and now, the river being perhaps lower than before this season, shows its rainbow colors, though dull. I distinguish four colors now, perfectly horizontal and parallel bars, as it were, six or eight inches wide as you look at the side of a dense patch along the shallow shore. The lowest is a dull red, the next clear green, then dull yellowish, and then dark brown. These colors, though never brilliant, are yet noticeable, and, when you look at a long and dense patch, have a rainbow-like effect. The red (or pinkish) is that part which has been recently submerged; the green, that which has not withered; the yellowish, what has changed; and the brown, the withered extremity, since it dies downward gradually from the tip to the bottom. The amount of it is that it decays gradually, beginning at the top, and, moreover, the whole being of a uniform height, a particular color in one plant corresponds exactly to the same in another, and so, though a single stalk would not attract attention, when seen in the mass they have this singular effect. I call it, therefore, the rainbow rush. When, moreover, you see it reflected in the water, the effect is very much increased.

We have a cool, white sunset, Novemberish, and no redness to warm our thoughts.

It is impossible to describe the infinite variety of hues, tints, and shades, for the language affords no names for them, and we must apply the same term monotonously to twenty different things. If I could exhibit so many different trees, or only leaves, the effect would be different. When the tints are the same they differ so much in purity and delicacy that language, to describe them truly, would have not only to be greatly enriched, but as it were dyed to the same colors herself, and speak to the eye as well as to the ear. And it is these

subtle differences which especially attract and charm our eyes. To describe these colored leaves you must use colored words. Who will undertake to describe in words the difference in tint between two neighboring leaves on the same tree? or of two thousand? — for by so many the eye is addressed in a glance. In describing the richly spotted leaves, for instance, how often we find ourselves using ineffectually words which merely indicate faintly our good intentions, giving them in our despair a terminal twist toward our mark, — such as redd*ish*, yellow*ish*, purpl*ish*, etc. We cannot make a hue of words, for they are not to be compounded like colors, and hence we are obliged to use such ineffectual expressions as reddish brown, etc. They need to be ground together.

Oct. 29. Nature now, like an athlete, begins to strip herself in earnest for her contest with her great antagonist Winter. In the bare trees and twigs what a display of muscle!

Apple trees, though many are thick-leaved, are in the midst of their fall. Our English cherry has fallen. The silvery abele is still densely leaved, and green, or at most a yellowish green. The lilac still thickly leaved; a yellowish green or greenish yellow as the case may be. Privet thickly leaved, yellowish-green.

If these plants acquire brighter tints in Europe, then one would say that they did not fully ripen their leaves here before they were killed. The orchard trees are not for beauty, but use. English plants have English habits here: they are not yet acclimated; they are early or late as if ours were an English spring or autumn; and no doubt in course of time a change will be produced in their constitutions similar to that which is observed in the English man here.

Nov. 1. As the afternoons grow shorter, and the early evening drives us home to complete our chores, we are reminded of the shortness of life, and become more pensive, at least in this twilight of the year. We are prompted to make haste and finish our work before the night comes. I leaned over a rail in the twilight on the Walden road, waiting for the evening mail to be distributed, when such thoughts visited me. I seemed to recognize the November evening as a familiar thing come round again, and yet I could hardly tell whether

I had ever known it or only divined it. The November twilights just begun! It appeared like a part of a panorama at which I sat spectator, a part with which I was perfectly familiar just coming into view, and I foresaw how it would look and roll along, and prepared to be pleased. We are independent on all that we see. The hangman whom I have *seen* cannot hang me. The earth which I have *seen* cannot bury me. Such doubleness and distance does sight prove. Only the rich and such as are troubled with ennui are implicated in the maze of phenomena. You cannot see anything until you are clear of it. The dark bank of clouds in the horizon long after sunset, the villagers crowding to the post-office, and the hastening home to supper by candle-light, had I not seen all this before! What new sweet was I to extract from it? Truly they mean that we shall learn our lesson well. Nature gets thumbed like an old spelling-book. I was no nearer, methinks, nor further off from my friends. Yet I sat the bench with perfect contentment, unwilling to exchange the familiar vision that was to be unrolled for any treasure or heaven that could be imagined. It was as if I was promised the greatest novelty the world has ever seen or shall see, though the utmost possible novelty would be the difference between me and myself a year ago. This alone encouraged me, and was my fuel for the approaching winter. That we may behold the panorama with this slight improvement or change, this is what we sustain life for with so much effort from year to year.

And yet there is no more tempting novelty than this new November. No going to Europe or another world is to be named with it. Give me the old familiar walk, post-office and all, with this ever new self, with this infinite expectation and faith, which does not know when it is beaten. We'll go nutting once more. We'll pluck the nut of the world, and crack it in the winter evenings. Theatres and all other sightseeing are puppet-shows in comparison. I will take another walk to the Cliff, another row on the river, another skate on the meadow, be out in the first snow, and associate with the winter birds. Here I am at home. In the bare and bleached crust of the earth I recognize my friend.

Pray, am I altogether a bachelor, or am I a widower, that I should go away and leave my bride? This Morrow that is ever knocking with irresistible force at our door, there is no such guest as that. I will

stay at home and receive company.

Think of the consummate folly of attempting to go away from *here*! When the constant endeavor should be to get nearer and nearer *here*. Here are all the friends I ever had or shall have, and as friendly as ever. How many things can you go away from? They see the comet from the northwest coast just as plainly as we do, and the same stars through its tail. Take the shortest way round and stay at home. A man dwells in his native valley like a corolla in its calyx, like an acorn in its cup. *Here*, of course, is all that you love, all that you expect, all that you are. Here is your bride elect, as close to you as she can be got. Here is all the best and all the worst you can imagine. What more do you want? Foolish people imagine that what they imagine is somewhere else. That stuff is not made in any factory but their own.

Nov. 3. Colder weather, true November weather, comes again to-night, and I must rekindle my fire, which I had done without of late. I must walk briskly in order to keep warm in my thin coat.

By fall I mean literally the falling of the leaves, though some mean by it the changing or the acquisition of a brighter color. This I call the autumnal tint, the ripening to the fall.

Nothing makes me so dejected as to have met my friends, for they make me doubt if it is possible to have any friends. I feel what a fool I am. I cannot conceive of persons more strange to me than they actually are; not thinking, not believing, not doing as I do; interrupted by me. My only distinction must be that I am the greatest bore they ever had. Not in a single thought agreed; regularly balking one another. But when I get far away, my thoughts return to them. That is the way I *can* visit them. Thus I am taught that my friend is not an actual person. When I have withdrawn and am alone, I forget the actual person and remember only my ideal. Then I have a friend again. I am not so ready to perceive the illusion that is in Nature. I certainly come nearer, to say the least, to an actual and joyful intercourse with her. Every day I have more or less communion with her, *as I think*. At least, I do not feel as if I must withdraw out of nature. I feel like a welcome guest. Yet, strictly speaking, the same must be true of nature and of man; our ideal is the only real. It is not

the finite and temporal that satisfies or concerns us in either case.

Nov. 4. A rainy day.

Called to C. from the outside of his house the other afternoon in the rain. At length he put his head out the attic window, and I inquired if he didn't want to take a walk, but he excused himself, saying that he had a cold. "But," added he, "you can take so much the longer walk. Double it."

If, about the last of October, you ascend any hill in the outskirts of the town and look over the forest, you will see, amid the brown of other oaks, which are now withered, and the green of the pines, the bright-red tops or crescents of the scarlet oaks, very equally and thickly distributed on all sides, even to the horizon. All this you will see, and much more, if you are prepared to see it, — if you *look* for it. Otherwise, regular and universal as this phenomenon is, you will think for threescore years and ten that all the wood is at this season sere and brown. Objects are concealed from our view not so much because they are out of the course of our visual ray as because there is no intention of the mind and eye toward them. We do not realize how far and widely, or how near and narrowly, we are to look. The greater part of the phenomena of nature are for this reason concealed to us all our lives. Here, too, as in political economy, the supply answers to the demand. Nature does not cast pearls before swine. There is just as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate, — not a grain more. The actual objects which one person will see from a particular hilltop are just as different from those which another will see as the persons are different. The scarlet oak must, in a sense, be in your eye when you go forth. We cannot see anything until we are possessed with the idea of it, and then we can hardly see anything else. In my botanical rambles I find that first the idea, or image, of a plant occupies my thoughts, though it may at first seem very foreign to this locality, and for some weeks or months I go thinking of it and expecting it unconsciously, and at length I surely see it, and it is henceforth an actual neighbor of mine. This is the history of my finding a score or more of rare plants which I could name.

Nov. 6. I guessed at Goodwin's age on the 1st. He is hale and stout and looks younger than he is, and I took care to set him high enough. I guessed he was fifty-five, and he said that if he lived two or three months longer he would be fifty-six. He then guessed at my age, thought I was forty. He thought that Emerson was a very young-looking man for his age, "But," said he, "he has not been out o'nights as much as you have."

Nov. 8. Goodwin, laying wall at Miss Ripley's, observed to me going by, "Well, it seems that Puffer thought that he had lived long enough." He committed suicide within a week, at his sister's house in Sudbury. A boy slept in the chamber with him, and, hearing a noise, got up and found P. on the floor with both his jugular veins cut, but his windpipe whole. He said to the boy, "Take the razor and cut deeper," but the boy ran, and P. died, and Garfield said it was about time, for P., in revenge for being sent to the house of correction, had set fire to a pile of wood of his, that long pile by the roadside beyond William Wheeler's, that I stood under in a rain once. P. probably burned Witherell's house too, and perhaps Boynton's stable.

The red osier at Mrs. Simmons's is quite bare; how long? Her hawthorn is still quite leafy and pretty, yellow-brown, dotted. A thorn at Hall's fence is dark scarlet and pretty.

Those trees and bushes which grow in dense masses and have many fine twigs, being bare, make an agreeable misty impression where there are a myriad retreating points to receive the eye, not a hard, abrupt wall; just as, in the sky, the visual ray is cushioned on clouds, unless it is launched into the illimitable ether. The eye is less worn and wearied, not to say wounded, by looking at these mazes where the seer is not often conscious of seeing anything. It is well that the eye is so rarely caught and detained by any object in one whole hemisphere of its range, *i.e.* the sky. It enjoys everlasting holiday on this side. Only the formless clouds and the objectless ether are presented to it. For they are nervous who see many faces in the clouds. Corresponding to the clouds in the sky are those mazes now on the earth. Nature disposes of her naked stems so softly as not to put our eyes out. She makes them a smoke, or stationary cloud, on

this side or that, of whose objective existence we rarely take cognizance. She does not expect us to notice them.

Nature has many scenes to exhibit, and constantly draws a curtain over this part or that. She is constantly repainting the landscape and all surfaces, dressing up some scene for our entertainment. Lately we had a leafy wilderness, now bare twigs begin to prevail, and soon she will surprise us with a mantle of snow. Some green she thinks so good for our eyes, like blue, that she never banishes it entirely, but has created evergreens.

It is remarkable how little any but a lichenist will observe on the bark of trees. The mass of men have but the vaguest and most indefinite notion of mosses, as a sort of shreds and fringes, and the world in which the lichenist dwells is much further from theirs than one side of this earth from the other. They see bark as if they saw it not. These objects which, though constantly visible, are rarely looked at are a sort of eye-brush.

Each phase of nature, while not invisible, is yet not too distinct and obtrusive. It is there to be found when we look for it, but not demanding our attention. It is like a silent but sympathizing companion in whose company we retain most of the advantages of solitude, with whom we can walk and talk, or be silent, naturally, without the necessity of talking in a strain foreign to the place.

Animals generally see things in the vacant way I have described. They rarely see anything but their food, or some real or imaginary foe. I never saw but one cow looking into the sky.

Lichens as they affect the scenery, as picturesque objects described by Gilpin or others, are one thing; as they concern the lichenist, quite another.

And a week later. Not heard since spring.

Vide Sept. 24, 1851.

I read that snow fell two or three inches deep in Bangor yesterday morning.

Nov. 10. I look out westward across Fair Haven Pond. The warmer colors are now rare. A cool and silvery light is the prevailing one; dark-blue or slate-colored clouds in the west, and the sun going down in them. All the light of November may be called an afterglow.

Aphides on alder.

Sap still flows in scarlet oak.

Returned by Spanish Brook Path. Notice the glaucous white bloom on the thimble-berry of late, as there are fewer things to notice. So many objects are white or light, preparing us for winter.

Nov. 12. It is much the coldest day yet, and the ground is a little frozen and resounds under my tread. All people move the brisker for the cold, yet are braced and a little elated by it. They love to say, "Cold day, sir." Though the days are shorter, you get more work out of a hired man than before, for he must work to keep warm.

Now for a brisk and energetic walk, with a will and a purpose. Have done with sauntering, in the idle sense. You must rush to the assault of winter. Make haste into the outskirts, climb the ramparts of the town, be on the alert and let nothing escape your observation.

I think that the change to some higher color in a leaf is an evidence that it has arrived at a late and more perfect and final maturity, answering to the maturity of fruits, and not to that of green leaves, etc., etc., which merely serve a purpose. The word "ripe" is thought by some to be derived from the verb "to reap," according to which that is ripe which is ready to be reaped. The fall of the leaf is preceded by a ripe old age.

Nov. 14. It is very cold and windy; thermometer 26. I walk to Walden and Andromeda Ponds. This strong and cutting northwest wind makes the oak leaves rustle dryly enough to set your heart on edge.

Now, while the frosty air begins to nip your fingers and your nose, the frozen ground rapidly wears away the soles of your shoes, as sandpaper might; the old she wolf is nibbling at your very extremities. The frozen ground eating away the soles of your shoes is only typical of the vulture that gnaws your heart this month.

Nov. 17. Leaving my boat, I walk through the low wood west of Dove Rock, toward the scarlet oak. The very sunlight on the pale-brown bleached fields is an interesting object these cold days. I naturally look toward it as to a wood-fire. Not only different objects

are presented to our attention at different seasons of the year, but we are in a frame of body and of mind to appreciate different objects at different seasons. I see one thing when it is cold and another when it is warm.

We are interested at this season by the manifold ways in which the light is reflected to us. Ascending a little knoll covered with sweet-fern, shortly after, the sun appearing but a point above the sweet-fern, its light was reflected from a dense mass of the bare downy twigs of this plant in a surprising manner which would not be believed if described. It was quite like the sunlight reflected from grass and weeds covered with hoar frost. A myriad of surfaces are now prepared to reflect the light. This is one of the hundred silvery lights of November. The setting sun, too, is reflected from windows more brightly than at any other season. "November Lights" would be a theme for me.

Nature is moderate and loves degrees. Winter is not all white and sere. Some trees are evergreen to cheer us, and on the forest floor our eyes do not fall on sere brown leaves alone, but some evergreen shrubs are placed there to relieve the eye. Mountain laurel, lambkill, checkerberry, wintergreen, etc., etc., etc., and a few evergreen ferns scattered about keep up the semblance of summer still.

Nov. 19. P.M. — Mocker-nutting, to Conantum.

Those long mocker-nuts appear not to have got well ripe this year. They do not shed their husks, and the meat is mostly skinny and soft and flabby. Perhaps the season has been too cold. I shook the trees. It is just the time to get them. How hard they rattle down, like stones! There is a harmony between this stony fruit and these hard, tough limbs which bear it. I did not think at first why these nuts had not been gathered, but I suspect it may be because Puffer, who probably used to get them, has committed suicide.

Nov. 24. Here is an author who contrasts love for "the beauties of the person" with that for "excellences of the mind," as if these were the alternatives. I must say that it is for neither of these that I should feel the strongest affection. I love that one with whom I sympathize, be she "beautiful" or otherwise, of excellent mind or not.

Nov. 25. While most keep close to their parlor fires this cold and blustering Thanksgiving afternoon, and think with compassion of those who are abroad, I find the sunny south side of this swamp as warm as their parlors, and warmer to my spirit. Aye, there is a serenity and warmth here which the parlor does not suggest, enhanced by the sound of the wind roaring on the northwest side of the swamp a dozen or so rods off. What a wholesome and inspiring warmth is this!

Nov. 26. Walden is very low, compared with itself for some years. There is a shore at least six feet wide inside the alders at my old shore, and what is remarkable, I find that not only Goose Pond also has fallen correspondingly within a month, but even the smaller pond-holes only four or five rods over, such as Little Goose Pond, shallow as they are. I begin to suspect, therefore, that this rise and fall extending through a long series of years is not peculiar to the Walden system of ponds, but is true of ponds generally, and perhaps of rivers, though in their case it may be more difficult to detect. The Pout's Nest, also, has lost ten feet on all sides.

Those pouts' nests which I discovered in the spring are high and dry six feet from the water. I overhauled one, ripping up the frozen roof with my hands. The roof was only three inches thick, then a cavity and a bottom of wet mud. In this mud I found two small frogs. They were quite sluggish and had evidently gone into winter quarters there, but probably some mink would have got them.

Looking more attentively, I detected also a great many minnows about one inch long either floating dead there or frozen into the ice, — at least fifty of them. They were shaped like bream, but had the transverse bars of perch.

Examining those minnows by day, I find that they are one and one sixth inches long by two fifths of an inch wide (this my largest); in form like a bream; of a very pale golden like a perch, or more bluish. Have but one dorsal fin and, as near as I can count, rays, dorsal 19 (first, 9 stouter and stiff and more distinctly pointed, then 10 longer and flexible, whole fin about three times as long as average height), caudal 19, anal 13 or 14, ventral 6, pectoral 10 (?). They have about

seven transverse dusky bars like a perch (!). Yet, from their form and single dorsal fin, I think they are breams. Are they not a new species? Have young breams transverse bars? A little narrower than this.

Nov. 27. I got seventeen more of those little bream of yesterday. As I now count, the dorsal fin-rays are 9–10 (Girard says 9–11), caudal 17 (with apparently 4 short on each side), anal 3–11, pectoral 11, ventral 1–5. They have about seven transverse dark bars, a vertical dark mark under eye, and a dark spot on edge of operculum. They appear to be the young of the *Pomotis obesus*, described by Charles Girard to the Natural History Society in April, '54, obtained by Baird in fresh water about Hingham and in Charles River in Holliston. They are exceedingly pretty seen floating dead on their sides in a bowl of water, with all their fins spread out. From their size and form and position they cannot fail to remind you of coins in the basin.

[*Pasted-in newspaper clipping, from a report of the proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History:* "Specimens of *Pomotis* and *Esox*, and of amphibians, were presented by Mr. H.D. Thoreau, from Concord, Mass. Mr. Putnam was of opinion that one of the *Pomotis* would prove a new species. There are with us two varieties of pickerel commonly known as the long or shovel-nosed, and the short or trout-nosed; these specimens were of the latter. Mr. Putnam was inclined to think these were distinct species, unless the differences should prove to be sexual. Drs. D.H. and H.R. Storer considered them varieties of the same species; Messrs. Baird and Girard think them (*Esox reticulatus* and *E. ornatus*) distinct."

Another clipping: "Mr. F.W. Putnam at a previous meeting stated that possibly the young Pomotis presented by Mr. Thoreau were the *P. obesus* of Girard. He had since then examined Girard's original specimens, and he finds that they are the same. The *P. guttatus* recently described in the Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia is identical with *P. obesus*. Having teeth on the palatines, and consequently belonging to the genus *Bryttus*, the proper name for the species is *B. obesus* (Putnam). He had also satisfied himself that the *Esox ornatus* of Girard is the same as the *E. fasciatus* of De Kay."]

How much more remote the newly discovered species seems to dwell than the old and familiar ones, though both inhabit the same pond! Where the *Pomotis obesus* swims must be a new country, unexplored by science. The seashore may be settled, but aborigines dwell unseen only thus far inland. This country is so new that species of fishes and birds and quadrupeds inhabit it which science has not yet detected. The water which such a fish swims in must still have a primitive forest decaying in it.

Nov. 28. A gray, overcast, still day, and more small birds — tree sparrows and chickadees — than usual about the house. There have been a very few fine snowflakes falling for many hours, and now, by 2 P.M., a regular snow-storm has commenced, fine flakes falling steadily, and rapidly whitening all the landscape. In half an hour the russet earth is painted white even to the horizon. Do we know of any other so silent and sudden a change?

And all the years that I have known Walden these striped breams have skulked in it without my knowledge! How many new thoughts, then, may I have?

Nov. 30. P.M. — To Walden with Channing, and Fair Haven Hill.

It is a pleasant day and the snow melting considerably.

I cannot but see still in my mind's eye those little striped breams poised in Walden's glaucous water. They balance all the rest of the world in my estimation at present, for this is the bream that I have just found, and for the time I neglect all its brethren and am ready to kill the fatted calf on its account. For more than two centuries have men fished here and have not distinguished this permanent settler of the township. When my eyes first rested on Walden the striped bream was poised in it, though I did not see it, and when Tahatawan paddled his canoe there. How wild it makes the pond and the township to find a new fish in it! America renews her youth here. But in my account of this bream I cannot go a hair's breadth beyond the mere statement that it exists, — the miracle of its existence, my contemporary and neighbor, yet so different from me! I can only poise my thought there by its side and try to think like a bream for a moment. I can only think of precious jewels, of music, poetry,

beauty, and the mystery of life. I only see the bream in its orbit, as I see a star, but I care not to measure its distance or weight. The bream, appreciated, floats in the pond as the centre of the system, another image of God. Its life no man can explain more than he can his own. I want you to perceive the mystery of the bream. I have a contemporary in Walden. It has fins where I have legs and arms. I have a friend among the fishes, at least a new acquaintance. Its character will interest me, I trust, not its clothes and anatomy. I do not want it to eat. Acquaintance with it is to make my life more rich and eventful. It is as if a poet or an anchorite had moved into the town, whom I can see from time to time and think of yet oftener. Perhaps there are a thousand of these striped bream which no one had thought of in that pond, — not their mere impressions in stone, but in the full tide of the bream life.

Though science may sometimes compare herself to a child picking up pebbles on the seashore, that is a rare mood with her; ordinarily her practical belief is that it is only a few pebbles which are *not* known, weighed and measured. A new species of fish signifies hardly more than a new name. See what is contributed in the scientific reports. One counts the fin-rays, another measures the intestines, a third daguerreotypes a scale, etc., etc.; otherwise there's nothing to be said. As if all but this were done, and these were very rich and generous contributions to science. Her votaries may be seen wandering along the shore of the ocean of truth, with their backs to that ocean, ready to seize on the shells which are cast up. You would say that the scientific bodies were terribly put to it for objects and subjects. A dead specimen of an animal, if it is only well preserved in alcohol, is just as good for science as a living one preserved in its native element.

What is the amount of my discovery to me? It is not that I have got one in a bottle, that it has got a name in a book, but that I have a little fishy friend in the pond. How was it when the youth first discovered fishes? Was it the number of their fin-rays or their arrangement, or the place of the fish in some system that made the boy dream of them? Is it these things that interest mankind in the fish, the inhabitant of the water? No, but a faint recognition of a living contemporary, a provoking mystery. One boy thinks of fishes

and goes a-fishing from the same motive that his brother searches the poets for rare lines. It is the poetry of fishes which is their chief use; their flesh is their lowest use. The beauty of the fish, that is what it is best worth the while to measure. Its place in our systems is of comparatively little importance. Generally the boy loses some of his perception and his interest in the fish; he degenerates into a fisherman or an ichthyologist.

Dec. 3. The largest of the four breams (*vide* November 26th) two and nine twentieths inches long, by one inch broad and nine twentieths thick. The back, sides forward, tail, and anal fin black or blackish or very dark; the transverse dark bars few and indistinct except in middle of fish; sides toward tail yellowish-olive. Rear of abdomen has violet reflections (and about base of anal fin). Operculums tinged, streaked, and spotted with golden, coppery, greenish, and violet reflections. A vertical dark mark or line, corresponding to the stripes, through the eye. Iris copper-color or darker. [*Etc.*]

Dec. 11. P.M. — To Walden. An overcast afternoon and rather warm. The snow on the ground in pastures brings out the warm red in leafy oak woodlands by contrast. These are what Thomson calls "the tawny copse." So that they suggest both shelter and warmth. All browns, indeed, are warmer now than a week ago. How much warmer our woodlands look and *are* for these withered leaves that still hang on! Without them the woods would be dreary, bleak, and wintry indeed.

A "swirl," applied to leaves suddenly caught up by a sort of whirlwind, is a good word enough, methinks.

Some, being offended, think sharp and satirical things, which yet they are not prepared consciously to utter. But in some unguarded moment these things escape from them, when they are as it were unconscious. They betray their thoughts, as it were by talking in their sleep, for the truth will out, under whatever veil of civility.

Dec. 12. P.M. — Up river on ice to Fair Haven Hill.

Crossing the fields, I see an immense flock of snow buntings, I

think the largest that I ever saw. There must be a thousand or two at least. Flying from you, in some positions, you see only or chiefly the black part of their bodies, and then, as they wheel, the white comes into view, contrasted prettily with the former, and in all together at the same time. Seen flying higher against a cloudy sky they look like large snowflakes. When they rise all together their note is like the rattling of nuts in a bag, as if a whole binful were rolled from side to side. They also utter from time to time — *i.e.*, individuals do — a clear rippling note, perhaps of alarm, or a call. Suddenly the pioneers (or a part not foremost) will change their course when in full career, and when at length they know it, the rushing flock on the other side will be fetched about as it were with an undulating jerk, as in the boys' game of snap-the-whip, and those that occupy the place of the snapper are gradually off after their leaders on the new tack. As far as I observe, they confine themselves to upland, not alighting in the meadows. Like a snow-storm they come rushing down from the north.

I should like to know where all those snowbirds will roost to-night, for they will probably roost together. And what havoc an owl might make among them!

Dec. 26. Call at a farmer's this Sunday afternoon, where I surprise the well-to-do masters of the house lounging in very ragged clothes (for which they think it necessary to apologize), and one of them is busy laying the supper-table (at which he invites me to sit down at last), bringing up cold meat from the cellar and a lump of butter on the end of his knife, and making the tea by the time his mother gets home from church. Thus sincere and homely, as I am glad to know, is the actual life of these New England men, wearing rags indoors there which would disgrace a beggar (and are not beggars and paupers they who *could be* disgraced so?) and doing the indispensable work, however humble. I am glad to find that our New England life has a genuine humane core to it; that inside, after all, there is so little pretense and brag.

Dec. 28. Aunt Jane says that she was born on Christmas Day, and they called her a Christmas gift, and she remembers hearing that her

Aunt Hannah Orrock was so disconcerted by the event that she threw all the spoons outdoors, when she had washed them, or with the dishwater.

Father says that he and his sisters (except Elizabeth) were born in Richmond Street, Boston, between Salem and Hanover Streets, on the spot where a bethel now stands, on the left hand going from Hanover Street. They had milk of a neighbor, who used to drive his cows to and from the Common every day.

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Jan. 2. P.M. — To Cliffs and Walden.

Going up the hill through Stow's young oak woodland, I listen to the sharp, dry rustle of the withered oak leaves. This is the voice of the wood now. Just as the inhabitant of Cape Cod hears the surf ever breaking on its shores, so we countrymen hear this kindred surf on the leaves of the forest. Regarded as a voice, — though it is not articulate, — as our articulate sounds are divided into vowels (but this is nearer a consonant sound), labials, dentals, palatals, sibilants, mutes, aspirate, etc., so this may be called *folial* or *frondal*, produced by air driven against the leaves, and comes nearest to our sibilants or aspirate.

Why do young oaks retain their leaves while old ones shed them? Why do they die on the stem, having some life at the base in the one case, while they wither through at the base in the other case? Is it because in the former case they have more sap and vigor?

When I hear the hypercritical quarrelling about grammar and style, the position of the particles, etc., etc., stretching or contracting every speaker to certain rules of theirs, — Mr. Webster, perhaps, not having spoken according to Mr. Kirkham's rule, — I see that they forget that the first requisite and rule is that expression shall be vital and natural, as much as the voice of a brute or an interjection: first of all, mother tongue; and last of all, artificial or father tongue. Essentially your truest poetic sentence is as free and lawless as a lamb's bleat. The grammarian is often one who can neither cry nor laugh, yet thinks that he can express human emotions. So the posture-masters tell you how you shall walk, — turning your toes out, perhaps, excessively, — but so the beautiful walkers are not made.

Mediæval, or law, Latin seems to have invented the word "forest," not being satisfied with *silva, nemus*, etc. Webster makes it from the same root with "L. *foris*, Fr. *hors*, and the Saxon *faran*, to go, to depart." The allied words "all express distance from cities and civilization, and are from roots expressing departure or wandering," — as if this newer term were needed to describe those strange, wild

woods furthest from the centres of civilization.

Jan. 4. A northeast snow-storm, or rather a north snow-storm, very hard to face. P.M. to Walden in it. It snows very hard, driving along almost horizontally, falling but a foot or two in a rod. Nobody is in the street, or thinks of going out far except on important business. Most roads are trackless. The snow may be now fifteen to eighteen inches deep.

The pitch pines near Thrush Alley are the most interesting objects, for they hold much more snow. The snow lodges on their plumes, and, bending them down, it accumulates more and more on the angle generally at the base of the several plumes, in little conical heaps shaped or somewhat like this: — differing according to the number and position of the plumes. They look as if a child had stuck up its elbow under a white sheet. Some small ones stand stiffly up-right like a soldier's plume. At the same time the lowermost small black and dead horizontal limbs near the ground, where there is least wind and jar, — these almost exclusively, — say for six or eight feet up, are covered with upright walls of snow five or six times their own height and zigzagging with them like the Wall of China; or like great white caterpillars they lie along them, these snowy sloths; or rather it is a labyrinth, a sort of cobweb, of broad white belts in the air. Only a dim twilight struggles through to this lower region, and the sight of these snowy walls or labyrinths suggests a rare stillness, freedom from wind and jar. If you try to stoop and wind your way there, you get your neck and ears full of snow. I can't draw it. That is, for each dead pine branch you have a thin flat branch of snow resting on it, an exaggeration of the former.

Your breath causes the snow to turn to ice in your beard; a shaggy mass of icicles it becomes, which makes you look like a man from the extreme north.

Jan. 13. The cold spell is over, and here this morning is a fog or mist; the wind, if there is any, I think, northerly; and there is built out horizontally on the north side of every twig and other surface a very remarkable sort of hoar frost, the crystallized fog, which is still increasing. It is quite rare here, at least on this scale. The mist lasts

all this day, though it is far from warm (+11° at 8 A.M.), and till noon of the 14th, when it becomes rain, and all this time there is exceedingly little if any wind.

I go to the river this morning and walk up it to see the trees and bushes along it. As the frostwork (which is not thin and transparent like ice, but white and snow-like, or between the distinctly leaf with veins and a mere aggregation of snow, though you easily distinguish the distinct leaves) is built out northward from each surface, spreading at an angle of about forty-five degrees, *i.e.* some twenty-odd each side of the north, you must stand on the north side and look south at the trees, etc., when they appear, except the large limbs and trunk, wholly of snow or frostwork, mere ghosts of trees, seen softly against the mist for a background. It is mist on mist. The outline and character of each tree is more distinctly exhibited, being exaggerated, and you notice any peculiarity in the disposition of the twigs. Some elm twigs, thus enlarged into snowy fingers, are strikingly regular and handsome, thus: In the case of most evergreens, it amounts to a very rich sugaring, being so firmly attached. The weeping willow seems to weep with more remarkable and regular curve than ever, and stands still and white with thickened twigs, as if carved in white marble or alabaster. Those trees, like alders, which have not grown much the past year — which have short and angular twigs — are the richest in effect.

Jan. 14. The fog turns to a fine rain at noon, and in the evening and night it produces a glaze, which this morning, —

Jan. 15, — is quite handsome. Instead of that soft, white, faery-like mantle of down with which the trees were thickly powdered, they are now cased in a coat of mail, of icy mail, built out in many cases about as far from the twig with icy prominences. Birches, tree-tops, and especially slender-twigged willows or osiers are bent over by it, as they were not by the snow-white and light frost of yesterday and the day before, so that the character or expression of many trees and shrubs is wholly altered. I might not guess what the pollard willow row at Merrick's shore, with twigs one or two years old, was, — instead of

Jan. 18. That wonderful frostwork of the 13th and 14th was too rare to be neglected, — succeeded as it was, also, by two days of glaze, — but, having company, I lost half the advantage of it. It was remarkable to have a fog for four days in midwinter without wind. Apparently as the fog was coarser and far more abundant, it was whiter, less delicate to examine, and of far greater depth than a frostwork formed of dew. We did not have an opportunity to see how it would look in the sun, but seen against the mist or fog it was too fair to be remembered. The trees were the ghosts of trees appearing in their winding-sheets, an intenser white against the comparatively dusky ground of the fog. I learn from the papers that this phenomenon prevailed all over this part of the country and attracted the admiration of all. The trees on Boston Common were clad in the same snow-white livery with our Musketaquid trees.

That glaze! I know what it was by my own experience; it was the frozen breath of the earth upon its beard.

Take the most rigid tree, the whole effect is peculiarly soft and spirit-like, for there is no marked edge or outline. How could you draw the outline of these snowy fingers seen against the fog, without exaggeration? There is no more a boundary-line or circumference that can be drawn, than a diameter. Hardly could the New England farmer drive to market under these trees without feeling that his sense of beauty was addressed. He would be aware that the phenomenon called beauty was become visible, if one were at leisure or had had the right culture to appreciate it. A miller with whom I rode actually remarked on the beauty of the trees; and a farmer told me in all sincerity that, having occasion to go into Walden Woods in his sleigh, he thought he never saw anything so beautiful in all his life, and if there had been men there who knew how to write about it, it would have been a great occasion for them.

Many times I thought that if the particular tree, commonly an elm, under which I was walking or riding were the only one like it in the country, it would be worth a journey across the continent to see it. Indeed, I have no doubt that such journeys would be undertaken on hearing a true account of it. But, instead of being confined to a single tree, this wonder was as cheap and common as the air itself. Every

man's wood-lot was a miracle and surprise to him, and for those who could not go so far there were the trees in the street and the weeds in the yard.

In some moods you might suspect that it was the work of enchantment. Some magician had put your village into a crucible and it had crystallized thus.

Jan. 19. I noticed last night, just after sunset, a sheet of mackerel sky far in the west horizon, very finely imbricated and reflecting a coppery glow, and again I saw still more of it in the east this morning at sunrise, and now, at 3.30 P.M., looking up, I perceive that almost the entire heavens are covered with a very beautiful mackerel sky. This indicates a peculiar state of the atmosphere. The sky is most wonderfully and beautifully mottled with evenly distributed cloudlets, of indescribable variety yet regularity in their form, suggesting fishes' scales, with perhaps small fish-bones thrown in here and there. It is white in the midst, or most prominent part, of the scales, passing into blue in the crannies. Something like this blue and white mottling, methinks, is seen on a mackerel, and has suggested the name. Is not the peculiar propriety of this term lost sight of by the meteorologists? It is a luxury for the eye to rest on it. What curtains, what tapestry to our halls!

The form of these cloudlets is, by the way, like or akin to that of waves, of ripple-marks on sand, of small drifts, wave-like, on the surface of snow, and to the first small openings in the ice of the midstream.

Jan. 20. The green of the ice and water begins to be visible about half an hour before sunset. Is it produced by the reflected blue of the sky mingling with the yellow or pink of the setting sun?

Jan. 27. When you have been deprived of your usual quantity of sleep for several nights, you sleep much more soundly for it, and wake up suddenly like a bullet that strikes a wall.

Feb. 3. Five minutes before 3 P.M. Father died.

After a sickness of some two years, going down-town in pleasant

weather, doing a little business from time to time, hoeing a little in the garden, etc., Father took to his chamber January 13th, and did not come down again. Most of the time previously he had coughed and expectorated a great deal. Latterly he did not cough, but continued to raise. He continued to sit up in his chamber till within a week before he died. He sat up for a little while on the Sunday four days before he died. Generally he was very silent for many months. He was quite conscious to the last, and his death was so easy that we should not have been aware that he was dying, though we were sitting around his bed, if we had not watched very closely.

I have touched a body which was flexible and warm, yet tenantless, — warmed by what fire? When the spirit that animated some matter has left it, who else, what else, can animate it?

How enduring are our bodies, after all! The forms of our brothers and sisters, our parents and children and wives, lie still in the hills and fields round about us, not to mention those of our remoter ancestors, and the matter which composed the body of our first human father still exists under another name.

When in sickness the body is emaciated, and the expression of the face in various ways is changed, you perceive unexpected resemblances to other members of the same family; as if within the same family there was a greater general similarity in the framework of the face than in its filling up and clothing.

Father first came to this town to live with his father about the end of the last century, when he was about twelve years old. (His father died in 1801.) Afterward he went to the Lexington Academy (Parker's?) a short time, perhaps a year, then into Deacon White's store as clerk; then learned the dry-goods business in a store in Salem. (Aunt J. shows me a letter from him directly after his going there, dated 1807.) Was with a Hathaway. When about twenty-one, opened a store for himself on the corner where the town house stands of late years, a yellow building, now moved and altered into John Keyes's house. He did so well there that Isaac Hurd went into partnership with him, to his injury. They soon dissolved, but could not settle without going to law, when my father gained the case, bringing his books into court. Then, I think, he went to Bangor and set up with Billings, selling to Indians (among others); married; lived

in Boston; writes thence to aunts at Bangor in 1815 with John on his knee; moved to Concord (*where I was born*), then to Chelmsford, to Boston, to Concord again, and here remained. Mother first came to Concord about the same age that father did, but a little before him.

As far as I know, Father, when he died, was not only one of the oldest men in the middle of Concord, but the one perhaps best acquainted with the inhabitants, and the local, social, and street history of the middle of the town, for the last fifty years. He belonged in a peculiar sense to the village street; loved to sit in the shops or at the post-office and read the daily papers. I think that he remembered more about the worthies (and unworthies) of Concord village forty years ago, both from dealing as a trader and from familiar intercourse with them, than any one else. Our other neighbors, now living or very recently dead, have either come to the town more recently than he, or have lived more aloof from the mass of the inhabitants.

Some have spoken slightingly of the Indians, as a race possessing so little skill and wit, so low in the scale of humanity, and so brutish that they hardly deserved to be remembered, — using only the terms "miserable," "wretched," "pitiful," and the like. In writing their histories of this country they have so hastily disposed of this refuse of humanity (as they might have called it) which littered and defiled the shore and the interior. But even the indigenous animals are inexhaustibly interesting to us. How much more, then, the indigenous man of America! If wild men, so much more like ourselves than they are unlike, have inhabited these shores before us, we wish to know particularly what manner of men they were, how they lived here, their relation to nature, their arts and their customs, their fancies and superstitions. They paddled over these waters, they wandered in these woods, and they had their fancies and beliefs connected with the sea and the forest, which concern us quite as much as the fables of Oriental nations do. It frequently happens that the historian, though he professes more humanity than the trapper, mountain man, or gold-digger, who shoots one as a wild beast, really exhibits and practices a similar inhumanity to him, wielding a pen instead of a rifle.

One tells you with more contempt than pity that the Indian had no religion, holding up both hands, and this to all the shallow-brained

and bigoted seems to mean something important, but it is commonly a distinction without a difference. Pray, how much more religion has the historian? If Henry Ward Beecher knows so much more about God than another, if he has made some discovery of truth in this direction, I would thank him to publish it in *Silliman's Journal*, with as few flourishes as possible.

It is the spirit of humanity, that which animates both so-called savages and civilized nations, working through a man, and not the man expressing himself, that interests us most. The thought of a so-called savage tribe is generally far more just than that of a single civilized man.

I perceive that we partially die ourselves through sympathy at the death of each of our friends or near relatives. Each such experience is an assault on our vital force. It becomes a source of wonder that they who have lost many friends still live. After long watching around the sick-bed of a friend, we, too, partially give up the ghost with him, and are the less to be identified with this state of things.

The writer must to some extent inspire himself. Most of his sentences may at first lie dead in his essay, but when all are arranged, some life and color will be reflected on them from the mature and successful lines; they will appear to pulsate with fresh life, and he will be enabled to eke out their slumbering sense, and make them worthy of their neighborhood. In his first essay on a given theme, he produces scarcely more than a frame and groundwork for his sentiment and poetry. Each clear thought that he attains to draws in its train many divided thoughts or perceptions. The writer has much to do even to create a theme for himself. Most that is first written on any subject is a mere groping after it, mere rubble-stone and foundation. It is only when many observations of different periods have been brought together that he begins to grasp his subject and can make one pertinent and just observation.

Feb. 5. When we have experienced many disappointments, such as the loss of friends, the notes of birds cease to affect us as they did.

I see another butcher-bird on the top of a young tree by the pond.

Feb. 7. Going along the Nut Meadow or Jimmy Miles road, when

I see the sulphur lichens on the rails brightening with the moisture I feel like studying them again as a relisher or tonic, to make life go down and digest well, as we use pepper and vinegar and salads. They are a sort of winter greens which we gather and assimilate with our eyes. That's the true use of the study of lichens. I expect that the lichenist will have the keenest relish for Nature in her every-day mood and dress. To study lichens is to get a taste of earth and health, to go gnawing the rails and rocks. The lichenist extracts nutriment from the very crust of the earth. A taste for this study is an evidence of titanic health, a sane earthiness. It fits a man to deal with the barrenest and rockiest experience. A little moisture, a fog, or rain, or melted snow makes his wilderness to blossom like the rose. A lichenist fats where others starve. His provender never fails.

Feb. 13. The old ice is covered with a dry, powdery snow about one inch deep, from which, as I walk toward the sun, this perfectly clear, bright afternoon, at 3.30 o'clock, the colors of the rainbow are reflected from a myriad fine facets. It is as if the dust of diamonds and other precious stones were spread all around. The blue and red predominate. Though I distinguish these colors everywhere toward the sun, they are so much more abundantly reflected to me from two particular directions that I see two distant rays, or arms, so to call them, of this rainbow-like dust, one on each side of the sun, stretching away from me and about half a dozen feet wide, the two arms including an angle of about sixty degrees. When I look from the sun, I see merely dazzling white points. Yet I might easily, and commonly do, overlook all this.

Sometimes in our prosaic moods, life appears to us but a certain number more of days like those which we have lived, to be cheered not by more friends and friendship but probably fewer and less. As, perchance, we anticipate the end of this day before it is done, close the shutters, and with a cheerless resignation commence the barren evening whose fruitless end we clearly see, we despondingly think that all of life that is left is only this experience repeated a certain number of times. And so it would be, if it were not for the faculty of imagination.

A transient acquaintance with any phenomenon is not sufficient to

make it completely the subject of your muse. You must be so conversant with it as to *remember* it and be reminded of it long afterward, while it lies remotely fair and elysian in the horizon, approachable only by the imagination.

Feb. 15. P.M. — Up river to Fair Haven Pond.

I thought, by the peculiar moaning sound of the wind about the dining-room at noon, that we should have a rain-storm. I heard only one blast through some crack, but no doubt that betrayed a *pluvious* breath.

Against Bittern Cliff I feel the first drop strike the right slope of my nose and run down the ravine there. Such is the origin of rivers. Not till half a mile further my doubting companion feels another on his nose also, and I get one in my eye, and soon after I see the countless dimples in the puddles on the ice. So measured and deliberate is Nature always. Then the gentle, spring-like rain begins, and we turn about.

The sound of it pattering on the dry oak leaves, where young oaks thickly cover a hillside, is just like that of wind stirring them, when first heard, but is steady and monotonous and so betrayed. We rejoice to be wetted, and the very smell of wet woollen clothes exhilarates us.

Feb. 20. In the composition it is the greatest art to find out as quickly as possible which are the best passages you have written, and tear the rest away to come at them. Even the poorest parts will be most effective when they serve these, as pediments to the column.

How much the writer lives and endures in coming before the public so often! A few years or books are with him equal to a long life of experience, suffering, etc. It is well if he does not become hardened. He learns how to bear contempt and to despise himself. He makes, as it were, *post-mortem* examinations of himself before he is dead. Such is art.

P.M. — The rain ceases, and it clears up at 5 P.M. It is a warm west wind and a remarkably soft sky, like plush; perhaps a lingering moisture there. What a revelation the blue and the bright tints in the west again, after the storm and darkness! It is the opening of the

windows of heaven after the flood!

Feb. 22. Go to Worcester to lecture in a parlor.

Feb. 25. All the criticism which I got on my lecture on Autumnal Tints at Worcester on the 22d was that I assumed that my audience had not seen so much of them as they had. But after reading it I am more than ever convinced that they have not seen much of them, — that there are very few persons who do see much of nature.

March 2. As I go through the Cassandra Ponds, I look round on the young oak woods still clad with rustling leaves as in winter, with a feeling as if it were their last rustle before the spring, but then I reflect how far away still is the time when the new buds swelling will cause these leaves to fall. We thus commonly antedate the spring more than any other season, for we look forward to it with more longing. We talk about spring as at hand before the end of February, and yet it will be two good months, one sixth part of the whole year, before we can go a-maying. There may be a whole month of solid and uninterrupted winter yet, plenty of ice and good sleighing. We may not even see the bare ground, and hardly the water, and yet we sit down and warm our spirits annually with this distant prospect of spring. As if a man were to warm his hands by stretching them toward the rising sun and rubbing them.

March 3. Going by the solidago oak at Clamshell Hill bank, I heard a faint rippling note and, looking up, saw about fifteen snow buntings sitting in the top of the oak, all with their breasts toward me, — sitting so still and quite white, seen against the white cloudy sky, they did not look like birds but the ghosts of birds, and their boldness, allowing me to come quite near, enhanced this impression. These were almost as white as snowballs, and from time to time I heard a low, soft rippling note from them. I could see no features, but only the general outline of plump birds in white. It was a very spectral sight, and after I had watched them for several minutes, I can hardly say that I was prepared to see them fly away like ordinary buntings when I advanced further. At first they were almost

concealed by being almost the same color with the cloudy sky.

Talk about reading! — a good reader! It depends on how he is heard. It takes two at least for this game, as for love, and they must coöperate. I saw some men unloading molasses-hogsheads from a truck at a depot the other day, rolling them up an inclined plane. The truckman stood behind and shoved, after putting a couple of ropes one round each end of the hogshead, while two men standing in the depot steadily pulled at the ropes. The first man was the lecturer, the last was the audience. It is the duty of the lecturer to team his hogshead of sweets to the depot, or Lyceum, place the horse, arrange the ropes, and shove; and it is the duty of the audience to take hold of the ropes and pull with all their might.

Read well! Did you ever suck cider through a straw? Did you ever know the cider to push out of the straw when you were not sucking, — unless it chanced to be in a complete ferment? An audience will draw out of a lecture, or enable a lecturer to read, only such parts of his lecture as they like. If it is pronounced good, it is partly to the credit of the hearers; if bad, it is partly their fault. Sometimes a lazy audience refuses to cooperate and pull on the ropes with a will, simply because the hogshead is full and therefore heavy, when if it were empty, or had only a little sugar adhering to it, they would whisk it up the slope in a jiffy.

March 7. The mystery of the life of plants is kindred with that of our own lives, and the physiologist must not presume to explain their growth according to mechanical laws, or as he might explain some machinery of his own making. We must not expect to probe with our fingers the sanctuary of any life, whether animal or vegetable. If we do, we shall discover nothing but surface still. The ultimate expression or fruit of any created thing is a fine effluence which only the most ingenuous worshipper perceives at a reverent distance from its surface even. Only that intellect makes any progress toward conceiving of the essence which at the same time perceives the effluence.

Accordingly, I reject Carpenter's explanation of the fact that a potato vine in a cellar grows toward the light, when he says, "The reason obviously is, that, in consequence of the loss of fluid from the

tissue of the stem on the side on which the light falls, it is contracted, whilst that of the other side remains turgid with fluid; the stem makes a bend, therefore, until its growing point becomes opposite to the light, and then increases in that direction." (C.'s "Vegetable Physiology," page 174.)

There is no ripeness which is not, so to speak, something ultimate in itself, and not merely a perfected means to a higher end. In order to be ripe it must serve a transcendent use. The ripeness of a leaf, being perfected, leaves the tree at that point and never returns to it. It has nothing to do with any other fruit which the tree may bear, and only the genius of the poet can pluck it.

The fruit of a tree is neither in the seed nor the timber, — the full-grown tree, — but it is simply the highest use to which it can be put.

March 8. A rainy day.

P.M. — To Hill in rain.

To us snow and cold seem a mere delaying of the spring. How far we are from understanding the value of these things in the economy of Nature!

The earth is still mostly covered with ice and snow. As usual, I notice large pools of greenish water in the fields, on an icy bottom, which cannot owe their greenness to the reflected blue mingled with the yellowish light at sundown, as I supposed in the case of the green ice and water in clear winter days, for I see the former now at midday and in a rain-storm, when no sky is visible. I think that these green pools over an icy bottom must be produced by the yellow or common earth-stain in the water mingling with the blue which is reflected from the ice. Many pools have so large a proportion of this yellow tinge as not to look green but yellow. The stain, the tea, of withered vegetation — grass and leaves — and of the soil supplies the yellow tint.

But perhaps those patches of emerald sky, sky just tinged with green, which we sometimes see, far in the horizon or near it, are produced in the same way as I thought the green ice was, — some yellow glow reflected from a cloud mingled with the blue of the atmosphere.

One might say that the yellow of the earth mingled with the blue

of the sky to make the green of vegetation.

Men of science, when they pause to contemplate "the power, wisdom, and goodness" of God, or, as they sometimes call him, "the Almighty Designer," speak of him as a total stranger whom it is necessary to treat with the highest consideration. They seem suddenly to have lost their wits.

March 11. P.M. — To Hunt house.

I go to get one more sight of the old house which Hosmer is pulling down, but I am too late to see much of it. The chimney is gone and little more than the oblong square frame stands. E. Hosmer and Nathan Hosmer are employed taking it down. The latter draws all the nails, however crooked, and puts them in his pockets, for, being wrought ones, he says it is worth the while.

On the chimney was the date 1703 (?), — I think that was it, — and if this was the date of the chimney, it would appear that the old part belonged to the Winthrops, and it may go back to near the settlement of the town. The timbers of the old part had been cased and the joists plastered over at some time, and, now that they were uncovered, you saw many old memorandums and scores in chalk on them, as "May ye 4th," "Ephraim Brown," "0 — 3s — 4d," "oxen," — so they kept their score or tally, — such as the butcher and baker sometimes make. Perhaps the occupant had let his neighbor have the use of his oxen so many days. I asked if they had found any old coins. N. Hosmer answered, Yes, he had, and showed it me, — took it out of his pocket. It was about as big as a quarter of a dollar, with "Britain," etc., legible, "Geo II," and date "1742," but it was of lead. But there was no manuscript, — not a copy of verses, only these chalk records of butter and cheese, oxen and bacon, and a counterfeit coin, out of the smoky recesses.

My mother says that she has been to the charitable society there. One old jester of the town used to call it "the *chattable* society."

Mrs. A. takes on dolefully on account of the solitude in which she lives, but she gets little consolation. Mrs. B. says she envies her that retirement. Mrs. A. is aware that she does, and says it is as if a thirsty man should envy another the river in which he is drowning. So goes the world. It is either this extreme or that. Of solitude one gets too

much and another not enough.

E. Hosmer says that a man told him that he had seen my uncle Charles take a twelve-foot ladder, set it up straight, and then run up and down the other side, kicking it from behind him as he went down. E.H. told of seeing him often at the tavern toss his hat to the ceiling, twirling it over, and catch it on his head every time.

Large flocks of blackbirds to-day in the elm-tops and other trees. These are the first conspicuous large flocks of birds. J. Farmer says he saw ducks this morning and has seen larks some days. Channing saw geese to-day.

Find out as soon as possible what are the best things in your composition, and then shape the rest to fit them. The former will be the midrib and veins of the leaf.

There is always some accident in the best things, whether thoughts or expressions or deeds. The memorable thought, the happy expression, the admirable deed are only partly ours. The thought came to us because we were in a fit mood; also we were unconscious and did not know that we had said or done a good thing. We must walk consciously only part way toward our goal, and then leap in the dark to our success. What we do best or most perfectly is what we have most thoroughly learned by the longest practice, and at length it falls from us without our notice, as a leaf from a tree. It is the *last* time we shall do it, — our unconscious leavings.

March 12. It is a regular spring rain, such as I remember walking in, — windy but warm. It alternately rains hard and then holds up a little. A similar alternation we see in the waves of water and all undulating surfaces, — in snow and sand and the clouds (the mackerel sky). Now you walk in a comparative lull, anticipating fair weather, with but a slight drizzling, and anon the wind blows and the rain drives down harder than ever. In one of these lulls, as I passed the Joe Hosmer (rough-cast) house, I thought I never saw any bank so handsome as the russet hillside behind it. It is a very barren, exhausted soil, where the cladonia lichens abound, and the lower side is a flowing sand, but this russet grass with its weeds, being saturated with moisture, was in this light the richest brown, methought, that I ever saw. A peculiar and unaccountable light seemed to fall on that

bank or hillside, though it was thick storm all around. A sort of Newfoundland sun seemed to be shining on it. It was a prospect to excite a reindeer. These tints of brown were as softly and richly fair and sufficing as the most brilliant autumnal tints. This kind of light, the air being full of rain and all vegetation dripping with it, brings out the browns wonderfully.

March 13. I see a small flock of blackbirds flying over, some rising, others falling, yet all advancing together, one flock but many birds, some silent, others tchucking, — incessant alternation. This harmonious movement as in a dance, this agreeing to differ, makes the charm of the spectacle to me. One bird looks fractional, naked, like a single thread or ravelling from the web to which it belongs. Alternation! Alternation! Heaven and hell! Here again in the flight of a bird, its ricochet motion, is that undulation observed in so many materials, as in the mackerel sky.

I cannot easily forget the beauty of those terrestrial browns in the rain yesterday. The withered grass was not of that very pale hoary brown that it is to-day, now that it is dry and lifeless, but, being perfectly saturated and dripping with the rain, the whole hillside seemed to reflect a certain yellowish light, so that you looked around for the sun in the midst of the storm. All the yellow and red and leather-color in the fawn-colored weeds was more intense than at any other season. The withered ferns which fell last fall — pinweeds, sarothra, etc. — were actually a *glowing* brown for the same reason, being all dripping wet. The very bare sand slopes, with only here and there a thin crusting of mosses, was a richer color than ever it is.

In short, in these early spring rains, the withered herbage, thus saturated, and reflecting its brightest withered tint, seems in a certain degree to have revived, and sympathizes with the fresh greenish or yellowish or brownish lichens in its midst, which also seem to have withered. It seemed to me — and I think it may be the truth — that the abundant moisture, bringing out the highest color in the brown surface of the earth, generated a certain degree of light, which, when the rain held up a little, reminded you of the sun shining through a thick mist.

The barrenest surfaces, perhaps, are the most interesting in such

weather as yesterday, when the most terrene colors are seen. The wet earth and sand, and especially subsoil, are very invigorating sights.

The Hunt house, to draw from memory, — though I have given its measures within two years in my Journal, — looked like this: —

This is only generally correct, without a scale.

March 14. P.M. — To Hunt house.

I thought from the above drawing that the original door must have been in the middle of the old part and not at one end, and that I should detect it in the manner in which the studs were set in. I really did so and found some other traces of the old door (where I have dotted it) when I got there. Some of the chalkmarks which have been preserved under the casing of the timbers so long have been completely washed off in yesterday's rain, as the frame stood bare. Also read in chalk on a chamber floor joist (which had been plastered over beneath) "enfine Brown," so many s. and d., and what most read for "Feb 1666," but, being written over a rough knot, it is doubtful. "Hides 3."

March 16. I look down over Tarbell's Bay, just north of Ball's Hill. Not only meadows but potato and rye fields are buried deep, and you see there, sheltered by the hills on the northwest, a placid blue bay having the russet hills for shores. This kind of bay, or lake, made by the freshet — these deep and narrow "fiords" — can only be seen along such a stream as this, liable to an annual freshet. The water rests as gently as a dewdrop on a leaf, laving its tender temporary shores. It has no strand, leaves no permanent water-mark, but though you look at it a quarter of a mile off, you know that the rising flood is gently overflowing a myriad withered green blades there in succession. There is the magic of lakes that come and go. The lake or bay is not an institution, but a phenomenon. You plainly see that it is so much water poured into the hollows of the earth.

March 17. 6.30 A.M. — River risen still higher.

I realize how water predominates on the surface of the globe. I am surprised to see new and unexpected water-lines, drawn by the level

edge of the flood about knolls in the meadows and in the woods, — waving lines, rarely if ever recognized or thought of by the walker or any, which mark the boundary of a possible or probable freshet any spring. Even if the highest water-mark were indicated at one point, the surveyor could not, with any labor short of infinite, draw these lines for us which wind about every elevation of earth or rock. Yet, though this slight difference of level which the water so simply and effectually points out, is so unobservable by us ordinarily, no doubt Nature never forgets it for a moment, but plants grow and insects, etc., breed in conformity to it. Many a kingdom of nature has its boundaries parallel with this waving line. By these freshets, the relation of some field, usually far from the stream, to future or past deluge is suggested. I am surprised and amused, at least, to walk in such a field and observe the nice distinctions which the great water-level makes there. So plants and animals and thoughts have their commonly unseen shores, and many portions of the earth are, with reference to them, islands or peninsulas or capes, shores or mountains.

We are stiff and set in our geography because the level of water is comparatively, or within short periods, unchangeable. We look only in the sea for islands and continents and their varieties. But there are more subtle and invisible and fluctuating floods which island this or that part of the earth whose geography has never been mapped. For instance, here is Mantatuket Rock, commonly a rocky peninsula with a low or swampy neck and all covered with wood. It is now a small rocky island, and not only the swampy neck but a considerable portion of the upland is blotted out by the flood, covered and concealed under water; and what surprises me is that the water should so instantly know and select its own shore on the upland, though I could not have told with my eye whether it would be thirty feet this way or as many that. A distinction is made for me by the water in this case which I had never thought of, revealing the relation of this surface to the flood ordinarily far from it, and which I now begin to perceive that every tree and shrub and herbaceous plant growing there knew, if I did not.

How different to-day from yesterday! Yesterday was a cool, bright day, the earth just washed bare by the rain, and a strong northwest

wind raised respectable billows on our vernal seas and imparted remarkable life and spirit to the scene. To-day it is perfectly still and warm; but, seen through this air, though many might not notice the difference, the russet surface of the earth does not shine, is not bright. The air is comparatively dead when I attend to it, and it is as if there were the veil of a fine mist over all objects, dulling their edges. Yet this would be called a clear day. These aerial differences in the days are not commonly appreciated, though they affect our spirits.

As I float by the Rock, I hear rustling amid the oak leaves above that new water-line, and, there being no wind, I know it to be a striped squirrel, and soon see its long-unseen striped sides flirting about the instep of an oak. Its lateral stripes, alternate black and yellowish, are a type which I have not seen for a long time, or rather a punctuation-mark, the character to indicate where a new paragraph commences in the revolution of the seasons. Double lines.

March 18. Consider how I discovered where the Winthrop family in this town placed their front door some two hundred years ago, without any verbal or written or ocular evidence. I, with others, saw by the frame of the old Hunt house that an addition had been made to its west end in 1703. This brought the front door, which was in the middle of the present, near one end of the original or Winthrop house. I, sitting at home, said to myself, having an occult sympathy with the Winthrops of that date, "The front door must originally have been in the middle of the old house, for symmetry and convenience required it, and if it was, I shall find traces of it; I shall find there where studs have been set into the frame in a different manner from the rest." I went to the house and looked where the door should have been, and I found precisely the evidence I sought, and, beside, where the timber above had been cut out just the width of the door.

March 19. All sorts of lumber is afloat. Rails, planks, and timber, etc., which the unthrifty neglected to secure now change hands. Much railroad lumber is floated off. While one end rests on the land, it is the railroad's, but as soon as it is afloat it is made the property of him who saves it. I see some poor neighbors as earnest as the railroad employees are negligent, to secure it. It blows so hard that you walk

aslant against the wind. Your very beard, if you wear a full one, is a serious cause of detention.

The meadows are all in commotion. The ducks are now concealed by the waves, if there are any floating there. The wind makes such a din about your ears that conversation is difficult; your words are blown away and do not strike the ear they were aimed at. If you walk by the water, the tumult of the waves confuses you. If you go by a tree or enter the woods, the din is yet greater. Nevertheless this universal commotion is very interesting and exciting.

We are interested in the phenomena of Nature mainly as children are, or as we are in games of chance. They are more or less exciting. Our appetite for novelty is insatiable. We do not attend to ordinary things, though they are most important, but to extraordinary ones. While it is only moderately hot or cold, or wet or dry, nobody attends to it, but when Nature goes to an extreme in any of these directions we are all on the alert with excitement. Not that we care about the philosophy or the effects of this phenomenon. *E.g.*, when I went to Boston in the early train the coldest morning of last winter, two topics mainly occupied the attention of the passengers, Morphy's chess victories and Nature's victorious cold that morning. The inhabitants of various towns were comparing notes, and that one whose door opened upon a greater degree of cold than any of his neighbors' doors chuckled not a little. Almost every one I met asked me almost before our salutations were over "how the glass stood" at my house or in my town, — the librarian of the college, the registrar of deeds at Cambridgeport, — a total stranger to me, whose form of inquiry made me think of another sort of glass, — and each rubbed his hands with pretended horror but real delight if I named a higher figure than he had yet heard. It was plain that one object which the cold was given us for was our amusement, a passing excitement. It would be perfectly consistent and American to bet on the coldness of our respective towns, of the morning that is to come. Thus a greater degree of cold may be said to warm us more than a less one. We hear with ill-concealed disgust the figures reported from some localities, where they never enjoy the luxury of severe cold. This is a perfectly legitimate amusement, only we should know that each day is peculiar and has its kindred excitements.

March 23. The qualities of the land that are most attractive to our eyes now are dryness and firmness. It is not the rich black soil, but warm and sandy hills and plains which tempt our steps. We love to sit on and walk over sandy tracts in the spring like cicindelas. These tongues of russet land tapering and sloping into the flood do almost speak to one. They are alternately in sun and shade. When the cloud is passed, and they reflect their pale-brown light to me, I am tempted to go to them.

The loud *peop* (?) of a pigeon woodpecker is heard in our sea, and anon the prolonged loud and shrill *cackle*, calling the thin-wooded hillsides and pastures to life. It is like the note of an alarm-clock set last fall so as to wake Nature up at exactly this date. *Up up up up up up up up up up!*

It is suggested that the blue is darkest when reflected from the most agitated water, because of the shadow (occasioned by the inequalities) mingled with it.

Some Indians of the north have but one word for blue and black, and blue is with us considered the darkest color, though it is the color of the sky or air. Light, I should say, was white; the absence of it, black. Hold up to the light a perfectly opaque body and you get black, but hold up to it the least opaque body, such as air, and you get blue. Hence you may say that blue is light seen through a veil.

March 25. Again I walk in the rain and see the rich yellowish browns of the moist banks. Surely russet is not the name which describes the fields and hillsides now, whether wet or dry. There is not red enough in it. I do not know a better name for this (when wet) yellowish brown than "tawny." On the south side of these warm hills, it may perhaps be called one of the fawn-colors, *i.e.* brown inclining to green. Much of this peculiar yellowish color on the surface of the Clamshell plain is due to a little curled sedge or grass growing at short intervals, loosely covering the ground (with green mosses intermixed) in little tufts like curled hair.

Day before yesterday, in clear, dry weather, we had pale-brown or fawn-colored earth, *i.e.*, a dry, withered grass blade; to-day, a more yellow brown or tawny, the same being wet. The wet brings out an

agreeable yellow light, as if the sun were shining through a mist on it. The earth is more truly russet in November, when there is more redness left in the withered and withering vegetation. Such is the change in the color of the bare portions of the earth (*i.e.* bare of trees and bushes) produced by rain. Also the oak leaves are much redder. In fair weather the light color of these objects was simply a light reflected from them, originating in the sun and sky; now it is a more proper and inward light, which attracts and confines our attention to moist sward itself.

A snipe flies away from the moist Clamshell shore, uttering its *cr-a-ack c-r-r-rack.*

I thought the other day, How we enjoy a warm and pleasant day at this season! We dance like gnats in the sun.

The color of spring hitherto, — I should say that in dry weather it was fawn-colored, in wet more yellowish or tawny. When wet, the green of the fawn is supplied by the lichens and the mosses.

March 28. P.M. — Paddle to the Bedford line.

It is now high time to look for arrowheads, etc. I spend many hours every spring gathering the crop which the melting snow and rain have washed bare. It is one of the regular pursuits of the spring.

I have not decided whether I had better publish my experience in searching for arrowheads in three volumes, with plates and an index, or try to compress it into one. These durable implements seem to have been suggested to the Indian mechanic with a view to my entertainment in a succeeding period. After all the labor expended on it, the bolt may have been shot but once perchance, and the shaft which was devoted to it decayed, and there lay the arrowhead, sinking into the ground, awaiting me. They lie all over the hills with like expectation, and in due time the husbandman is sent, and, tempted by the promise of corn or rye, he plows the land and turns them up to my view. Many as I have found, methinks the last one gives me about the same delight that the first did. Some time or other, you would say, it had rained arrowheads, for they lie all over the surface of America. You cannot tell the third-hand ones (for they are all second-hand) from the others, such is their persistent out-of-door durability; for they were chiefly made to be lost. They are sown,

like a grain that is slow to germinate, broadcast over the earth. Like the dragon's teeth which bore a crop of soldiers, these bear crops of philosophers and poets, and the same seed is just as good to plant again. It is a stone fruit. Each one yields me a thought. I come nearer to the maker of it than if I found his bones. His bones would not prove any wit that wielded them, such as this work of his bones does. It is humanity inscribed on the face of the earth, patent to my eyes as soon as the snow goes off, not hidden away in some crypt or grave or under a pyramid. No disgusting mummy, but a clean stone, the best symbol or letter that could have been transmitted to me.

The Red Man, his mark

At every step I see it, and I can easily supply the "Tahatawan" or "Mantatuket" that might have been written if he had had a clerk. It is no single inscription on a particular rock, but a footprint — rather a mindprint — left everywhere, and altogether illegible.

Time will soon destroy the works of famous painters and sculptors, but the Indian arrowhead will balk his efforts and Eternity will have to come to his aid. They are not fossil bones, but, as it were, fossil thoughts, forever reminding me of the mind that shaped them. I would fain know that I am treading in the tracks of human game, — that I am on the trail of mind, — and these little reminders never fail to set me right.

It is a recommendation that they are so inobvious, — that they occur only to the eye and thought that chances to be directed toward them. When you pick up an arrowhead and put it in your pocket, it may say: "Eh, you think you have got me, do you? But I shall wear a hole in your pocket at last, or if you put me in your cabinet, your heir or great-grandson will forget me or throw me out the window directly, or when the house falls I shall drop into the cellar, and there I shall lie quite at home again. Ready to be *found* again, eh? Perhaps some new red man that is to come will fit me to a shaft and make me do his bidding for a bow-shot. What reck I?"

I suspect it will be found that there is really some advantage in large birds of passage flying in the wedge form and cleaving their way through the air, — that they really do overcome its resistance best in this way, — and perchance the direction and strength of the

wind determine the comparative length of the two sides.

The great gulls fly generally up or down the river valley, cutting off the bends of the river, and so do these geese. These fly sympathizing with the river, — a stream in the air, soon lost in the distant sky.

We see these geese swimming and flying at midday and when it is perfectly fair.

If you scan the horizon at this season of the year you are very likely to detect a small flock of dark ducks moving with rapid wing athwart the sky, or see the undulating line of migrating geese against the sky.

How charming the contrast of land and water, especially a temporary island in the flood, with its new and tender shores of waving outline, so withdrawn yet habitable, above all if it rises into a hill high above the water and contrasting with it the more, and if that hill is wooded, suggesting wildness! Our vernal lakes have a beauty to my mind which they would not possess if they were more permanent. But this particular phase of beauty is fleeting. In a few days, perchance, these lakes will have all run away to the sea. In many arrangements there is a wearisome monotony. We know too well what we shall have for our Saturday's dinner, but each day's feast in Nature's year is a surprise to us and adapted to our appetite and spirits. Her motive is not economy but satisfaction.

March 31. It will show how our prejudices interfere with our perception of color, to state that yesterday morning, after making a fire in the kitchen cooking-stove, as I sat over it I thought I saw a little bit of red or scarlet flannel on a chink near a bolt-head on the stove, and I tried to pick it out, — while I was a little surprised that I did not smell it burning. It was merely the reflection of the flame of the fire through a chink, on the dark stove. This showed me what the true color of the flame was, but when I knew what this was, it was not very easy to perceive it again. It appeared now more yellowish. I think that my senses made the truest report the first time.

It is a very windy afternoon, wind northwest, and at length a dark cloud rises on that side, evidently of a windy structure, a dusky mass with lighter intervals, like a parcel of brushes lying side by side, — a

parcel of “mare’s-tails” perhaps. It winds up with a flurry of rain.

April 3. Men’s minds run so much on work and money that the mass instantly associate all literary labor with a pecuniary reward. They are mainly curious to know how much money the lecturer or author gets for his work. They think that the naturalist takes so much pains to collect plants or animals because he is paid for it. An Irishman who saw me in the fields making a minute in my note-book took it for granted that I was casting up my wages and actually inquired what they came to, as if he had never dreamed of any other use for writing. I might have quoted to him that the wages of sin is death, as the most pertinent answer. “What do you get for lecturing now?” I am occasionally asked. It is the more amusing since I only lecture about once a year out of my native town, often not at all; so that I might as well, if my objects were merely pecuniary, give up the business. or

Vide.

Vide Dec. 3.

Melvin tells me that he saw a thousand feeding a long time in the Great Meadows, — he thinks on the seeds of the wool-grass (!!), — about same time.

April 12. I look again at the meadow-crust carried off by the ice. There is one by the railroad bridge, say three rods by one, covered with button-bushes and willows. Another, some five rods by three, at the south end of Potter Swamp Meadow, also covered densely with button-bushes, etc. It is far from the river, by the edge of the wood. Another, and the most interesting one, lies up high some thirty rods north of this near the wood-side and fifteen rods from the river. I measure it with a tape. It is rudely triangular and about four rods on a side, though the sides are longer on the convex line. As well as the other, it is from one to three feet thick and very densely covered with button-bushes, with a few black and other willows and late roses from four to seven feet high. As dense and impassable as any kind of thicket that we have, and there are, besides, countless great yellow and white lily and pontederia roots in it. It is a large and densely bushy island in the meadow. It would surprise any one to behold it.

Suppose that you were to find in the morning such a slice of the earth's crust with its vegetation dropped in your front yard, if it could contain it. I think we should not soon hear the last of it. It is an island such as might almost satisfy Sancho Panza's desires. It is a forest, in short, and not a very small one either. It is Birnam wood come to Dunsinane. It contained at least eight square rods.

Such revolutions can take place and none but the proprietor of the meadow notice it, for the traveller passing within sight does not begin to suspect that the bushy island which he sees in the meadow has floated from elsewhere, or if he saw it when on its voyage, he would not know it for a voyager. In one year all the raw edge is concealed, and the vegetation thus transplanted does not appear to find it out. These must have been carried off about the 16th of March or when the river broke up, perhaps in that strong southwest wind of the 19th. The ice, being eighteen or twenty inches thick and having ten thousand strong handles to take hold by, aided too often by the lightness of the frozen meadow, can easily lift these masses, and if there were rocks imbedded in them, would move them also.

The present islands, bushy or wooded, in the meadow have no doubt commonly had this origin. The soil is there doubled, and so elevated, and the plants set out at the same time. When the flood comes with icy hands you have got a mighty lifter at work. Black willows ten feet high and these four or five rods of button-bushes are all taken up together with their soil and carried upright and without jarring to a new locality half a mile or more distant.

April 15. The bay-wing now sings — the first I have been able to hear. It comes to revive with its song the dry uplands and pastures and grass-fields about the skirts of villages. If you yield for a moment to the impressions of sense, you hear some bird giving expression to its happiness in a pleasant strain. We are provided with singing birds and with ears to hear them. What an institution that!

Consider how much is annually spent on the farmer's life: the beauty of his abode, which has inspired poets since the world was made; the hundreds of delicate and beautiful flowers scattered profusely under his feet and all around him, as he walks or drives his team afield, — he cannot put his spade into uncultivated, nor into

much cultivated, ground without disturbing some of them; a hundred or two of equally beautiful birds to sing to him morning and evening, and some at noonday, a good part of the year; a perfect sky arched over him, a perfect carpet spread under him, etc., etc.!

April 17. The air which was so lately void and silent begins to resound as it were with the breathing of a myriad fellow-creatures, and even the unhappy man, on the principle that misery loves company, is soothed by this infinite din of neighbors. I have listened for the notes of various birds, and now, in this faint hum of bees, I hear as it were the first twittering of the bird Summer.

A wood tortoise on bank; first seen, water so high.

April 21. Setting pines all day in R.W.E.'s Wyman lot. This makes two and a half days, with two men and a horse and cart to help me. We have set some four hundred trees at fifteen feet apart diamondwise, covering some two acres. I set every one with my own hand, while another digs the holes where I indicate, and occasionally helps the other dig up the trees. We prefer bushy pines only one foot high which grow in open or pasture land, yellow-looking trees which are used to the sun, instead of the spindling dark-green ones from the shade of the woods. There are a great many more of these plants to be had along the edges and in the midst of any white pine wood than one would suppose.

Got about one hundred and twenty from George Heywood's land and the rest from the Brister lot and this Wyman lot itself.

R.W.E. has bought a quarter of a pound of white pine seed at $4.00 per pound.

We could not dig up pines on the north side of the wood on the Brister lot to-day on account of frost! Though we had quite forgotten it, and put the winter so far behind us.

April 22. When setting the pines at Walden the last three days, wandering thoughts visited me, which I have now forgotten. My senses were busily suggesting them, though I was unconscious of their origin. *E.g.*, I first *consciously* found myself entertaining the thought of a carriage on the road, and directly after I was aware that I

heard it. No doubt I had heard it before, or rather my ears had, but I was quite unconscious of it, — it was not a fact of my then state of existence; yet such was the force of habit, it affected my thoughts nevertheless, so double, if not treble, even, are we. Sometimes the senses bring us information quicker than we can receive it. Perhaps these thoughts which run in ruts by themselves while we are engaged in some routine may be called automatic. I distinctly entertained the idea of a carriage, without the slightest suspicion how it had originated or been suggested to my mind. I have no doubt at all that my ears had heard it, but my mind, just then preoccupied, had refused to attend to it. This suggests that most, if not all, indeed, of our ideas may be due some sort of sensuous impression of which we may or may not be conscious.

April 24. There is a season for everything, and we do not notice a given phenomenon except at that season, if, indeed, it can be called the same phenomenon at any other season. There is a time to watch the ripples on Ripple Lake, to look for arrowheads, to study the rocks and lichens, a time to walk on sandy deserts; and the observer of nature must improve these seasons as much as the farmer his. So boys fly kites and play ball or hawkie at particular times all over the State. A wise man will know what game to play to-day, and play it. We must not be governed by rigid rules, as by the almanac, but let the season rule us. The moods and thoughts of man are revolving just as steadily and incessantly as nature's. Nothing must be postponed. Take time by the forelock. Now or never! You must live in the present, launch yourself on every wave, find your eternity in each moment. Take any other course, and life will be a succession of regrets. There is no world for the penitent and regretful.

Dr. B. asked me what I found that was new these days, if I was still looking after the beautiful. I told him yes, and that I wished to hire two or three good observers.

April 29. 7 A.M. — To Walden, and set one hundred larch trees from England, all two years from seed, about nine inches high, just begun to leaf.

May 1. We accuse savages of worshipping only the bad spirit, or devil, though they may distinguish both a good and a bad; but they regard only that one which they fear and worship the devil only. We too are savages in this, doing precisely the same thing. This occurred to me yesterday as I sat in the woods admiring the beauty of the blue butterfly. We are not chiefly interested in birds and insects, for example, as they are ornamental to the earth and cheering to man, but we spare the lives of the former only on condition that they eat more grubs than they do cherries, and the only account of the insects which the State encourages is of the "Insects *Injurious* to Vegetation." We too admit both a good and a bad spirit, but we worship chiefly the bad spirit, whom we fear. We do not think first of the good but of the harm things will do us.

The catechism says that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, which of course is applicable mainly to God as seen in his works. Yet the only account of its beautiful insects — butterflies, etc. — which God has made and set before us which the State ever thinks of spending any money on is the account of those which are injurious to vegetation! This is the way we glorify God and enjoy him forever. Come out here and behold a thousand painted butterflies and other beautiful insects which people the air, then go to the libraries and see what kind of prayer and glorification of God is there recorded.

Science is inhuman. Things seen with a microscope begin to be insignificant. So described, they are as monstrous as if they should be magnified a thousand diameters. Suppose I should see and describe men and houses and trees and birds as if they were a thousand times larger than they are!

Very warm. See hundreds of turtles. All up and down our river meadows their backs are shining in the sun to-day. It is a turtle day.

As we sat on the steep hillside south of Nut Meadow Brook Crossing, we noticed a remarkable whirlwind on a small scale, which carried up the oak leaves from that Island copse in the meadow. The oak leaves now hang thinly and are very dry and light, and these small whirlwinds, which seem to be occasioned by the sudden hot and calm weather (like whirlpools or dimples in a smooth stream), wrench them off, and up they go, somewhat spirally, in countless

flocks like birds, with a rustling sound; and higher and higher into the clear blue deeps they rise above our heads, till they are fairly lost to sight, looking, when last seen, mere light specks against the blue, like stars by day, in fact. I could distinguish some, I have no doubt, five or six hundred feet high at least, but if I looked aside a moment they were lost. The largest oak leaves looked not bigger than a five-cent-piece. These were drifting eastward, — to descend where? Methought that, instead of decaying on the earth or being consumed by fire, these were being translated and would soon be taken in at the windows of heaven. I had never observed this phenomenon so remarkable. The flight of the leaves. This was quite local, and it was comparatively still where we sat a few rods on one side. Thousands went up together in a rustling flock.

May 4. Wednesday. P.M. — To Lee's Cliff on foot.

This the fourth warm day. Looking up through this soft and warm southwest wind, I notice the conspicuous shadow of Middle Conantum Cliff, now at 3 P.M., and elsewhere the shade of a few apple trees, — their trunks and boughs. It is remarkable that shadow should only be noticed now when decidedly warm weather comes, though before the leaves have expanded, *i.e.*, when it begins to be grateful to our senses. This first shadow is as noticeable and memorable as a flower. I observe annually the first shadow of this cliff. When we begin to pass from sunshine into shade for our refreshment; when we look on shade with yearning as on a friend. That cliff and its shade suggests dark eyes and eyelashes and overhanging brows. Few things are more suggestive of heat than this first shade, though now we see only the tracery of tree-boughs on the greening grass and the sandy street. This I notice at the same time with the first bumblebee, when the *Rana palustris* purrs in the meadow generally, the white willow and aspen display their tender green full of yellow light, the particolored warbler is first heard over the swamp, the woodchuck, who loves warmth, is out on the hillsides in numbers, the jingle of the chip-bird is incessantly heard, the thrasher sings incessantly, the first cricket is heard in a warm rocky place, and that scent of vernal flowers is in the air.

Life out of doors begins.

May 5. Thursday. Red-wings fly in flocks yet. Near the oak beyond Jarvis land, a yellow butterfly, — how hot! this meteor dancing through the air. Also see a *scalloped*-edge dark-colored butterfly resting on the trunk of a tree, where, both by its form and color, its wings being closed, it resembles a bit of bark, or rather a lichen. Evidently their forms and colors, especially of the under sides of their wings, are designed to conceal them when at rest with their wings closed.

The wilderness, in the eyes of our forefathers, was a vast and howling place or *space*, where a man might roam naked of house and most other defense, exposed to wild beasts and wilder men. They who went to war with the Indians and French were said to have been "out," and the wounded and missing who at length returned after a fight were said to have "got in."

June 3. Friday. P.M. — Up Assabet.

A large yellow butterfly (somewhat Harris *Papilio Asterias* like but not *black*-winged) three and a half to four inches in expanse. Pale-yellow, the front wings crossed by three or four black bars; rear, or outer edge, of all wings widely bordered with black, and some yellow behind it; a short black tail to each hind one, with two blue spots in front of two red-brown ones on the tail.

Nighthawk, two eggs, fresh. Quail heard.

June 24. The 22d, 23d, and 24th, I have been surveying the bridges and river from Heard's Bridge to the Billerica dam.

The testimony of the farmers, etc., is that the river thirty to fifty years ago was much lower in the summer than now. Deacon Richard Heard spoke of playing when a boy on the river side of the bushes where the pads are, and of wading with great ease at Heard's Bridge, and I hear that one Rice (of Wayland or Sudbury), an old man, remembers galloping his horse through the meadows to the edge of the river. The meadow just above the causeway on the Wayland side was spoken of as particularly valuable. Colonel David Heard, who accompanied me and is best acquainted of any with the details of the controversy, — has worked at clearing out the river (I think about

1820), — said that he did not know of a rock in the river from the falls near the Framingham line to perhaps the rear of Hubbard's in Concord.

July 4. P.M. — To Fair Haven Pond, measuring depth of river.

As you walk beside a ditch or brook, you see the frogs which you alarm launching themselves from a considerable distance into the brook. They spring considerably upward, so as to clear all intervening obstacles, and seem to know pretty well where the brook is. Yet no doubt they often strike, to their chagrin and perhaps sorrow, on a pebbly shore or rock. Their noses must be peculiarly organized to resist accidents of this kind, and allow them to cast themselves thus heedlessly into the air, trusting to fall into the water, for they come down nose foremost. A frog reckons that he knows where the brook is. I shudder for them when I see their soft, unshielded proboscis falling thus heedlessly on whatever may be beneath.

July 7. I learn from measuring on Baldwin's second map that the river (*i.e.* speaking of that part below Framingham) is much the straightest in the lower part of its course, or from Ball's Hill to the Dam.

It winds most in the broad meadows. The greatest meander is in the Sudbury meadows.

From upper end of Sudbury Canal to Sherman's Bridge direct is 558 rods (1 mile 238 rods); by thread of river, 1000 rods (3 miles 40 rods), or nearly twice as far.

But, though meandering, it is straighter in its general course than would be believed. These nearly twenty-three miles in length (or 16 + direct) are contained within a breadth of two miles twenty-six rods; *i.e.*, so much it takes to meander in. It can be plotted by the scale of one thousand feet to an inch on a sheet of paper seven feet one and one quarter inches long by eleven inches wide.

July 9. I see, at length, where the floated meadow (on Hubbard's meadow) came from last spring, — from opposite Bittern Cliff, and some below. There is a pond created in the meadow there, some five

rods by four and three to three and a half feet deep, water being eleven and a half inches above summer level. So much of the meadow which has been mowed is thus converted into a pool.

We are accustomed to refer changes in the shore and the channel to the very gradual influence of the current washing away and depositing matter which was held in suspension, but certainly in many parts of our river the ice which moves these masses of bushes and meadow is a much more important agent. It will alter the map of the river in one year. The whole shore for forty rods on the east side below Bittern Cliff was stripped of its button-bushes and willows, etc., etc., last spring, and as I floated over the river there to-day, I could not at first account for the remarkable breadth of the river there, like a bay. I got a very novel impression of the size of the river, though it is now low water. In fact the width of the river has been increased fully three or four rods for more than forty rods in length, and is three to four feet deep on that side now. You cannot tell, of any clump or row of button-bushes, whether it grew up where it stands or was thus set out there.

July 11. The position of the button-bushes determines the width of the river, no less than the width or depth of the water determines the position of the button-bushes. We call that all river between the button-bushes, though sometimes they may have landed or sprung up in a regular brink fashion three or four rods further from, or nearer to, the channel.

That mass (described on the 9th, seen the 10th) in the Wayland meadows above Sherman's Bridge was, I think, the largest mass drifted or growing at all on that great meadow. So this transplantation is not on an insignificant scale when compared with the whole body that grows by our river.

I hear that Mr. and Mrs. Such-a-one are "going to the beach" for six weeks. What a failure and defeat this suggests their lives to be! Here they live, perchance, the rest of the year, trying to do as they would be done by and to exercise charity of all kinds, and now at last, the parents not having realized their aspirations in the married state, and the misses now begun to be old maids without having found any match at all, succumb and slope to the beach for six

weeks. Yet, so far from being felt to be a proof of failure in the lives of these Christians, it is thought to be the culminating-point of their activity. At length their season of activity is arrived, and they go to the beach, they energetically keep cool. They bathe daily and are blown on by the sea-breeze. This keeps their courage up for the labors of the year. This recess which the Sabbath-school teachers take!

July 22. For the last mile above the Falls the river becomes rocky, the rocks gradually increasing in number, until at the Falls its bed is crowded with them. Some of the rocks are curiously water-worn. They are, as usual in our black river, almost as black as ink, — the parts much submerged, — and I notice that bricks and white crockery on the bottom acquire the same color from the water, as if painted black. The water of this river is a black paint-brush which coats all things with fast colors. Rocks half a dozen feet in diameter which were originally of the usual lumpish form are worn thus by the friction of the pebbles, etc., washed against them by the stream at high water. Several of them have this peculiar sheaf-like form; and black as ink. But, though evidently worn into this form by the rush of water, they are by no means worn smooth, but are as rough as a grater, such being their composition.

I was surprised to see on the rocks, densely covering them, though only in the midst of the fall, where was the swiftest water, a regular seaweed, growing just like rockweed and of the same olive-green color,— "*Podostemon Ceratophyllum*, River-weed," — still in bloom, though chiefly gone to seed. Gray says it is "attached to loose stones," and Torrey says it "adheres to pebbles," but here it covered the rocks under water in the swiftest place only, and was partly uncovered by the fall of the water. I found, in what I gathered, a little pout which had taken refuge in it. Though the botanist, in obedience to his rules, puts it among phænogamous plants, I should not hesitate to associate it with the rockweed. It is the rockweed of our river. I have never seen it elsewhere in the river, though possibly it grows at the factory or other swift places. It seemed as if our river had there for a moment anticipated the sea, suffered a sea-change, mimicked the great ocean stream. I did not see it a few rods above or below,

where the water is more sluggish. So far as I know, then, it grows only in the swiftest water, and there is only one place, and that the Falls, in Concord River where it can grow. A careless observer might confound it with the rockweed of the sea. It covers the rocks in exactly the same manner, and when I tore it off, it brought more or less of the thin, scaly surface of the rocks with it. It is a foretaste of the sea. It is very interesting and remarkable that at this one point we have in our river a plant which so perfectly represents the rockweed of the seashore. This is from four to eight or nine inches long. It has the peculiar strong fresh-water scent.

It is a question if the river has as much created the shoal places as found them.

The presence or absence of weeds at a given shallowness is a good gauge of the rapidity of the current. At the Fordway they do not grow where it is only two feet on an average, owing to the swiftness of the current (as well as stoniness), and in the very swiftest and narrowest part of the Falls occurs one species, the podostemon, which I have not found in any other part of the river.

It is remarkable how the river, even from its very source to its mouth, runs with great bends or zigzags regularly recurring and including many smaller ones, first northerly, then northeasterly, growing more and more simple and direct as it descends, like a tree; as if a mighty current had once filled the valley of the river, and meandered in it according to the same law that this small stream does in its own meadows.

A river of this character can hardly be said to fall at all: it rather runs over the extremity of its trough, being filled to overflowing. If, after flowing twenty miles, all the water has got to rise as high as it was when it started, or rather if it has got to pass over a bottom which is as high as that was where it started, it cannot be said to have gained anything or have fallen at all. It has not got down to a lower level. You do not produce a fall in the channel or bottom of a trough by cutting a notch in its edge. The bottom may lose as much as the surface gains.

If our river had been dry a thousand years, it would be difficult to *guess* even where its channel had been without a spirit level. I should expect to find waterworn stones and a few muddy pools and small

swamps.

July 23. P.M. — To Walden.

Going through Thrush Alley and beyond, I am pestered by flies about my head, — *not till now* (though I may have said so before). They are perfect imps, for they gain nothing for their pains and only pester me. They do not for the most part attempt to settle on me, never sting me. Yet they seriously interfere with walking in the wood. Though I may keep a leafy twig constantly revolving about my head, they too constantly revolve, nevertheless, and appear to avoid it successfully. They seem to do it for deviltry and sport.

July 28. The black willows are the children of the river. They do not grow far from the water, not on the steep banks which the river is wearing into, not on the unconverted shore, but on the bars and banks which the river has made. A bank may soon get to be too high for it. It grows and thrives on the river-made shores and banks, and is a servant which the river uses to build up and defend its banks and isles. It is married to the river.

July 30. A.M. — On river to ascertain the rate of the current.

I see more moss(?)-covered rocks on the bottom and some rising quite near the surface, revealed in the sunny water, and little suspected before. They are so completely covered with moss-like weeds or tresses that you do not see them, — like the heads of mermaids. They sleep there concealed under these long tresses on the bottom, suggesting a new kind of antiquity. There is nothing to wear on and polish them there. They do not bear the paint rubbed off from any boat. Though unsuspected by the oldest fisher, they have eyed Concord for centuries through their watery veil without ever parting their tresses to look at her.

Trying the current there, there being a very faint, chiefly side, wind, commonly not enough to be felt on the cheek or to ripple the water, — what would be called by most a calm, — my bottle floats about seventy-five feet in forty minutes, and then, a very faint breeze beginning to drive it back, I cannot wait to see when it will go a hundred. It is, in short, an exceedingly feeble current, almost a

complete standstill. My boat is altogether blown up-stream, even by this imperceptible breath. Indeed, you can in such a case feel the pulse of our river only in the shallowest places, where it preserves some slight passage between the weeds. It faints and gives up the ghost in deeper places on the least adverse wind, and you would presume it dead a thousand times, if you did not apply the nicest tests, such as a feather to the nostrils of a drowned man. It is a mere string of lakes which have not made up their minds to be rivers. As near as possible to a standstill.

Yet by sinking a strawberry box beneath the surface I found that there was a slight positive current there, that when a chip went pretty fast up-stream in this air, the same with the box sunk one foot and tied to it went slowly down, at three feet deep or more went faster than when the box was sunk only one foot. The water flowed faster down at three feet depth than at one, there where it was about seven feet deep, and though the surface for several inches deep may be flowing up in the wind, the weeds at bottom will all be slanted down. Indeed, I suspect that at four or five feet depth the weeds will be slanted downward in the strongest wind that blows up, in that the current is *always* creeping along downward underneath.

Yet the river in the middle of Concord is swifter than above or below, and if Concord people are slow in consequence of their river's influence, the people of Sudbury and Carlisle should be slower still.

Aug. 3. Since our river is so easily affected by wind, the fact that its general course is northeast and that the prevailing winds in summer are southwest is very favorable to its rapid drainage at that season.

If by fall you mean a swifter place occasioned by the bottom below for a considerable distance being lower than the bottom above for a considerable distance, I do not know of any such between Pelham Pond and the Falls. These swifter places are produced by a contraction of the stream, — chiefly by the elevation of the bottom at that point, — also by the narrowing of the stream.

The depths are very slight compared with the lengths. The average depth of this twenty-five miles is about one seventeen thousandth the

length; so that if this portion of the river were laid down on a map four feet long the depth would be about equal to the thickness of ordinary letter paper, of which it takes three hundred and fifty to an inch. Double the thickness of the letter paper, and it will contain the deep holes which are so unfathomed and mysterious, not to say bottomless, to the swimmers and fishermen.

The haymakers are quite busy on the Great Meadows, it being drier than usual. It being remote from public view, some of them work in their shirts or half naked.

AUG. 5. See many yellowed peach leaves and butternut leaves, which have fallen in the wind yesterday and the rain to-day.

The lowest dark-colored rocks near the water at the stone bridge (*i.e.* part of the bridge) are prettily marked with (apparently) mosses, which have adhered to them at higher water and now withered and bleached on, — in fact are transferred, — and by their whitish color are seen very distinctly on the dark stone and have a very pretty effect. They are quite like sea-mosses in their delicacy, though not equally fine with many. These are very permanently and closely fastened to the rock. This is a phenomenon of low water. Also see them transferred to wood, as pieces of bridges.

Aug. 9. Minott says that some used to wonder much at the windings of the Mill Brook and could not succeed in accounting for them, but his Uncle Ben Prescott settled the difficulty by saying that a great eel came out of Flint's Pond and rooted its way through to the river and so made the channel of the Mill Brook.

Aug. 14. When I reached the upper end of this weedy bar, at about 3 P.M., this warm day, I noticed some light-colored object in mid-river, near the other end of the bar. At first I thought of some large stake or board standing amid the weeds there, then of a fisherman in a brown holland sack, referring him to the shore beyond. Supposing it the last, I floated nearer and nearer till I saw plainly enough the motions of the person, whoever it was, and that it was no stake. Looking through my glass thirty or forty rods off, I thought certainly that I saw C., who had just bathed, making signals to me with his

towel, for I referred the object to the shore twenty rods further. I saw his motions as he wiped himself, — the movements of his elbows and his towel. Then I saw that the person was nearer and therefore smaller, that it stood on the sand-bar in mid-stream in shallow water and must be some maiden in a bathing-dress, — for it was the color of brown holland web, — and a very peculiar kind of dress it seemed. But about this time I discovered with my naked eye that it was a blue heron standing in very shallow water amid the weeds of the bar and pluming itself. I had not noticed its legs at all, and its head, neck, and wings, being constantly moving, I had mistaken for arms, elbows, and towel of a bather, and when it stood stiller its shapely body looked like a peculiar bathing-dress.

Suddenly comes a second, flying low, and alights on the bar yet nearer to me, almost high and dry. Adjutant they were to my idea of the river, these two winged men.

You have not seen our weedy river, you do not know the significance of its weedy bars, until you have seen the blue heron wading and pluming itself on it. I see that it was made for these shallows, and they for it. Now the heron is gone from the weedy shoal, the scene appears incomplete. Of course, the heron has sounded the depth of the water on every bar of the river that is fordable to it. The water there is not so many feet deep, but so many heron's tibiæ. Instead of a foot rule you should use a heron's leg for a measure. If you would know the depth of the water on these few shoalest places of Musketaquid, ask the blue heron that wades and fishes there. In some places a heron can wade across.

How long we may have gazed on a particular scenery and think that we have seen and known it, when, at length, some bird or quadruped comes and takes possession of it before our eyes, and imparts to it a wholly new character. The heron uses these shallows as I cannot. I give them up to him.

By a gauge set in the river I can tell about what time the millers on the stream and its tributaries go to work in the morning and leave off at night, and also can distinguish the Sundays, since it is the day on which the river does not rise, but falls. If I had lost the day of the week, I could recover it by a careful examination of the river. It lies

by in the various mill-ponds on Sunday and keeps the Sabbath. What its *persuasion* is, is another question.

Aug. 26. The first fall rain is a memorable occasion, when the river is raised and cooled, and the first crop of sere and yellow leaves falls. The air is cleared; the dogdays are over; sun-sparkles are seen on water; crickets sound more distinct; saw-grass reveals its spikes in the shorn fields; sparrows and bobolinks fly in flocks more and more. Farmers feel encouraged about their late potatoes and corn. Mill-wheels that have rested for want of water begin to revolve again. Meadow-haying is over.

The first significant event (for a long time) was the frost of the 17th. That was the beginning of winter, the first summons to summer. Some of her forces succumbed to it. The second event was the rain of yesterday.

Aug. 27. I was telling Jonas Potter of my lameness yesterday, whereat he says that he "broke" both his feet when he was young, — I imagined how they looked through his wrinkled cowhides, — and he did not get over it for four years, nay, even now he sometimes felt pains in them before a storm.

All our life, *i.e.* the living part of it, is a persistent dreaming awake. The boy does not camp in his father's yard. That would not be adventurous enough, there are too many sights and sounds to disturb the illusion; so he marches off twenty or thirty miles and there pitches his tent, where stranger inhabitants are tamely sleeping in their beds just like his father at home, and camps in *their* yard, perchance. But then he dreams uninterruptedly that he is anywhere but where he is.

I often see yarrow with a delicate pink tint, very distinct from the common pure-white ones.

The first notice I have that grapes are ripening is by the rich scent at evening from my own native vine against the house, when I go to the pump, though I thought there were none on it.

The children have done bringing huckleberries to sell for nearly a week.

Aug. 28. P.M. — To Walden.

A cool day; wind northwest. Need a half-thick coat. Thus gradually we withdraw into winter quarters. It is a clear, flashing air, and the shorn fields now look bright and yellowish and cool. You feel the less inclined to bathing this weather, and bathe from principle, when boys, who bathe for fun, omit it.

I saw a month or more ago where pine-needles which had fallen (old ones) stood erect on low leaves of the forest floor, having stuck in, or passed through, them. They stuck up as a fork which falls from the table. Yet you would not think that they fell with sufficient force.

Aug. 31. P.M. — To Fair Haven Hill.

Was caught in five successive showers, and took refuge in Hayden's barn, under the cliffs, and under a tree.

There was another shower in the night (at 9 P.M.), making the sixth after 1.30 P.M. It was evidently one cloud thus broken into six parts, with some broad intervals of clear sky and fair weather. It would have been convenient for us, if it had been printed on the first cloud, "Five more to come!" Such a shower has a history which has never been written. One would like to know how and where the cloud first gathered, what lands and water it passed over and watered, and where and when it ceased to rain and was finally dissipated.

Sept. 1. If you would study the birds now, go where their food is, *i.e.* the berries, especially to the wild black cherries, elder-berries, poke berries, mountain-ash berries, and ere long the barberries, and for pigeons the acorns. We sit near the tree and listen to the now unusual sounds of these birds, and from time to time one or two come dashing from out the sky toward this tree, till, seeing us, they whirl, disappointed, and perhaps alight on some neighboring twigs and wait till we are gone. The cherry-birds and robins seem to know the locality of every wild cherry in the town. You are as sure to find them on them now, as bees and butterflies on the thistles. If we stay long, they go off with a fling, to some other cherry tree, which they know of but we do not.

Bought a pair of shoes the other day, and, observing that as usual they were only wooden-pegged at the toes, I required the seller to put

in an extra row of iron pegs there while I waited for them. So he called to his boy to bring those zinc pegs, but I insisted on iron pegs and no zinc ones. He gave me considerable advice on the subject of shoes, but I suggested that even the wearer of shoes, of whom I was one, had an opportunity to learn some of their qualities. I have learned to respect my own opinion in this matter. As I do not use blacking and the seller often throws in a box of blacking when I buy a pair of shoes, they accumulate on my hands.

You must be careful not to eat too many nuts. I one winter met a young man whose face was broken out into large pimples and sores, and when I inquired what was the matter, he answered that he and his wife were fond of shagbarks, and therefore he had bought a bushel of them, and they spent their winter evenings eating them, and this was the consequence.

SEPT. 3. A strong wind, which blows down much fruit. R.W.E. sits surrounded by choice windfall pears.

Sept. 8. The 7th, 8th, and 9th, the State muster is held here. The only observation I have to make is that Concord is fuller of dust and more uninhabitable than I ever knew it to be before. Not only the walls, fences, and houses are thickly covered with dust, but the fields and meadows and bushes; and the pads in the river for half a mile from the village are white with it. From a mile or two distant you see a cloud of dust over the town and extending thence to the muster-field. I went to the store the other day to buy a bolt for our front door, for, as I told the storekeeper, the Governor was coming here. "Aye," said he, "and the Legislature too." "Then I will take two bolts," said I. He said that there had been a steady demand for bolts and locks of late, for our protectors were coming.

Sept. 13. I remember my earliest going a-graping. (It was a wonder that we ever hit upon the ripe season.) There was more fun in finding and eying the big purple clusters high on the trees and climbing to them than in eating them. We used to take care not to chew the skins long lest they should make our mouths sore.

Some haws of the scarlet thorn are really a splendid fruit to look

at now and far from inedible. They are not only large, but their beauty is enhanced by the persistent calyx relieving the clear scarlet of the fruit.

There are various degrees of living out-of-doors. You must be outdoors long, early and late, and travel far and earnestly, in order to perceive the phenomena of the day. Even then much will escape you. Few live so far outdoors as to hear the first geese go over.

Sept. 16. Grasshoppers have been very abundant in dry fields for two or three weeks. Sophia walked through the Depot Field a fortnight ago, and when she got home picked fifty or sixty from her skirts, — for she wore hoops and crinoline. Would not this be a good way to clear a field of them, — to send a bevy of fashionably dressed ladies across a field and leave them to clean their skirts when they get home? It would supplant anything at the patent office, and the motive power is cheap.

I am invited to take some party of ladies or gentlemen on an excursion, — to walk or sail, or the like, — but by all kinds of evasions I omit it, and am thought to be rude and unaccommodating therefore. They do not consider that the wood-path and the boat are my studio, where I maintain a sacred solitude and cannot admit promiscuous company. I will see them occasionally in an evening or at the table, however. They do not think of taking a child away from its school to go a-huckleberrying with them. Why should not I, then, have my school and school hours to be respected? Ask me for a certain number of dollars if you will, but do not ask me for my afternoons.

Sept. 18. Dr. Bartlett handed me a paper to-day, desiring me to subscribe for a statue to Horace Mann. I declined, and said that I thought a man ought not any more to take up room in the world after he was dead. We shall lose one advantage of a man's dying if we are to have a statue of him forthwith. This is probably meant to be an opposition statue to that of Webster. At this rate they will crowd the streets with them. A man will have to add a clause to his will, "No statue to be made of me." It is very offensive to my imagination to see the dying stiffen into statues at this rate. We should wait till their

bones begin to crumble — and then avoid too near a likeness to the living.

Sept. 19. See many yellow butterflies in the road this very pleasant day after the rain of yesterday. One flutters across between the horse and the wagon safely enough, though it looks as if it would be run down.

P. Turnus?

Sept. 24. I have many affairs to attend to, and feel hurried these days. Great works of art have endless leisure for a background, as the universe has space. Time stands still while they are created. The artist cannot be in hurry. The earth moves round the sun with inconceivable rapidity, and yet the surface of the lake is not ruffled by it. It is not by a compromise, it is not by a timid and feeble repentance, that a man will save his soul and *live*, at last. He has got to *conquer* a clear field, letting Repentance & Co. go. That's a well-meaning but weak firm that has assumed the debts of an old and worthless one. You are to fight in a field where no allowances will be made, no courteous bowing to one-handed knights. You are expected to do your duty, not in spite of every thing but *one*, but in spite of *everything*.

A man must attend to Nature closely for many years to know when, as well as where, to look for his objects, since he must always anticipate her a little. Young men have not learned the phases of Nature; they do not know what constitutes a year, or that one year is like another. I would know when in the year to expect certain thoughts and moods, as the sportsman knows when to look for plover.

Sept. 25. P.M. — To Emerson's Cliff.

Holding a white pine needle in my hand, and turning it in a favorable light, as I sit upon this cliff, I perceive that each of its three edges is notched or serrated with minute forward-pointing bristles. So much does Nature avoid an unbroken line that even this slender leaf is serrated; though, to my surprise, neither Gray nor Bigelow mention it. Loudon, however, says, "Scabrous and inconspicuously

serrated on the margin; spreading in summer, but in winter contracted, and lying close to the branches." Fine and smooth as it looks, it is serrated after all. This is its concealed wildness, by which it connects itself with the wilder oaks.

Prinos berries are fairly ripe for a few days. Moles work in meadows.

Sept. 26. How feeble women, or rather ladies, are! They cannot bear to be shined on, but generally carry a parasol to *keep off* the sun.

Oct. 13. The swamp amelanchier is leafing again, as usual. What a pleasing phenomenon, perhaps an Indian-summer growth, an anticipation of the spring, like the notes of birds and frogs, etc., an evidence of warmth and genialness. Its buds are annually awakened by the October sun as if it were spring. The shad-bush is leafing again by the sunny swamp-side. It is like a youthful or poetic thought in old age. Several times I have been cheered by this sight when surveying in former years. In the fall I will take this for my coat-of-arms. It seems to detain the sun that expands it. These twigs are so full of life that they can hardly contain themselves. They ignore winter. They anticipate spring. What faith! In my latter years, let me have some *shad-bush* thoughts.

Oct. 14. I hear a man laughed at because he went to Europe twice in search of an imaginary wife who, he thought, was there, though he had never seen nor heard of her. But the majority have gone further while they stayed in America, have actually allied themselves to one whom they thought their wife and found out their mistake too late to mend it. It would be cruel to laugh at these.

Oct. 15. A cold northwest wind. I go along the east edge of Poplar Hill. This very cold and windy day, now that so many leaves have fallen, I begin to notice the silveriness of willows blown up in the wind, — a November sight.

This is a cold fall.

Oct. 16. Sunday. P.M. — Paddle to Puffer's and thence walk to

Ledum Swamp and Conant's Wood.

A cold, clear, Novemberish day. The wind goes down and we do not sail. The button-bushes are just bare, and the black willows partly so, and the mikania all fairly gray now. I have not been on the river for some time, and it is the more novel to me this cool day.

When I get to Willow Bay I see the new musquash-houses erected, conspicuous on the now nearly leafless shores. To me this is an important and suggestive sight, as, perchance, in some countries new haystacks in the yards; as to the Esquimaux the erection of winter houses. I remember this phenomenon annually for thirty years. A more constant phenomenon here than the new haystacks in the yard, for they were erected here probably before man dwelt here and may still be erected here when man has departed. For thirty years I have annually observed, about this time or earlier, the freshly erected winter lodges of the musquash along the riverside, reminding us that, if we have no gypsies, we have a more indigenous race of furry, quadrupedal men maintaining their ground in our midst still. This may not be an annual phenomenon to you. It may not be in the Greenwich almanac or ephemeris, but it has an important place in my Kalendar. So surely as the sun appears to be in Libra or Scorpio, I see the conical winter lodges of the musquash rising above the withered pontederia and flags. There will be some reference to it, by way of parable or otherwise, in *my* New Testament. Surely, it is a defect in our Bible that it is not truly ours, but a Hebrew Bible. The most pertinent illustrations for us are to be drawn, not from Egypt or Babylonia, but from New England.

Talk about learning our *letters* and being *literate*! Why, the roots of *letters* are *things*. Natural objects and phenomena are the original symbols or types which express our thoughts and feelings, and yet American scholars, having little or no root in the soil, commonly strive with all their might to confine themselves to the imported symbols alone. All the true growth and experience, the living speech, they would fain reject as "Americanisms." It is the old error, which the church, the state, the school ever commit, choosing darkness rather than light, holding fast to the old and to tradition. A more intimate knowledge, a deeper experience, will surely originate a word. When I really know that our river pursues a serpentine course

to the Merrimack, shall I continue to describe it by referring to some other river no older than itself which is like it, and call it a *meander*? It is no more *meandering* than the Meander is *musketaquidding*. As well sing of the nightingale here as the Meander. What if there were a tariff on words, on language, for the encouragement of home manufactures? Have we not the genius to coin our own? Let the schoolmaster distinguish the true from the counterfeit.

They go on publishing the "chronological cycles" and "movable festivals of the Church" and the like from mere habit, but how insignificant are these compared with the annual phenomena of your life, which fall within your experience! The signs of the zodiac are not nearly of that significance to me that the sight of a dead sucker in the spring is. That is the occasion for an *im*movable festival in my church. Another kind of Lent then begins in my thoughts than you wot of. I am satisfied then to live on fish alone for a season.

The phenomena of our year are one thing, those of the almanac another. For October, for instance, instead of making the sun enter the sign of the scorpion, I would much sooner make him enter a musquash-house. Astronomy is a fashionable study, patronized by princes, but not fungi. "Royal Astronomer." The snapping turtle, too, must find a place among the constellations, though it may have to supplant some doubtful characters already there. If there is no place for him overhead, he can serve us bravely underneath, supporting the earth.

When we emerged from the pleasant footpath through the birches into Witherell Glade, looking along it toward the westering sun, the glittering white tufts of the *Andropogon scoparius*, lit up by the sun, were affectingly fair and cheering to behold. It was already a cheerful Novemberish scene. A thousand such tufts now catch up the sun and send to us its light but not heat. His heat is being steadily withdrawn from us. Light without heat is getting to be the prevailing phenomenon of the day now.

The ledum smells like a bee, — that peculiar scent they have.

I remark how still it is to-day, really Sabbath-like. This day, at least, we do not hear the rattle of cars nor the whistle. I cannot realize that the country was often as still as this twenty years ago.

The weeds are dressed in their frost jackets, naked down to their

close-fitting downy or flannel shirts. Like athletes they challenge the winter, these bare twigs.

The cool, placid, silver-plated waters at even coolly await the frost. The musquash is steadily adding to his winter lodge. There is no need of supposing a peculiar instinct telling him how high to build his cabin. He has had a longer experience in this river-valley than we.

Your hands begin to be cool, rowing, now. At many a place in sprout-lands, where the sedge is peculiarly flat and white or hoary, I put down my hand to feel if there is frost on it. It must be the *trace* of frost.

Each ball of the button-bush reflected in the silvery water by the riverside appears to me as distinct and important as a star in the heavens viewed through "optic glass." This, too, deserves its Kepler and Galileo.

Oct. 19. It galls me to listen to the remarks of craven-hearted neighbors who speak disparagingly of John Brown because he resorted to violence, resisted the government, threw his life away! — what way have they thrown their lives, pray? — neighbors who would praise a man for attacking singly an ordinary band of thieves or murderers. Such minds are not equal to the occasion. They preserve the so-called peace of their community by deeds of petty violence every day.

The remarks of my neighbors upon Brown's death and supposed fate, with very few exceptions, are, "He is undoubtedly insane," "Died as the fool dieth," "Served him right;" and so they proceed to live their sane, and wise, and altogether admirable lives, reading their Plutarch a little.

A government that pretends to be Christian and crucifies a million Christs every day!

Our foes are in our midst and all about us. Hardly a house but is divided against itself. For our foe is the all but universal woodenness (both of head and heart).

Some eighteen hundred years ago Christ was crucified; this morning, perhaps, John Brown was hung. These are the two ends of a chain which I rejoice to know is not without its links.

Oct. 21. It is very cold and blustering to-day. It is the breath of winter, which is encamped not far off to the north.

A great many shrub oak acorns hold on, and are a darker brown than ever.

Insane! A father and seven sons, and several more men besides, — as many, at least, as twelve disciples, — all struck with insanity at once; while the sane tyrant holds with a firmer gripe than ever his four millions of slaves, and a thousand sane editors, his abettors, are saving their country and their bacon! Ask the tyrant who is his most dangerous foe, the sane man or the insane.

Oct. 22. I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in all the country should be hung. Perhaps he saw it himself. If any leniency were shown him, any compromise made with him, any treating with him at all, by the government, he might be suspected.

I rejoice that I live in this age, that I was his contemporary.

I do not wish to kill or to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both of these things would be by me unavoidable.

This event advertises me that there is such a fact as death, — the possibility of a man's dying. It seems as if no man had ever died in America; for in order to die you must first have lived.

It is the best news that America has ever heard.

It has already quickened the public pulse of the North; it has infused more, and more generous, blood into her veins and heart than any number of years of what is called commercial and political prosperity could. How many a man who was lately contemplating suicide has now something to live for!

Nov. 9. A fine Indian-summer day. Have had pleasant weather about a week.

Nov. 10. Rain; warm.

Nov. 12. The first sprinkling of snow, which for a short time

whitens the ground in spots.

I do not know how to distinguish between our waking life and a dream. Are we not always living the life that we imagine we are? Fear creates danger, and courage dispels it.

There was a remarkable sunset, I think the 25th of October. The sunset sky reached quite from west to east, and it was the most varied in its forms and colors of any that I remember to have seen. At one time the clouds were most softly and delicately rippled, like the ripple-marks on sand. But it was hard for me to see its beauty then, when my mind was filled with Captain Brown. So great a wrong as his fate implied overshadowed all beauty in the world.

Dec. 5. Rather hard walking in the snow. There is a slight mist in the air and accordingly some glaze on the twigs and leaves, and thus suddenly we have passed from Indian summer to winter. It is as if you had stepped from a withered garden into the yard of a sculptor or worker in marble, crowded with delicate works, rich and rare.

Dec. 6. Came upon a round bed of tansy, half a dozen feet in diameter, which was withered quite black, as seen above the snow, — blacker than any plant I remember. This reminded me that its name was by some thought to be from ἀθανασία, or immortality, from its not withering early, but in this case it suggested its funereal reputation.

The death of Irving, which at any other time would have attracted universal attention, having occurred while these things were transpiring, goes almost unobserved. Literary gentlemen, editors, and critics think that they know how to write because they have studied grammar and rhetoric; but the art of composition is as simple as the discharge of a bullet from a rifle, and its masterpieces imply an infinitely greater force behind it. This unlettered man's speaking and writing is standard English. Some words and phrases deemed vulgarisms and Americanisms before, he has made standard American. *"It will pay."* It suggests that the one great rule of composition — and if I were a professor of rhetoric I should insist on this — is to *speak the truth*. This first, this second, this third.

Dec. 8. Two hundred years ago is about as great an antiquity as we can comprehend or often have to deal with. It is nearly as good as two thousand to our imaginations. It carries us back to the days of aborigines and the Pilgrims; beyond the limits of oral testimony, to history which begins already to be enamelled with a gloss of fable, and we do not quite believe what we read; to a strange style of writing and spelling and of expression; to those ancestors whose names we do not know, and to whom we are related only as we are to the race generally. It is the age of our very oldest houses and cultivated trees. Nor is New England very peculiar in this. In England also, a house two hundred years old, especially if it be a wooden one, is pointed out as an interesting relic of the past.

When we read the history of the world, centuries look cheap to us and we find that we had doubted if the hundred years preceding the life of Herodotus seemed as great an antiquity to him as a hundred years does to us. We are inclined to think of all Romans who lived within five hundred years B.C. as *contemporaries* to each other. Yet Time moved at the same deliberate pace then as now. Pliny the Elder, who died in the 79th year of the Christian era, speaking of the paper made of papyrus which was then used, — how carefully it was made, — says, *just as we might say*, as if it were something remarkable: "There are, thus, ancient memorials in the handwriting of Caius and Tiberius Gracchus, almost two hundred years old, which I have seen in the possession of Pomponius Secundus the poet, a very illustrious citizen. As for the handwriting of Cicero, Augustus, and Virgil, we very often meet with it still."

How is it that what is actually present and transpiring is commonly perceived by the common sense and understanding only, is bare and bald, without halo or the blue enamel of intervening air? But let it be past or to come, and it is at once idealized. It is not simply the understanding now, but the imagination, that takes cognizance of it. The imagination requires a long range. It is the faculty of the poet to see present things as if, in this sense, also past and future, as if distant or universally significant.

Dec. 13. P.M. — On river to Fair Haven Pond.

My first true winter walk is perhaps that which I take on the river,

or where I cannot go in the summer. It is the walk peculiar to winter, and now first I take it.

What a spectacle the subtle vapors that have their habitation in the sky present these winter days! You have not only ever-varying forms of a given type of cloud, but various types at different heights or hours. It is a scene, for variety, for beauty and grandeur, out of all proportion to the attention it gets. Who watched the forms of the clouds over this part of the earth a thousand years ago? Who watches them to-day?

Now that the river is frozen we have a sky under our feet also. Going over black ice three or four inches thick, only reassured by seeing the thickness at the cracks, I see it richly marked internally with large whitish figures suggesting rosettes of ostrich-feathers or coral. These at first appear to be a dust on the surface, but, looking closely, are found to be at various angles with it internally, in the grain. The work of crystallization.

DEC. 14. At 2 P.M. begins to snow again. I walk to Walden.

Snow-storms might be classified. This is a fine, dry snow, drifting nearly horizontally from the north, so that it is quite blinding to face, almost as much so as sand. It is cold also. It is drifting but not accumulating fast. I can see the woods about a quarter of a mile distant through it. That of the 11th was a still storm, of large flakes falling gently in the quiet air, like so many white feathers descending in different directions when seen against a wood-side, — the regular snow-storm such as is painted. A myriad falling flakes weaving a coarse garment by which the eye is amused. The snow was a little moist and the weather rather mild. Also I remember the perfectly crystalline or *star* snows, when each flake is a perfect six(?)-rayed wheel. This must be the *chef-d'œuvre* of the Genius of the storm. Also there is the pellet or shot snow, which consists of little dry spherical pellets the size of robin-shot. This, I think, belongs to cold weather. Probably never have much of it. Also there is sleet, which is half snow, half rain.

The *Juncus tenuis*, with its conspicuous acheniums, is very noticeable now, rising above the snow in the wood-paths, commonly aslant.

Dec. 15. Philosophy is a Greek word by good rights, and it stands almost for a Greek thing. Yet some rumor of it has reached the commonest mind. M. Miles, who came to collect his wood bill to-day, said, when I objected to the small size of his wood, that it was necessary to split wood fine in order to cure it well, that he had found that wood that was more than four inches in diameter would not dry, and moreover a good deal depended on the manner in which it was corded up in the woods. He piled his high and tightly. If this were not well done the stakes would spread and the wood lie loosely, and so the rain and snow find their way into it. And he added, "I have handled a good deal of wood, and I think that I understand the *philosophy* of it."

DEC. 16. A.M. — To Cambridge, where I read in Gerard's Herbal. His admirable though quaint descriptions are, to my mind, greatly superior to the modern more scientific ones. He describes not according to rule but to his natural delight in the plants. He brings them vividly before you, as one who has seen and delighted in them. It is almost as good as to see the plants themselves. It suggests that we cannot too often get rid of the barren assumption that is in our science. His leaves are leaves; his flowers, flowers; his fruit, fruit. They are green and colored and fragrant. It is a man's knowledge added to a child's delight. Modern botanical descriptions approach ever nearer to the dryness of an algebraic formula, as if $x + y$ were = to a love-letter. It is the keen joy and discrimination of the child who has just seen a flower for the first time and comes running in with it to its friends. How much better to describe your object in fresh English words rather than in these conventional Latinisms! He has really seen, and smelt, and tasted, and reports his sensations.

Bought a book at Little &Brown's, paying a nine-pence more on a volume than it was offered me for elsewhere. The customer thus pays for the more elegant style of the store.

Dec. 17. Under the hill, on the southeast side of R.W.E.'s lot, where the hemlock stands, I see many tracks of squirrels (I am not sure whether they are red or gray or both, for I see none) leading

straight from the base of one tree to that of another, thus leaving untrodden triangles, squares, and polygons of every form, bounded by much trodden highways. One, two, three, and the track is lost on the upright bole of a pine, — as if they had played at base-running from goal to goal, while pine cones were thrown at them on the way. You come thus on the tracks of these frisky and volatile (semivolitant) creatures in the midst of perfect stillness and solitude, as you might stand in a hall half an hour after the dancers had departed.

Dec. 22. Another fine winter day.

P.M. — To Flint's Pond.

We pause and gaze into the Mill Brook on the Turnpike bridge. C. says that in Persia they call the ripple-marks on sandy bottoms "chains" or "chain-work." I see a good deal of cress there, on the bottom, for a rod or two, the only green thing to be seen. No more slimy than it usually is beneath the water in summer. Is not this the plant which most, or most conspicuously, preserves its greenness in the winter? Is it not now most completely in its summer state of any plant? So far as the water and the mud and the cress go, it is a summer scene. It is green as ever, and waving in the stream as in summer.

How nicely is Nature adjusted! The least disturbance of her equilibrium is betrayed and corrects itself. As I looked down on the surface of the brook, I was surprised to see a leaf floating, as I thought, up the stream, but I was mistaken. The motion of a particle of dust on the surface of any brook far inland shows which way the earth declines toward the sea, which way lies the constantly descending route, and the only one.

The fisherman stands erect and still on the ice, awaiting our approach, as usual forward to say that he has had no luck. He has been here since early morning, and for some reason or other the fishes won't bite. You won't catch him here again in a hurry. They all tell the same story. The amount of it is he has had "fisherman's luck," and if you walk that way you may find him at his old post to-morrow. It is hard, to be sure, — four little fishes to be divided between three men, and two and a half miles to walk; and you have

only got a more ravenous appetite for the supper which you have not earned. However, the pond floor is not a bad place to spend a winter day.

Dec. 25. You may think that you need take no care to preserve your woodland, but every tree comes either from the stump of another tree or from a seed. With the present management, will there always be a fresh stump, or a nut in the soil, think you? Will not the nobler kinds of trees, which bear comparatively few seeds, grow more and more scarce? What is become of our chestnut wood? There are but few stumps for sprouts to spring from, and, as for the chestnuts, there are not enough for the squirrels, and nobody is planting them.

How different are men and women, *e.g.* in respect to the adornment of their heads! Do you ever see an old or jammed bonnet on the head of a woman at a public meeting? But look at any assembly of men with their hats on; how large a proportion of the hats will be old, weather-beaten, and indented, but I think so much the more picturesque and interesting! One farmer rides by my door in a hat which it does me good to see, there is so much character in it, — so much independence to begin with, and then affection for his old friends, etc., etc. I should not wonder if there were lichens on it. Think of painting a hero in a bran-new hat! But go to a lyceum and look at the bonnets and various other headgear of the women and girls, — who, by the way, keep their hats on, it being too dangerous and expensive to take them off!! Why, every one looks as fragile as a butterfly's wings, having just come out of a bandbox, — as it will go into a bandbox again when the lyceum is over. Men wear their hats for use; women theirs for ornament.

Again, what an ado women make about trifles! Here is one tells me that she cannot possibly wear india-rubber boots in sloshy weather, because they have heels. Men have been wearing boots with heels from time immemorial; little boys soon learn the art, and are eager to try the experiment. The woodchoppers and teamsters, and the merchants and lawyers, go and come quietly the livelong day, and though they may meet with many accidents, I do not remember any that originated in the heels of their boots. But not so with

women; they bolt at once, recklessly as runaway horses, the moment they get the boots on, before they have learned the wonderful art of wearing them. My informant tells me of a friend who has got a white swelling from coming down-stairs imprudently in boots, and of another seriously injured on the meeting-house steps, — for when you deal with steps, then comes the rub, — and of a third who involuntarily dashed down the front stairs, knocked a hat-tree through the side-lights, and broke I do not know how many ribs. Indeed, that quarter-inch obstruction about the heels seems to be an insuperable one to the women.

Dec. 29. When I went to walk it was about 10° above zero, and when I returned, 1°. I did not notice any vapor rising from the open places, as I did in the morning, when it was –16° and also –6°. Therefore the cold must be between + 1° and –6° in order that vapor may rise from these places. It takes a greater degree of cold to show the breath of the river than that of man. Apparently, the river is not enough warmer than the air to permit of its rising into it, *i.e.*, evaporating, unless the air is of a very low temperature. When the air is say four or five degrees below, the water being + 32°, then there is a visible evaporation. Is there the same difference, or some 40°, between the heat of the human breath and that air in which the moisture in the breath becomes visible in vapor? This has to do with the dew-point. Next, what makes the water of those open places thus warm? and is it any warmer than elsewhere? There is considerable heat reflected from a sandy bottom where the water is shallow, and at these places it is always sandy and shallow, but I doubt if this actually makes the water warmer, though it may melt the more opaque ice which absorbs it. The fact that Holt Bend, which is deep, is late to freeze, being narrow, seems to prove it to be the swiftness of the water and not reflected heat that prevents freezing.

Taking the river in Concord in its present condition, it is, with one exception, only the shallowest places that are open; and the shallowest place in all in Concord is the latest of all to freeze, *e.g.* at the junction. So, if you get into the river at this season, it is most likely to be at the shallowest places, they being either open or most thinly frozen over. That is one consolation for you.

Dec. 30. Those who depend on skylights found theirs but a dim, religious light this forenoon and hitherto, owing to the thickness of snow resting on them. Also cellar windows are covered, and cellars are accordingly darkened.

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Jan. 4. See that long meandering track where a deer mouse hopped over the soft snow last night, scarcely making any impression. What if you could witness with owls' eyes the revelry of the wood mice some night, frisking about the wood like so many little kangaroos? Here is such populousness as commonly only the imagination dreams of.

A man receives only what he is ready to receive, whether physically or intellectually or morally, as animals conceive at certain seasons their kind only. We hear and apprehend only what we already half know. If there is something which does not concern me, which is out of my line, which by experience or by genius my attention is not drawn to, however novel and remarkable it may be, if it is spoken, we hear it not, if it is written, we read it not, or if we read it, it does not detain us. Every man thus *tracks himself* through life, in all his hearing and reading and observation and travelling. His observations make a chain. The phenomenon or fact that cannot in any wise be linked with the rest which he has observed, he does not observe. By and by we may be ready to receive what we cannot receive now. I find, for example, in Aristotle something about the spawning, etc., of the pout and perch, because I know something about it already and have my attention aroused; but I do not discover till very late that he has made other equally important observations on the spawning of other fishes, because I am not interested in those fishes.

Jan. 18. 2 P.M. — To Fair Haven Pond, on river. Thermometer 46; sky mostly overcast.

The temperature of the air and the clearness or serenity of the sky are indispensable to a knowledge of a day, so entirely do we sympathize with the moods of nature. It is important to know of a day that is past whether it was warm or cold, clear or cloudy, calm or windy, etc.

They are very different seasons in the winter when the ice of the river and meadows and ponds is bare, — blue or green, a vast

glittering crystal, — and when it is all covered with snow or slosh; and our moods correspond. The former may be called a crystalline winter.

Jan. 25. In keeping a journal of one's walks and thoughts it seems to be worth the while to record those phenomena which are most interesting to us at the time. Such is the weather. It makes a material difference whether it is foul or fair, affecting surely our mood and thoughts. Then there are various degrees and kinds of foulness and fairness. It may be cloudless, or there may be sailing clouds which threaten no storm, or it may be partially overcast. On the other hand it may rain, or snow, or hail, with various degrees of intensity. It may be a transient thunder-storm, or a shower, or a flurry of snow, or it may be a prolonged storm of rain or snow. Or the sky may be overcast or rain-threatening. So with regard to temperature. It may be warm or cold. Above 40° is warm for winter. One day, at 38 even, I walk dry and it is good sleighing; the next day it may have risen to 48, and the snow is rapidly changed to slosh. It may be calm or windy. The finest winter day is a cold but clear and glittering one. There is a remarkable life in the air then, and birds and other creatures appear to feel it, to be excited and invigorated by it. Also warm and melting days in winter are inspiring, though less characteristic.

I will call the weather fair, if it does not threaten rain or snow or hail; foul, if it rains or snows or hails, or is so overcast that we expect one or the other from hour to hour. To-day it is fair, though the sky is slightly overcast, but there are *sailing* clouds in the south-west.

Jan. 27. Fair and hardly a cloud to be seen. Thermometer 28. (But it is overcast from the northwest before sunset.)

Now I see, as I am on the ice by Hubbard's meadow, some wisps of vapor in the west and southwest advancing. They are of a fine, white, thready grain, curved like skates at the end. Have we not more finely divided clouds in winter than in summer? flame-shaped, asbestos-like? I doubt if the clouds show as fine a grain in warm weather. They are wrung dry now. They are not expanded but contracted, like spiculæ. What hieroglyphics in the winter sky!

As I go along the edge of Hubbard's Wood, on the ice, it is very warm in the sun — and calm there. There are certain spots I could name, by hill and wood sides, which are always thus sunny and warm in fair weather, and have been, for aught I know, since the world was made. What a distinction they enjoy!

How many memorable localities in a river walk! Here is the warm wood-side; next, the good fishing bay; and next, where the old settler was drowned when crossing on the ice a hundred years ago. It is all storied.

When you think that your walk is profitless and a failure, and you can hardly persuade yourself not to return, it is on the point of being a success, for then you are in that subdued and knocking mood to which Nature never fails to open.

Feb. 2. 6° below at about 8 A.M.

Clock has stopped. Teams squeak.

2 P.M. — To Fair Haven Pond.

The river, which was breaking up, is frozen over again. The new ice over the channel is of a yellow tinge, and is covered with handsome rosettes two or three inches in diameter where the vapor which rose through froze and crystallized. This new ice for forty rods together is thickly covered with these rosettes, often as thick as snow, an inch deep, and sometimes in ridges like frozen froth three inches high. Sometimes they are in a straight line along a crack. The frozen breath of the river at a myriad breathing-holes.

It blowed considerably yesterday, though it is very still to-day, and the light, dry snow, especially on the meadow ice and the river, was remarkably plowed and drifted by it, and now presents a very wild and arctic scene. Indeed, no part of our scenery is ever more arctic than the river and its meadows now, though the snow was only some three inches deep on a level. It is cold and perfectly still, and you walk over a level snowy tract. It is a sea of white waves of nearly uniform shape and size. Each drift is a low, sharp promontory directed toward the northwest, and showing which way the wind blowed with occasional small patches of bare ice amid them. It is exactly as if you walked over a solid sea where the waves rose about two feet high. These promontories have a general

resemblance to one another. Many of them are perfect tongues of snow more or less curving and sharp.

One hour you have bare ice; the next, a level counterpane of snow; and the next, the wind has tossed and sculptured it into these endless and varied forms. I go sliding over the few bare spots, getting a foothold for my run on the very thin sloping and ridged snow.

I frequently see where oak leaves, absorbing the heat of the sun, have sunk into the ice an inch in depth and afterward been blown out, leaving a perfect type of the leaf with its petiole and lobes sharply cut, with perfectly upright sides, so that I can easily tell the species of oak that made it. Sometimes these moulds have been evenly filled with snow while the ice is dark, and you have the figure of the leaf in white.

Feb. 5. Coming home last night in the twilight, I recognized a neighbor a dozen rods off by his walk or carriage, though it was so dark that I could not see a single feature of his person. Indeed, his person was all covered up excepting his face and hands, and I could not possibly have distinguished these at this distance from another man's. Nor was it owing to any peculiarity in his dress, for I should have known him though he had had on a perfectly new suit. It was because the man within the clothes moved them in a peculiar manner that I knew him thus at once at a distance and in the twilight. He made a certain figure in any clothes he might wear, and moved in it in a peculiar manner. Indeed, we have a very intimate knowledge of one another; we see through thick and thin; spirit meets spirit. A man hangs out innumerable signs by which we may know him. So, last summer, I knew another neighbor half a mile off up the river, though I did not see him, by the manner in which the breath from his lungs and mouth, *i.e.* his voice, made the air strike my ear. In that manner he communicated himself to all his acquaintance within a diameter of one mile (if it were all up and down the river). So I remember to have been sure once in a very dark night who was preceding me on the sidewalk, — though I could not see him, — by the sound of his tread. I was surprised to find that I knew it.

And to-day, seeing a peculiar very long track of a man in the snow, who has been along up the river this morning, I guessed that it

was George Melvin, because it was accompanied by a hound's track. There was a thin snow on the ice, and I observed that he not only furrowed the snow for a foot before he completed his step, but that the (toe) of his track was always indefinite, as if his boot had been worn out and prolonged at the toe. I noticed that I and my companion made a clear and distinct track at the toe, but when I experimented, and tried to make a track like this by not lifting my feet but gliding and partly scuffing along, I found myself walking just like Melvin, and that perfectly convinced me that it was he.

We have no occasion to wonder at the instinct of a dog. In these last two instances I surpassed the instinct of the dog.

It may always be a question how much or how little of a man goes to any particular act. It is not merely by taking time and by a conscious effort that he betrays himself. A man is revealed, and a man is concealed, in a myriad unexpected ways; *e. g.*, I can hardly think of a more effectual way of disguising neighbors to one another than by stripping them naked.

Feb. 8. 2 P.M. — Up river to Fair Haven Hill.

Thermometer 43. 40° and upward may be called a *warm* day in the winter.

We have had much of this weather for a month past, reminding us of spring. February may be called *earine* (springlike). There is a peculiarity in the air when the temperature is thus high and the weather fair, at this season, which makes sounds more clear and pervading, as if they trusted themselves abroad further in this genial state of the air. A different sound comes to my ear now from iron rails which are struck, as from the cawing crows, etc. Sound is not abrupt, piercing, or rending, but softly sweet and musical. It will take a yet more genial and milder air before the bluebird's warble can be heard.

Walking over Hubbard's broad meadow on the softened ice, I admire the markings in it. The more interesting and prevailing ones now appearing ingrained and giving it a more or less marbled look, — one, what you may call *checkered* marbling (?), consisting of small polygonal figures three quarters in diameter, bounded by whitish lines more or less curved within the ice, and apparently

covered with an entire thin surface ice, and so on for rods (these when five or six inches wide make a mackerel-sky ice); the other apparently passing from this into a sort of fibrous structure of waving lines, hair-like or rather flame-like, — call it *phlogistic*: — only far more regular and beautiful than I can draw. Sometimes like perhaps a cassowary's feathers, the branches being very long and fine. This fibrous or phlogistic structure is evidently connected with the flow of the surface water, for I see some old holes, now smoothly frozen over, where these rays have flowed from all sides into the hole in the midst of the checked ice, making a circular figure which reminded me of a jellyfish: only far more beautiful than this. The whitish lines which bound these figures and form the parallel fibres are apparently lines of fine bubbles more dense than elsewhere. I am not sure that these markings always imply a double or triple ice, *i.e.* a thinner surface ice, which contains them.

The ice is thus marked under my feet somewhat as the heavens overhead; there is both the mackerel sky and the fibrous flame or asbestos-like form in both. The mackerel spotted or marked ice is very common, and also reminds me of the reticulations of the pickerel.

Then there is occasionally, where puddles on the ice have frozen, that triangular rib-work of crystals, — a beautiful casting in alto-relievo of low crystal prisms with one edge up, — so meeting and crossing as to form triangular and other figures. Shining splinters in the sun. Giving a rough hold to the feet. One would think that the forms of ice-crystals must include all others.

The proper color of water is perhaps best seen when it overflows white ice.

Feb. 12. I walk over a smooth green sea, or *aequor*, amid thousands of these flat isles as purple as the petals of a flower. It would not be more enchanting to walk amid the purple clouds of the sunset sky. And, by the way, this is but a sunset sky under our feet, produced by the same law, the same slanting rays and twilight. Here the clouds are these patches of snow or frozen vapor, and the ice is the greenish sky between them. Thus all of heaven is realized on

earth. You have seen those purple fortunate isles in the sunset heavens, and that green and amber sky between them. Would you believe that you could ever walk amid those isles? You can on many a winter evening. I have done so a hundred times. The ice is a solid crystalline sky under our feet.

Whatever aid is to be derived from the use of a scientific term, we can never begin to see anything as it is so long as we remember the scientific term which always our ignorance has imposed on it. Natural objects and phenomena are in this sense forever wild and unnamed by us.

Thus the sky and the earth sympathize, and are subject to the same laws, and in the horizon they, as it were, meet and are seen to be one.

I have walked in such a place and found it hard as marble.

Not only the earth but the heavens are made our footstool. That is what the phenomenon of ice means. The earth is annually inverted and we walk upon the sky. The ice reflects the blue of the sky. The waters become solid and make a sky below. The clouds grow heavy and fall to earth, and we walk on them. We live and walk on solidified fluids.

We have such a habit of looking away that we see not what is around us. These snow-clad hills answer to the rosy isles in the west. The winter is coming when I shall walk the sky. The ice is a solid sky on which we walk. It is the inverted year. There is an annual light in the darkness of the winter night. The shadows are blue, as the sky is forever blue. In winter we are purified and translated. The earth does not absorb our thoughts. It becomes a Valhalla.

Feb. 13. 2 P.M. — Down river.

Thermometer 38°. Warm; a cloud just appearing in the west.

That hard meadow just below the boys' bathing-place below the North Bridge is another elfin burial-ground. It would be a bad place to walk in a dark night. The mounds are often in ridges, even as if turned up by the plow.

Water overflowing the ice at an opening in the river, and mixing with thin snow, saturating it, seen now on one side at right angles with the sun's direction, is as black as black cloth. It is surprising what a variety of distinct colors the winter can show us, using but

few pigments, so to call them. The principal charm of a winter walk over ice is perhaps the peculiar and pure colors exhibited.

There is the *red* of the sunset sky, and of the snow at evening, and in rainbow flocks during the day, and in sun-dogs.

The *blue* of the sky, and of the ice and water reflected, and of shadows on snow.

The *yellow* of the sun and the morning and evening sky, and of the sedge (or straw-color, bright when lit on edge of ice at evening), and *all three* in hoar frost crystals.

Then, for the secondary, there is the *purple* of the snow in drifts or on hills, of the mountains, and clouds at evening.

The *green* of evergreen woods, of the sky, and of the ice and water toward evening.

The *orange* of the sky at evening.

The *white* of snow and clouds, and the *black* of clouds, of water agitated, and water saturating thin snow on ice.

The *russet* and *brown* and *gray*, etc., of deciduous woods.

The *tawny* of the bare earth.

I suspect that the green and rose (or purple) are not noticed on ice and snow unless it is pretty cold, and perhaps there is less greenness of the ice now than in December, when the days were shorter. The ice may now be too old and white.

Those horn, knob, and rake icicles on the southeast sides of all open places — or that were open on the 10th near enough to the bushes — are suddenly softening and turning white on one side to-day, so that they remind me of the alabaster (?) or plaster images on an Italian's board. All along the ice belt or shelf — for the river has fallen more than a foot — countless white figures stand crowded, their minute cores of sedge or twigs being concealed. Some are like beaks of birds, — cranes or herons. Having seen this phenomenon in one place, I know with certainty in just how many places and where, throughout the town, — four or five, — I shall find these icicles, on the southeast sides of the larger open places which approached near enough to a bushy or reedy shore.

The grass comes very nearly being completely encrusted in some places, but commonly rounded knobs stand up.

The ground being bare, I pick up two or three arrowheads in

Tarbell's field near Ball's Hill.

There is nothing more affecting and beautiful to man, a child of the earth, than the sight of the naked soil in the spring. I feel a kindredship with it.

The sun being in a cloud, partly obscured, I see a very dark purple tinge on the flat drifts on the ice earlier than usual, and when afterward the sun comes out below the cloud, I see no purple nor rose. Hence it seems that the twilight has as much or more to do with this phenomenon, supposing the sun to be low, than the slight angle of its rays with the horizon.

Always you have to contend with the stupidity of men. It is like a stiff soil, a hard-pan. If you go deeper than usual, you are sure to meet with a pan made harder even by the superficial cultivation. The stupid you have always with you. Men are more obedient at first to words than ideas. They mind names more than things. Read to them a lecture on "Education," naming that subject, and they will think that they have heard something important, but call it "Transcendentalism," and they will think it moonshine. Or halve your lecture, and put a psalm at the beginning and a prayer at the end of it and read it from a pulpit, and they will pronounce it good without thinking.

The Scripture rule, "Unto him that hath shall be given," is true of composition. The more you have thought and written on a given theme, the more you can still write. Thought breeds thought. It grows under your hands.

Vide extracts from preface made in October, 1859.

I told him of it afterward, and he gave a corresponding account of himself.

Feb. 15. As in the expression of moral truths we admire any closeness to the physical fact which in all language is the symbol of the spiritual, so, finally, when natural objects are described, it is an advantage if words derived originally from nature, it is true, but which have been turned (*tropes*) from their primary signification to a moral sense, are used, *i.e.*, if the object is personified. The one who loves and understands a thing the best will incline to use the personal pronouns in speaking of it. To him there is no *neuter* gender. Many

of the words of the old naturalists were in this sense doubly tropes.

P.M. — About 30° at 2 P.M. Skated to Bound Rock.

Feb. 17. We cannot spare the very lively and lifelike descriptions of some of the old naturalists. They sympathize with the creatures which they describe. Edward Topsell in his translation of Conrad Gesner, in 1607, called "The History of Four-footed Beasts," says of the antelopes that "they are bred in India and Syria, near the river Euphrates," and then — which enables you to realize the living creature and its habitat — he adds, "and delight much to drink of the cold water thereof." The beasts which most modern naturalists describe do not *delight* in anything, and their water is neither hot nor cold. Reading the above makes you want to go and drink of the Euphrates yourself, if it is warm weather. I do not know how much of his spirit he owes to Gesner, but he proceeds in his translation to say that "they have horns growing forth of the crown of their head, which are very long and sharp; so that Alexander affirmed they pierced through the shields of his soldiers, and fought with them very irefully: at which time his company slew as he travelled to India, eight thousand five hundred and fifty, which great slaughter may be the occasion why they are so rare and seldom seen to this day."

Now here *something* is described at any rate; it is a real account, whether of a real animal or not. You can plainly see the horns which "grew forth" from their crowns, and how well that word "irefully" describes a beast's fighting! And then for the number which Alexander's men slew "as he travelled to India," — and what a travelling was that, my hearers! — eight thousand five hundred and fifty, just the number you would have guessed after the thousands were given, and an easy one to remember too. He goes on to say that "their horns are great and made like a saw, and they with them can cut asunder the branches of osier or small trees, whereby it cometh to pass that many times their necks are taken in the twists of the falling boughs, whereat the beast with repining cry, bewrayeth himself to the hunters, and so is taken." The artist too has done his part equally well, for you are presented with a drawing of the beast with serrated horns, the tail of a lion, a cheek tooth (canine?) as big as a boar's, a stout front, and an exceedingly "ireful" look, as if he were facing all

Alexander's army.

Though some beasts are described in this book which have no existence as I can learn but in the imagination of the writers, they really have an existence there, which is saying not a little, for most of our modern authors have not imagined the actual beasts which they presume to describe. The very frontispiece is a figure of "the gorgon," which looks sufficiently like a hungry beast covered with scales, which you may have dreamed of, apparently just fallen on the track of you, the reader, and snuffing the odor with greediness.

These men had an adequate idea of a beast, or what a beast should be, a very *bellua* (the translator makes the word *bestia* to be "*a vastando*"); and they will describe and will draw you a cat with four strokes, more beastly or beast-like to look at than Mr. Ruskin's favorite artist draws a tiger. They had an adequate idea of the wildness of beasts and of men, and in their descriptions and drawings they did not always fail when they *surpassed* nature.

Gesner says of apes that "they are held for a subtil, ironical, ridiculous and unprofitable beast, whose flesh is not good for meat as a sheep, neither his back for burthen as an asses, nor yet commodious to keep a house like a dog, but of the Grecians termed gelotopoios, made for laughter."

Feb. 18. A snow-storm, falling all day; wind northeast.

The snow is fine and drives low; is composed of granulated masses one sixteenth to one twentieth of an inch in diameter. Not in flakes at all. I think it is not those large-flaked snow-storms that are the worst for the traveller, or the deepest.

Gesner (unless we owe it to the translator) has a livelier conception of an animal which has no existence, or of an action which was never performed, than most naturalists have of what passes before their eyes. The ability to report a thing *as if it had occurred*, whether it did or not, is surely important to a describer. They do not half tell a thing because you might expect them to but half believe it. I feel, of course, very ignorant in a museum. I know nothing about the things which they have there, — no more than I should know my friends in the tomb. I walk amid those jars of bloated creatures which they label frogs, a total stranger, without the

least froggy thought being suggested. Not one of them can croak. They leave behind all life they that enter there, both frogs and men.

Sometimes, when I go forth at 2 P.M., there is searcely a cloud in the sky, but soon one will appear in the west and steadily advance and expand itself, and so change the whole character of the afternoon and of my thoughts. The history of the sky for that afternoon will be but the development of that cloud.

I think that the most important requisite in describing an animal, is to be sure and give its character and spirit, for in that you have, without error, the sum and effect of all its parts, known and unknown. You must tell what it is to man. Surely the most important part of an animal is its *anima*, its vital spirit, on which is based its character and all the peculiarities by which it most concerns us. Yet most scientific books which treat of animals leave this out altogether, and what they describe are as it were phenomena of dead matter. What is most interesting in a dog, for example, is his attachment to his master, his intelligence, courage, and the like, and not his anatomical structure or even many habits which affect us less.

If you have undertaken to write the biography of an animal, you will have to present to us the living creature, *i.e.*, a result which no man can understand, but only in his degree report the impression made on him.

Science in many departments of natural history does not pretend to go beyond the shell; *i.e.*, it does not get to animated nature at all. A history of animated nature must itself be animated.

The ancients, one would say, with their gorgons, sphinxes, satyrs, mantichora, etc., could imagine more than existed, while the moderns cannot imagine so much as exists.

In describing brutes, as in describing men, we shall naturally dwell most on those particulars in which they are most like ourselves, — in which we have most sympathy with them.

We are as often injured as benefited by our systems, for, to speak the truth, no human system is a true one, and a name is at most a mere convenience and carries no information with it. As soon as I begin to be aware of the life of any creature, I at once forget its name. To know the names of creatures is only a convenience to us at first, but so soon as we have learned to distinguish them, the sooner

we forget their names the better, so far as any true appreciation of them is concerned. I think, therefore, that the best and most harmless names are those which are an imitation of the voice or note of an animal, or the most poetic ones. But the name adheres only to the accepted and conventional bird or quadruped, never an instant to the real one. There is always something ridiculous in the name of a great man, — as if he were named John Smith. The name is convenient in communicating with others, but it is not to be remembered when I communicate with myself.

If you look over a list of medicinal recipes in vogue in the last century, how foolish and useless they are seen to be! And yet we use equally absurd ones with faith to-day.

When the ancients had not found an animal wild and strange enough to suit them, they created one by the mingled traits of the most savage already known, — as hyenas, lionesses, pards, panthers, etc., etc., — one with another. Their beasts were thus of wildness and savageness all compact, and more *ferine* and *terrible* than any of an unmixed breed could be. They allowed nature great license in these directions. The most strange and fearful beasts were by them supposed to be the off-spring of two different savage kinds. So fertile were their imaginations, and such fertility did they assign to nature. In the modern account the fabulous part will be omitted, it is true, but the portrait of the real and living creature also.

The old writers have left a more lively and lifelike account of the gorgon than modern writers give us of real animals.

Feb. 20. P.M. — I see directly in front of the Depot Ice house, on the only piece of bare ground I see hereabouts, a large flock of lesser redpolls feeding. They must be picking up earth, sand, or the withered grass. They are so intent on it that they allow me to come quite near. This, then, is one use for the drifting of snow which lays bare some spots, however deep it may be elsewhere, — so that the birds, etc., can come at the earth.

Feb. 21. It was their very admiration of nature that made the ancients attribute those magnanimous qualities which are rarely to be found in man to the lion as her masterpiece, and it is only by a

readiness, or rather preparedness, to see more than appears in a creature that one can appreciate what is manifest.

It is remarkable how many berries are the food of birds, mice, etc. Perhaps I may say that all are, however hard or bitter. This I am inclined to say, judging of what I do not know from what I do.

Feb. 23. 2 P.M. — Thermometer 56°. Wind south.

3 P.M. — Thermometer 58° and snow almost gone. River rising. We have not had such a warm day since the beginning of December (which was remarkably warm).

The words "pardall" and "libbard," applied by Gesner to the same animal, express as much of the wild beast as any.

I read in Brand's "Popular Antiquities" that "Bishop Stillingfleet observes, that among the Saxons of the northern nations, the Feast of the New Year was observed with more than ordinary jollity: thence, as Olaus Wormius and Scheffer observe, they reckoned their age by so many Iolas." (*Iola*, to make merry. — Gothic.) So may we measure our lives by our joys. We have lived, not in proportion to the number of years that we have spent on the earth, but in proportion as we have enjoyed.

A fact stated barely is dry. It must be the vehicle of some humanity in order to interest us. It is like giving a man a stone when he asks you for bread. Ultimately the moral is all in all, and we do not mind it if inferior truth is sacrificed to superior, as when the moralist fables and makes animals speak and act like men. It must be warm, moist, incarnated, — have been breathed on at least. A man has not seen a thing who has not felt it.

Feb. 24. 2 P.M. — Thermometer 42. A very spring-like day, so much sparkling light in the air.

The clouds reflecting a dazzling brightness from their edges, and though it is rather warm (the wind raw) there are many, finely divided, in a stream southwest to northeast all the afternoon, and some most brilliant mother-o'-pearl. I never saw the green in it more distinct.

Feb. 28. Looking from Hubbard's Bridge, I see a great water-bug

even on the river, so forward is the season.

I take up a handsomely spread (or blossomed) pitch pine cone, but I find that a squirrel has begun to strip it first, having gnawed off a few of the scales at the base. The squirrel always begins to gnaw a cone thus at the base, as if it were a stringent law among the squirrel people, — as if the old squirrels taught the young ones a few simple rules like this.

C. saw a dozen robins to-day on the ground on Ebby Hubbard's hill by the Yellow Birch Swamp.

March 2. Notice the brightness of a row of osiers this morning. This phenomenon, whether referable to a change in the condition of the twig or to the spring air and light, or even to our imaginations, is not the less a real phenomenon, affecting us annually at this season. This is one compensation for having them lopped so often along the causeways, that it is only these new and vigorous growths which shine thus.

March 8. 2.30 P.M. — 50°. To Cliffs and Walden.

See a small flock of grackles on the willow-row above railroad bridge. How they sit and make a business of chattering! for it cannot be called singing, and no improvement from age to age perhaps. Yet, as *nature* is a *becoming*, their notes may become melodious at last. At length, on my very near approach, they flit suspiciously away, uttering a few subdued notes as they hurry off.

March 9. Snows this forenoon, whitening the ground again.

I have seen three or four pieces of coral in the fields of Concord, and Mr. Pratt has found three or four on his farm. How shall they be accounted for? Who brought them here? and when?

March 14. 2 P.M. — Thermometer 39. Overcast, with a flurry of snow and a little rain, till 4.30 P.M. To Walden and Cliffs.

I am surprised to find Walden almost entirely open. I have not observed it to open before before the 23d of March. However, it is clear enough why Walden has broken up thus early this year. It does not ordinarily freeze till near the end of December (average of twelve

observations, December 25th), while Fair Haven Pond freezes about December 2d. But this past winter our cold weather was mostly confined to December, which was remarkable for its uniform cold, while January and February were very open and pleasant. So that Fair Haven Pond, having more than three weeks the start, and that being almost all the cold weather that we had, froze much the thickest. Walden did not freeze so thick as usual. If we have an average winter up to January, but a particularly warm one afterward, Walden will break up early, not having had any chance to freeze thick.

As I stand there, I see some dark ripples already drop and sweep over the surface of the pond, as they will ere long over Ripple Lake and other pools in the wood. No sooner has the ice of Walden melted than the wind begins to play in dark ripples over the surface of the virgin water. It is affecting to see Nature so tender, however old, and wearing none of the wrinkles of age. Ice dissolved is the next moment as perfect water as if it had been melted a million years. To see that which was lately so hard and immovable now so soft and impressible! What if our moods could dissolve thus completely? It seems as if it must rejoice in its own newly acquired fluidity, as it affects the beholder with joy. Often the March winds have no chance to ripple its face at all.

I see on the peak several young English cherry trees six or eight feet high, evidently planted by birds and growing well. These grew nearly a foot last year and look quite healthy. The bird must have brought the stone far to this locality.

Every craftsman looks at his own objects with peculiar eyes. I thought of this on seeing these young cherry trees and remembering how I used to distinguish the erect and lusty shoots when I cultivated a small nursery, for budding. One eye will mark how much the twigs grew last year, another the lichens on the trunk.

March 15. A hen-hawk sails away from the wood southward. I get a very fair sight of it sailing overhead. What a perfectly regular and neat outline it presents! an easily recognized figure anywhere. Yet I never see it represented in any books. The exact correspondence of the marks on one side to those on the other, as the black or dark tip

of one wing to the other, and the dark line midway the wing. I have no idea that one can get as correct an idea of the form and color of the under sides of a hen-hawk's wings by spreading those of a dead specimen in his study as by looking up at a free and living hawk soaring above him in the fields. The penalty for obtaining a petty knowledge thus dishonestly is that it is less interesting to men generally, as it is less significant. What is an eagle in captivity! — screaming in a courtyard! I am not the wiser respecting eagles for having seen one there. I do not wish to know the length of its entrails.

March 18. Sunday. 2 P.M. — Thermometer 56. Wind south, but soon changes to southeast, making the air fresh and hazy and rippling the before smooth water.

All along under that bank I heard the hum of honey-bees in the air, attracted by this flower. What a remarkable instinct it is that leads them to this flower! This bee is said to have been introduced by the white man, but how much it has learned!

You see a fly come forth from its hibernaculum in your yard, stretch its wings in the sun, and set forth on its flowery journey. You little think that it knows the locality of early flowers better than you. You have not dreamed of them yet. It knows a spot a mile off under a warm bank-side where the skunk-cabbage is in bloom. No doubt this flower, too, has learned to expect its winged visitor knocking at its door in the spring.

Pratt says that his bees come out in a pleasant day at any time in the winter; that of late they have come out and eased themselves, the ground being covered around the hives with their yellow droppings. Were not these the little yellow pellets I saw in a skunk-cabbage flower some years ago? He says they come home now all yellow. I tell him it is skunk-cabbage pollen. I think there would be no surer way to tell when this flower had bloomed than to keep bees and watch when they first returned laden with pollen. Let them search for you, — a swarm of bees. Probably with a microscope you could tell exactly when each of the bee-frequented flowers began to bloom throughout the year.

March 22. The phenomena of an average March are increasing warmth, melting the snow and ice and, gradually, the frost in the ground; cold and blustering weather, with high, commonly northwest winds for many days together; misty and other rains taking out frost, and whitenings of snow, and winter often back again, both its cold and snow; bare ground and open waters, and more or less of a freshet; some calm and pleasant days reminding us of summer, with a blue haze or a thicker mist wreathing the woods at last, in which, perchance, we take off our coats awhile and sit without a fire a day; ways getting settled, and some greenness appearing on south bank; April-like rains, after the frost is chiefly out; plowing and planting of peas, etc., just beginning, and the old leaves getting dry in the woods.

Vegetation fairly begins, — conferva and mosses, grass and carex, etc., — and gradually many early herbaceous plants start, and noticed radical leaves; *Stellaria media* and shepherd's-purse bloom; maple and buttonwood sap (6th) flow; spiræas start, cladonias flush, and bæomyces handsome; willow catkins become silvery, aspens downy; osiers, etc., look bright, white maple and elm buds expand and open, oak woods thin-leaved; alder and hazel catkins become relaxed and elongated. First perceptible greenness on south banks, 22d. The skunk-cabbage begins to bloom (23d); plant peas, etc., 26th; spring rye, wheat, lettuce; maple swamps red-tinged (?) 28th, and lake grass; and perchance the gooseberry and lilac begin to show a little green. That is, *one indigenous native flower* blooms. (*Vide* if the early sedge does.)

About twenty-nine migratory birds arrive (including hawks and crows), and two or three more utter their spring notes and sounds, as nuthatch and chickadee, turkeys, and woodpecker tapping, while apparently the snow bunting, lesser redpoll, shrike, and doubtless several more — as owls, crossbills (?) — leave us, and woodcocks and hawks begin to lay.

Many insects and worms come forth and are active, — and the perla insects still about ice and water, — as tipula, grubs, and fuzzy caterpillars, minute hoppers on grass at springs; gnats, large and small, dance in air; the common and the green fly buzz outdoors; the gyrinus, large and small, on brooks, etc., and skaters; spiders shoot their webs, and at last gossamer floats; the honey-bee visits the

skunk-cabbage; fishworms come up, sow-bugs, wireworms, etc.; various larvæ are seen in pools; small green and also brown grasshoppers begin to hop, small ants to stir (25th); *Vanessa Antiopa* out 29th; cicindelas run on sand; and small reddish butterflies are seen in wood-paths, etc., etc., etc.

Skunks are active and frolic; woodchucks and ground squirrels come forth; moles root; musquash are commonly drowned out and shot, and sometimes erect a new house, and at length are smelled; and foxes have young (?).

As for fishes, etc., trout glance in the brooks, brook minnows are seen; see furrows on sandy bottoms, and small shell snails copulate; dead suckers, etc., are seen floating on meadows; pickerel and perch are running up brooks, and suckers (24th) and pickerel begin to dart in shallows.

And for reptiles, not only salamanders and pollywogs are more commonly seen, and also those little frogs (*sylvatica* males?) at spring-holes and ditches, the yellow-spot turtle and wood turtle, *Rana fontinalis*, and painted tortoise come forth, and the *Rana sylvatica* croaks.

Our river opened in 1851, much before February 25; 1852, March 14 at least; 1853, say March 8 at least; 1854, say March 9; average March 5. Hudson River opened, according to Patent Office Reports, 1854, page 435: 1851, February 25; 1852, March 28; 1853, March 23; 1854, March 17; average March 16. According to which our river opens some eleven days the soonest. Perhaps this is owing partly to the fact that our river is nearer the ocean and that it rises southward instead of northward.

March 23. It will be seen by the annexed scrap that March is the fourth coldest month, or about midway between December and November. The same appears from the fifteen years' observation at Mendon. ("American Almanac," page 86.) The descent to extreme cold occupies seven months and is therefore more gradual (though a part of it is more rapid) than the ascent to extreme heat, which takes only five months. The mean average temperature of the coldest month (February) being 23.25, and of the warmest (July) being 72.35, the whole ascent from extreme cold to extreme heat is 49.10°,

and in March (32.73) we have accomplished 8.48°, or a little less than one sixth the ascent. (According to the Mendon fifteen years' average the whole ascent is 47.5, and in March we have advanced 9.2, a little more than one fifth.) It appears (from the scrap) that December, January, and February, the three winter months, differ very little in temperature, and the three summer months and September are next most alike, though they differ considerably more. (Same from Mendon tables.) The greatest or abruptest change is from November to December (in Mendon tables from September to October), the next most abrupt from April to May (in Mendon tables from March to April). The least change (according to the above tables) is from December to January. (According to Mendon tables, the same from December to January as from January to February.) The three spring months, and also October and November, are transition months, in which the temperature rapidly changes.

March 24. According to a table in the "American Almanac" for '49, page 84, made at Cambridge, from May, '47, to May, '48, the monthly mean force of the wind for March, April, and May were equal, and were inferior to July and June; for quantity of clouds March and May were equal, and were preceded by December, November, September, January, June, and August. For depth of rain, [*etc.*].

March 25. To speak of the general phenomena of March: When March arrives, a tolerably calm, clear, sunny, spring-like day, the snow is so far gone that sleighing ends and our compassion is excited by the sight of horses laboriously dragging wheeled vehicles through mud and water and slosh. We shall no longer hear the jingling of sleigh-bells. The sleigh is housed, or, perchance, converted into a wheeled vehicle by the travelling peddler caught far from home. The wood-sled is perhaps abandoned by the roadside, where the snow ended, with two sticks put under its runners, — there to rest, it may be, while the grass springs up green around it, till another winter comes round. Even the boy's sled gets put away by degrees, or when it is found to be in the way, and his thoughts are directed gradually to more earthy games. There are now water privileges for him by every

roadside.

The boy's sled gets put away in the barn or shed or garret, and there lies dormant all summer, like a woodchuck in the winter. It goes into its burrow just before woodchucks come out, so that you may say a woodchuck never sees a sled, nor a sled a woodchuck, — unless it were a prematurely risen woodchuck or a belated and unseasonable sled. Before the woodchuck comes out the sled goes in. They dwell at the antipodes of each other. Before sleds rise woodchucks have set. The ground squirrel too shares the privileges and misfortunes of the woodchuck. The sun now passes from the constellation of the sled into that of the woodchuck.

The sleighing, the sledding, or sliding, is gone. We now begin to wheel or roll ourselves and commodities along, which requires more tractile power. The high-set chaise, the lumbering coach like wasps and gnats and bees come humming forth.

The traveller, when he returns the hired horse to his stable, concludes at last that it is worse sleighing than wheeling. To be sure, there was one reach where he slid along pretty well under the north side of a wood, but for the most part he cut through, as when the cook cuts edgings of dough for her pies, and the grating on the gravel set his teeth on edge.

To proceed with March: Frost comes out of warm sand-banks exposed to the sun, and the sand flows down in the form of foliage. But I see still adhering to the bridges the great chandelier icicles formed in yesterday's cold and windy weather.

By the 2d, ice suddenly softens and skating ends. This warmer and springlike day, the inexperienced eagerly revisit the pond where yesterday they found hard and glassy ice, and are surprised and disappointed to find it soft and rotten. Skates, then, have become useless tools and follow sleds to their winter quarters. They are ungratefully parted with, not like old friends surely. They and the thoughts of them are shuffled out of the way, and you will probably have to hunt long before you find them next December.

The air is springlike. The milkman closes his ice-house doors against the milder air.

By the 3d, [*etc., day by day through March 31*].

March 26. Tried by various tests, this season fluctuates more or less. For example, we may have absolutely no sleighing during the year. There was none in the winter months of ‘58 (only from March 4 to 14). ‘52–’53 was an open winter. Or it may continue uninterrupted from the beginning of winter to the 3d of April, as in ‘56, and the dependent phenomena be equally late. The river may be either only transiently closed, as in ‘52–’53 and ‘57–’58, or it may not be open entirely (up *to* pond) till April 4th.

As for cold, some years we may have as cold days in March as in any winter month. March 4, 1858, it was –14, and on the 29th, 1854, the pump froze so as to require thawing.

The river may be quite high in March or at summer level.

Fair Haven Pond may be open by the 20th of March, as this year, or not till April 13 as in ‘56, or twenty-three days later.

Tried by the skunk-cabbage, this may flower March 2 (‘60) or April 6 or 8 (as in ‘55 and ‘54), or some five weeks later, — say thirty-six days.

The bluebird may be seen February 24, as in ‘50, ‘57, and ‘60, or not till March 24, as in ‘56, — say twenty-eight days.

The yellow-spotted tortoise may be seen February 23, as in ‘57, or not till March 28, as in ‘55, — thirty-three days.

The wood frog may be heard March 15, as this year, or not till April 13, as in ‘56, — twenty-nine days.

That is, tried by the last four phenomena, there may be about a month’s fluctuation, so that March may be said to have receded half-way into February or advanced half-way into April, *i.e.*, it borrows half of February or half of April.

April 1. Warm, with the thick haze still concealing the sun.

Our gooseberry begins to show a little green, but not our currant.

The fruit a thinker bears is *sentences*, — statements or opinions. He seeks to affirm something as true. I am surprised that my affirmations or utterances come to me ready-made, — not fore-thought, — so that I occasionally awake in the night simply to let fall ripe a statement which I had never consciously considered before, and as surprising and novel and agreeable to me as anything can be. As if we only thought by sympathy with the universal mind, which

thought while we were asleep. There is such a necessity to make a definite statement that our minds at length do it without our consciousness, just as we carry our food to our mouths. This occurred to me last night, but I was so surprised by the fact which I have just endeavored to report that I have entirely forgotten what the particular observation was.

April 20. Moore tells me that last fall his men, digging sand in that hollow just up the hill, dug up a parcel of snakes half torpid. They were both striped and black together. The men killed them, and laid them all in a line on the ground, and they measured several hundred feet. This seems to be the common practice when such collections are found; they are at once killed and stretched out in a line, and the sum of their lengths measured and related.

May 3. To Cambridge and Boston.

I see at the Aquarium many of my little striped or barred breams, now labelled *Bryttus obesus*. Compared with the common, they have rounded tails, larger dorsal and anal fins, and are fuller or heavier forward. I observe that they incline to stand on their heads more.

May 12. Celandine. Very hot.

2.30 P.M. — 81°.

We seek the shade to sit in for a day or two.

The sugar maple blossoms on the Common resound with bees.

First bathe in the river. Quite warm enough.

May 17. Standing in the meadow near the early aspen at the island, I hear the first fluttering of leaves, — a peculiar sound, at first unaccountable to me. The breeze causes the now fully expanded aspen leaves there to rustle with a pattering sound, striking on one another. It is much like a gentle surge breaking on a shore, or the rippling of waves. This is the first softer music which the wind draws from the forest, the woods generally being comparatively bare and just bursting into leaf. It was delicious to behold that dark mass and hear that soft rippling sound.

Hear of a hummingbird on the 12th.

Hear the first bullfrog's *trump*.

May 23. Critchicrotches some two or three days; now tender to eat.

How agreeable and surprising the peculiar fragrance of the sweet flag when bruised! That this plant alone should have extracted this odor surely for so many ages each summer from the moist earth!

The quarter-grown red oak leaves between you and the sun, how yellow-green!

June 4. The clear brightness of June was well represented yesterday by the buttercups (*Ranunculus bulbosus*) along the roadside. Their yellow so glossy and varnished within; but not without. Surely there is no reason why the new butter should not be yellow now.

One asks me to-day when it is that the leaves are fully expanded, so that the trees and woods look dark and heavy with leaves. I answered that there were leaves on many if not on most trees already fully expanded, but that there were not many on a tree, the shoots having grown only some three inches, but by and by they will have grown a foot or two and there will be ten times as many leaves. Each tree (or most trees) now holds out many little twigs, some three inches long, with two or three fully expanded leaves on it, between us and the sun, making already a grateful but thin shade, like a coarse sieve, so open that we see the fluttering of each leaf in its shadow; but in a week or more the twigs will have so extended themselves, and the number of fully expanded leaves be so increased, that the trees will look heavy and dark with foliage and the shadow be dark and opaque, — a gelid shade.

You may say that now, when most trees have fully expanded leaves and the black ash fairly shows green, the leafy season has fairly commenced. (I see that I so called it May 31 and 27, 1853.)

June 7. The peculiarities of the new leaves, or young ones, are to be observed. *As I now remember*, there is the whitish shoot of the white pine; the reddish brown of the pitch pine, giving a new tinge to its tops; the bead-work of the hemlock; the now just conspicuous

bursting lighter glaucous-green buds of the black spruce in cold swamps; the frizzly-looking glaucous-green shoots and leafets of the fir (and fragrant now or soon); the thin and delicate foliage of the larch; the inconspicuous and fragrant arbor-vitæ; the bead-work of the *Juniperus repens* (red cedar inconspicuous); [*etc. — 24 more*].

June 8. 2 P.M. — To Well Meadow *via* Walden.

Within a day or two has begun that season of summer when you see afternoon showers, maybe with thunder, or the threat of them, dark in the horizon, and are uncertain whether to venture far away or without an umbrella. I noticed the very first such cloud on the 25th of May, — the dark iris of June.

As I look at the mountains in the horizon, I am struck by the fact that they are all pyramidal — pyramids, more or less low — and have a peak. Why have the mountains usually a peak? This is not the common form of hills. They do not so impress us at least.

June 16. It appears to me that these phenomena occur simultaneously, say June 12th, *viz.*: —

Heat about 85° at 2 P.M. True summer.

Hylodes cease to peep.

Purring frogs (*Rana palustris*) cease.

Lightning-bugs first seen.

Bullfrogs trump *generally*.

Mosquitoes begin to be really troublesome.

Afternoon thunder-showers almost regular.

Sleep with open window (10th), and wear thin coat and ribbon on neck.

Turtles fairly and generally begun to lay.

June 21. Having noticed the pine pollen washed up on the shore of three or four ponds in the woods lately and at Ripple Lake, a dozen rods from the nearest pine, also having seen the pollen carried off visibly half a dozen rods from a pitch pine which I had jarred, and rising all the while when there was very little wind, it suggested to me that the air must be full of this fine dust at this season, that it must be carried to great distances, when dry, and falling at night perhaps,

or with a change in the atmosphere, its presence might be detected remote from pines by examining the edges of pretty large bodies of water, where it would be collected to one side by the wind and waves from a large area.

So I thought over all the small ponds in the township in order to select one or more most remote from the woods or pines, whose shores I might examine and so test my theory. I could think of none more favorable than this little pond only four rods in diameter, a watering-place in John Brown's pasture, which has but few pads in it. It is a small round pond at the bottom of a hollow in the midst of a perfectly bare, dry pasture. The nearest wood of any kind is just thirty-nine rods distant northward, and across a road from the edge of the pond. Any other wood in other directions is five or six times as far. I knew it was a bad time to try my experiment, — just after such heavy rains and when the pines are effete, — a little too late. The wind was now blowing quite strong from the northeast, whereas all the pollen that I had seen hitherto had been collected on the northeast sides of ponds by a southwest wind. I approached the pond from the northeast and, looking over it and carefully along the shore there, could detect no pollen. I then proceeded to walk round it, but still could detect none. I then said to myself, If there was any here before the rain and northeast wind, it must have been on the northeast side and then have been washed over and now up high quite at or on the shore. I looked there carefully, stooping down, and was gratified to find, after all, a distinct yellow line of pollen dust about half an inch in width — or washing off to two or three times that width — quite on the edge, and some dead twigs which I took up from the wet shore were completely coated with it, as with sulphur. This yellow line reached half a rod along the southwest side, and I then detected a little of the dust slightly graying the surface for two or three feet out there.

When I thought I had failed, I was much pleased to detect, after all, this distinct yellow line, revealing unmistakably the presence of pines in the neighborhood and thus confirming my theory. As chemists detect the presence of ozone in the atmosphere by exposing to it a delicately prepared paper, so the lakes detect for us thus the presence of the pine pollen in the atmosphere. They are our

pollinometers. How much of this invisible dust must be floating in the atmosphere, and be inhaled and drunk by us at this season!! Who knows but the pollen of some plants may be unwholesome to inhale, and produce the diseases of the season?

Of course a large pond will collect the most, and you will find most at the bottom of long deep bays into which the wind blows.

I did not expect to find any pollen, the pond was so small and distant from any wood, but I thought that I would examine. Who knows but the pollen of various kinds floating through the air at this season may be the source of some of the peculiar perfumes which are not traceable to their sources?

June 27. Farmer says that he found on the 24th a black snake laying her eggs on the side of the hill between his peach-orchard and the ledge in the woods. Was close by where his uncle (?) tried to dig through to the other side of the world. Dug more or less for three years. Used to dig nights, as long as one candle lasted. Left a stone just between him and the other side, not to be removed till he was ready to marry Washington's sister. The foxes now occupy his hole.

June 28. This month, it must be 85° at 2 P.M. and *still* to make hot weather. 80° with wind is quite comfortable. June-grass is now generally browned atop, its spikes being out of bloom and old. Herd's-grass out, two or three days.

Farmer said yesterday that he thought foxes did not live so much in the depth of the woods as on open hillsides, where they lay out and overlooked the operations of men, — studied their ways, — which made them so cunning.

JUNE 29. Dogdayish and showery, with thunder.

At 6 P.M. 91°, the hottest yet, though a thunder-shower has passed northeast and grazed us, and, in consequence, at 6.30 or 7, another thunder-shower comes up from the southwest and there is a sudden burst from it with a remarkably strong, gusty wind, and the rain for fifteen minutes falls in a blinding deluge. I think I never saw it rain so hard. The roof of the depot shed is taken off, many trees torn to pieces, the garden flooded at once, corn and potatoes, etc.,

beaten flat. You could not see distinctly many rods through the rain. It was the very strong gusts added to the weight of the rain that did the mischief. There was little or no wind before the shower; it belonged wholly to it. Thus our most violent thunder-shower followed the hottest hour of the month.

July 3. Looked for the marsh hawk's nest in the Great Meadows. We had much difficulty in finding it again, but at last nearly stumbled on to a young hawk with a great head, staring eyes, and open gaping or panting mouth, yet mere down, grayish-white down, as yet; but I detected another which had crawled a foot one side amid the bushes for shade or safety, more than half as large again, with small feathers and a yet more angry, hawk-like look. How naturally anger sits on the young hawk's head! June is an up-country month, when our air and landscape is most like that of a more mountainous region, full of freshness.

July 7. June 30th, July 3d, 4th, 6th, and 7th, I carried round a thermometer in the afternoon and ascertained the temperature of the springs, brooks, etc. [*Eight pages of data, averaged and analyzed, on 18 springs, 11 brooks, 15 river temperatures, and 6 other local bodies of water.*]

I should say, then, that a spring colder than 48° was remarkably cold; 48° to 50°, inclusive, quite cold, a very good cold spring; above 50° and not above 54°, cold; above that and not above 58°, *tolerable* merely. Or, I should rather say that only 50° and below was *cold* for a *spring*; say below 48°, remarkably cold; between that and 50°, inclusive, cold; 50° to 54°, inclusive, *pretty* cold; thence to 58°, inclusive, merely tolerable to drink.

It appears that in a cold day at present the water of the river at 6 A.M. will be ten to fourteen degrees warmer than the air, and accordingly feels warm to the touch. In the translation into English of Cranz's "Greenland" from High Dutch (1767) I find "an elve or mountain spring," and again "Salmon elves, or the little streams from the hills."

July 13. 2 P.M. — To Little Truro.

You now especially notice some very red fields where the red-top grass grows luxuriantly and is now in full bloom, — a red purple, passing into brown, looking at a distance like a red-sandstone soil. The different cultivated fields are thus like so many different-colored checkers on a checker-board. First we had the June-grass reddish-brown, and the sorrel red, of June; now the red-top red of July. For a week — and if you look very closely, for a fortnight or more — past, the season has had a more advanced look, from the reddening, imbrowning, or yellowing, and ripening of many grasses, as the sweet-scented vernal (for some time generally withered) and the June-grass, and some grain, — rye, wheat, etc., — so that the fields and hillsides present a less liquid green than they did. The vernal freshness of June is passed.

July 17. 2 P.M. — To Walden.

The soft sand on the bottom of Walden, as deep as I can wade, feels very warm to my feet, while the water feels cold. This may be partly a mere sensation, but I suspect that the sand is really much warmer than the water and that some creatures take refuge in it accordingly, that much heat passes through the water and is absorbed in the sand. Yet when I let a thermometer lie on the bottom and draw it up quickly I detect no difference between the temperature of the bottom and of the water at the surface. Probably it would have been different if the thermometer had been buried in the sand.

July 19. The rich crimson under sides (with their regularly branching veins) of some white lily pads surpasses the color of most flowers. No wonder the spiders are red that swim beneath; and think of the fishes that swim beneath this crimson canopy, — beneath a crimson sky. I can frequently trace the passage of a boat, a pickerel-fisher, perhaps, by the crimson under sides of the pads upturned.

The pads crowd and overlap each other in most amicable fashion. Sometimes one lobe of a yellow lily pad is above its neighbor, while the other is beneath. The pads are rapidly consumed, but fresh ones are all the while pushing up and unrolling. They push up and spread out in the least crevice that offers.

July 22. Yesterday having been a rainy day, the air is now remarkably clear and cool and you rarely see the horizon so distinct. The surface of the earth, especially looking westward, — grass grounds, pastures, and meadows, — is remarkably beautiful. I stand in Heywood's pasture west of the leek and, leaning over the wall, look westward. All things — grass, etc. — are peculiarly fresh this season on account of the copious rains.

The next field on the west slopes gently from both east and west to a meadow in the middle. So, as I look over the wall, it is first dark-green, where white clover has been cut (still showing a myriad low white heads which resound with the hum of bees); next, along the edge of the bottom or meadow, is a strip or belt three or four rods wide of red-top, uncut, perfectly distinct; then the cheerful bright-yellow sedge of the meadow, yellow almost as gamboge; then a corresponding belt of red-top on its upper edge, quite straight and rectilinear like the first; then a glaucous-green field of grain still quite low; and, in the further corner of the field, a much darker square of green than any yet, all brilliant in this wonderful light. You thus have a sort of terrestrial rainbow, thus: —

The farmer accustomed to look at his crops from a mercenary point of view is not aware how beautiful they are. This prospect was really exciting, even as a rainbow is.

March 19, 1856, it was twenty-six inches thick!!
No, for Farmer says the former are liquid.
15th, 16th, 17th.
Vide June 20 and 22, 1858.
There was the same sudden and remarkably violent storm about two hours earlier all up and down the Hudson, and it struck the Great Eastern at her moorings in New York and caused some damage.

July 23. I saw the other day where the lightning on the 12th or 13th had struck the telegraph-posts at Walden Pond. It had shattered five posts in succession, they being a dozen rods apart, spoiling them entirely; though all of them *stood* but one, yet they were a mere wrack of splinters through which you could look. It had omitted a

great many more posts and struck half a dozen more at a great distance from these on each side. And at the same time there was a smart shock, an explosion, at the operating office at the depot, two miles off from the furthest point. I should think, speaking from memory, that the posts struck were the oldest and dampest, or most rotten. At one or two posts it had plainly entered the ground and plowed toward the railroad-track, slightly injuring it. It struck a pitch pine standing within four or five feet of the wire, leaving a white seam down one side of it, also two large oaks a little further off. This was where the telegraph ran parallel to, and a few feet only from, a wood. It also struck a small oak on the opposite side of the track. The lightning struck for two miles (!!) at least.

So far as leaves are concerned, one of the most noticeable phenomena of this green-leaf season is the conspicuous reflection of light in clear breezy days from the silvery under sides of some.

All trees and shrubs which have light-colored or silvery under sides to their leaves, but especially the swamp white oak and the red maple, are now very bright and conspicuous in the strong wind after the rain of the morning. To be sure, most, if not all leaves, not to mention grasses, are a paler green beneath, and hence the oaks and other trees behind show various shades of green, which would be more observed if it were not for these stronger contrasts. Though the wind may not be very strong nor incessant, you appear to see *only* the under sides of those first named, and they make a uniform impression, as if their leaves, having been turned up, were permanently held so. Before the wind arose, the wooded shore and hillsides were an almost uniform green, but now the whole outline of the swamp white oaks and maples is revealed by the wind — a sort of magic, a "presto change" — distinctly against trees whose leaves are nearly of the same color with the upper sides of these.

In a maple swamp every maple-top stands now distinguished thus from the birches in their midst. Before they were confounded, but a wind comes and lifts their leaves, showing their lighter under sides, and suddenly, as by magic, the maple stands out from the birch. There is a great deal of life in this landscape. What an airing the leaves get! Perchance it is necessary that their under sides be thus exposed to the light and air in order that they may be hardened and

darkened by it.

I read of the Amazon that its current, indeed, is strong, but the wind always blows up the stream. This sounds too good to be true.

July 31. Before it rained hardest I could see in the midst of the dark and smoother water a lighter-colored and rougher surface, generally in oblong patches, which moved steadily down the stream, and this, I think, was the new water from above welling up and making its way downward amid the old. The water or currents of a river are thus not homogeneous, but the surface is seen to be of two shades, the smoother and darker water which already fills its bed and the fresh influx of lighter-colored and rougher, probably more rapid, currents which spot it here and there; *i.e.*, some water seems to occupy it as a lake to some extent, other is passing through it as a stream, — the lacustrine and the fluviatile water. These lighter reaches without reflections (?) are, as it were, water wrong side up. But do I ever see these except when it rains? And are they not the rain-water which has not yet mingled with the water of the river?

AUGUST, 1860

Aug. 1. P. M. — To Cliffs.

The earliest corn has shed its pollen, say a week or ten days. Rye, wheat, and oats and barley have bloomed, say a month.

I stand at the wall-end on the Cliffs and look over the Miles meadow on Conantum. It is an unusually clear day after yesterday's rain.

How much of beauty — of color, as well as form — on which our eyes daily rest goes unperceived by us! No one but a botanist is likely to distinguish nicely the different shades of green with which the open surface of the earth is clothed, — not even a landscape-painter if he does not know the species of sedges and grasses which paint it. With respect to the color of grass, most of those even who attend peculiarly to the aspects of Nature only observe that it is more or less dark or light, green or brown, or velvety, fresh or parched, etc. But if you are studying grasses you look for another and different beauty, and you find it, in the wonderful variety of color, etc., presented by the various species.

Take the bare, unwooded earth now, and consider the beautiful variety of shades (or tints?) of green that clothe it under a bright sun. The pastured hills of Conantum, now just imbrowned (probably by the few now stale flowering tops of the red-top which the cows have avoided as too wiry), present a hard and solid green or greenish brown, just touched here and there delicately with light patches of sheep's fescue (though it may be only its radical leaves left), as if a dew lay on it there, — and this has some of the effect of a watered surface, — and the whole is dotted with a thousand little shades of projecting rocks and shrubs. Then, looking lower at the meadow in Miles's field, that is seen as a bright-yellow and sunny stream (yet with a slight tinge of glaucous) between the dark-green potato-fields, flowing onward with windings and expansions, and, as it were, with rips and waterfalls, to the river meadows.

Again, I sit on the brow of the orchard, and look northwest down the river valley (at mid-afternoon). There flows, or rests, the calm blue winding river, lakelike, with its smooth silver-plated sides, and

wherever weeds extend across it, there too the silver plate bridges it, like a spirit's bridge across the Styx; but the rippled portions are blue as the sky. This river reposes in the midst of a broad brilliant yellow valley amid green fields and hills and woods, as if, like the Nanking or Yang-ho (or what-not), it flowed through an Oriental Chinese meadow where yellow is the imperial color. The immediate and raised edge of the river, with its willows and button-bushes and polygonums, is a light green, but the immediately adjacent low meadows, where the sedge prevails, is a brilliant and cheerful yellow, intensely, incredibly bright, such color as you never see in pictures; yellow of various tints, in the lowest and sedgiest parts deepening to so much color as if gamboge had been rubbed into the meadow there; the most cheering color in all the landscape; shaded with little darker isles of green in the midst of this yellow sea of sedge. Yet it is the bright and cheerful yellow, as of spring, and with nothing in the least autumnal in it. How this contrasts with the adjacent fields of red-top, now fast falling before the scythe!

When your attention has been drawn to them, nothing is more charming than the common colors of the earth's surface. See yonder flashing field of corn through the *shimmering* air. (This was said day before yesterday.)

The deciduous woods generally have now and for a long time been nearly as dark as the pines, though, unlike the pines, they show a general silveriness.

For some days have seen stigmas of what I have called *Cyperus dentatus,* but it is evidently later than the *diandrus.*

See a berry (not ripe) of the two-leaved Solomon's-seal dropped at the mouth of a mouse or squirrel's hole, and observe that many are gone from these plants, as if plucked by mice.

The sphagnum shows little black-balled drumsticks now. The nuthatch is active now. Meadow-haying commenced. *Cinna arundinacea* (?) almost.

Looked in two red maple swamps to find the young plants. If you look carefully through a dense red maple swamp now, you find many little maples a couple of inches high which have sprung up chiefly on certain spots alone, especially where the seed has fallen on little beds of sphagnum, which apparently have concealed the seed at the same

time that they supplied the necessary moisture. There you find the little tree already deeply rooted, while the now useless winged seed lies empty near by, with its fragile wing half wasted away, as if wholly unrelated to that plant, — not visibly attached, but lying empty on one side. But so far as I look, I see only one maple to a seed, but, indeed, I see only a single seed at a time. You do not find dense groves of them generally, as you might expect from the abundance of seed that falls.

Nevertheless, you will be surprised, on looking through a large maple swamp which two months ago was red with maple seed falling in showers around, at the very small number of maple seeds to be found there, and probably every one of these will be empty. The little maples appear oftenest to have sprung from such as fell into crevices in the moss or leaves and so escaped. Indeed, almost every seed that falls to the earth is picked up by some animal or other whose favorite and perhaps peculiar food it is. They are daily busy about it in the season, and the few seeds which escape are exceptions. There is at least a squirrel or mouse to a tree. If you postpone your search but for a short time, you find yourself only gleaning after them. You may find several of their holes under every tree, if not within it. They ransack the woods. Though the seed may be almost microscopic, it is nuts to them; and this apparently is one of the principal ends which these seeds were intended to serve.

Look under a nut tree a month after the nuts have fallen, and see what proportion of sound nuts to the abortive ones and shells you will find ordinarily. They have been dispersed, and many effectually planted, far and wide by animals. You have come, you would say, after the feast was over, and are presented with shells only. It looks like a platform before a grocery. These little creatures must live, and, pray, what are they to eat if not the fruits of the earth? — *i.e.* the graminivorous [sic] ones.

Aug. 2. The wing of the sugar maples is dry and ripe to look at, but the seed end and seed are quite green. I find, as Michaux did, one seed always abortive.

P. M. — Up Assabet.

The young red maples have sprung up chiefly on the sandy and

muddy shores, especially where there is a bay or eddy.

At *2* p. M. the river is twelve and seven eighths above summer level, higher than for a long time, on account of the rain of the 31st. Seed of hop-hornbeam not ripe. The button-bush is about in prime, and white lilies considerably past prime. Mikania begun, and now, perhaps, the river's brink is at its height. The black willow down is even yet still seen here and there on the water.

The river, being raised three or four inches, looks quite full, and the bur-reed, etc., is floating off in considerable masses. See those round white patches of eggs on the upright sides of dark rocks.

There is now and of late a very thin, in some lights purplish, scum on the water, outside of coarser drift that has lodged, — a brown scum, somewhat gossamerlike as it lies, and browner still on your finger when you take it up. What is it? The pollen of some plant?

As we rest in our boat under a tree, we hear from time to time the loud snap of a wood pewee's bill overhead, which is incessantly diving to this side and that after an insect and returning to its perch on a dead twig. We hear the sound of its bill when it catches one.

In huckle-berry fields I see the seeds of berries recently left on the rocks where birds have perched. How many of these small fruits they may thus disseminate!

Aug. 3. The knotty-rooted cyperus out some days at least.

Aug. 4. 8.30 a m. — Start for Monadnock.

Begins to rain at 9 a m., and rains from time to time thereafter all day, the mountain-top being constantly enveloped in clouds.

Notice in Troy much of the *cyperinus* variety of wool-grass, now done, of various heights. Also, by roadside, the *Ribes Cynosbati*, with its prickly berries now partly reddened but hardly ripe. Am exhilarated by the peculiar raspberry scent by the roadside this wet day — and of the dicksonia fern. Raspberries still quite common, though late. The high blackberries, the mulberry kind, all still green and red; and also on the 9th, except one berry on a rock.

There was a little sunshine on our way to the mountain, but the cloud extended far down its sides all day, so that one while we mistook Gap Monadnock for the true mountain, which was more to

the north.

According to the guide-board it is two and one fourth miles from Troy to the first fork in the road near the little pond and schoolhouse, and I should say it was near two miles from there to the summit, — all the way uphill from the meadow.

We crossed the immense rocky and springy pastures, containing at first raspberries, but much more hard-hack in flower, reddening them afar, where cattle and horses collected about us, sometimes came running to us, as we thought for society, but probably not. I told Bent of it, — how they gathered about us, they were so glad to see a human being, — but he said I might put it in my book so, it would do no harm, but then the fact was they came about me for salt. "Well," said I, "it was probably because I had so much salt in my constitution." Said he, "If you had had a little salt with you [you] could hardly have got away from them."

"Well," said I, "[I] had some salt in my pocket."

"That's what they smelt," said he. Cattle, young and old, with horns in all stages of growth, — young heifers with budding horns, — and horses with a weak [?] Sleepy-David look, though sleek and handsome. They gathered around us while we took shelter under a black spruce from the rain.

We were wet up to our knees before reaching the woods or steep ascent where we entered the cloud. It was quite dark and wet in the woods, from which we emerged into the lighter cloud about 3 P. M., and proceeded to construct our camp, in the cloud occasionally amounting to rain, where I camped some two years ago.

Choosing a place where the spruce was thick in this sunken rock yard, I cut out with a little hatchet a space for a camp in their midst, leaving two stout ones six feet apart to rest my ridge-pole on, and such limbs of these as would best form the gable ends. I then cut four spruces as rafters for the gable ends, leaving the stub ends of the branches to rest the cross-beams or girders on, of which there were two or three to each slope; and I made the roof very steep. Then cut an abundance of large flat spruce limbs, four or five feet long, and laid them on, shingle-fashion, beginning at the ground and covering the stub ends. This made a foundation for two or three similar layers of smaller twigs. Then made a bed of the same, closed up the ends

somewhat, and all was done. All these twigs and boughs, of course, were dripping wet, and we were wet through up to our middles. But we made a good fire at the door, and in an hour or two were completely dried.

The most thickly leaved and flattest limbs of the spruce are such as spread flat over the rocks far and wide (while the upper ones were more bushy and less flat); not the very lowest, which were often partly under the surface and but meagrely leafed, but those close above them.

Standing and sitting before the fire which we kindled under a shelving rock, we could dry us much quicker than at any fireside below, for, what with stoves and reduced fireplaces, they could not have furnished such blaze or heat in any inn's [?] kitchen or parlor. This fire was exactly on the site of my old camp, and we burned a hole deep into the withered remains of its roof and bed.

It began to clear up and a star appeared at 8 P. M. Lightning was seen far in the south. Cloud, drifting cloud, alternated with moonlight all the rest of the night. At 11.30 p. M. I heard a nighthawk. Maybe it hunted then because prevented by the cloud at evening.

I heard from time to time through the night a distant sound like thunder or a falling of a pile of lumber, and I suspect that this may have been the booming of night-hawks at a distance.

Aug. 5. The wind changed to northerly toward morning, falling down from over the summit and sweeping through our camp, open on that side, and we found it rather cold!

About an hour before sunrise we heard again the nighthawk; also the robin, chewink, song sparrow, *Fringilla hyemalis;* and the wood thrush from the woods below.

Had a grand view of the summit on the north now, it being clear. I set my watch each morning by sunrise, and this morning the lichens on the rocks of the southernmost summit (south of us), just lit by the rising sun, presented a peculiar yellowish or reddish brown light (being wet) which they did not any morning afterward. The rocks of the main summit were olive-brown, and C. called it the Mount of Olives.

I had gone out before sunrise to gather blueberries, —— fresh,

dewy (because wet with yesterday's rain), almost crispy blueberries, just in prime, much cooler and more grateful at this hour, — and was surprised to hear the voice of people rushing up the mountain for berries in the wet, even at this hour. These alternated with bright light-scarlet bunchberries not quite in prime.

The sides and angles of the cliffs, and their rounded brows (but especially their southeast angles, for I saw very little afterward on the north side; indeed, the cliffs or precipices are not on that side), were clothed with these now lively olive-brown lichens (umbilicaria), alike in sun and shade, becoming afterward and generally dark olive-brown when dry. *Vide* my specimens. Many of the names inscribed on the summit were produced by merely rubbing off the lichens, and they are thus distinct for years.

At 7.30 A. M. for the most part in cloud here, but the country below in sunshine. We soon after set out to walk to the lower southern spur of the mountain. It is chiefly a bare gray and extremely diversified rocky surface, with here and there a spruce or other small tree or bush, or patches of them, or a little shallow marsh on the rock; and the whole mountain-top for two miles was covered, on countless little shelves and in hollows between the rocks, with low blueberries of two or more species or varieties, just in their prime. They are said to be later here than below. Beside the kinds (black and blue *Pennsylvanicum)* common with us, there was the downy *Vaccinium Canadense* and a form or forms intermediate between this and the former, *i.e.* of like form but less hairy. The *Vaccinium Canadense* has a larger leaf and more recurved and undulating on its surface, and generally a lighter green than the common. There were the blue with a copious bloom, others simply black (not shiny, as ours commonly) and bn largish bushes, and others of a peculiar blue, as if with a skim-coat of blue, hard and thin, as if glazed, such as we also have. The black are scarce as with us.

These blueberries grew and bore abundantly almost wherever anything else grew on the rocky part of the mountain, — except perhaps the very wettest of the little swamps and the thickest of the little thickets, — quite up to the summit, and at least thirty or forty people came up from the surrounding country this Sunday to gather them. When we behold this summit at this season of the year, far

away and blue in the horizon, we may think of the blueberries as blending their color with the general blueness of the mountain. They grow alike in the midst of the cladonia lichens and of the lambkill and moss of the little swamps. No shelf amid the piled rocks is too high or dry for them, for everywhere they enjoy the cool and moist air of the mountain. They are evidently a little later than in Concord, —— say a week or ten days later. Blueberries of every degree of blueness and of bloom. There seemed to be fewer of them on the more abrupt and cold westerly and northwesterly sides of the summit, and most in the hollows and shelves of the plateau just southeast of the summit.

Perhaps the prettiest berry, certainly the most novel and interesting to me, was the mountain cranberry, now grown but yet hard and with only its upper cheek red. They are quite local, even on the mountain. The vine is most common close to the summit, but we saw very little fruit there; but some twenty rods north of the brow of this low southern spur we found a pretty little dense patch of them between the rocks, where we gathered a pint in order to make a sauce of them. They here formed a dense low flat bed, covering the rocks for a rod or two, some lichens, green mosses, and the mountain potentilla mingled with them; and they rose scarcely more than one inch above the ground. These vines were only an inch and a half long, clothed with small, thick, glossy leaves, with two or three berries together, about as big as huckleberries, on the recurved end, with a red cheek uppermost and the other light-colored. It was thus a dense, firm sward [?] of glossy little leaves dotted with bright-red berries. They were very easy to collect, for you only made incessant dabs at them with all your fingers together and the twigs and leaves were so rigid that you brought away only berries and no leaves.

I noticed two other patches where the berries were thick, *viz* one a few rods north of the little rain-water lake of the rocks, at the first, or small, meadow (source of Contoocook) at northeast end of the mountain, and another not more than fifty rods northwest of the summit, where the vines were much ranker and the berries larger. Here the plants were four or five inches high, and there were three or four berries of pretty large huckleberry size at the end of each, and they branched like little bushes. In each case they occupied almost

exclusively a little sloping shelf between the rocks, and the vines and berries were especially large and thick where they lay up against the sloping sunny side of the rock.

We stewed these berries for our breakfast the next morning, and thought them the best berry on the mountain, though, not being quite ripe, the berry was a little bitterish — but not the juice of it. It is such an acid as the camper-out craves. They are, then, somewhat earlier than the common cranberry. I do not know that they are ever gathered hereabouts. At present they are very firm berries, of a deep, dark, glossy red. Doubtless there are many more such patches on the mountain.

We heard the voices of many berry-pickers and visitors to the summit, but neither this nor the camp we built afterward was seen by any one.

P. M. — Walked to the wild swamp at the northeast spur. That part is perhaps the most interesting for the wild confusion of its variously formed rocks, and is the least, if at all, frequented. We found the skull and jaws of a large rodent, probably a hedgehog, — larger than a woodchuck's, — a considerable quantity of dry and hard dark-brown droppings, of an elliptical form, like very large rat-droppings, somewhat of a similar character but darker than the rabbit's, and I suspect that these were the porcupine's.

Returned over the top at 5 P. M., after the visitors, men and women, had descended, and so to camp.

Aug. 6. The last was a clear, cool night. At 4 A. M. see local lake-like fogs in some valleys below, but there is none here.

This forenoon, after a breakfast on cranberries, leaving, as usual, our luggage concealed under a large rock, with other rocks placed over the hole, we moved about a quarter of a mile along the edge of the plateau eastward and built a new camp there. It was [a] place which I had noticed the day before, where, sheltered by a perpendicular ledge some seven feet high and close to the brow of the mountain, grew five spruce trees. Two of these stood four feet from the rock and six or more apart; so, clearing away the superfluous branches, I rested stout rafters from the rock-edge to limbs of the two spruces and placed a plate beam across, and, with

two or three cross-beams or girders, soon had a roof which I could climb and shingle. After filling the inequalities with rocks and rubbish, I soon had a sloping floor on which to make our bed. Lying there on that shelf just on the edge of the steep declivity of the mountain, we could look all over the south and southeast world without raising our heads. The rock running east and west was our shelter on the north.

Our huts, being built of spruce entirely, were not noticeable two or three rods off, for we did [not] cut the spruce amid which they were built more than necessary, bending aside their boughs in order to enter. My companion, returning from a short walk, was lost when within two or three rods, the different rocks and clumps of spruce looked so much alike, and in the moonlight we were liable to mistake some dark recess between two neighboring spruce ten feet off for the entrance to our house. We heard this afternoon the tread of a blueberry-picker on the rocks two or three rods north of us, and saw another as near, south, and, stealing out, we came round from another side and had some conversation with them, — two men and a boy, — but they never discovered our house nor suspected it. The surface is so uneven that ten steps will often suffice to conceal the ground you lately stood on, and yet the different shelves and hollows are so much alike that you cannot tell if one is new or not. It is somewhat like travelling over a huge fan. When in a valley the nearest ridge conceals all the others and you cannot tell one from another.

This afternoon, again walked to the larger northeast swamp, going directly, *i.e.* east of the promontories or part way down the slopes. Bathed in the small rocky basin above the smaller meadow. These two swamps are about the wildest part of the mountain and most interesting to me. The smaller occurs on the northeast side of the main mountain, *i.e.* at the northeast end of the plateau. It is a little roundish meadow a few rods over, with cotton-grass in it, the shallow bottom of a basin of rock, and out the east side there trickles a very slight stream, just moistening the rock at present and collecting enough in one cavity to afford you a drink. This is evidently a source of the Contoocook, the one I noticed two years ago as such.

The larger swamp is considerably lower and more northerly,

separating the northeast spur from the main mountain, probably not far from the line of Dublin. It extends northwest and southeast some thirty or forty rods, and probably leaked out now under the rocks at the northwest end, — though I found water only half a dozen rods below, — and so was a source probably of the Ashuelot. The prevailing grass or sedge in it, growing in tufts in the green moss and sphagnum between the fallen dead spruce timber, was the *Eriophorum vaginatum* (long done) and the *E. gracile.* Also the *Epilobium palustre*, apparently in prime in it, and common wool-grass (*Scirpus Eriophorum).* Around its edge grew the *Cheloneglabra* (not yet out), meadow-sweet in bloom, black choke-berry just ripening, red elder (its fruit in prime), mountain-ash, *Carex trisperma* and *Deweyana* (small and slender), and the fetid currant in fruit (in a torrent of rocks at the east end), etc., etc.

I noticed a third, yet smaller, quite small, swamp, yet more southerly, on the edge of the plateau, evidently another source of a river, where the snows melt.

At 5 p. M. we went to our first camp for our remaining baggage. From this point at this hour the rocks of the precipitous summit (under whose south side that camp is placed), lit by the declining sun, were a very light gray, with reddish-tawny touches from the now drying *Aira flexuosa* on the inaccessible shelves and along the seams. Returned to enjoy the evening at the second camp.

Evening and morning were the most interesting seasons, especially the evening. Each day, about an hour before sunset, I got sight, as it were accidentally, of an elysium beneath me. The smoky haze of the day, suggesting a furnace-like heat, a trivial dustiness, gave place to a clear transparent enamel, through which houses, woods, farms, and lakes were seen as in [a] picture indescribably fair and expressly made to be looked at. At any hour of the day, to be sure, the surrounding country looks flatter than it is. Even the great steep, furrowed, and rocky pastures, red with hardhack and raspberries, which creep so high up the mountain amid the woods, in which you think already that you are halfway up, perchance, seen from the top or brow of the mountain are not for a long time distinguished for elevation above the surrounding country, but they look smooth and tolerably level, and the cattle in them are not

noticed or distinguished from rocks unless you search very particularly. At length you notice how the houses and bams keep a respectful, and at first unaccountable, distance from these near pastures and woods, though they *are* seemingly flat, that there is a broad neutral ground between the roads and the mountain; and yet when the truth flashes upon you, you have to imagine the long, ascending path through them.

To speak of the landscape generally, the open or cleared land looks like a thousand little swells or tops of low rounded hills, — tent-like or like a low hay-cap spread, — tawny or green amid the woods. As you look down on this landscape you little think of the hills where the traveller walks his horse. The woods have not this swelling look. The most common color of open land (from apex at *5* P. M.) is tawny brown, the woods dark green. At midday the darker green of evergreens amid the hardwoods is quite discernible half a dozen miles off. But, as the most interesting view is at sunset, so it is the part of [the] landscape nearest to you and most immediately beneath the mountain, where, as usual, there is that invisible gelid haze to glass it.

The nearest house to the mountain which we saw from our camp — one on the Jaffrey road — was in the shadow even of the low southern spur of the mountain which we called the Old South, just an hour before the sun set, while a neighbor on a hill within a quarter of a mile eastward enjoyed the sunlight at least half an hour longer. So much shorter are their days, and so much more artificial light and heat must they obtain, at the former house. It would be a serious loss, methinks, one hour of sunlight every day. *We* saw the sun so much longer. Of course the labors of the day were brought to an end, the sheep began to bleat, the doors were closed, the lamps were lit, and preparations for the night were made there, so much the earlier.

The landscape is shown to be not flat, but hilly, when the sun is half an hour high, by the shadows of the hills.

But, above all, from half an hour to two hours before sunset many western mountain-ranges are revealed, as the sun declines, one behind another, by their dark outlines and the intervening haze; *i.e.,* the ridges are dark lines, while the intervening valleys are a cloudlike haze. It was so, at least, from 6 to 6.30 p. M. on the 6th; and, at 5 p.

M. on the 8th, it being very hazy still, I could count in the direction of Saddleback Mountain eight distinct ranges, revealed by the darker lines of the ridges rising above this cloud-like haze. And I might have added the ridge of Monadnock itself within a quarter of a mile of me.

Of course, the last half of these mountain-ridges appeared successively higher and seemed higher, all of them *(i.e.* the last half), than the mountain we were on, as if you had climbed to the heights of the sky by a succession of stupendous terraces reaching as far as you could see from north to south. The Connecticut Valley was one broad gulf of haze which you were soon over. They were the Green Mountains that we saw, but there was no greenness, only a bluish mistiness, in what we saw; and all of Vermont that lay between us and their summit was but a succession of parallel ranges of mountains. Of course, almost all that we mean commercially and agriculturally by Vermont was concealed in those long and narrow haze-filled valleys. I never saw a mountain that looked so high and so melted away at last cloud-like into the sky, as Saddleback this eve, when your eye had clomb to it by these eight successive terraces. You had to begin at this end and ascend step by step to recognize it for a mountain at all. If you had first rested your eye on *it,* you would have seen it for a cloud, it was so incredibly high in the sky.

After sunset the ponds are white and distinct. Earlier we could distinguish the reflections of the woods perfectly in ponds three miles off.

I heard a cock crow very shrilly and distinctly early in the evening of the 8th. This was the most distinct sound from the lower world that I heard up there at any time, not excepting even the railroad whistle, which was louder. It reached my ear perfectly, to each note and curl, — from some submontane cock. We also heard at this hour an occasional bleat from a sheep in some mountain pasture, and a lowing of a cow. And at last we saw a light here and there in a farmhouse window. We heard no sound of man except the railroad whistle and, on Sunday, a church-bell. Heard no dog that I remember. Therefore I should say that, of all the sounds of the farmhouse, the crowing of the cock could be heard furthest or most distinctly under these circumstances. It seemed to wind its way

through the layers of air as a sharp gimlet through soft wood, and reached our ears with amusing distinctness.

Aug. 7. Morning — dawn and sunrise — was another interesting season. I rose always by four or half past four to observe the signs of it and to correct my watch. From our first camp I could not see the sun rise, but only when its first light (yellowish or, rather, pinkish) was reflected from the lichen-clad rocks of the southern spur. But here, by going eastward some forty rods, I could see the sun rise, though there was invariably a low stratum or bar of cloud in the horizon. The sun rose about five. The tawny or yellowish pastures about the mountain (below the woods; what was the grass?) reflected the auroral light at 4.20 A. M. remarkably, and they were at least as distinct as at any hour.

There was every morning more or less solid white fog to be seen on the earth, though none on the mountain. I was struck by the localness of these fogs. For five mornings they occupied the same place and were about the same in extent. It was obvious that certain portions of New Hampshire and Massachusetts were at this season commonly invested with fog in the morning, while others, or the larger part, were free from it. The fog lay on the lower parts only. From our point of view the largest lake of fog lay in Rindge and southward; and southeast of Fitzwilliam, *i.e.* about Winchendon, very large there. In short, the fog lay in great spidery lakes and streams answering to the lakes, streams, and meadows beneath, especially over the sources of Miller's River and the region of primitive wood thereabouts; but it did [not] rest on lakes always, *i.e.,* where they were elevated, as now some in Jaffrey were quite clear. It suggested that there was an important difference, so far as the health and spirits of the inhabitants were concerned, between the town where there was this regular morning fog and that where there was none. I shall always remember the inhabitants of State Line as dwellers in the fog. The geography and statistics of fog have not been ascertained. If we awake into a fog, it does not occur to us that the inhabitants of a neighboring town which lies higher may have none, neither do they, being ignorant of this happiness, inform us of it. Yet, when you come to look down thus on the country every morning,

you see that here this thick white veil of fog is spread and not there. It was often several hundred feet thick, soon rising, breaking up, and drifting off, or rather seeming to drift away, as it evaporated. There was commonly such a risen fog drifting through the interval between this mountain and Gap Monadnock.

One morning I noticed clouds as high as the Peterboro Hills, — a lifted fog, — ever drifting easterly but making no progress, being dissipated. Also long rolls and ant-eaters of cloud, at last reduced by the sun to mere vertebrae. That morning (the 8th) the great and general cloud and apparently fog combined over the lowest land running southwest from Rindge was apparently five hundred or more feet deep, but our mountain was above all.

This forenoon I cut and measured a spruce on the north side the mountain, and afterward visited the ‘ summit, where one of the coast surveyors had been signalling, as I was told, to a mountain in Laconia, some fifty-five miles off, with a glass reflector.

After dinner, descended into the gulf and swamp beneath our camp. At noon every roof in the southern country sloping toward the north was distinctly revealed, — a lit gray.

In the afternoon, walked to the Great Gulf and meadow, in the midst of the plateau just east of and under the summit.

Aug. 8. *Wednesday.* 8.30 a m. Walk round the west side of the summit. Bathe in the rocky pool there, collect mountain cranberries on the northwest side, return over the summit, and take the bearings of the different spurs, etc. Return to camp at noon.

Toward night, walk to east edge of the plateau.

Aug. 9. At 6 a m., leave camp for Troy, where we arrive, after long pauses, by 9 a m., and take the cars at 10.5.

I observed these plants on the rocky summit of the mountain, above the forest: —

Raspberry, not common.

Low blueberries of two or three varieties.

Bunchberry.

Solidago thyrsoidea.

Fetid currant, common; leaves beginning to be scarlet; grows amid loose fallen rocks.

Red cherry, some ripe, and handsome.

Black choke-berry.

Potentilla tridentata, still lingering in bloom.

Aralia hispida, still lingering in bloom.

Cow-wheat, common, still in bloom.

Mountain cranberry, not generally abundant; full grown earlier than lowland ditto.

Black spruce.

Lambkill, lingering in flower in cool and moist places.

Aster acuminatus, abundant; not generally open, but fairly begun to bloom.

Red elder, ripe, apparently in prime, not uncommon.

Arenaria Groenlandica, still pretty common in flower.

Solidago lanceolata, not uncommon; just fairly begun. *Epilobium angustijolium*, in bloom; not common, however. *Epilobium palustre*, some time, common in mosses, small and slender.

Wild holly, common; berries not quite ripe.

Viburnum nudum, common; berries green.

White pine; saw three or four only, mostly very small. Mountain-ash, abundant; berries not ripe; generally very small, largest in swamps.

Diervilla, not uncommon, still.

Rhodora, abundant; low, *i.e.* short.

Meadow-sweet, abundant, apparently in prime.

Hemlocks; two little ones with rounded tops.

Chelone glabra, not yet; at northeast swamp-side.

Yarrow.

Canoe birch, very small.

Clintonia borealis, with fruit.

Checkerberry.

Gold-thread.

One three-ribbed goldenrod, northwest side (not *Canadense).*

Tall rough goldenrod, not yet; not uncommon.

Populus tremidiformis, not very common.

Polygonum cilinode, in bloom.

Yellow birch, small.

Fir, a little; four or five trees noticed.

Willows, not uncommon, four or five feet high.

Red maple, a very little, small.

Water andromeda, common about the bogs.

Trientalis.

Pearly everlasting, out.

Diplopappus umbellatus, in bloom, not common (?); northeast swamp-side, also northwest side of mountain.

Juncus trifidus.

Some *Juncus paradoxus?*) about edge of marshes Some *Juncus acuminatus?*)

CYPERACEÆ

Eriophorum gracile, abundant, whitening the little swamps. *Eriophorum vaginatum,* abundant, little swamps, long done, (this the coarse grass in tufts, in marshes).

Wool-grass, not uncommon, (common kind).

Carex trisperma (?) or *Deweyana,* with large seeds, slender and drooping, by side of northeast swamp. *Vide* press.

Carex scoparia? or *straminea?* a little.

C. debilis.

Carex, small, rather close-spiked, *C. canescens-like* (?), common. A fine grass-like plant very common, perhaps *Eleocharis tenuis;* now without heads, but marks of them.

GRASSES

Aira flexuosa.

Glyceria elongata, with appressed branches (some purplish), is swamp.

Blue-joint, apparently in prime, one place.

Festuca ovina, one place.
Cinna arundinacea, one place.
Agrostis scabra (?), at our spring, *q v.*

FERNS AND LICHENS, ETC.

A large greenish lichen flat on rocks, of a peculiarly concentric growth, *q v.*

Some common sulphur lichen.

The very bright handsome crustaceous yellow lichen, as on White Mts., *q v.*

Two or three umbilicaria lichens, *q v.,* giving the dark brown to the rocks.

A little, in one place, of the old hat umbilicaria, as at Flint's Pond Rock.

Green moss and sphagnum in the marshes.

Two common cladonias, white and greenish.

Stereocaulon.

Lycopodium complanatum, one place.

Lycopodium annotinum, not very common.

Common polypody.

Dicksonia fern, *q v.*

Sensitive fern, and various other common ones.

I see that in my last visit, in June,'58, I also saw here Labrador tea (on the north side), two-leaved Solomon's-seal, *Amelanchier Canadensis* var *oligocarpa* and var *oblongifolia*, one or two or three kinds of willows, a little mayflower, and chiogenes, and *Lycopodium clavatum.*

The prevailing trees and shrubs of the mountain-top are, in order of commonness, etc., low blueberry, black spruce, lambkill, black choke-berry, wild holly, *Viburnum nudum*, mountain-ash, meadow-sweet, rhodora, red cherry, canoe birch, water andromeda, fetid currant.

The prevailing and characteristic smaller plants, excepting grasses, cryptogamie, etc.: *Potentilla tridentata*, *Solidago thyrsoidea*, bunchberry, cow-wheat, *Aster acuminatus, Arenaria Grœnlandica*,

mountain cranberry, *Juncus trifidus, Clintonia borealis*, *Epilobium palustre*, *Aralia hispida.*

Of *Cyperaceæ* the most common and noticeable now were *Eriophorum gracile* and *vaginatum*, a few sedges, and perhaps the grass-like *Eleocharis tenuis.*

The grass of the mountain now was the *Aira flexuosa,* large and abundant, now somewhat dry and withered, on all shelves and along the seams, quite to the top; a pinkish tawny now. Most would not have noticed or detected any other. The other kinds named were not common. You would say it was a true mountain grass. The only grass that a careless observer would notice. There was nothing like a sod on the mountain-top. The tufts of *J. trifidus*, perhaps, came the nearest to it.

The black spruce is the prevailing tree, commonly six or eight feet high; but very few, and those only in the most sheltered places, as hollows and swamps, are of regular outline, on account of the strong and cold winds with which they have to contend. Fifteen feet high would be unusually large. They cannot grow here without some kind of lee to start with. They commonly consist of numerous flat branches close above one another for the first foot or two, spreading close over the surface and filling and concealing the hollows between the rocks; but exactly at a level with the top of the rock which shelters them they cease to have any limbs on the north side, but all their limbs now are included within a quadrant between southeast and southwest, while the stem, which is always perfectly perpendicular, is bare and smooth on the north side; yet it is led onward at the top by a tuft of tender branches a foot in length and spreading every way as usual, but the northern part of these successively die and disappear. They thus remind you often of masts of vessels with sails set on one side, and sometimes one of these almost bare masts is seen to have been broken short off at ten feet from the ground, such is the violence of the wind there. I saw a spruce, healthy and straight, full sixteen feet without a limb or the trace of a limb on the north side. When building my camp, in order to get rafters six feet long and an inch and a half in diameter at the small end, I was obliged to cut down spruce at least five inches in diameter at one foot from the ground. So stout and tapering do they

grow. They spread so close to the rocks that the lower branches are often half worn away for a foot in length by their rubbing on the rocks in the wind, and I sometimes mistook the creaking of such a limb for the note of a bird, for it is just such a note as you would expect to hear there. The two spruce which formed the sides of my second camp had their lower branches behind the rock so thick and close, and, on the outsides of the quadrant, so directly above one another perpendicularly, that they made two upright side walls, as it were, very convenient to interlace and make weather-tight.

I selected a spruce growing on the highest part of the plateau east of the summit, on its north slope, about as high as any tree of its size, to cut and count its rings. It was five feet five inches high. As usual, all its limbs except some of the leading twigs extended toward the south. One of the lowermost limbs, so close to the ground that I thought its green extremity was a distinct tree, was ten feet long. There were ten similar limbs (though not so long) almost directly above one another, within two feet of the ground, the largest two inches thick at the butt. I cut off this tree at one foot from the ground. It was there five inches in diameter and had forty-four rings, but four inches of its growth was on the south side the centre and only one inch on the north side. I cut it off again nineteen inches higher and there there were thirty-five rings.

Our fuel was the dead spruce — apparently that which escaped the fire some forty years ago!! — which lies spread over the rocks in considerable quantity still, especially at the northeast spur. It makes very good dry fuel, and some of it is quite fat and sound. The spruce twigs were our bed. I observed that, being laid bottom upward in a hot sun, as at the foot of our bed, the leaves turned pale-brown, as if boiled, and fell off very soon.

The black spruce is certainly a very wild tree, and loves a primitive soil just made out of disintegrated granite.

After the low blueberry I should say that the lamb-kill was the commonest shrub. The black choke-berry also was very common, but this and the rhodora were both dwarfish. Though the meadow-sweet was very common, I did not notice any hardhack; yet it was exceedingly prevalent in the pastures below.

The *Solidago thyrsoidea* was the goldenrod of the mountain-top,

from the woods quite to the summit. Any other goldenrod was comparatively scarce. It was from two inches to two feet high. It grew both in small swamps and in the seams of the rocks everywhere, and was now in its prime.

The bunchberry strikes one from these parts as much as any, — about a dozen berries in a dense cluster, a lively scarlet on a green ground.

Spruce was the prevailing tree; blueberry, the berry; *S. thyrsoidea*, the goldenrod; *A. acuminatus*, the aster (the only one I saw, and very common); *J uncus trifidus*, the juncus; and *Aira flexuosa,* the grass, of the mountain-top.

The two cotton-grasses named were very common and conspicuous in and about the little meadows.

The *Juncus trifidus* was the common grass (or grasslike plant) of the very highest part of the mountain, — the peak and for thirty rods downward, — growing on the shelves and especially on the edges of the *scars* rankly, and on this part of the mountain almost alone had it fruited, — for I think that I saw it occasionally lower and elsewhere on the rocky portion without fruit.

The apparently common green and white cladonias, together with yet whiter stereocaulon, grew all over the flat rocks in profusion, and the apparently common greenish rock lichen (*q v.* in box) grew concentricwise in large circles on the slopes of rocks also, not to mention the common small umbilicaria *(q v.)* of one or two kinds which covered the brows and angles of the rocks.

The berries now ripe were: blueberries, bunchberries, fetid currant, red cherry, black choke-berry (some of them), mountain cranberry (red-cheeked and good cooked), red elder (quite showy), *Clintonia borealis,* raspberry (not common). And berries yet green were: *Aralia hispida* (ripe in Concord, *much* of it), wild holly (turning), *Viburnum nudum* (green), mountain-ash.

The birds which I noticed were: robins, chewinks, *F. hyemalis*, song sparrow, nighthawk, swallow (a few, probably bam swallow, one flying over the extreme summit), crows (sometimes flew over, though mostly heard in the woods below), wood thrush (heard from woods below); and saw a warbler with a dark-marked breast and yellowish angle to wing and white throat, and heard a note once like

a very large and powerful nuthatch. Some small hawks.

The bird peculiar to the mountain was the *F. hyemalisy* and perhaps the most common, flitting over the rocks, unless the robin and chewink were as common. These, with the song sparrow and wood thrush, were heard regularly each morning. I saw a robin's nest in one of the little swamps. The wood thrush was regularly heard late in the afternoon, its strain coming up from the woods below as the shadows were lengthening.

But, above all, this was an excellent place to observe the habits of the nighthawks. They were heard and seen regularly at sunset, — one night it was at 7.10, or exactly at sunset, — coming upward from the lower and more shaded portion of the rocky surface below our camp, with their *spark spark*, soon answered by a companion, for they seemed always to hunt in pairs, —— yet both would dive and boom and, according to Wilson, only the male utters this sound. They pursued their game thus a short distance apart and some sixty or one hundred feet above the gray rocky surface, in the twilight, and the constant *spark spark* seemed to be a sort of call-note to advertise each other of their neighborhood. Suddenly one would hover and flutter more stationarily for a moment, somewhat like a kingfisher, and then dive almost perpendicularly downward with a rush, for fifty feet, frequently within three or four rods of us, and the loud booming sound or rip was made just at the curve, as it ceased to fall, but whether voluntarily or involuntarily I know not. They appeared to be diving for their insect prey. What eyes they must have to be able to discern it *beneath* them against the rocks in the twilight! As I was walking about the camp, one flew low, within two feet of the surface, about me, and lit on the rock within three rods of me, and uttered a harsh note like *c-o-w*, *c-o-w*, — hard and gritty and allied to their common notes, — which I thought expressive of anxiety, or to alarm me, or for its mate.

I suspect that their booming on a distant part of the mountain was the sound which I heard the first night which was like very distant thunder, or the fall of a pile of lumber.

They did not fly or boom when there was a cloud or fog, and ceased pretty early in the night. They came up from the same quarter — the shaded rocks below — each night, two of them, and left off

booming about 8 o'clock. Whether they then ceased hunting or withdrew to another part of the mountain, I know not. Yet I heard one the first night at 11.30 p. M., but, as it had been a rainy day and did not clear up here till some time late in the night, it may have been compelled to do its hunting then. They began to boom again at 4 a. M. (other birds about 4.30) and ceased about 4.20. By their color they are related to the gray rocks over which they flit and circle.

As for quadrupeds, we saw none on the summit and only one small gray rabbit at the base of the mountain, but we saw the droppings of rabbits all over the mountain, and they must be the prevailing large animal, and we heard the motions probably of a mouse about our camp at night. We also found the skull of a rodent larger than a woodchuck or gray rabbit, and the tail-bones (maybe of the same) some half-dozen inches long, and saw a large quantity of dark-brown oval droppings *(q v.*, preserved). I think that this was a porcupine, and I hear that they are found on the mountain. Mr. Wild saw one recently dead near the spring some sixteen years ago. I saw the ordure of some large quadruped, probably this, on the rocks in the pastures beneath the wood, composed chiefly of raspberry seeds.

As for insects: There were countless ants, large and middle-sized, which ran over our bed and inside our clothes. They swarmed all over the mountain. Had young in the dead spruce which we burned. Saw but half a dozen mosquitoes. Saw two or three common yellow butterflies and some larger red-brown ones, and moths. There were great flies, as big as horse-flies, with shining black abdomens and buff-colored bases to their wings. Disturbed a swarm of bees in a dead spruce on the ground, but they disappeared before I ascertained what kind they were. On the summit one noon, *i.e.* on the very apex, I was pestered by great swarms of small black wasps or winged ants about a quarter of an inch long, which fluttered about and settled on my head and face. Heard a *fine* (in the sod) cricket, a dog-day locust once or twice, and a *creaking* grasshopper.

Saw two or three frogs, — one large *Rana fontinalis* in that rocky pool on the southwest side, where I saw the large spawn which I supposed to be bullfrog spawn two years ago, but now think must have been *R. fontinalis* spawn; and there was a dark pollywog one inch long. This frog had a raised line on each side of back and was as

large as a common bullfrog. I also heard the note once of some familiar large frog. The one or two smaller frogs which I saw elsewhere were perhaps the same.

There were a great many visitors to the summit, both by the south and north, *i.e.* the Jaffrey and Dublin paths, but they did not turn off from the beaten track. One noon, when I was on the top, I counted forty men, women, and children around me, and more were constantly arriving while others were going. Certainly more than one hundred ascended in a day. When you got within thirty rods you saw them seated in a row along the gray parapets, like the inhabitants of a castle on a gala-day; and when you behold Monadnock's blue summit fifty miles off in the horizon, you may imagine it covered with men, women, and children in dresses of all colors, like an observatory on a muster-field. They appeared to be chiefly mechanics and farmers' boys and girls from the neighboring towns. The young men sat in rows with their legs dangling over the precipice, squinting through spy-glasses and shouting and hallooing to each new party that issued from the woods below. Some were playing cards; others were trying to see their house or their neighbor's. Children were running about and playing as usual. Indeed, this peak in pleasant weather is the most trivial place in New England. There are probably more arrivals daily than at any of the White Mountain houses. Several were busily engraving their names on the rocks with cold-chisels, whose incessant clink you heard, and they had but little leisure to look off. The mountain was not free of them from sunrise to sunset, though most of them left about *5* p. M. At almost any hour of the day they were seen wending their way single file in various garb up or down the shelving rocks of the peak. These figures on the summit, seen in relief against the sky (from our camp), looked taller than life. I saw some that camped there, by moonlight, one night. On Sunday, twenty or thirty, at least, in addition to the visitors to the peak, came up to pick blueberries, and we heard on all sides the rattling of dishes and their frequent calls to each other.

The rocky area — or summit of the mountain above the forest — which I am describing is of an irregular form from a mile and a half to two miles long, north and south, by three quarters to a mile wide at the widest part, in proportion as you descend lower on the rocks.

There are three main spurs, *viz* the northeast, or chief, one, toward Monadnock Pond and the village of Dublin; the southerly, to Swan's [?]; and the northerly, over which the Dublin path runs. These afford the three longest walks. The first is the longest, wildest, and least-frequented, and rises to the greatest height at a distance from the central peak. The second affords the broadest and smoothest walk. The third is the highest of all at first, but falls off directly. There are also two lesser and lower spurs, on the westerly side, — one quite short, toward Troy, by which you might come up from that side, the other yet lower, but longer, from north 75° west. But above all, for walking, there is an elevated rocky plateau, so to call it, extending to half a mile east of the summit, or about a hundred rods east of the ravine. This slopes gently toward the south and east by successive terraces of rock, and affords the most amusing walking of any part of the mountain.

The most interesting precipices are on the south side of the peak. The greatest abruptness of descent (from top to bottom) is on the west side between the two lesser ravines.

The northeast spur (of two principal summits beyond the swamp) has the most dead spruce on it.

The handsome ponds near the mountain are a long pond chiefly in Jaffrey, close under the mountain on the east, with a greatly swelling knoll extending into it on the east side; Monadnock Pond in Dublin, said to be very deep, about north-northeast (between the northeast spur and Dublin village); a large pond with a very white beach much further off in Nelson, about north (one called it Breed's?); Stone Pond, northwesterly, about as near as Monadnock Pond. Also large ponds in Jaffrey, Rindge, Troy; and many more further off.

The basis of my map was the distance from the summit to the second camp, measured very rudely by casting a stone before. Pacing the distance of an easy cast, I found it about ten rods, and thirteen such stone's throws, or one hundred and thirty rods, carried me to the camp. As I had the course, from the summit and from the camp, of the principal points, I could tell the rest nearly enough. It was about fifty rods from the summit to the ravine and eighty more to the camp.

It was undoubtedly Saddleback Mountain which I saw about S. 85° W. What was that elevated part of the Green Mountains about N.

50° W., which one called falsely Camel's Hump? — the next elevated summit north of Saddleback.

It would evidently be a noble walk from Watatic to Goffstown perchance, over the Peterboro mountains, along the very backbone of this part of New Hampshire, —— the most novel and interesting walk that I can think of in these parts.

They who simply climb to the peak of Monadnock have seen but little of the mountain. I came not to look *off from* it, but to look *at* it. The view of the pinnacle itself from the plateau below surpasses any view which you get from the summit. It is indispensable to see the top itself and the sierra of its outline from one side. The great charm is not to look off from a height but to walk over this novel and wonderful rocky surface. Moreover, if you would enjoy the prospect, it is, methinks, most interesting when you look from the edge of the plateau immediately down into the valleys, or where the edge of the lichen-clad rocks, only two or three rods from you, is seen as the lower frame of a picture of green fields, lakes, and woods, suggesting a more stupendous precipice than exists. There are much more surprising effects of this nature along the edge of the plateau than on the summit. It is remarkable what haste the visitors make to get to the top of the mountain and then look away from it.

Northward you see Ascutney and Kearsarge Mountains, and faintly the White Mountains, and others more northeast; but above all, toward night, the Green Mountains.

But what a study for rocks does this mountain-top afford! The rocks of the pinnacle. have many regular nearly rightangled slants to the southeast, covered with the dark-brown (or olivaceous) umbilicaria. The rocks which you walk over are often not only worn smooth and slippery, but grooved out, as if with some huge rounded tool, — or they are much oftener convex:

You see huge buttresses or walls —— put up by Titans, with true joints, only recently loosened by an earthquake as if ready to topple down. Some of the lichen-clad rocks are of a rude brick-loaf form or small cottage form: You see large boulders, left just on the edge of the steep descent of the plateau,— ‘ commonly resting on a few small stones, as if the Titans were in the very act of transporting them when they were interrupted; some left standing on their ends,

and almost the only convenient rocks in whose shade you can sit sometimes. Often you come to a long, thin rock, two or three rods long, which has the appearance of having just been split into underpinning-stone, — perfectly straight-edged and parallel pieces, and lying as it fell, ready for use, just as the mason leaves it. Post-stones, door-stones, etc. There were evidences of recent motion as well as ancient.

I saw on the flat sloping surface of rock a fresher white space exactly the size and form of a rock which was lying by it and which had lately covered it. What had upset it? There were many of these whitish marks where the dead spruce had lain but was now decayed or gone.

The rocks were not only coarsely grooved but finely scratched from northwest to southeast, commonly about S. 10° E. (but between 5° and 20° east, or, by the true meridian, more yet). I could have steered myself in a fog by them.

Piles of stones left as they were split ready for the builder. I saw one perfect triangular hog-trough — except that it wanted one end — and which would have been quite portable and convenient in a farmer's yard. The core, four or five feet long, lay one side.

The rocks are very commonly in terraces with a smooth rounded edge to each. The most remarkable of these terraces that I noticed was between the second camp and the summit, say some forty rods from the camp. These terraces were some six rods long and six to ten feet wide, but the top slanting considerably back into the mountain, and they were about four or five feet high each. There were four such in succession here, running S. 30° E. The edges of these terraces, here and commonly, were rounded and grooved like the rocks at a waterfall, as if water and gravel had long washed over them.

Some rocks were like huge doughnuts: — The edges of cliffs were frequently lumpishly rounded, covered with lichens, so that you could not stand near the edge. The extreme east and northeast parts of the plateau, especially near the little meadow, are the most interesting for the forms of rocks. Sometimes you see where a huge oblong square stone has been taken out from the edge of a terrace, leaving a space which looks like a giant's grave unoccupied.

On the west side the summit the strata ran north and south and

dipped to east about 60° with the horizon. There were broad veins of white quartz (sometimes one foot wide) running directly many rods.

Near the camp there was a succession of great rocks, their corners rounded semicircularly and grooved at the same time like the capital of a column reversed. The most rugged walking is on the steep westerly slope.

We had a grand view, especially after sunset, as it grew dark, of the *sierra* of the summit's outline west of us, — the teeth of the sierra often turned back toward the summit, — when the rocks were uniformly black in the shade and seen against the twilight.

In Morse's Gazetteer (1797) it is said, "Its base is five miles in diameter north to south, and three from east to west.... Its summit is a bald rock." By the summit he meant the very topmost part, which, it seems, was always a "bald rock."

There were all over the rocky summit peculiar yellowish gravelly spots which I called scars, commonly of an oval form, not in low but elevated places, and looking as if a little mound had been cut off there.

The edges of these, on the very pinnacle of the mountain, were formed of the *Juncus trifidus*, now gone to seed. If they had been in hollows, you would have said that they were the bottom of little pools, now dried up, where the gravel and stones had been washed bare. I am not certain about their origin. They suggested some force which had suddenly cut off and washed or blown away the surface there, like a thunder-spout [sic], or lightning, or a hurricane. Such spots were very numerous, and had the appearance of a fresh scar.

Much, if not most, of the rock appears to be what Hitchcock describes and represents as graphic granite (*vide* his book, page 681).

Hitchcock says (page 389) that he learns from his assistant, Abraham Jenkins, Jr., that "on the sides of and around this mountain [Monadnock] diluvial grooves and scratches are common; having a direction about N. 10° W. and S. 10° E. The summit of the mountain, which rises in an insulated manner to the height of 3250 feet, is a naked rock of gneiss of several acres in extent, and this is thoroughly grooved and scored. One groove measured fourteen feet in width, and two feet deep; and others are scarcely of less size. Their direction at the summit, by a mean of nearly thirty measurements with a

compass, is nearly north and south."

According to Heywood's Gazetteer, the mountain is "talc, mica, slate, distinctly stratified," and is 3718 feet high.

Though there is little or no soil upon the rocks, owing apparently to the coolness, if not moisture, you have rather the vegetation of a swamp than that of sterile rocky ground below. For example, of the six prevailing trees and shrubs — low blueberry, black spruce, lambkill, black choke-berry, wild holly, and *Viburnum nudum* —— all but the first are characteristic of swampy and low ground, to say nothing of the commonness of wet mosses, the two species of cotton-grass, and some other plants of the swamp and meadow. Little meadows and swamps are scattered all over the mountain upon and amid the rocks. You are continually struck with the proximity of gray and lichen-clad rock and mossy bog. You tread alternately on wet moss, into which you sink, and dry, lichen-covered rocks. You will be surprised to see the vegetation of a swamp on a little shelf only a foot or two over, — a bog a foot wide with cotton-grass waving over it in the midst of cladonia lichens so dry as to burn like tinder. The edges of the little swamps — if not their middle — are commonly white with cotton-grass. The *Arenaria Groenlandica* often belies its name here, growing in wet places as often as in dry ones, together with eriophorum.

One of the grandest views of the summit is from the east side of the central meadow of the plateau, which I called the Gulf, just beneath the pinnacle on the east, with the meadow in the foreground.

Water stands in shallow pools on almost every rocky shelf. The largest pool of open water which I found was on the southwest side of the summit, and was four rods long by fifteen to twenty feet in width and a foot deep. Wool-and cotton-grass grew around it, and there was a dark green moss and some mud at the bottom. There was a smoother similar pool on the next shelf above it. These were about the same size in June and in August, and apparently never dry up. There was also the one in which I bathed, near the northeast little meadow. I had a delicious bath there, though the water was warm, but there was a pleasant strong and drying wind blowing over the ridge, and when I had bathed, the rock felt like plush to my feet.

The cladonia lichens were so dry at midday, even the day after

rain, that they served as tinder to kindle our fire, — indeed, we were somewhat troubled to prevent the fire from spreading amid them, — yet at night, even before sundown, and morning, when we got our supper and breakfast, they would not burn thus, having absorbed moisture. They had then a cool and slightly damp feeling.

Every evening, excepting, perhaps, the Sunday evening after the rain of the day before, we saw not long after sundown a slight scud or mist begin to strike the summit above us, though it was perfectly fair weather generally and there were no clouds over the lower country.

First, perhaps, looking up, we would see a small scud not more than a rod in diameter drifting just over the apex of the mountain. In a few minutes more a somewhat larger one would suddenly make its appearance, and perhaps strike the topmost rocks and invest them for a moment, but as rapidly drift off northeast and disappear. Looking into the southwest sky, which was clear, we would see all at once a small cloud or scud a rod in diameter beginning to form half a mile from the summit, and as it came on it rapidly grew in a mysterious manner, till it was fifty rods or more in diameter, and draped and concealed for a few moments all the summit above us, and then passed off and disappeared northeastward just as it had come on. So that it appeared as if the clouds had been attracted by the summit. They also seemed to rise a little as they approached it, and endeavor to go over without striking. I gave this account of it to myself. They were not attracted to the summit, but simply generated there and not elsewhere. There would be a warm southwest wind blowing which was full of moisture, alike over the mountain and all the rest of the country. The summit of the mountain being cool, this warm air began to feel its influence at half a mile distance, and its moisture was rapidly condensed into a small cloud, which expanded as it advanced, and evaporated again as it left the summit. This would go on, apparently, as the coolness of the mountain increased, and generally the cloud or mist reached down as low as our camp from time to time, in the night.

One evening, as I was watching these small clouds forming and dissolving about the summit of our mountain, the sun having just set, I cast my eyes toward the dim bluish outline of the Green Mountains

in the clear red evening sky, and, to my delight, I detected exactly over the summit of Saddleback Mountain, some sixty miles distant, its own little cloud, shaped like a parasol and answering to that which capped our mountain, though in this case it did not rest on the mountain, but was considerably above it, and all the rest of the west horizon for forty miles was cloudless.

I was convinced that it was the local cloud of that mountain because it was directly over the summit, was of small size and of umbrella form answering to the summit, and there was no other cloud to be seen in that horizon. It was a beautiful and serene object, a sort of fortunate isle, — like any other cloud in the sunset sky.

That the summit of this mountain is cool appears from the fact that the days which we spent there were remarkably warm ones in the country below, and were the common subject of conversation when we came down, yet we had known nothing about it, and went warmly clad with comfort all the while, as we had not done immediately before and did not after we descended. We immediately perceived the difference as we descended. It was warm enough for us on the summit, and often, in the sheltered southeast hollows, too warm, as we happened to be clad, but on the summits and ridges it chanced that there was always wind, and in this wind it was commonly cooler than we liked. Also our water, which was evidently rain-water caught in the rocks and retained by the moss, was cool enough if it were only in a little crevice under the shelter of a rock, *i.e.* out of the sun.

Yet, though it was thus cool, and there was this scud or mist on the top more or less every night, there was, as we should say, no dew on the summit any morning. The lichens, blueberry bushes, etc., did not feel wet, nor did they wet you in the least, however early you walked in them. I rose [?] to observe the sunrise and picked blueberries every morning before sunrise, and saw no dew, only once some minute dewdrops on some low grass-tips, and that was amid the wet moss of a little bog, but the lambkill and blueberry bushes above it were not wet. Yet the Thursday when we left, we found that though there was no dew on the summit there was a very heavy dew in the pastures below, and our feet and clothes were completely wet with it, as much as if we had stood in water.

I should say that there were no true springs (?) on the summit, but simply rain-water caught in the hollows of the rocks or retained by the moss. I observed that the well which we made for washing — by digging up the moss with our hands — half dried up in the sun by day, but filled up again at night.

The principal stream on the summit, — if not the only one, — in the rocky portion described, was on the southeast side, between our two camps, though it did not distinctly show itself at present except a little below our elevation. For the most part you could only see that water had flowed there between and under the rocks.

I fancied once or twice that it was warmer at 10 p. M. than it was immediately after sunset.

The voices of those climbing the summit were heard remarkably far. We heard much of the ordinary conversation of those climbing the peak above us a hundred rods off, and we could hear those on the summit, or a hundred and thirty rods off, when they shouted. I heard a party of ladies and gentlemen laughing and talking there in the night (they were camping there), though I did not hear what they said. We heard, or imagined that we heard, from time to time, as we lay in our camp by day, an occasional chinking or clinking sound as if made by one stone on another.

In clear weather, in going from one part of the summit to another it would be most convenient to steer by distant objects, as towns or mountains or lakes, rather than by features of the summit itself, since the former are most easily recognized and almost always in sight.

I saw what I took to be a thistle-down going low over the summit, and might have caught it, though I saw no thistle on the mountain-top nor any other plant from which this could have come. (I have no doubt it was a thistle by its appearance and its season.) It had evidently come up from the country below. This shows that it may carry its seeds to higher regions than it inhabits, and it suggests how the seeds of some mountain plants, as the *Solidago thyrsoidea*, may be conveyed from mountain to mountain, also other solidagos, asters, epilobiums, willows, etc.

The descent through the woods from our first camp to the site of the shanty is from a third to half a mile. You then come to the raspberry and fern scented region. There were some raspberries still

left, but they were fast dropping off.

There was a good view of the mountain from just above the pond, some two miles from Troy. The varying outline of a mountain is due to the crest of different spurs, as seen from different sides. Even a small spur, if you are near, may conceal a much larger one and give its own outline to the mountain, and at the same time one which extends directly toward you is not noticed at all, however important, though, as you travel round the mountain, this may gradually come into view and finally its crest may be one half or more of the outline presented. It may partly account for the peaked or pyramidal form of mountains that one crest may be seen through the gaps of another and so fill up the line.

Think I saw leersia or cut-grass in bloom in Troy.

I carried on this excursion the following articles (beside what I wore), *viz.:* —

One shirt.

One pair socks.

Two pocket-handkerchiefs.

One *thick* waistcoat.

One flannel shirt (had no occasion to use it).

India-rubber coat.

Three bosoms.

Towel and soap.

Pins, needles, thread.

A blanket (would have been more convenient if stitched up in the form of a bag).

Cap for the night.

Map and compass.

Spy-glass and microscope and tape.

Saw and hatchet.

Plant-book and blotting-paper.

Paper and stamps.

Botany.

Insect and lichen boxes. —

Jack-knife.

Matches.

Waste paper and twine.

Iron spoon and pint dipper with handle.

All in a knapsack.

Umbrella.

N. B. — Add to the above next time a small bag, which may be stuffed with moss or the like for a pillow.

For provision for one, six days, carried: —

2 1/2 lbs of salt beef and tongue. Take only salt beef next time, 1 — to 3 lbs.

18 hard-boiled eggs. — Omit eggs.

2 1/2 lbs sugar and a little salt. 2 lbs of sugar would have done. About 1/4 lb of tea. — 2/3 as much would have done.

2 lbs hard-bread. — The right amount of bread, 1/2 loaf home-made bread and but might have taken more a piece of cake. — home-made and more *solid* sweet cake.

N. B. — Carry salt (or some of it) in a wafer-box. Also some sugar in a small box.

N. B. — Observe next time: the source of the stream which crosses the path; what species of swallow flies over mountain; what the grass which gives the pastures a yellowish color seen from the summit.

The morning would probably never be ushered in there by the chipping of the chip-bird, but that of the *F. hyemalis* instead, — a dry, hard occasional chirp, more in harmony with the rocks. There you do not hear the *link* of the bobolink, the chatter of red-wings and crow blackbirds, the wood pewee, the twitter of the kingbird, the half [sic] strains of the vireo, the passing goldfinch, or the occasional plaintive note of the bluebird, all which are now commonly heard in the lowlands.

That area is literally a chaos, an example of what the earth was before it was finished.

Do I not hear the mole cricket at night?

Aug. 10. *2* p m. — Air, 84°; Boiling Spring this afternoon., 46°; Brister's, 49°; or where there is little or no surface water the same as in spring. Walden is at surface 80° (air over it 76).

Aster dumosus and pennyroyal out; how long? Sand cherry is well ripe — some of it — and tolerable, better than the red cherry or

choke-cherry. *Juncus paradoxus*, that large and late juncus (tailed), as in Hubbard's Close and on island above monument and in Great Meadows, say ten days.

Saw yesterday in Fitzwilliam from the railroad a pond covered with white lilies uniformly about half the size of ours!

Saw this evening, behind a picture in R. W. E.'s dining-room, the hoary bat. First heard it fluttering at dusk, it having hung there all day. Its rear parts covered with a fine hoary down.

Aug. 11. *Panicum capillare;* how long? *Cyperus strigosus;* how long?

Aug. 12. The river-bank is past height. The button-bush is not common now, though the clethra is in prime. The black willow hardly ceases to shed its down when it looks yellowish. *Setaria glauca*, some days. *Elymus Virginicus*, some days. *Andropogon furcatus* (in meadow); how long? Probably before *scoparius.* Zizania several days.

River at 5 p. M. three and three quarters inches below summer level.

Panicum glabrum (not *sanguinale?* — our common); how long? The upper glume equals the flower, yet it has many spikes.

Aug. 13. P. M. — To Great Meadows and Gowing's Swamp.

Purple grass (*Eragrostis pectinacea*), two or three days. *E. capillar is,* say as much. *Andropogon scoparius,* a day or two. *Calamagrostis coarctata*, not quite. *Glyceria obtusa,* well out; say several days.

Some of the little cranberries at Gowing's Swamp appear to have been frost-bitten. Also the blue-eyed grass, which is now black-topped.

Hear the steady shrill of the alder locust.

Rain this forenoon; windy in afternoon.

Aug. 14. Heavy rain.

Aug. 15. Fair weather.

See a blue heron.

Aug. 16. 2 p. M. — River about ten and a half inches above summer level.

Apparently the Canada plum began to be ripe about the 10th.

Aug. 17. We have cooler nights of late.

See at Pout's Nest two solitary tattlers, as I have seen them about the muddy shore of Gourgas Pond-hole and in the Great Meadow pools. They seem to like a muddier shore than the peetweet.

Hear a whip-poor-will sing to-night.

Aug. 18. The note of the wood pewee sounds prominent of late.

Aug. 19. Examine now more at length that smooth, turnip-scented brassica which is a pest in some grain-fields. Formerly in Stow's land; this year in Warren's, on the Walden road. To-day I see it in Minot Pratt's, with the wild radish, which is a paler yellow and a rougher plant. I thought it before the *B. campestris*, but Persoon puts that under brassicas with *siliquis tetraedris*, which this is not, but, for aught that appears, it agrees with his *B. Napus*, closely allied, *i.e.* wild rape. Elliot speaks of this as introduced here. *Vide* Patent Office Report for 1853 and "Vegetable Kingdom," page 179. The *B. campestris* also is called rape.

Leersia (cut-grass) abundantly out, apparently several days.

Aug. 21. Soaking rains, and in the night.

A few fireflies still at night.

Aug. 22. P. M. — Row to Bittern Cliff.

Now, when the mikania is conspicuous, the bank is past prime, for lilies are far gone, the pontederia is past prime, willows and button-bushes begin to look the worse for the wear thus early, — the lower or older leaves of the willows are turned yellow and decaying, — and many of the meadows are shorn. Yet now is the time for the cardinal-flower. The already, *methinks*, yellowing willows and button-bushes, the half-shorn meadows, the higher water on their edges, with wool-

grass standing over it, with the notes of flitting bobolinks and redwings of *this year*, in rustling flocks, all tell of the fall.

I hear two or three times behind me the loud *creaking* note of a wood duck which I have scared up, which goes to settle in a new place.

Some deciduous trees are now at least as dark as evergreens, the aldèrs are darker than white pines, and as dark as pitch, as I now see them.

I try the temperature of the river at Bittern Cliff, the deep place. The air over river at 4.30 is 81°; the water at the top, 78°; poured from a bottle (into a dipper) which I let lie on the bottom half an hour, 73°, — or 5° difference. When I merely sunk the thermometer and pulled it up rapidly it stood 73j, though not in exactly the same place, — say two rods off.

When I used to pick the berries for dinner on the East Quarter hills I did not eat one till I had done, for going a-berrying implies more things than eating the berries. They at home got only the pudding: I got the forenoon out of doors, and the appetite for the pudding.

It is true, as is said, that we have as good a right to make berries private property as to make grass and trees such; but what I chiefly regret is the, in effect, dog-in-the-manger result, for at the same time that we exclude mankind from gathering berries in our field, we exclude them from gathering health and happiness and inspiration and a hundred other far finer and nobler fruits than berries, which yet we shall not gather ourselves there, nor even carry to market. We strike only one more blow at a simple and wholesome relation to nature. As long as the berries are free to all comers they are beautiful, though they may be few and small, but tell me that is a blueberry swamp which somebody has hired, and I shall not want even to look at it. In laying claim for the first time to the spontaneous fruit of our pastures we are, accordingly, aware of a little meanness inevitably, and the gay berry party whom we turn away naturally look down on and despise us. If it were left to the berries to say who should have them, is it not likely that they would prefer to be gathered by the party of children in the hay-rigging, who have come to have a good time merely?

I do not see clearly that these successive losses are ever quite made up to us. This is one of the taxes which we pay for having a railroad. Almost all our improvements, so called, tend to convert the country into the town.

This suggests what origin and foundation many of our laws and institutions have, and I do not say this by way of complaining of this particular custom. Not that I love Cæsar less, but Rome more.

Yes, and a potato-field is a rich sight to me, even when the vines are half decayed and blackened and their decaying scent fills the air, though unsightly to many; for it speaks then more loudly and distinctly of potatoes than ever. I see their weather-beaten brows peeping out of the hills here and there, for the earth cannot contain them, when the creak of the cricket and the shrilling of the locust prevail more and more, in the sunny end of summer. There the confident husbandman lets them lie for the present, even as if he knew not of them, or as if that property were insured, so carelessly rich he is. He relaxes now his labors somewhat, seeing to their successful end, and takes long mornings, perchance, stretched in the shade of his ancestral elms.

Returning down the river, when I get to Clamshell I see great flocks of the young red-wings and some crow blackbirds on the trees and the ground. They are not very shy, but only timid, as inexperienced birds are. I do not know what they find to eat on this half bare, half grassy bank, but there they hop about by hundreds, while as many more are perched on the neighboring trees; and from time to time they all rise from the earth and wheel and withdraw to the trees, but soon return to the ground again. The red-wings are almost reddish about the throat. The crow blackbirds have some notes now just like the first croaks of the wood frog in the spring.

Sorghum nutans well out (behind the birch); how long? Paspalum ditto.

The recent heavy rains have washed away the bank here considerably, and it looks and smells more mouldy with human relics than ever. I therefore find myself inevitably exploring it. On the edge of the ravine whose beginning I witnessed, one foot beneath the surface and just over a layer some three inches thick of pure shells and ashes, — a gray-white line on the face of the cliff. — I find

several pieces of Indian pottery with a rude ornament on it, not much more red than the earth itself. Looking farther, I find more fragments, which have been washed down the sandy slope in a stream, as far as ten feet. I find in all thirty-one pieces, averaging an inch in diameter and about a third of an inch thick. Several of them made part of the upper edge of the vessel, and have a rude ornament encircling them in three rows, as if pricked with a stick in the soft clay, and also another line on the narrow edge itself. At first I thought to match the pieces again, like a geographical puzzle, but I did not find that any I [got] belonged together. The vessel must have been quite large, and I have not got nearly all of it. It appears to have been an impure clay with much sand and gravel in it, and I think a little pounded shell. It is [of] very unequal thickness, some of the unadorned pieces (probably the bottom) being half an inch thick, while near the edge it is not more than a quarter of an inch thick. There was under this spot and under the layer of shells a manifest hollowness in the ground, not yet filled up. I find many small pieces of bone in the soil of this bank, probably of animals the Indians ate.

In another — bank, in the midst of a much larger heap of shells which has been exposed, found a delicate stone tool of this form and size of a soft slate-stone. It is very thin and sharp on each side edge, and in the middle is not more than an eighth of an inch thick. I suspect that this was used to open clams with. It is curious at I expected to find *I* as much as this, and in this very spot too, before I reached it mean the pot). Indeed, I never find a remarkable Indian relic — and I find a good many — but I have first divined its existence, and planned the discovery of it. Frequently I have told myself distinctly what it was to be before I found it.

The river is fifteen and three quarters inches above summer level.

Aug. 24. This and yesterday very foggy, dogdayish days. Yesterday the fog lasted till nine or ten, and to-day, in the afternoon, it amounts to a considerable drizzling rain.

P. M. — To Walden to get its temperature. The air is only 66 (in the mizzling rain the 23d it was 78); the water at top, 75° (the 23d also 75). What I had sunk to the bottom in the middle, where a hundred feet deep by my line, left there half an hour, then pulled up

and poured into a quart dipper, stood at 53°. I tried the same experiment yesterday, but then in my haste was uncertain whether it was not 51°; certain that a little later it was 54°. So 53° it must be for the present. I may have been two or more minutes pulling up the line so as to prevent its snarling. Therefore I think the water must have acquired a temperature two or three degrees higher than it had at the bottom by the time I tried it. So it appears that the' bottom of Walden has, in fact, the temperature of a genuine and cold spring, or probably is of the same temperature with the average mean temperature of the earth, and, I *suspect,* the same all the year. This shows that springs need not come from a very great depth in order to be cold. What various temperatures, then, the fishes of this pond can enjoy! They require no other refrigerator than their deeps afford. They can in a few moments sink to winter or rise to summer. Walden, then, must be included among the springs, but it is one which has no outlet, — is a well rather. It reaches down to where the temperature of the earth is unchanging. It is not a superficial pond, — not in the mere skin of the earth. It goes deeper. How much this varied temperature must have to do with the distribution of the fishes in it! The few trout must oftenest go down below in summer.

At the bottom of the deep cove I see much black birch and red maple just sprung up, and their seeds have evidently been drifted to this shore. The little birches are already fragrant.

Aug. 25. 2 P. M. — To Clamshell.

See a large hen-hawk sailing over Hubbard's meadow and Clamshell, soaring at last very high and toward the north. At last it returns southward, at that height impelling itself steadily and — swiftly forward with ts wings set in this wise: *i.e.* more curved, or, is it were, trailing behind, without apparent motion. It thus moves half a mile directly.

The front-rank polygonum is apparently in prime; now, solid, of a pinkish rose-color. Notice the small aptrycliium's leaf.

As I row by, see a green bittern near by standing erect on Monroe's boat. Finding that it is observed, it draws on its head and stoops to conceal itself. When it flies it seems to have no tail. It allowed me to approach so near, apparently being deceived by some

tame ducks there.

Aug. 26. 2 P. M. — To White Pond.

The leersia or cut-grass in the old pad ditch by path beyond Hubbard's Grove.

As I cross the upland sprout-land south of Ledum Swamp, I see that the fine sedge there is half withered and brown, and it is too late for that cheerful yellow gleam.

Thread my way through the blueberry swamp in front of Martial Miles's. The high blueberries far above your head in the shade of the swamp retain their freshness and coolness a long time. Little blue sacks full of swampy nectar and ambrosia commingled, like schnapps or what-not, that you break with your teeth. Is not this the origin of the German name as given by Gerard? But there is far the greatest show of choke-berries there, rich to see. I wade and press my way through endless thickets of these untasted berries, their lower leaves now fast reddening. Yet they have an agreeable juice, — though the pulp may be rejected, — and perhaps they might be made into wine.

The shrilling of the alder locust is the solder that welds these autumn days together. All bushes (*arbusta*) resound with their song, and you wade up to your ears in it. Methinks the burden of their song is the countless harvests of the year, — berries, grain, and other fruits.

I am interested by the little ridge or cliff of foam which the breeze has raised along the White Pond shore, the westerly breeze causing the wavelets to lapse on the shore and mix the water with the air gradually. Though this is named *White* Pond from the whiteness of its sandy shore, the line of foam is infinitely whiter, far whiter than any sand. This reminds me how far a white pond-shore, *i.e.* the sand, may be seen. I saw from Monadnock the north shore of a large pond in Nelson which was some eight miles north by the map, very distinct to every one who looked that way. Perhaps in such cases a stronger light is reflected from the water on to the shore. The highest ridge of foam is where it is held or retained and so built up gradually behind some brush or log on the shore, by additions below, into a little cliff, like a sponge. In other places it is rolled like a muff. It is

all light and trembling in the air.

Thus we are amused with foam, a hybrid between two elements. A breeze comes and gradually mingles some of the water with the air. It is, as it were, the aspiration of the pond to soar into the air. The debatable ground between two oceans, the earth, or shore, being only the point of resistance, where they are held to mingle.

See nowadays the pretty little Castile-soap galls on the shrub oaks. Their figure is like the Indian girdle of triangular points. Also other galls, yellowish and red on different sides.

The pussy clover heads were most interesting, large, and puffy, say ten days ago.

I notice milkweed in a hollow in the field by the cove at White Pond, as if the seed had settled there, owing to the lull of the wind.

It is remarkable how commonly you see the thistledown sailing just over water (as I do after this — the 2d of September — at Walden). I see there, *i.e.* at Walden, at 5 p. M., September 2d, many seedless thistle-downs sailing about a foot above the water, and some in it, as if there was a current just above the surface which prevented their falling or rising. They are probably wafted to the water because there is more air over water.

Aug. 27. P. M. — To Ministerial Swamp.

Clear weather within a day or two after the thick dog-days. The nights have been cooler of late, but the heat of the sun by day has been more local and palpable, as it were. It is as if the sun touched your shoulder with a hot hand while there are cool veins in the air. That is, I am from time to time surprised and oppressed by a melting heat on my back in the sun, though I am sure of a greater general coolness. The heat is less like that of an apartment equably warmed, and more like that [of] a red-hot iron carried about and which you occasionally come near.

See one of the shrilling green alder locusts on the under side of a grape leaf. Its body is about three quarters of an inch or less in length; antennæ and all, two inches. Its wings are at first perpendicular above its shoulders, it apparently having just ceased shrilling. Transparent, with lines crossing them.

Notice now that sour-tasting white (creamy, for consistence)

incrustation between and on the berries of the smooth sumach, like frostwork. Is it not an exudation? or produced by the bite of an insect?

Calamagrostis coarctata grass by Harrington's Pool, Ministerial Swamp, say one week (not in prime).

Muhlenbergia glomerata, same place, say ten days, or past prime.

Gather some of those large and late low blackberries (as at Thrush Alley) which run over the thin herbage, green moss, etc., in open pitch pine woods.

Aug. 28. About 6.20 p. M. paddled on Walden. Near the shore I see at least one little skater to a foot, further off one to a yard, and in middle not more than one to a rod; but I see no gyrinus at all here to-night.

At first the sky was completely overcast, but, just before setting, the sun came out into a clear space in the horizon and fell on the east end of the pond and the hillside, and this sudden blaze of light on the still very fresh green leaves was a wonderful contrast with the previous and still surrounding darkness. Indeed, the bright sunlight was at this angle reflected from the water at the east end — while I in the middle was in the shade of the east woods — up under the verdure of the bushes and trees on the shore and on Pine Hill, especially to the tender under sides and to the lower leaves not often lit up. Thus a double amount of light fell on them, and the most vivid and varied shades of green were revealed. I never saw such a green *glow* before. The outline of each shrub and tree was a more or less distinct downy or silvery crescent, where the light was reflected from the under side of the most downy, or newest, leaves, — as I should not have seen it at midday, — either because the light fell more on the under sides of the leaves, being so horizontal and also reflected upward, or because the leaves stood more erect at this hour and after a cloudy day, or for both reasons. The lit water at the east end was invisible to me, or no more than a line, but the shore itself was a very distinct whitish line. When the sun fell lower, and the sunlight no longer fell on the pond, the green blaze of the hillside was at once very much diminished, because the light was no longer reflected upward to it.

At sunset the air over the pond is 62 +; the water at the top, 74°; poured from a stoppled bottle which lay at the bottom where one hundred feet deep, twenty or thirty minutes, 55° (and the same when drawn up in an open bottle which lay five minutes at the bottom); in an open bottle drawn up from about fifty feet depth (*there)* or more, after staying there five minutes, 63°. This about half the whole difference between the top and bottom, so that the temperature seems to fall regularly as you descend, at the rate of about one degree to five feet. When I let the stoppled bottle down *quickly*, the cork was forced out before it got to the bottom, when [?] the water drawn up stood at 66°. Hence it seemed to be owing to the rising of the warmer water and air in the bottle. Five minutes with the open bottle at the bottom was as good as twenty with it stoppled.

I found it 2° warmer than the 24th, though the air was then 4° warmer than now. Possibly, comparing one day with the next, it is warmer at the bottom in a cold day and colder in a warm day, because when the surface is cooled it mixes more with the bottom, while the average temperature is very slightly changed.

The *Lycopodium inundatum* common by Harrington's mud-hole, Ministerial Swamp.

Hear the night-warbler and whip-poor-will.

There was no prolonged melody of birds on the summit of Monadnock. They for the most part emitted sounds there more in harmony with the silent rocks, — a faint chipping or *chinking*, often somewhat as of two stones struck together.

Aug. 30. Surveying Minott's land.

Am surprised to find on his hard land, where he once raised potatoes, the hairy huckleberry, which before I had seen in swamps only. Here, too, they are more edible, not so insipid, yet not quite edible generally. They are improved, you would say, by the firmer ground. The berries are in longer racemes or clusters than any of our huckleberries. They are the prevailing berry all over this field. They are oblong and black, and the thick, shaggy-feeling coats left in the mouth are far from agreeable to the palate. Are now in prime.

Also find, in one of his ditches where peat was dug (or mud), the *Lemna polyrhiza;* not found in Concord before, and said not to

blossom in this country. I found it at Pushaw. Also the *Muhlenbergia glomerata* near the lemna, or southeast of it.

The hairy huckleberry and muhlenbergia, I think, grow here still because Minott is an old-fashioned man and has not scrubbed up and improved his land as many, or most, have. It is in a wilder and more primitive condition. The very huckleberries are shaggy there. There was only one straight side to his land, and that I cut through a dense swamp. The fences are all meandering, just as they were at least in 1746, when it was described.

The lemna reminds me strongly of that greenish or yellowish scum which I see mantling some bam-yard pools. It makes the same impression on the eye at a little distance. You would say it was the next higher stage of vegetation. The smallest of *pads,* one sixth of an inch in diameter and, like the white lily pad, crimson beneath. It completely covers two or three ditches under the edge of the wood there, except where a frog has jumped in and revealed the dark water, — and maybe there rests, his green snout concealed amid it; but it soon closes over him again when he has dived. These minute green scales completely cover some ditches, except where a careless frog has leapt in or swam across, and rent the veil.

There is also, floating in little masses, a small ranunculus-like plant, flattish-stemmed with small forks, some of it made into minute caddis-cases. Perhaps it was cut up by some creature at the bottom. *Vide* press.

SEPTEMBER, 1860

Sept. 1. P. M. — To Walden.

Saw a fish hawk yesterday up the Assabet. In one position it flew just like a swallow; of the same form as it flew.

We could not judge correctly of distances on the mountain, but greatly exaggerated them. That surface was so novel, — suggested so many thoughts, — and also so uneven, a few steps sufficing to conceal the least ground, as if it were half a mile away, that we would have an impression as if we had travelled a mile when we had come only forty rods. We no longer thought and reasoned as in the plain.

Now see many birds about E. Hubbard's elder hedge, —— bobolinks, kingbirds, pigeon woodpeckers, — and not elsewhere.

Many pine stipules fallen yesterday. Also see them on Walden to-day.

Hear that F. Hayden saw and heard geese a fortnight ago!

I see within an oak stump on the shore of Walden tomato plants six or eight inches high, as I found them formerly about this pond in a different place. Since they do not bear fruit the seed must be annually brought here by birds, yet I do not see them pecking the tomatoes in our gardens, and this is a mile and a half from the village and half a mile from the nearest house in Lincoln.

River about eight inches above summer level yesterday.

We are so accustomed to see another forest spring up immediately as a matter of course, whether from the stump or from the seed, when a forest is cut down, never troubling about the succession, that we hardly associate the seed with the tree, and do not anticipate the time when this regular succession will cease and we shall be obliged to plant, as they do in all old countries. The planters of Europe must have a very different, a much correcter, notion of the value of the seed of forest trees than we. To speak generally, they know that the forest trees spring from seeds, as we do of apples and pears, but we know only that they come out of the earth.

See how artfully the seed of a cherry is placed in order that a bird may be compelled to transport it. It is placed in the very midst of a

tempting pericarp, so that the creature that would devour a cherry must take a stone into its mouth. The bird is bribed with the pericarp to take the stone with it and do this little service for Nature. Cherries are especially birds' food, and many kinds are called birds' cherry, and unless we plant the seeds occasionally, I shall think the birds have the best right to them. Thus a bird's wing is added to the cherry-stone which was wingless, and it does not wait for winds to transport it. If you ever ate a cherry, and did not make two bites of it, you must have perceived it. There it is, right in the midst of the luscious morsel, an earthy residuum left on the tongue. And some wild men and children instinctively swallow it, like the birds, as the shortest way to get rid of it. And the consequence is that cherries not only grow here but there, and I know of some handsome young English cherries growing naturally in our woods, which I think of transplanting back again to my garden. If the seed had been placed in a leaf, or at the root, it would not have got transported thus. Consider how many seeds of plants we take into our mouths. Even stones as big as peas, a dozen at once.

The treatment of forests is a very different question to us and to the English. There is a great difference between replanting the cleared land from the superabundance of seed which is produced in the forest around it, which will soon be done by nature alone if we do not interfere, and the planting of land the greater part of which has been cleared for more than a thousand years.

Sept. 2. P. M. — To Annursnaek.

Solidago nemoralis apparently in prime, and *S. stricta.* The former covers A. Hosmer's secluded turtle field near the bridge, together with johnswort, now merely lingering.

Sept. 3. P. M. — To Bateman's Pond.

2 — *p* m. — River six and seven eighths above [summer level].

Here is a beautiful, and perhaps *first* decidedly autumnal, day, — a cloudless sky, a clear air, with, maybe, veins of coolness. As you look toward the sun, the [sic] shines more than in the spring. The dense fresh green grass which has sprung up since it was mowed, on most ground, reflects a blaze of light, as if it were morning all the

day. The meads and slopes are enamelled with it, for there has been no drought nor withering. We see the smokes of burnings on various sides. The farmers are thus clearing up their pastures, — some, it may be, in preparation for plowing. Though it is warm enough, I notice again the swarms of fuzzy gnats dancing in the cooler air, which also is decidedly autumnal.

See on the two pear trees by the Boze cellar ripe pears, some ripe several days. Most are bitter, others mealy, but one was quite sweet and good, of middling size, and prettier than most cultivated ones. It had a few faint streaks of red and was exceeding wax-like.

Sept. 4. P. M. — To Conantum.

At my Swamp Brook crossing at Willow Bay, I see where a great many little red maples have sprung up in a potato-field, apparently since the last plowing or cultivating this year. They extend more or less thickly as much as eleven rods in a northwest direction from a small tree, the only red maple in that neighborhood. And it is evidently owing to the land having been cultivated this year that the seed vegetated there; otherwise there would now be no evidence that any such seeds had fallen here. Last year and for many years it has been a pasture. It is evident that land may be kept as a pasture and covered with grass any number of years, and though there are maples adjacent to it, none of the seed will catch in it; but at last it is plowed, and this year the seed which falls on it germinates, and if it chances not to be plowed again, and cattle are kept out, you soon have a maple wood there. So of other light-seeded trees.

It is cooler these days and nights, and I move into an eastern chamber in the morning, that I may sit in the sun. The water, too, is cooler when I bathe in it, and I am reminded that this recreation has its period. I feel like a melon or other fruit laid in the sun to ripen. I grow, not gray, but yellow.

Saw flocks of pigeons the 2d and 3d. I see and hear on Conantum an upland plover. The goldfinch is very busy pulling the thistle to pieces.

What I have called *Muhlenbergia sobolifera* is in prime (say a week); the *M, Mexicana* not quite (say in two or three days).

Sept. 5. P. M. — To Ball's Hill.

The brink of the river is still quite interesting in some respects, and to some eyes more interesting than ever. Though the willows and button-bushes have already assumed an autumnal hue, and the pontederia is extensively crisped and blackened, the dense masses of mikania, now, it may be, paler than before, are perhaps more remarkable than ever. I see some masses of it, overhanging the deep water and completely concealing the bush that supports them, which are as rich a sight as any flower we have, — little terraces of contiguous corymbs, like mignonette (?). Also the dodder is more revealed, also draping the brink over the water. The mikania is sometimes looped seven or eight feet high to a tree above the bushes, — a manifest vine, with its light-colored corymbs at intervals.

See the little dippers back. Did I not see a marsh hawk in imperfect plumage? Quite brown, with some white midway the wings, and tips of wings black?

What further adds to the beauty of the bank is the hibiscus, in prime, and the great bidens., Having walked through a quantity of desmodium under Ball's Hill, by the shore there *(Marilandicum* or *rigidum*), we found our pants covered with its seeds to a remarkable and amusing degree. These green scales closely covering and greening my legs reminded me of the lemna on a ditch. It amounted to a kind of coat of mail. It was the event of our walk, and we were proud to wear this badge, as if he were the most distinguished who had the most on his clothes. My companion expressed a certain superstitious feeling about it, for he said he thought it would not be right to walk intentionally amid the desmodium so as to get more of the ticks on us, nor yet to pick them off, but they must be carried about till they are rubbed off accidentally. I saw that Nature's design was furthered even by his superstition.

Sept. 6. The willows and button-bushes have very rapidly yellowed since I noticed them August 22d. I think it was the 25th of August that I found the lower or older leaves of the willow twigs decidedly and rapidly yellowing and decaying on a near inspection. Now the change is conspicuous at a distance.

Sept. 7. P. M. — To Cardinal Shore.

I see many seedling shrub oaks springing up in Potter's field by the swamp-side, some (of last year) in the open pasture, but many more in the birch wood half a dozen rods west from the shrub oaks by the path. The former were dropped by the way. They plant in birch woods as in pines. This small birch wood has been a retreat for squirrels and birds. When I examine the little oaks in the *open* land there is always an effete acorn with them.

Common rose hips as handsome as ever.

Sept. 8. To Lowell *via* Boston.

Rainy day.

Pursh's [sic] *Brassica Napus* is "radice caulescente fusiformi, fol laevibus, superioribus cordato-lanceolatis amplexicaulibus, inferioribus lyratis dentatis." Frequently found wild. The lower leaves of mine are considerably bristly. Sowerby's Botany at Cambridge says of *B. campestris,* "Pods upright, cylindrical, or very obscurely quadrangular, veiny, the seeds slightly projecting, the beak awl-shaped, striated, square at its base." *B. Napus,*— "Pod on a slender stalk, spreading, round, beaded, with an angular point." Mine is apparently *B. Napus,* judging from pods, for the lower leaves are all eaten. *Vide* young plants in spring.

Sept. 9. In Lowell. — My host says that the thermometer was at 80° yesterday morning, and this morning is at 52°. Sudden coolness.

Clears up in afternoon, and I walk down the Merrimack on the north bank. I see very large plants of the lanceolate thistle, four feet high and very branching. Also *Aster cordata* with the *corymbosus.*

Concord River has a high and hard bank at its mouth, maybe thirty feet high on the east side; and my host thinks it was originally about as high on the west side, where now it is much lower and flat, having been dug down. There is a small isle in the middle of the mouth. There are rips in the Merrimack just below the mouth of the Concord. There is a fall and dam in the Concord at what was Hurd's factory, — the principal fall on the Concord, in Lowell, — one at a bleachery above, and at Whipple's, — three in all below Billerica dam.

Sept. 10. Lowell to Boston and Concord.

There was a frost this morning, as my host, who keeps a market, informed me.

Leaving Lowell at 7 A. M. in the cars, I observed and admired the dew on a fine grass in the meadows, which was almost as white and silvery as frost when the rays of the newly risen sun fell on it. Some of it *was* probably the frost of the morning melted. I saw that this phenomenon was confined to one species of grass, which grew in narrow curving lines and small patches along the edges of the meadows or lowest ground, — a grass with very fine stems and branches, which held the dew; in short, that it was what I had falsely called *Eragrostis capillaris*, but which is probably the *Sporobolus serotinus*, almost the only, if not the only, grass there in its prime. And thus this plant has its day. Owing to the number of its very fine branches, now in their prime, it holds the dew like a cobweb, — a clear drop at the end and lesser drops or beads all along the fine branches and stems. It grows on the higher parts of the meadows, where other herbage is thin, and is the less apt to be cut; and, seen toward the sun not long after sunrise, it is very conspicuous and bright a quarter of a mile off, like frostwork. Call it dew-grass. I find its *hyaline* seed.

Almost every plant, however humble, has thus its day, and sooner or later becomes the characteristic feature of some part of the landscape or other.

Almost all other grasses are now either cut or withering, and are, beside, so coarse comparatively that they can never present this phenomenon. It is only a grass that is in its full vigor, as well as fine-branched (capillary), that can thus attract and uphold the dew. This is noticed about the time the first frosts come.

If you sit at an open attic window almost anywhere, about the 20th of September, you will see many a milkweed down go sailing by on a level with you, — though commonly it has lost its freight, — notwithstanding that you may not know of any of these plants growing in your neighborhood.

My host, yesterday, told me that he was accustomed once to chase a *black* fox from Lowell over this way and lost him at Chelmsford.

Had heard of him within about six years. A Carlisle man also tells me since that this fox used to turn off and run northwest from Chelmsford, but that he would soon after return.

Sept. 11. George Melvin came to tell me this forenoon that a strange animal was killed on Sunday, the 9th, near the north line of the town, and it was not known certainly what it was. From his description I judged it to be a Canada lynx. In the afternoon I went to see it. It was killed on Sunday morning by John Quincy Adams, who lives in Carlisle about half a mile (or less) from the Concord line, on the Carlisle road.

Some weeks ago a little girl named Buttrick, who was huckleberrying near where the lynx was killed, was frightened by a wild animal leaping out of the bushes near her — *over* her, as she said — and bounding off. But no one then regarded her story. Also a Mr. Grimes, who lives in Concord just on the line, tells me that some month ago he heard from his house the loud cry of an animal in the woods northward, and told his wife that if he were in Canada he should say it was a bob-tailed cat. He had lived seven years in Canada and seen a number of this kind of animal. Also a neighbor of his, riding home in the night, had heard a similar cry. Jacob Farmer saw a strange animal at Bateman's Pond a year ago, which he thinks was this.

Adams had lost some of his hens, and had referred it to a fox or the like. He being out, his son told me that on Sunday he went out with his gun to look after the depredator, and some forty or fifty rods from his house northwesterly (on Dr. Jones's lot, which I surveyed) in the woods, this animal suddenly dropped within two feet of him, so near that he could not fire. He had heard a loud hiss, but did not mind it. He accordingly struck it with the butt of his gun, and it then bounded off fifteen feet or more, turned about, and faced him, whereupon he fired directly into its eyes, putting them out. His gun was loaded with small shot, No. 9. The creature then bounded out of sight, and he had a chance to reload, by which time it appeared again, crawling toward him on its belly, fiercely seeking him. He fired again, and, it still facing him, he fired a third time also, and finally finished it with the butt of his gun.

It was now skinned and the skin stuffed with hay, and the skull had been boiled, in order to be put into the head.

I measured the stuffed skin carefully. From the forehead (the nose pointing down) to end of tail, 3 feet [inches]. Tail stout and black at the abrupt end, 5 inches. Extreme length from fore paws to hind paws, 4 — feet 8 inches, when stretched out, the skin being *stiff*. (They said it measured 5 feet before it was skinned, which is quite likely.) Forehead to extremity of hind feet, 50 1/2 inches. It stood, as nearly as I could measure, holding it up, 19 to 20 inches high from ground to shoulder. From midway between the legs beneath, the hind legs measured 19 inches, within; the fore legs, 16 inches, within. From skull to end of tuft on ear, 4 1/2 inches; tuft on ear (black and thin), 1 1/2 inches. The width of fore paw gently pressed was 3 1/2 inches; would have made a track perhaps four inches wide in snow. There was a small *bare* brown tubercle of flesh to each toe, and also a larger one for the sole, amid the grayish-white hair. A principal claw was 3/4 inch long measured directly, but it was very curving.

For color: It was, above, brownish-gray, with a dark-brown or black line down the middle of the back. Sides gray, with small dark-brown spots, more or less within the hair. Beneath, lighter, *hoary*, and long-haired. Legs gray, like the sides, but more reddish-brown behind, especially the hind legs, and these, like the belly and sides, were indistinctly spotted with dark brown, having the effect more of a dark-brown tinge at a little distance than of spots. General aspect brownish-hoary. Tail, above, more reddish than rest of back, much, and conspicuously black at end. Did not notice any white at tip. Throat pretty white. Ears, without, broadly edged with black half an inch or more wide, the rest being a triangular white. There was but a small muffler, chiefly a triangular whitish and blackish tuft on the sides of the face or neck, not noticeably under the chin. It weighed, by their account, nineteen pounds. This was a female, and Farmer judged from his examination of the mammæ — two or more of them being enlarged, and the hair worn off around them — that it had suckled young this year. The fur was good for nothing now.

I cannot doubt that this is a Canada lynx; yet I am somewhat puzzled by the descriptions of the two lynxes. Emmons says of the Canada lynx that it has “no naked spots or tubercles [on the soles of

its feet] like the other species of the feline race;" and Audubon says, "Soles, hairy;" but of the *Lynx rufus*, "Soles... naked." It is Audubon's *L. rufus* in the naked soles, also in "ears, outer surface, a triangular spot of dull white,... bordered with brownish-black," not described in his *Canadensis.* It is his *L. Canadensis* in size, in color generally, in length of ear-tuft (his *L. rufus* tufts being only half an inch), in "upper surface of the tail, to within an inch of the tip, and exterior portion of the thighs, rufous," in tail being stout, not "slender" like *rufus.* Audubon says that the *L. rufus* is easily distinguished from small specimens of the female *L. Canadensis* by "the larger feet and more tufted ears of the latter,... as well as its grayer color." This is four inches longer than his smaller Canada lynx and exactly as long as his larger one, — both his being males. Emmons's one is also just 37 inches, or the same length. Emmons's largest *L. rufus* is, thus measured, only 29 inches long and Audubon's "fine specimen" only 30 inches.

Grimes, who had lived seven years in Canada, called this a "bob-tailed cat," and said that the Canada lynx was as dark as his dog, which would be called a black dog, though somewhat brownish.

They told me there that a boy had seen another, supposed to be its mate, this morning, and that they were going out to hunt it toward night.

The water is cold to-day, and bathing begins to be questionable.

The turtles, painted and sternothærus, are certainly less timid than in the spring. I see a row of half a dozen or more painted turtles on a slanting black willow, so close together that two or three of them actually have their fore feet on the shells of their predecessors, somewhat like a row of bricks that is falling. The scales of some are curled up and just falling.

Sept. 12. Very heavy rain to-day (equinoctial), raising the river suddenly. I have said, within a week, that the river would rise this fall because it did not at all in the spring, and now it rises. A very dark and stormy night (after it); shops but half open. Where the fence is not painted white I can see nothing, and go whistling for fear I run against some one, though there is little danger that any one will be out. I come against a stone post and bruise my knees; then stumble

over a bridge, — being in the gutter. You walk with your hands out to feel the fences and trees. There is no vehicle in the street to-night.

The thermometer at 4 p m. was 54°.

There was pretty high wind in the night.

Sept. 13. I go early to pick up my windfalls. Some of them are half buried in the soil, the rain having spattered the dirt over them.

The river this morning, about *7* a m., is already twenty-eight and a half inches above summer level, and more than twenty inches of this is owing to the rain of yesterday and last night!! By 1.30 p m., when it has risen two or three inches more, I can just cross the meadow in a straight line to the Rock. I see a snake swimming on the middle of the tide, far from shore, washed out of the meadow, and myriads of grasshoppers and beetles, etc., are wrecked or clinging to the weeds and stubble that rises above the flood. At evening the river is five inches higher than in the morning.

There is very little current at my boat's place this evening, yet a chip floats down (and next morning, the 14th, I see that a large limb has been carried up-stream during the night, from where it lay at evening, some twenty rods above the junction, to a place thirty rods above the junction). Yet, when I try the current (in the evening of the 13th) with a chip, it goes down at Heron Rock, but the limb was large and irregular, and sank very deep in the water; so I think that the Assabet water was running up beneath while the Musketaquid flowed down over it slowly.

A Carlisle man tells me of a coon he killed in Carlisle which weighed twenty-three and a half pounds and dressed fourteen pounds. He frequently sees and hears them at present.

On the 13th I go to J. Q. Adams's again to see the lynx. Farmer said that if the skin was tainted the hair would come off.

The tail is black at extremity for one inch, and no white at tip; the rest of it above is rust-color (beneath it is white), with the slightest possible suggestion of white rings, *i.e.* a few white hairs noticed. When stretched or spread the fore foot measured just 5 inches in width, the hind foot scarcely less than 6 inches. The black border on the ear was broadest on the inner (i.e. toward the other ear) and forward side, — 1/2 inch and more. The tufts on the ears only about

1/8 + inch wide.

Adams went to show me the carcass. It was quite sweet still (13th, in afternoon), only a little fly-blown. No quadruped or bird had touched it. Remarkably long and slender, made for jumping. The muscles of the thigh were proportionately very large. I thought the thigh would measure *now* 9 inches in circumference. I had heard that there was nothing in its stomach, but we opened the paunch and found it full of rabbits' fur. I cut off a fore leg.

He said that he had lost two or three hens only, and apparently did not think much of that. The first he knew the animal was within three feet of him, so that he could hardly turn his gun to strike him. He did not know where he came from, — whether from over the wall, to which he was near, or from a chestnut, for he was in the midst of the woods of Jones's lot, *not cut.* He felt somewhat frightened. Struck him with the butt of his gun, but did not hurt him much, he was so quick. He jumped at once *thirty feet*, turned round, and faced him. He then fired, about thirty feet, at his eyes, and destroyed one, — perhaps put out the other, too. He then bounded out of sight. When he had loaded he found him crawling toward him on his belly as if to spring upon him; fired again, and thinks he mortally wounded him then. After loading, approached, and the lynx faced him, all alive. He then fired, and the lynx leapt up fifteen feet, fell, and died. Either at the second or last shot leapt within ten feet of him. He was much impressed by his eyes and the ruff standing out on the sides of his neck.

This was about one hundred and thirty rods easterly from his house.

The skinned tail measured 5 inches. I boiled the leg on the 14th (five days after it was killed) for the bone. It smelled and looked like very good meat, like mutton.

Vide Salem lynxes, September 23d, 1858.

It is remarkable how slow people are to believe that there are any wild animals in their neighborhood. They who have seen this generally suppose that it got out of a menagerie; others that it strayed down from far north. At most they call it *Canada* lynx. In Willey's White Mountain book the same animal is spoken of as a terror to the hunter and called the "Siberian Lynx." What they call it I know not.

I do not think it necessary even to suppose it a straggler, but only very rare hereabouts. I have seen two lynxes that were killed between here and Salem since'27. Have heard of another killed in or near Andover. There may have been many more killed as near within thirty years and I not have heard of it, for they who kill one commonly do not know what it is. They are nocturnal in their habits, and therefore are the more rarely seen, yet a strange animal is seen in this town by somebody about every year, or its track. I have heard of two or three such within a year, and of half a dozen within fifteen years. Such an animal might range fifteen to twenty miles back and forth from Acton to Tewksbury and find more woodland than in the southern part of New Hampshire generally.

Farmer says that a farmer in Tewksbury told him two or three years ago that he had seen deer lately on the pine plain thereabouts.

Adams got a neighbor to help him skin the lynx, a middle-aged man; but he was "so nervous" and unwilling to touch even the dead beast, when he came to see it, that he gave him but little assistance.

Dr. Reynolds tells me of a lynx killed in Andover, in a swamp near Haggerty's Pond, one winter when he kept school in Tewksbury, about 1820. At first it was seen crossing the Merrimack into Tewksbury, and there was accordingly a story of an animal about that was ten feet long. They turned out, all the hunters of the neighborhood, and tracked it in the snow, across Tewksbury to the swamp in Andover and back again to Tewksbury. One old hunter bet something that they could not show him a track which he did not know, but when they showed him this he gave up. Finally they tracked it to the Andover swamp, and a boy shot it on a tree, though it leapt and fell within a few feet of him when shot.

Rice tells of a common wildcat killed in Sudbury some forty years ago, resting on some ice as it was crossing the Sudbury meadows amid ice and water.

Mr. Boutwell of Groton tells me that a lynx was killed in Dunstable within two or three years. Thinks it is in the State Museum.

This makes five that I have heard of (and seen three) killed within some fifteen or eighteen miles of Concord within thirty years past, and no doubt there have been three times as many of them killed

here.

Sept. 14. A. M. — River still rising; at 4 p. M. one and an eighth inches higher than in morning.

Sept. 15. In morning river is three feet two and a half plus inches above summer level. 6 p m., river is slightly higher than in morning, or at height. Thus it reached its height the third day after the rain; had risen on the morning of the third day about thirty inches on account of the rain of one day (the 12th).

Joe Smith's man brings me this forenoon a fish hawk which was shot on George Brooks's pigeon-stand last evening. It is evidently a female of this year, full grown. Length 23 inches; alar extent 5 feet 61/2 inches. It probably lit there merely for a perch.

Looked at Mr. Davis's museum. Miss Lydia Hosmer (the surviving maiden lady) has given him some relics which belonged to her (the Hosmer) family. A small lead or pewter sun-dial, which she told him was brought over by her ancestors and which has the date 1626 scratched on it. Also some *stone* weights in an ancient linen bag, said to have been brought from England. They were oval stones or pebbles from the shore, — or *might* have been picked up at Walden. There was a pound, a half-pound, a quarter, a two-ounce, and several one-ounce weights, now all rather dark and ancient to look at, like the bag. This was to me the most interesting relic in his collection. I love to see anything that implies a simpler mode of life and greater nearness to the earth.

Sept. 16. 7 a m. — River fallen one and a half inches. Is three feet and seven eighths of an inch above summer level, *i.e.* at notch on tree. I mark a willow eight feet above summer level.

See no zizania seed ripe, or black, yet, but almost all is fallen.

Sept. 17. 6.30 a m. — River thirty-four and an eighth above summer level, or fallen about four inches since evening of 15th. It flows now (a sunk bottle) one hundred feet in two minutes at boat's place, there being no wind.

P. M. — Up river.

Pontederia seeds falling.

See a flock of eight or ten wood ducks on the Grindstone Meadow, with glass, some twenty-five rods off, — several drakes very handsome. They utter a creaking scream as they sail there, — being alarmed, — from time to time, shrill and loud, very unlike the black duck. At last one sails off, calling the others by a short creaking note.

Sept. 18. According to all accounts, very little com is fit to grind before October 1st (though I have one kind ripe and fit to grind September 1st). It becomes hard and dry enough in the husk in the field by that time, much of it. But long before this, or say by the 1st of September, it begins to glaze (or harden on the surface), when it begins to be too hard to boil.

P. M. — To beeches.

This is a beautiful day, warm but not too warm, a harvest day (I am going down the railroad causeway), the first unquestionable and conspicuous autumnal day, when the willows and button-bushes are a yellowed bower in parallel lines along the swollen and shining stream. The first autumnal tints (of red maples) are now generally noticed. The shrilling of the alder locust fills the air. A brightness as of spring is reflected from the green shorn fields. Both sky and earth are bright. The first clear blue and shining white (of clouds). Cornstalk-tops are stacked about the fields; potatoes are being dug; smokes are seen in the horizon. It is the season of agricultural fairs. If you are not happy to-day you will hardly be so to-morrow.

Leaving Lowell on the morning of the 10th, after the rain of the day before, I passed some heaps of brush in an opening in the woods, — a pasture surrounded by woods, — to which the owner was just setting fire, wet as they were, it being the safest time to burn them. Hence they make so much smoke sometimes. Some farmer, perhaps, wishes to plow this fall there, and sow rye perchance, or merely to keep his pasture clear. Hence the smokes in the horizon at this season. The rattle-pod (in Deep Cut) has begun to turn black and rattle for three or four days.

Notice some green pods of lady's-slipper still, full of chaffy seed.

The beechnut burs are browned but not falling. They open directly

in my chamber. The nuts are all empty.

White pine cones (a small crop), and all open that I see.

The toadstools in wood-paths are perforated (almost like pepper-boxes) by flattish slippery insects, bronze and black, which are beneath and within it. Or you see their heads projecting and the dust (or exuviæ) they make like a curb about the holes.

Smooth sumach berries are about past their beauty and the white creamy incrustation mostly dried up.

I see in the Walden road two dead shrews and some fox-dung by them. They look as if bitten and flatted by the fox. Were they not dropped there by him? Perhaps they will not eat one.

Sept. 19. 4 p. M. — River fallen about one foot.

Sept. 20. Cattle-Show.

Rainy in forenoon.

Sept. 21. Hard rain last night. About one and seven eighths inches fallen since yesterday morning, and river rising again.

See, at Reynolds's, Hungarian millet raised by Everett. It is smaller and more purple than what is commonly raised here.

P. M. — To Easterbrooks Country.

The fever-bush berries have begun some time, — say one week; are not yet in prime. Taste almost exactly like lemon-peel. But few bushes bear any.

The bayberries are perhaps ripe, but not so light a gray and so rough, or wrinkled, as they will be.

The pods of the broom are nearly half of them open. I perceive that one, just ready to open, opens with a slight spring on being touched, and the pods at once twist and curl a little. I suspect that such seeds as these, which the winds do not transport, will turn out to be more sought after by birds, etc., and so transported by them than those lighter ones which are furnished with a pappus and are accordingly transported by the wind; *i.e.,* that those which the wind takes are less generally the food of birds and quadrupeds than the heavier and wingless seeds.

Muhlenbergia Mexicana by wall between E. Hosmer and Simon

Brown, some time. Some large thorn bushes quite bare.

Sept. 22. P. M. — To Clamshell by boat.

Find more pieces of that Indian pot. Have now thirty-eight in all.

Evidently the recent rise of the river has caused the lower leaves of the button-bush to fall. A perfectly level line on these bushes marks the height to which the water rose, many or most of the leaves so high having fallen. —

The clematis yesterday was but just beginning to be feathered, but its feathers make no show. Feathers out next day in house.

See a large flock of crows.

The sweet-gale fruit is yet quite green, but perhaps it is ripe. The button-bush balls are hardly reddened.

Moreover the beach plum appears to prefer a sandy place, however far inland, and one of our patches grows on the only desert which we have.

Some of the early botanists, like Gerard, were prompted and compelled to *describe* their plants, but most nowadays only measure them, as it were. The former is affected by what he sees and so inspired to portray it; the latter merely fills out a schedule prepared for him, — makes a description *pour servir.* I am constantly assisted by the books in identifying a particular plant and learning some of its humbler uses, but I rarely read a sentence in a botany which reminds me of flowers or living plants. Very few indeed write as if they had seen the thing which they pretend to describe.

Sept. 23. P. M. — To Cliffs.

Some small botrychium ripe.

I see on the top of the Cliffs to-day the dung of a fox, consisting of fur, with part of the jaw and one of the long rodent teeth of a woodchuck in it, and the rest of it huckleberry seeds with some whole berries. I saw exactly the same beyond Goose Pond a few days ago, on a rock, — except that the tooth (a curved rodent) was much smaller, probably of a mouse. It is evident, then, that the fox eats huckleberries and so contributes very much to the dispersion of this shrub, for there were a number of entire berries in its dung, — in both the last two I chanced to notice. To spread these seeds, Nature

employs not only a great many birds but this restless ranger the fox. Like ourselves, he likes two courses, rabbit and huckleberries.

I see everywhere in the shady yew wood those pretty round-eyed fungus-spots on the upper leaves of the blue-stemmed goldenrod *(vide* press), contrasting with the few bright-yellow flowers above them, — yellowish-white rings (with a slate-colored centre), surrounded by green and then dark.

Red pine-sap by north side of Yew Path some ten rods east of yew, not long done. The root of the freshest has a decided checkerberry scent, and for a long time — a week after — in my chamber, the bruised plant has a very pleasant earthy sweetness.

I hear that a large owl, probably a cat owl, killed and carried off a full-grown turkey in Carlisle a few days ago.

Sept. 24. P. M. — To Flint's Pond *via* Smith's chestnut grove.

See a dead shrew in road on Turnpike Hill. (Had hard rain the night of the 20th.) *Vide* back, 18th.

It is remarkable how persistently Nature endeavors to keep the earth clothed with wood of some kind, — how much vitality there is in the stumps and roots of some trees, though small and young. For example, examined the little hickories on the bare slope of Smith's Hill. I have observed them endeavoring to cover that slope for a dozen years past, and have wondered how the seed came there, planted on a bare pasture hillside, but I now see that the nuts were probably planted just before the pine wood (the stumps of which remain) was cut down, and, having sprung up about that time, have since been repeatedly cut down to keep the pasture clear, till now they are quite feeble or dying, though many are six feet high. When a part of the hill has been plowed and cultivated I examine the roots which have been turned out, and find that they are two inches thick at the ground though only one to three feet high above. I *fudge* that it is fifteen years since the pine wood was cut, and if the hickories had not been cut down and cattle been kept out, there would have been a dense hickory wood there now fifteen to twenty feet high at least. You see on an otherwise perfectly bare hillside or pasture where pines were cut, say fifteen years before, remote from any hickories, countless little hickories a foot high or little more springing up every

few feet, and you wonder how they came there, but the fact that they preserve their vitality, though cut down so often and so long, accounts for them.

This shows how heedlessly wood-lots are managed at present, and suggests that when one is cut (if not before) a provident husbandman will carefully examine the ground and ascertain what kind of wood is about to take the place of the old and how abundantly, in order that he may act understandingly and determine if it is best to clear the land or not. I have seen many a field perfectly barren for fifteen or twenty years, which, if properly managed, or only let alone, would naturally have yielded a crop of birch trees within that time.

In Wood Thrush Path at Flint's Pond, a great many of the geiropodium fungus now shed their dust. When closed it is [a] roundish or conical orange-colored fungus three quarters of an inch in diameter, covered with a mucilaginous matter. The thick outer skin of many (it is pink-red inside) had already curled back (it splits into segments and curls parallel to the axis of the plant) and revealed the pinkish fawn-colored puffball capped with a red dimple or crown. This is a hollow bag, which, when you touch it, spurts forth a yellowish-white powder three or four inches through its orifice.

See two very handsome butterflies on the Flint's Pond road in the woods at Gourgas lot, which C. had not seen before. I find that they are quite like the *Vanessa Atalanta*, or red admiral, of England.

1 — p. M. — The river risen about thirty-three inches above summer level.

Sept. 25. Hard, gusty rain (with thunder and lightning) in afternoon. About seven eighths of an inch falls.

Sept. 26. P. M. — Round Walden and Pleasant Meadow.

Small oaks in hollows (as under Emerson Cliff) have fairly begun to change.

The taller grass and sedge is now generally withered and brown, and reveals the little pines in it.

I see that acorns — white oak, etc. — have fallen after the rain and wind, just as leaves and fruit have.

I see, just up, the large light-orange toadstools with white spots,

— at first: then:

Sept. 27. A. M. — Sawing up my raft by river.

River about thirty-five inches above summer level, and goes no higher this time.

Monroe's tame ducks sail along and feed close to me as I am working there. Looking up, I see a little dipper, about one half their size, in the middle of the river, evidently attracted by these tame ducks, as to a place of security. I sit down and watch it. The tame ducks have paddled four or five rods down-stream along the shore. They soon detect the dipper three or four rods off, and betray alarm by a tittering note, especially when it dives, as it does continually. At last, when it is two or three rods off and approaching them by diving, they all rush to the shore and come out on it in their fear, but the dipper shows itself close to the shore, and when they enter the water again joins them within two feet, still diving from time to time and threatening to come up in their midst. They return up-stream, more or less alarmed, and pursued in this wise by the dipper, who does not know what to make of their fears, and soon the dipper is thus tolled along to within twenty feet of where I sit, and I can watch it at my leisure. It has a dark bill and considerable white on the sides of the head or neck, with black between it, no tufts, and no observable white on back or tail. When at last disturbed by me, it suddenly sinks low (all its body) in the water without diving.

Thus it can float at various heights. (So on the 30th I saw one suddenly dash along the surface from the meadow ten rods before me to the middle of the river, and then dive, and though I watched fifteen minutes and examined the tufts of grass, I could see no more of it).

Sept. 28. Butternuts still on tree and falling, as all September.

This morning we had a very severe frost, the first to kill our vines, etc., in garden; what you may call a black frost, — making things look black. Also ice under pump.

Sept. 29. Another hard frost and a very cold day.

Sept. 30. Frost and ice.

OCTOBER, 1860

Oct. 1. Remarkable frost and ice this morning; quite a wintry prospect. The leaves of trees stiff and white at 7 A. M. I hear it was 21° this morning early. I do not remember such cold at this season. This is about the full of the moon (it fulled at 9 p. M. the 29th) in clear, bright moonlight nights. We have fine and bright but cold days after it. One man tells me that he regretted that he had not taken his mittens with him when he went to his morning's work, — mowing in a meadow, — and when he went to a spring at 11 A. M., found the dipper with two inches of ice in it frozen solid.

P. M. — Rain again.

Button-bush balls were fairly reddened yesterday, and the *Andropogon scoparius* looked silvery in sun. Gossamer was pretty thick on the meadows, and noticed the round green leafy buds of the utricularia in the clear, cold, smooth water. Water was prepared for ice, and C. saw the first *Vanessa Antiopa* since spring.

Oct. 3. See *Vanessa Antiopa.*

The hard frost of September 28th, 29th, and 30th, and especially of October 1st, has suddenly killed, crisped, and caused to fall a great many leaves of ash, hickory, etc., etc. These (and the locusts, *generally)* look shrivelled and hoary, and of course they will not ripen or be bright. They are killed and withered green, — all the more tender leaves. Has killed all the burdock flowers and no doubt many others.

Sam Barrett says that last May he waded across the Assabet River on the old dam in front of his house without going over his india-rubber boots, which are sixteen and a half inches high. I do not believe you could have done better than this a hundred years ago, or before the canal dam was built.

Bay-wings about.

I have seen and heard sparrows in *flocks*, more as if flitting by, within a week, or since the frosts began.

Gathered to-day my apples at the Texas house. I set out the trees, fourteen of them fourteen years ago and five of them several years

later, and I now get between ten and eleven barrels of apples from them.

Oct. 5. Rain, more or less, yesterday afternoon and this forenoon.

P. M. — To Walden.

The frosts have this year killed all of Stow's artichokes before one of them had blossomed, but those in Alcott's garden had bloomed probably a fortnight ago. This suggests that this plant could not have grown much further north than this. I see a great many young hickories fifteen feet high killed, turned brown, almost black, and withering in the woods, as I do not remember to have seen them before. Indeed, the woods have a strong decaying scent in consequence. Also much indigo-weed is killed and turned black and broken off, as well as ferns generally. The butternut is also killed, turned dark-brown, and the leaves mostly fallen, — not turning yellow at all. The maples generally are what Gerard would have called an " over-worn" scarlet color.

About 4 p. M. it is fast clearing up, the clouds withdrawing, with a little dusky scud beyond their western edges against the blue. We came out on the east shore of Walden. The water is tolerably smooth. The smooth parts are dark and dimpled by many rising fishes. Where it is rippled it is light-colored, and the surface thus presents three or four alternate light and dark bars. I see a fish hawk, skimming low over it, suddenly dive or stoop for one of those little fishes that rise to the surface so abundantly at this season. He then sits on a bare limb over the water, ready to swoop down again on his finny prey, presenting, as he sits erect, a long white breast and belly and a white head. No doubt he well knows the habits of these little fishes which dimple the surface of Walden at this season, and I doubt if there is any better fishing-ground for him to resort to. He can easily find a perch overlooking the lake and discern his prey in the clear water.

The sporobolus grass in the meadows is now full of rain (as erst of dew) and would wet you through if you walked there.

Apparently all the celtis and horse-chestnut leaves are killed, turned dark-brown and withering, before changing or ripening, so severe has been the frost, and, looking from hills over huckleberry-fields, the sweet-fern patches are turned a dark brown, almost black

(mulberry black) amid the crimson blueberry and huckleberry, so that the surface is parded black and scarlet from the same cause.

Oct 6. P. M. — Over hill to Woodis Park.

I see not one hemlock cone of this year at the Hemlocks, but very many of last year holding on. Apparently they bore so abundantly last year that they do not bear at all this year.

I hear that the late cold of September *29* and 30 and October 1 froze all Bull's grapes (papers say some fifty bushels), the thermometer going down to *20*°.

As I go over the hill, I see a large flock of crows on the dead white oak and on the ground under the living one. I find the ground strewn with white oak acorns, and many of these have just been broken in two, and their broken shells are strewn about, so that I suppose the crows have been eating them. Some are merely scratched, as if they had been pecked at without being pierced; also there are two of the large swamp white oak acorn-cups joined together dropped under this oak, perhaps by a crow, maybe a quarter of a mile from its tree, and that probably across the river. Probably a crow had transported one or more swamp white oak acorns this distance. They must have been too heavy for a jay.

The crow, methinks, is our only large bird that hovers and circles about in flocks in an irregular and straggling manner, filling the air over your head and sporting in it as if at home here. They often burst up above the woods where they were perching, like the black fragments of a powder-mill just exploded.

One crow lingers on a limb of the dead oak till I am within a dozen rods. There is strong and blustering northwest wind, and when it launches off to follow its comrades it is blown up and backward still nearer to me, and it is obliged to tack four or five times just like a vessel, a dozen rods or more each way, very deliberately, first to the right, then to the left, before it can get off; for as often as it tries to fly directly forward against the wind, it is blown upward and backward within gunshot, and it only advances directly forward at last by stooping very low within a few feet of the ground where the trees keep off the wind. Yet the wind is not remarkably strong.

Horace Mann tells me that he saw a painted turtle in this town eating a unio, in our river, in the shell, it evidently having just caught

and opened it. He has been collecting shells in Ohio recently, and was obliged to wade at least knee-deep into the streams for mussels, the hogs, which run at large there, having got them all in the shallower water.

Oct. 7. P. M. — To Hubbard's Bath and Grove.

Now and for a week the chip-birds in flocks; the withered grass and weeds, etc., alive with them.

Rice says that when a boy, playing with darts with his brother Israel, one of them sent up his dart when a flock of crows was going over. One of the crows followed it down to the earth, picked it up, and flew off with it a quarter of a mile before it dropped it. He has observed that young wood ducks swim faster than the old, which is a fortunate provision, for they can thus retreat and hide in the weeds while their parents fly off. He says that you must shoot the little dipper as soon as it comes up, — before the water is fairly off its eyes, — else it will dive at the flash.

I see one small but spreading white oak full of acorns just falling and ready to fall. When I strike a limb, great numbers fall to the ground. They are a very dark hazel, looking black amid the still green leaves, — a singular contrast. Some that have fallen have already split and sprouted, an eighth of an inch. This when, on *some* trees, far the greater part have not yet fallen.

Probably the blueberry and huckleberry, ame-lanchier, and other bushes which spring up immediately when the woods are cut have been already planted and started annually, as the little oaks have. Nature thus keeps a supply of these plants in her nursery (*i.e.* under the larger wood), always ready for casualties, as fires, windfalls, and clearings by man. Birds and foxes, etc., are annually conveying the seed into the woods.

Rice reminds me that when the maples in a blueberry swamp have got up high, the blueberries die, and you have at length a maple wood clear of underwood.

Remarking to old Mr. B — the other day on the abundance of the apples, "Yes," says he, "and fair as dollars too." That's the kind of beauty they see in apples.

Looked over Hayden's farm and granary. He now takes pleasure

in his field of com just ready for harvesting, — the rather small ears fully filled out and rounded at the end, setting low and many on one stalk. He loves to estimate the number of bushels he will have; has already calculated the number of hills, — some forty thousand in this field, — and he shows some one the ear in his granary. Also his rye in barrels and his seed-corn tucked into the mow as he was husking, — the larger and fuller ears picked out, with the husk on. But all this com will be given to his pigs and other stock. Three great hogs weighing twelve hundredweight lie asleep under his bam already sold. Hears of one man who sold his fat hog for $75.00. He has two high and very spreading apple trees, looking like one, they are so close together, from which he gathered one year twenty-one barrels of sound Hubbardston's nonesuch and five barrels of windfalls, grafted on to it within a few years.

If we have not attended to the subject, we may think that the activity of the animals is not enough to account for the annual planting of such extensive tracts; just as we wonder where all the flies and other insects come from in the spring, because we have not followed them into their winter quarters and counted them there. Yet nature does preserve and multiply the race of flies while we are inattentive and sleeping.

Many people have a foolish way of talking about small things, and apologize for themselves or another having attended to a small thing, having neglected their ordinary business and amused or instructed themselves by attending to a small thing; when, if the truth were known, their ordinary business was the small thing, and almost their whole lives were misspent, but they were such fools as not to know it.

Oct. 8. P. M. — To Damon's wood-lot, part of the burnt district of the spring.

Am surprised to see how green the forest floor and the sprout-land north of Damon's lot are already again, though it was a very severe burn. In the wood-lot the trees are *apparently* killed for twenty feet up, especially the smaller, then six or ten feet of green top, while very vigorous sprouts have shot up from the base below the influence of the fire. This shows that they will die, I think. The top has merely

lived for the season while the growth has been in their sprouts around the base. This is the case with oaks, maples, cherry, etc. Also the blueberry *(Vaccinium vacillans)* has sent up very abundant and vigorous shoots all over the wood from the now more open and cleaned ground. These are evidently from stocks which were comparatively puny before. The adjacent oak sprout-land has already sprung up so high that it makes on me about the same impression that it did before, though it [was] from six to ten feet high and was generally killed to the ground. The fresh shoots from the roots are very abundant and three to five feet high, or half as high as before. So vivacious are the roots and so rapidly does Nature recover herself. You see myriads of little shrub oaks and others in the woods which look as if they had just sprung from the seed, but on pulling one up you find it to spring from a long horizontal root which has survived perhaps several burnings or cuttings. Thus the stumps and roots of young oak, chestnut, hickory, maple, and many other trees retain their vitality a very long time and after many accidents, and produce thrifty trees at last.

In the midst of the wood, I noticed in some places, where the brush had been more completely burned and the ground laid bare, some fire-weed (*Senecio*), golden-rods, and ferns.

Standing by a pigeon-place on the north edge [of] Damon's lot, I saw on the dead top of a white pine four or five rods off — which had been stripped for fifteen feet downward that it might die and afford with its branches a perch for the pigeons about the place, like the more artificial ones that were set up — two woodpeckers that were new to me. They uttered a peculiar sharp *kek kek* on alighting (not so sharp as that of the hairy or downy woodpecker) and appeared to be about the size of the hairy woodpecker, or between that and the golden-winged. I had a good view of them with my glass as long as I desired. With the back to me, they were clear black all above, as well as their feet and bills, and each had a yellow or orange (or possibly orange-scarlet?) front (the anterior part of the head at the base of the upper mandible). A long white line along the side of the head to the neck, with a black one below it. The breast, as near as I could see, was gray specked with white, and the under side of the wing expanded was also gray, with small white spots. The throat

white and vent also white or whitish. Is this the arctic three-toed? Probably many trees dying on this large burnt tract will attract many woodpeckers to it.

I find a great many white oak acorns already sprouted, although they are but half fallen, and can easily believe that they sometimes sprout before they fall. It is a good year for them. It is remarkable how soon and unaccountably they decay. Many which I cut open, though they look sound without, are discolored and decaying on one side or throughout within, though there is no worm in them. Perhaps they are very sensitive to moisture. Those which I see to-day are merely hazel and not nearly so black as what I saw yesterday. Trees that stand by themselves without the wood bear the most.

The sugar maple seeds are now browned — the seed end as well as wing — and are ripe. The severe frosts about the first of the month ripened them.

Oct. 9. P. M. — Up Assabet.

See one crow chasing two marsh hawks over E. Hosmer's meadow. Occasionally a hawk dives at the crow, but the crow perseveres in pestering them. Can it *now* have anything to do with the hawk's habit of catching young birds? In like manner smaller birds pursue crows. The crow is at length joined by another.

See several squirrels' nests of leaves formed in the maples lately.

Though the red maples have not their common brilliancy on account of the very severe frost about the end of September, some are very interesting. You cannot judge a tree by seeing it from one side only. As you go round or away from it, it may overcome you with its mass of glowing scarlet or yellow light. You need to stand where the greatest number of leaves will transmit or reflect to you most favorably. The tree which looked comparatively lifeless, cold, and merely parti-colored, seen in a more favorable light as you are floating away from it, may affect you wonderfully as a warm, glowing drapery. I now see one small red maple which is all a pure yellow within and a bright red scarlet on its outer surface and prominences. It is a remarkably distinct painting of scarlet on a yellow ground. It is an indescribably beautiful contrast of scarlet and yellow. Another is yellow and green where this was scarlet and

yellow, and in this case the bright and liquid green, now getting to be rare, is by contrast as charming a color as the scarlet.

I met in the street afterward a young lady who rowed up the river after me, and I could tell exactly where she plucked the maple twig which she held in her hand. It was the one so conspicuous for a quarter of a mile in one reach of the river.

I wonder that the very cows and the dogs in the street do not manifest a recognition of the bright tints about and above them. I saw a terrier dog glance up and down the painted street before he turned in at his master's gate, and I wondered what he thought of those lit trees, —— if they did not touch his philosophy or spirits, — but I fear he had only his common doggish thoughts after all. He trotted down the yard as if it were a matter of course after all, or else as if he deserved it all.

Wood ducks are about now, amid the painted leaves.

For two or more nights past we have had remarkable glittering golden sunsets as I came home from the postoffice, it being cold and cloudy just above the horizon. There was the most intensely bright golden light in the west end of the street, extending under the elms, and the very dust a quarter of a mile off was like gold-dust. I wondered how a child could stand quietly in that light, as if it had been a furnace.

This haste to kill a bird or quadruped and make a skeleton of it, which many young men and some old ones exhibit, reminds me of the fable of the man who killed the hen that laid golden eggs, and so got no more gold. It is a perfectly parallel case. Such is the knowledge which you may get from the anatomy as compared with the knowledge you get from the living creature. Every fowl lays golden eggs for him who can find them, or can detect alloy and base metal.

Oct. 10. In August,'55, I levelled for the artificial pond at Sleepy Hollow. They dug gradually for three or four years and completed the pond last year,'59. It is now about a dozen rods long by five or six wide and two or three deep, and is supplied by copious springs in the meadow. There is a long ditch leading into it, in which no water now flows, nor has since winter at least, and a short ditch leading out

of it into the brook. It is about sixty rods from the very source of the brook. Well, in this pond thus dug in the midst of a meadow a year or two ago and supplied by springs in the meadow, I find to-day several small patches of the large yellow and the kalmiana lily already established. Thus in the midst of death we are in life. The water is otherwise apparently clear of weeds. The river, where these abound, is about half a mile distant down the little brook near which this pond lies, though there *may* be a few pads in the ditched part of it at half that distance. How, then, did the seed get here? I learned last winter (*vide* December 23, 1859) that many small pouts and some sizable pickerel had been caught here, though the connection with the brook is a very slight and shallow ditch. I think, therefore, that the lily seeds have been conveyed into this pond from the river immediately, or perchance from the meadow between, either by fishes, reptiles, or birds which fed on them, and that the seeds were not lying dormant in the mud. You have only to dig a pond anywhere in the fields hereabouts, and you will soon have not only water-fowl, reptiles, and fishes in it, but also the usual water-plants, as lilies, etc. You will no sooner have got your pond dug than nature will begin to stock it. I suspect that turtles eat these seeds, for I often see them eating the decayed lily leaves. If there is any water communication, perhaps fishes arrive first, and then the water-plants for their food and shelter.

Horace Mann shows me the skeleton of a blue heron. The neck is remarkably strong, and the bill. The latter is 5 — + inches long to the feathers above and 61/2 to the gape. A stake-driver which he has, freshly killed, has a bill 3 inches long above and to the gape and between 5/8 and 6/8 deep vertically at the base. This bird weighs a little over two pounds, being quite large and fat. Its nails are longer and less curved than those of the heron. The sharp bill of the heron, like a stout pick, wielded by that long and stout neck, would be a very dangerous weapon to encounter. He has made a skeleton of the fish hawk which was brought to me within a month. I remark the great eye-sockets, and the claws, and perhaps the deep, sharp breast-bone. Including its strong hooked bill it is clawed at both ends, harpy-like.

P. M. — Went to a fire — or smoke — at Mrs. Hoar's. There is a slight blaze and more smoke. Two or three hundred men rush to the

house, cut large holes in the roof, throw many hogsheads of water into it, — when a few pails full well directed would suffice, — and then they run off again, leaving your attic three inches deep with water, which is rapidly descending through the ceiling to the basement and spoiling all that can be spoiled, while a torrent is running down the stairways. They were very forward to put out the [fire], but they take no pains to put out the water, which does far more damage. The first was amusement; the last would be mere work and utility. Why is there not a little machine invented to throw the water out of a house?

They are hopelessly cockneys everywhere who learn to swim with a machine. They take neither disease nor health, nay, nor life itself, the natural way. I see dumbbells in the minister's study, and some of their dumbness gets into his sermons. Some travellers carry them round the world in their carpetbags. Can he be said to travel who requires still this exercise? A party of school-children had a picnic at the Easterbrooks Country the other [day], and they carried bags of beans from their gymnasium to exercise with there. I cannot be interested in these extremely artificial amusements. The traveller is no longer a wayfarer, with his staff and pack and dusty coat. He is not a pilgrim, but he travels in a saloon, and carries dumb-bells to exercise with in the intervals of his journey.

Oct. (10 *and)* 11. P. M. — To Sleepy Hollow and north of M. Pratt's.

There is a remarkably abundant crop of white oak acorns this fall, also a fair crop of red oak acorns; but not of scarlet and black, very few of them. Which is as well for the squirrel. The acorns are now in the very midst of their fall. The white oak acorn is about the prettiest of ours. They are a glossy hazel (while the red and black are more or less downy at first) and of various forms, — some nearly spherical but commonly oblong and pointed, some more *slender* oval or elliptical; and of various shades of brown, — some almost black, but generally a wholesome hazel. Those which have fallen longest, and been exposed to the severe frosts on the ground, are partly bleached there. The white oak acorns are found chiefly on trees growing in the open or on the edge of the wood, and on the most exposed side of

these trees. They grow either singly or in twos and threes.

This afternoon (11th) the strong wind which arose at noon has strewn the ground with them. I could gather many bushels in a short time. This year is as good for white oak acorns as for apples and pears. What pleasant picking on the firm, green pasture sod which is browned with this glossy fruit! The worms are already at work in them, — sometimes three or four in one, — and some are already decayed and decaying on the tree without a worm. The fibery [sic] inner bark of the nut appears to retain moisture and hasten rot, especially when the fruit has once been swollen by the wet. The best time to gather these nuts is now, when a strong wind has arisen suddenly in the day, before the squirrels have preceded you; and so of chestnuts.

Of red oak acorns, some are short and broad, others longer. I see some pretty shrub oak acorns longitudinally striped. Chestnuts also are frequently striped, but before they have been exposed to the light, and are completely ripe.

The season is as favorable for pears as for apples. R. W. E.'s garden is strewn with them. They are not so handsome as apples, — are of more earthy and homely colors, — yet they are of a wholesome color enough. Many, inclining to a rough russet or even ferruginous, both to touch (rusty) and eye, look as if they were proof against frost. After all, the few varieties of wild pears here have more color and are handsomer than the many celebrated varieties that are cultivated. The cultivated are commonly of so dull a color that it is hard to distinguish them from the leaves, and if there are but two or three left you do not see them revealing themselves distinctly at a distance amid the leaves, as apples do, but I see that the gatherer has overlooked half a dozen large ones on this small tree, which were concealed by their perfect resemblance to the leaves, — a yellowish green, spotted with darker-green rust or fungi (?). Yet some have a fair cheek, and, generally, in their form they are true pendants, as if shaped expressly to hang from the trees.

They are a more aristocratic fruit. How much more attention they get from the proprietor! The hired man gathers the apples and barrels them. The proprietor plucks the pears at odd hours for a pastime, and his daughter wraps them each in its paper. They are, perchance, put

up in the midst of a barrel of Baldwins as if something more precious than these. They are spread on the floor of the best room. They are a gift to the most distinguished guest. Judges and ex-judges and honorables are connoisseurs of pears, and discourse of them at length between sessions. I hold in my hand a Bonne Louise which is covered with minute brown specks or dots one twelfth to one sixteenth [of an inch] apart, largest and most developed on the sunny side, quite regular and handsome, as if they were the termination or operculum of pores which had burst in the very thin pellicle of the fruit, producing a slight roughness to the touch. Each of these little ruptures, so to call them, is in form a perfect star with five rays; so that, if the apple is higher-colored, reflecting the sun, on the duller surface of this pear the whole firmament with its stars shines forth. They whisper of the happy stars under whose influence they have grown and matured. It is not the case with all of them, but only the more perfect specimens.

Pears, it is truly said, are less poetic than apples. They have neither the beauty nor the fragrance of apples, but their excellence is in their flavor, which speaks to a grosser sense. They are *glouts-morceaux.* Hence, while children dream of apples, ex-judges realize pears. They are named after emperors and kings and queens and dukes and duchesses. I fear I shall have to wait till we get to pears with American names, which a republican can swallow.

Looking through a more powerful glass, those little brown dots are stars with from four to six rays, — commonly five, — where a little wart-like prominence (perhaps the end of a pore or a thread) appears to have burst through the very thin pellicle and burst it into so many rays.

Oct. 13. P. M. — Up river.

I find no new cones on Monroe's larch by the river, but many old ones (the same was the case with the hemlocks on Assabet), unless those imperfect ones with a twig growing from their extremity were this year's, — but I think they were last year's. Last year both white pine, hemlock, and larches bore abundantly and there were very few white oak acorns. This year, so far as I observe, there are scarcely any white pine cones (were there any?) or hemlock or larch, and a

great abundance of white oak acorns in all parts of the town. So far as I have observed, if pines or oaks bear abundantly one year they bear little or nothing the next year. This is a white oak year, not a pine year. It is also an apple and a potato year. I should think that there might be a bushel or two of acorns on and under some single trees. There are but few in the woods. Those spreading trees that stand in open pastures fully exposed to the light and air are the most fertile ones. I rejoice when the white oaks bear an abundant crop. I speak of it to many whom I meet, but I find few to sympathize with me. They seem to care much more for potatoes. The Indians say that many acorns are a sign of a cold winter. It is a cold fall at any rate.

The shore at Clamshell is greened with pontederia seed which has floated up and been left there, with some button-bush seed and some of those slender bulbs of the lysimachia and those round green leaf-buds of the *Utricularia vulgaris.* Thus, probably, are all these dispersed. I also see large masses of the last-named weed lodged against the bridges, etc., with the conspicuous greener leaf-buds attached. I find no yellow lily seeds, only a few white lily seed-pods. These are full of seeds the color of apple seeds and but a quarter as big. They sink in water as soon as the slimy matter which invests them is washed off. I see a white lily stem coiled up with many whorls like a wire spring. They are almost only white lily pads that are left now.

There is some of the fresh-water sponge in this the main stream too.

The *F. hyemalis* back, and I think I see and hear the shore larks.

The shrub oaks on J. Hosmer's hillside this side of Hollowell place have already passed the height of their beauty. Is it not early on account of frost?

At Holden Swamp. — Now, as soon as the frost strips the maples, and their leaves strew the swamp floor and conceal the pools, the note of the chickadee sounds cheerfully wintryish.

I see many pine and oak tree tops in the woods that were blown off last spring. They lie many rods from their trunks, so that I have to look a little while to tell where they came from. Moreover, the butt of the piece over which I stand looks so large compared with the broken shaft up there so high that I at first feel sure it did not come

from there, — which [?] it did, — and so am puzzled to locate it.

The lentago fruit is quite sweet and reminds me of dates in their somewhat mealy pulp. It has large flat black seeds, somewhat like watermelon seeds, but not so long.

The scientific differs from the poetic or lively description somewhat as the photographs, which we so weary of viewing, from paintings and sketches, though this comparison is too favorable to science. All science is only a makeshift, a means to an end which is never attained. After all, the truest description, and that by which another living man can most readily recognize a flower, is the unmeasured and eloquent one which the sight of it inspires. No scientific description will supply the want of this, though you should count and measure and analyze every atom that seems to compose it.

Surely poetry and eloquence are a more universal language than that Latin which is confessedly dead. In science, I should say, all description is postponed till we know the whole, but then science itself will be cast aside. But unconsidered expressions of our delight which any natural object draws from us are something complete and final in themselves, since all nature is to be regarded as it concerns man; and who knows how near to absolute truth such unconscious affirmations may come? Which are the truest, the sublime conceptions of Hebrew poets and *seers*, or the guarded statements of modern geologists, which we must modify or unlearn so fast?

As they who were present early at the discovery of gold in California, and observed the sudden fall in its value, have most truly described that state of things, so it is commonly the old naturalists who first received American plants that describe them best. A scientific description is such as you would get if you should send out the scholars of the polytechnic school with all sorts of metres made and patented to take the measures for you of any natural object. In a sense you have got nothing new thus, for every object that we see mechanically is mechanically daguerreotyped on our eyes, but a true description growing out [of] the perception and appreciation of it is itself a new fact, never to be daguerreotyped, indicating the highest quality of the plant, — its relation to man, — of far more importance than any merely medicinal quality that it may possess, or be thought to-day to possess. There is a certainty and permanence about this

kind of observation, too, that does not belong to the other, for every flower and weed has its day in the medical pharmacopoeia, but the beauty of flowers is perennial in the taste of men.

Truly this is a world of vain delights. We think that men have a substratum of common sense but sometimes are peculiarly frivolous. But consider what a value is seriously and permanently attached to gold and so-called precious stones almost universally. Day and night, summer and winter, sick or well, in war and in peace, men speak of and believe in gold as a great treasure. By a thousand comparisons they prove their devotion to it. If wise men or true philosophers bore any considerable proportion to the whole number of men, gold would be treated with no such distinction. Men seriously and, if possible, religiously believe in and worship gold. They hope to earn golden opinions, to celebrate their golden wedding. They dream of the golden age. Now it is not its intrinsic beauty or value, but its rarity and arbitrarily attached value, that distinguishes gold. You would think it was the reign of shams.

The one description interests those chiefly who have not seen the thing; the other chiefly interests those who have seen it and are most familiar with it, and brings it home to the reader. We like to read a good description of no thing so well as of that which we already know the best, as our friend, or ourselves even. In proportion as we get and are near to our object, we do without the measured or scientific account, which is like the measure they take, or the description they write, of a man when he leaves his country, and insert in his passport for the use of the detective police of other countries. The men of science merely look at the object with sinister eye, to see if [it] corresponds with the passport, and merely visé or make some trifling additional mark on its passport and let it go; but the real acquaintances and friends which it may have in foreign parts do not ask to see nor think of its passport.

Gerard has not only heard of and seen and raised a plant, but felt and smelled and tasted it, applying all his senses to it. You are not distracted from the thing to the system or arrangement. In the true natural order the order or system is not insisted on. Each is first, and each last. That which presents itself to us this moment occupies the whole of the present and rests on the very topmost point of the

sphere, under the zenith. The species and individuals of all the natural kingdoms ask our attention and admiration in a round robin. We make straight lines, putting a captain at their head and a lieutenant at their tails, with sergeants and corporals all along the line and a flourish of trumpets near the beginning, insisting on a particular uniformity where Nature has made curves to which belongs their own sphere-music. It is indispensable for us to square her circles, and we offer our rewards to him who will do it.

Who [sic] describes the most familiar object with a zest and vividness of imagery as if he saw it for the first time, the novelty consisting not in the strangeness of the object, but in the new and clearer perception of it.

Oct. 14. This year, on account of the very severe frosts, the trees change and fall early, or fall before fairly changing. The willows have the bleached look of November. Consider how many leaves there are to fall each year and how much they must add to the soil. Coultas (in "What may be Learned from a Tree") finds that a single beech twig twenty-seven inches and three lines long and six years old was "the leaf-labor of one hundred and fifty-five leaves," and quotes from Asa Gray's "First Lessons in Botany" that "the Washington Elm at Cambridge — a tree of no extraordinary size — was some years ago estimated to produce a crop of seven millions of leaves, exposing a surface of 200,000 square feet, or about five acres, of foliage." Supposing this to be true, and that the horizontal spread of this (like other the largest elms) is one hundred feet, then, if all its leaves should be spread evenly on the ground directly under it, there would be about twenty-five thicknesses. An ordinary forest would probably cover the ground as thickly as this tree would. Supposing a leaf to be of the same thickness with an ordinary sheet of letter-paper, and that the mass is compressed as much as paper packed in a ream, the twenty-five would be about one sixteenth of an inch thick. This is a rude calculation.

We have had a remarkably fertile year. Let us see now if we have a cold winter after it.

P. M. — Up Groton Turnpike.

If you examine a wood-lot after numerous fires and cuttings, you

will be surprised to find how extremely vivacious are the roots of oaks, chestnuts, hickories, birches, cherries, etc. The little trees which look like seedlings of the year will be found commonly to spring from an older root or horizontal shoot or a stump. Those layers which you may have selected to transplant will be found to have too much of old stump and root underground to be removed. They have commonly met with accidents and seen a good deal of the world already. They have learned to endure and bide their time. When you see an oak fully grown and of fair proportions, you little suspect what difficulties it may have encountered in its early youth, what sores it has overgrown, how for years it was a feeble layer lurking under the leaves and scarcely daring to show its head above them, burnt and cut, and browsed by rabbits. Driven back to earth again twenty times, — as often as it aspires to the heavens. The soil of the forest is crowded with a mass of these old and tough fibres, annually sending up their shoots here and there. The underground part survives and holds its own, though the top meets with countless accidents; *so* that, although seeds were not to be supplied for many years, there would still spring up shoots enough to stock it. So with the old and feeble huckleberry roots. Nay, even the sedge *(Carex Pennsylvanica)* is already rooted in most woods, and at once begins to spread and prevail when the wood is cut, especially if a frost or fire keeps down the new wood.

I examine the John Hosmer wood-lot (sprout-land) cut off last winter on the north side at Colburn Hill. Next to the conspicuous sprouts from the large stumps (of which the white birch have here grown the most, — commonly four or five feet) you notice an increased growth of weeds, as goldenrods (especially *S. puberula*), the two fire-weeds, asters, everlasting (fragrant), hawkweeds, yarrow, low blackberry, cinquefoil, etc. All of these, I believe, except the erechthites, are perennials, and those which blossomed this year (with this exception) must have sprung up before the wood was cut. The others were probably planted last fall or in the winter, unless their seed endures in the soil. I see, for example, what I consider seedling goldenrods, everlasting, and yarrow, *i.e.* mere radical leaves without any stem, which will bloom next year. The seedling trees of this year, of course, will be scarcely noticed among the sprouts and

weeds. I chance to see none. I see, however, many young black cherry trees, three to six inches high, which are just three years old, with roots partly coiled up (as if they had met with difficulties in their upward growth) and much larger than their stems. These, then, were planted in the midst of this pine and oak and birch wood at least two years before it was cut, though the tree they came from is so far off that I know not where it is, and they have not effectually risen above the surface till this year. If you look through a sprout-land you will find no tree, not strictly speaking a forest tree, and which at the same time did not attain to its growth there before, so common as these little black cherries, the birds having conveyed the stones into the midst of the woods and dropped them there; *i.e.* they are planted chiefly before the wood is cut. *These* cherry trees are, however, short-lived. They live a few years and bear large and pleasant-tasted fruit, but when the forest trees have grown up around them they die.

I see that a great part of the club-moss *(Lycopodium complanatum)* which was so abundant in the lower part of this wood has already been killed, and is completely withered and bleached white, probably by the cold last winter, if not also by exposure to the light and heat of the summer.

This lot is thickly covered with the rubbish or tops. I suspect that it is, on the whole, better to leave this than to clear the ground, — that when it is not too thick (as masses of pine-tops) it is an important protection to the seedling trees (gardeners find that seedling pines require shade in their nurseries), and of course the soil is enriched by its decay.

Under one white oak where, on the 8th, the ground was strewn with acorns, I find but a single sound one left to-day, and under another, though many acorns are left, all of them are decayed, so rapidly are they gathered by the squirrels. I take them from the tree already decayed without a worm in them. Far the greater part that you find destroyed (this does not include those eaten by animals) have thus decayed, and I think that the cause was the severe frost of about October 1st, which especially injured those on the ground. It is surprising that any escape the winter. I am not sure that white oak acorns do (as I am that many scarlet and red oak, etc., do). These are not protected by any downiness, and their shoots and leaves I know

are the most tender in the spring. Probably almost all the white oak acorns would be destroyed by frost if left on the surface in pastures, and so it may be that more escape because the squirrels carry them off and bury them, or leave them under the shelter of the woods and leaves, though they consume so many, than would if they were not disturbed. Also I find many full-grown worms in them, and the acorn all powder, on the tree.

Do I not see yellow-crowned warblers? Much yellow on shoulders or sides, and white in wings when they fly.

Acorns that fall in open pastures decay so fast that you might wonder how any survived the winter, but the fact is that they are not suffered to lie long, but are picked up and carried off by animals, and either deposited in holes or buried under the leaves in the forest, or consumed; and so, probably, more of these survive than would if they were not carried off.

Oct. 16. P. M. — To White Pond and neighborhood. As a consequence of the different manner in which trees which have winged seeds and those which have not are planted, — the [former] being blown together in one direction by the wind, the latter being dispersed irregularly by animals, — I observe that the former, as pines (which (the white) are said in the primitive wood to grow in communities), white birches, red maples, alders, etc., often grow in more or less regular rounded or oval or conical patches, as the seeds fell, while oaks, chestnuts, hickories, etc., simply form woods of greater or less extent whether by themselves or mixed; *i.e.*, they do not naturally spring up in an oval form (or elliptical) unless they derive it from the pines under which they were planted.

For example, take this young white pine wood half a dozen years old, which has sprung up in a pasture adjacent to a wood of oaks and pines mixed. It has the form of a broad crescent, or half-moon, with its diameter resting on the old wood near where a large white pine stood. It is true most such groves are early squared by our plows and fences, for we square these circles every day in our rude practice. And in the same manner often they fall in a sprout-land amid oaks, and I, looking from a hilltop, can distinguish in distant old woods still, of pine and oak mixed, these more exclusive and regular

communities of pine, a dozen or more rods wide, while it is the oak commonly that fills up the irregular crevices, beside occupying extensive spaces itself. So it happens that, as the pines themselves and their fruit have a more regularly conical outline than deciduous trees, the groves they form also have.

Our wood-lots, of course, have a history, and we may often recover it for a hundred years back, though we *do* not. A small pine lot may be a side of such an oval, or a half, or a square in the inside with all the curving sides cut off by fences. Yet if we attended more to the history of our lots we should manage them more wisely.

Looking round, I observe at a distance an oak wood-lot some twenty years old, with a dense narrow edging of pitch pines about a rod and a half wide and twenty-five or thirty years old along its whole southern side, which is straight and thirty or forty rods long, and, next to it, an open field or pasture. It presents a very singular appearance, because the oak wood is broad and has no pines within it, while the narrow edging is perfectly straight and dense, and pure pine. It is the more remarkable at this season because the oak is all red and yellow and the pine all green. I understand it and read its history easily before I get to it. I find, as I expected, a fence separating the pines from the oaks, or that they belong to different owners. I also find, as I expected, that eighteen or twenty years ago a pitch pine wood had stood where the oaks are, and was then cut down, for there are their old stumps. But before they were cut, their seeds were blown into the neighbor's field, and the little pines came up all along its edge, and they grew so thickly and so fast that that neighbor refrained at last from plowing them up or cutting them off, for just this rod and a half in width, where they were thickest, and moreover, though there are no sizable oaks mixed with these pines, the whole surface even of this narrow strip is as usual completely stocked with little seedling oaks less than a foot high. But I ask, if the neighbor so often lets this narrow edging grow up, why not often, by the same rule, let them spread over the whole of his field? When at length he sees how they have grown, does he not often regret that he did not do so? Or why be dependent, even to this extent, on these windfalls from our neighbors' trees, or an accident? Why not control our own woods and destiny more? (This was north from the lane

beyond Conant's handsome wood.) There are many such problems in forest geometry to be solved.

Again, I read still further back a more varied story. Take the line between Rice and Conant (?) or Garfield (?). Here is a green strip of dense pitch and white pine some thirty or forty rods long by four wide and thirty years old. On the east side is a large red and yellow [sic] oak wood-lot, the nearest part of it some dozen or more years old, and on the west a strip three rods wide of little white and pitch pines four to ten feet high that have sprung up in the open land, and next to these is an open field occasionally cultivated.

Given these facts, to find the wall. If you think a moment you will know without my telling you that it is between the pine wood and the oak. Some dozen or more years ago there was a large pine wood extending up to the wall on the west, and then an open field belonging to another man. But, as before, the pine seed had blown over the wall and taken so well that for four rods in width it was suffered to grow, or rather may be said to have defended itself and crowded the farmer back (no thanks to him). But when, some fifteen years ago, the old pine wood was cut by its owner, the other was not ready to cut his younger one. This is now about thirty years old and for many years it has been endeavoring to spread into the open land by its side, as its parents did, but for a long time the proprietor, not taking the hint, blind to his own interests, plowed quite up to the edge of the wood, as I noticed, — and got a few beans for his pains. But the pines (which he did not plant) grew while he slept, and at length, one spring, he gave up the contest and concluded at last to plow only within three rods of the wood, the little pines were so thick and promising. He concluded not to cut his own fingers any more, *i.e.* not further than up to the last joint, and hence this second row of little pines. They would have covered the half or perhaps the whole of his barren field before this if he had let them.

I examined these pine lots. The strip of little pines contained also a little white birch, much sweet-fern, and thin open sod, but scarcely one oak, and that very small. The strip of large pines contained countless oaks of various kinds, — white, red, black, and shrub oak, — which had come from the young oak lot, many little pines of both kinds, and *little* wild cherry, — white [sic], — and some hazel and

high blueberry. (It was rather elevated as well as dry soil.)

I dug up some of the little oaks to see how old they were and how they had fared. The largest in the lot were about one foot high. First, a red or scarlet oak, apparently four years old. The acorn was about one inch below the surface of the pine leaves. It rose five inches above the leaves, and the root extended about one foot below the surface. It had died down once.

The second was a black oak which rose six inches above the leaves (or eight, measured along the stem). It was apparently four years old. It was much branched, and its tops had been cut off by rabbits last year. The root ran straight down about one inch, then nearly horizontally five or six inches, and when I pulled it up it broke off where less than one eighth inch thick, at sixteen inches below the surface. This tree was one fourth of an inch in diameter at the surface and nearly three fourths of an inch in diameter at five inches below (along the root). At the same height above the surface it was hardly one fifth of an inch in diameter.

The third was a white oak ten inches high, apparently seven years old. It also had been browsed by a rabbit and put out a new shoot accordingly. Two years' growth was buried in the leaves. The root was very similar, both in direction and form, to the last, only not quite so thick.

Fourth, a shrub oak also quite similar, though less thick still and with two or more shoots from one stock.

In all these cases, or especially the first three [?], there was one main, and an unexpectedly great, fusiform root, altogether out of proportion to the top, you would say, tapering both ways, but of course largest and sharpest downward, with many fine stringy fibres extending on every side from it perhaps a foot. Just as a biennial plant devotes its energies the first year to producing a stock on which it can feed the next, so these little oaks in their earliest years are forming great fusiform vigorous roots on which they can draw when they are suddenly left to seek their fortunes in a sprout-land.

Thus this double forest was advancing to conquer new (or old) land, sending forward their children on the wings of the wind, while already the oak seedlings from the oak wood behind had established themselves beneath the old pines ready to supplant them. The pines

were the vanguard. They stood up to fire with their children before them, while the little oaks kneeled behind and between them. The pine is the pioneer, the oak the more permanent settler who lays out his improvements. Pines are by some considered lower in the scale of trees — in the order of development — than oaks.

While the pines were blowing into the pasture from this narrow edging, the animals were planting the acorns under the pines. Even the small pine woods are thus perfectly equipped.

There was even under these dark, dense pines, thirty years old, a pretty thick bed of blueberry and huckleberry bushes next the wall, ten feet wide, the relics of a still denser and higher one that grew there when it was an open field. The former had thus been driven back three times, first by the blueberry hedge, then by the pines of thirty years ago, and lastly by the young pines that sprang from them. Thus a wood-lot had been forced upon him, and yet perhaps he will talk of it as a creation of his own.

I have come up here this afternoon to see— 's dense white pine lot beyond the pond, that was cut off last winter, to know how the little oaks look in it. To my surprise and chagrin, I find that the fellow who calls himself its owner has burned it all over and sowed winter-rye here. He, no doubt, means to let it grow up again in a year or two, but he thought it would be clear gain if he could extract a little rye from it in the meanwhile. What a fool! Here nature had got everything ready for this emergency, and kept them ready for many years, — oaks half a dozen years old or more, with fusiform roots full charged and tops already pointing skyward, only waiting to be touched off by the sun, — and he thought he knew better, and would get a little rye out of it first, which he could feel at once between his fingers, and so he burned it, and dragged his harrow over it. As if oaks would bide *his* time or come at his bidding. Or as if he preferred to have a pine or a birch wood here possibly half a century hence — for the land is "pine sick" — rather than an oak wood at once. So he trifles with nature. I am chagrined for him. That he should call himself an agriculturalist! He needs to have a guardian placed over him. A forest-warden should be appointed by the town. Overseers of poor husbandmen.

He has got his dollars for the pine timber, and now he wishes to get his bushels of grain and finger the dollars that they will bring; and then, Nature, you may have your way again. Let us purchase a mass for his soul. A greediness that defeats its own ends.

I examined a little lot of his about a dozen rods square just this side, cut off last winter, apparently two thirds white pine and one third white oak. Last year the white pine seed was very abundant, but there was little or no white oak seed. Accordingly I noticed twenty or more seedling white pines of this year on the barest spots, but not a single seedling oak. This suggests how much the species of the succeeding forest may depend on whether the trees were fertile the year before they were cut, or not.

I see a very large white oak acorn which has a double meat with a skin between. There is a very young grub in it.

They appear to be last year's hemlock and larch cones that still hold on in great numbers!

As time elapses, and the resources from which our forests have been supplied fail, we shall of necessity be more and more convinced of the significance of the seed.

I see in a thick pitch pine wood half a dozen stout pine twigs five eighths of an inch thick that have been gnawed off with their plumes. Why?

Hear the alder locust still. Robins apparently more numerous than a month ago. See grackles in cornfields in two places to-day.

It chanced that here were two proprietors within half a mile who had done exactly the same, *i.e.,* accepted part of a wood-lot that was forced on them, and I have no doubt that there are several more exactly similar cases within that half-mile diameter.

The history of a wood-lot is often, if not commonly, *here*, a history of cross-purposes, — of steady and consistent endeavor on the part of Nature, of interference and blundering with a glimmering of intelligence at the eleventh hour on the part of the proprietor. The proprietor of wood-lots commonly treats Nature as an Irishman drives a horse, — by standing before him and beating him in the face all the way across a field.

If I find any starved pasture in the midst of our woods, — and I remember many such, and they are the least valuable tracts we have,

— I know that it has commonly had such a history as this wood-lot (above). It was burned over when cut, and perhaps cultivated a year or two, often because the owner thought it was what the soil needed in order that it might produce trees. In some cases there may be sense in such a course if he can afford to wait a century instead of a third of that time for a crop. It depends on what the trees are, the locality, etc. But commonly the owner who adopts this course makes a move in the dark and in ninety-nine cases in a hundred [an indecipherable word] his own fingers.

The time will soon come, if it has not already, when we shall have to take special pains to secure and encourage the growth of white oaks, as we already must that of chestnuts for the most part. These oaks will become so scattered that there will be not seed enough to seed the ground rapidly and completely.

Horace Mann tells me that he found in the crop or inside of the stake-driver killed the other day one grasshopper, several thousand-legs one to one and a half inches long, and not much else.

It commonly happens in settled countries like this that the new community of pines, sprung from seeds blown off from an older one, is very youthful compared with the trees it sprang from because many successive crops of trees or seeds have been plowed up or cut before the owner allowed Nature to take her course. Naturally the pines spread more steadily and with no such abrupt descents. In the wildwood at least there are commonly only fires and insects or blight, and not the axe and plow and the cattle, to interrupt the regular progress of things.

Oct. 17. P. M. — To Walden Woods.

The trees which *with us* grow in masses, *i.e.* not merely scattering, are: —

1, *2.* White and pitch pine 3. — Oaks 4. — White birch 5. — Red maple 6. — Chestnut 7. — Hickory Alder Hemlock, spruce, and larch Cedar (white and red)

Willow Locust Apple Red cherry (in neighboring towns) W. [sic]

Sugar maple (rare)

Of these only white and pitch pine, oaks, white birch, and red maple are *now* both important and abundant. (Chestnut and hickory

have become rare.)

It is an interesting inquiry what determines which species of these shall grow on a given tract. It is evident that the soil determines this to some extent, as of the oaks only the swamp white stands in our meadows, and, so far as these seven trees are concerned, swamps will be composed only of red maples, swamp white oaks, white birch, and white pine. By removing to upland we get rid of the swamp white oak and red maples in *masses*, and are reduced to white and pitch pine, oaks, and white birch only, *i.e.* of those that are abundant and important.

Secondly, ownership, and a corresponding difference of treatment of the land as to time of cutting, etc., decides the species.

Third, age, as, if the trees are one hundred years old, they may be chestnut, but if sprout-land are less likely to be; etc., etc., etc.

The noblest trees and those which it took the longest to produce, and which are the longest-lived, as chestnuts, hickories (?), oaks, are the first to become extinct under our present system and the hardest to reproduce, and their place is taken by pines and birches, of feebler growth than the primitive pines and birches, for want of a change of soil.

There is many a tract now bearing a poor and decaying crop of birches, or perhaps of oaks, dying when a quarter grown and covered with fungi and excrescences, where two hundred years ago grew oaks or chestnuts of the largest size.

I look through a lot of young oaks twenty or twenty-five years old (Warren's, east of the Deep Cut, exclusively oak, the eastern part). There are plenty of little oaks from a few inches to a foot in height, but on examination I find fewer seedlings in proportion to the whole *(i.e.* manifestly seedlings) and they have much older and larger and poorer or more decayed roots than the oaks in dense pine woods. Oftenest they are shoots from the end of a horizontal twig running several feet under the leaves and leading to an old stump [?] under the surface. But I must examine again and further.

Looking through this wood and seeking very carefully for oak seedlings and anything else of the kind, I am surprised to see where the wood was chiefly oak a cluster of little chestnuts six inches high and close together. Working my hand underneath, I easily lift them

up with all their roots, — four little chestnuts two years old, which partially died down the first year, — and to my surprise I find still attached four great chestnuts from which they sprang and four acorns which have also sent up puny little trees beneath the chestnuts. These eight nuts all lay within a diameter of two inches about an inch and a half beneath the present leafy surface, in a very loose soil of but [?] half decayed leaves in the midst of this young oak wood. If I had not been looking for something of the kind, I should never have seen either the oaks or the chestnuts. Such is the difference between looking for a thing and waiting for it to attract your attention. In the last case you will probably never see it [at] all. They were evidently planted there two or three years ago by a squirrel or mouse. I was surprised at the sight of these chestnuts, for there are not *to my knowledge* any chestnut trees — none, at least, nearly large enough to bear nuts — within about half a mile of that spot, and I should about as soon have expected to find chestnuts in the artificial pine grove in my yard. The chestnut trees old enough to bear fruit are near the Lincoln line about half a mile east of this through the woods and over hill and dale. No one acquainted with these woods — not the proprietor — would have believed that a chestnut lay under the leaves in that wood or within a quarter of a mile of it, and yet from what I saw then and afterward I have no doubt that there were hundreds, which were placed there by quadrupeds and birds. This wood lies on the south of the village, separated from it by a mile of open fields and meadows. It is the northern part of an extensive pine and oak forest which half a mile eastward, near the Lincoln line, begins to contain a few chestnuts. These little chestnuts were growing well, but the oaks appeared to be dead and dying.

It is well known that the chestnut timber of this vicinity has rapidly disappeared within fifteen years, having been used for railroad sleepers, for rails, and for planks, so that there is danger that this part of our forest will become extinct.

The last chestnut tracts of any size were on the side of Lincoln. As I advanced further through the woods toward Lincoln, I was surprised to see how many little chestnuts there were, mostly two or three years old and some even ten feet high, scattered through them and also under the dense pines, as oaks are. I should say there was

one every half-dozen rods, made more distinct by their yellow leaves on the brown ground, which surprised me because I had not attended to the spread of the chestnut, and it is certain that every one of these came from a chestnut placed there by a quadruped or bird which had brought it from further east, where alone it grew.

You would say that the squirrels, etc., went further for chestnuts than for acorns in proportion as they were a greater rarity. I suspect that a squirrel may convey them sometimes a quarter or a half a mile even, and no doubt as soon as a young chestnut fifteen or twenty feet high, far advanced beyond the chestnut woods, bears a single bur, which no man discovers, a squirrel or bird is almost sure to gather it and plant it in that neighborhood or still further forward. A squirrel goes a-chest-nutting perhaps as far as the boys do, and when he gets there he does not have to shake or club the tree or wait for frost to open the burs; he walks [?] up to the bur and cuts it off, and strews the ground with them before they have opened. And the fewer they are in the wood the more certain it is that he will appropriate every one, for it is no transient afternoon's picnic with him, but the pursuit of his life, a harvest that he gets as surely as the farmer his com.

Now it is important that the owners of these wood-lots should know what is going on here and treat them and the squirrels accordingly. They little dream of what the squirrels are about; know only that they get their seed-corn in the adjacent fields, and encourage their boys to shoot them every day, supplying them with powder and shot for this purpose. In newer parts of the country they have squirrel-hunts on a large scale and kill many thousands in a few hours, and all the neighborhood rejoices.

Thus it appears that by a judicious letting Nature alone merely we might recover our chestnut wood in the course of a century.

This also suggests that you cannot raise one kind of wood alone in a country unless you are willing to plant it yourself. If no oaks grow within miles of your pines, the ground under the pines will not be filled with little oaks, and you will have to plant them. Better have your wood of different kinds in narrow lots of fifty acres, and not one kind covering a township.

I took up a red oak seedling of this year five inches high. In this case the top is larger, putting length and breadth together, than the

root, and the great acorn is still perfectly sound, lying on its side, and the plant this first year evidently derives a great part of its nourishment from it. The root is abruptly curved back under the acorn, and I find that seedling or young oaks generally have roots which slant off more or less horizontally from where the acorn lay two to five or six inches, and then, having acquired their greatest thickness, descend straight downward. To this irregularity is sometimes added a half-turn or spiral in the upper part of the root: or, looking down on it:

The acorn is still so sound that I think it must continue to furnish nourishment to the plant a part of next year.

Apparently the pine woods are a natural nursery of oaks, from whence we might easily transplant them to our grounds, and thus save some of those which annually decay, while we let the pines stand. Experience has proved, at any rate, that these oaks will bear exposure to the light. It is remarkable that for the most part there are no seedling oaks in the open grassy fields and pastures. The acorns are little likely to succeed if dropped there. Those springing up in such places appear to have been dropped or buried by animals when on their way with them to another covert.

I examine under the pitch pines by Thrush Alley to see how long the oaks live under dense pines. The oldest oaks there are about eight or ten years old. I see none older under these and other dense pines, even when the pines are thirty or more years old, though I have no doubt that oaks began to grow there more than twenty years ago. Hence they must have died, and I suppose I could find their great roots in the soil if I should dig for them. I should say that they survived under a very dense pine wood only from six to ten years. This corresponds exactly with the experience of the English planters, who begin to shred the branches of the nursing pines when the oaks are six or seven years old and to remove the pines altogether when the oaks are eight to ten years old.

But in openings amid the pines, though only a rod in diameter, or where the pines are thin, and also on their edges, the oaks shoot up higher and become trees, and this shows how mixed woods of pine and oak are produced. If the pines are quite small or grow but thinly, fewer acorns will be planted amid them, it is true, but more will

come to trees, and so you have a mixed wood. Or when you thin out a pine wood, the oaks spring up here and there; or when you thin an oak wood, the pines plant themselves and grow up in like manner.

It is surprising how many accidents these seedling oaks will survive. We have seen [?] that they commonly survive six to ten years under the thickest pines and acquire stout and succulent roots. Not only they bear the sudden exposure to the light when the pines are cut, but, in case of a more natural succession, when a fire runs over the lot and kills pines and birches and maples, and oaks twenty feet high, these little oaks are scarcely injured at all, and they will still be just as high the next year, if not in the fall of the same year if the fire happens early in the spring. Or if in the natural course of events a fire does not occur nor a hurricane, the soil may at last be exhausted for pines, but there are always the oaks ready to take advantage of the least feebleness and yielding of the pines.

Hereabouts a pine wood, or even a birch wood, is no sooner established than the squirrels and birds begin to plant acorns in it. First the pines, then the oaks; and coniferous trees, geologists tell us, are older, as they are lower in the order of development, — were created before oaks. —

I observe to-day a great many pitch pine plumes cut off by squirrels and strewn under the trees, as I did yesterday.

I count the rings of a great white pine sawed off in Laurel Glen a few years ago, — about one hundred and thirty. This, probably, was really of the second growth, at least, but probably now even the second growth is all gone in this town. We may presume that any forest tree here a hundred and thirty years old belongs to the second growth, at least. We may say that all pines and oaks of this age or *growth* are now extinct in this town, and the present generation are not acquainted with large trees of these species.

A month ago I saw the smoke of many burnings in the horizon (even now see one occasionally), and now in my walks I occasionally come to a field of winter-rye already greening the ground in the woods where such a fire was then kindled.

If any one presumes that, after all, there cannot be so many nuts planted as we see oaks spring up at once when the pines are cut, he must consider that *according to the above calculation* (two pages

back) there are some ten years for the animals to plant the oak wood in; so that, if the tract is ten rods square or contains one hundred square rods, it would only be necessary that they should plant ten acorns in a year which should not be disturbed, in order that there might be one oak to every square rod at the end of ten years. This, or anything like this, does not imply any very great activity among the squirrels. A striped squirrel could carry enough in his cheeks at one trip.

While the man that killed my lynx (and many others) thinks it came out of a menagerie, and the naturalists call it the Canada lynx, and at the White Mountains they call it the Siberian lynx, — in each case forgetting, or ignoring, that it belongs here, — I call it the Concord lynx.

Oct. 18. P. M. — To Merriam's white pine grove.

I often see amid or beside a pitch or white pine grove, though thirty years old, a few yet larger and older trees, from which they came, rising above them, like patriarchs surrounded by their children.

Early cinquefoil again.

I find fair-looking white oak acorns, which abound on the trees near Beck Stow's, to be decayed on the tree. Wishing to see what proportion were decayed I pull down a bough, and pluck forty-one acorns, which I cut open successively with my knife. Every one is soft and spoiled, turned black or dark-brown within, though there is not a single worm in them. Indeed, abundant and beautiful as the crop is, they are all decayed on that and the neighboring trees, and I only find one sound one after long search. This is probably the reason why they hold on still so numerously, and beside the squirrels do not disturb them. I suspect that they were killed by the severe frost of about October 1st. Abundant as the crop is, perhaps half of them have already been destroyed thus. Those that were touched first and most severely are paler-brown on one or both sides. Here, or on *these* trees, is a whole crop destroyed before it fell, though remarkably abundant. How many thousand bushels there must be in this state in this town!

See how an acorn is planted by a squirrel, just under a loose covering of moist leaves where it is shaded and concealed, and lies

on its side on the soil, ready to send down its radicle next year.

If there are not so many oak seedlings in a deciduous wood as in a pine one, it may be because both oaks (and acorns) and squirrels love warmth. The ground does not freeze nearly so hard under dense pines as in a deciduous wood.

Look through an oak wood, say twenty-five or thirty years old, north of the Sherman grove on the road. It appeared to me that there were fewer seedling oaks under this than under pines, and the roots of the other little ones that looked like seedlings were old and decaying, and the shoots slender, feeble, and more or less prostrate under the leaves. You will find seedling oaks under oaks, it is true, but I think that you will not find a great many of them. You will not find, as under pines, a great many of these little oaks one to eight or ten years old, with great fat, or fusiform, roots, all ready to spring up when the pines are cut.

If it were true that the little oaks under oaks steadily grew and came to trees there, then even that would be a reason why the soil would not be so well stocked with them when the wood was cut as when a pine wood is cut, for there would be only ten trees in the first case to one hundred in the last (according to our calculation before).

Most of the little oaks here were little or dwarfed, apparently because they were shoots from poor and diseased rootstocks, which were common in the ground.

But I think that neither pines nor oaks do well under older trees.

Methinks you do not see numerous oaks of all ages and sizes in an old oak wood, but commonly large trees of about the same age and little ones like huckleberry bushes under your feet; and so commonly with pine woods. In either case, if the woods are well grown and dense, all the trees in them appear to have been planted at the same time.

For aught that I know, I would much rather have a young oak wood which has succeeded to pines than one that has succeeded to oaks, for they will make better trees, not only because the soil is new to them, but because they are all seedlings, while in the other case far the greater part are sprouts; just as I would prefer apple trees five or six years from the seed for my orchard to suckers from those which have come to maturity or decayed. Otherwise your young oaks will

soon, when half grown, have the diseases of old trees, — warts and decay.

I find that Merriam's white pine grove is on the site of an oak wood, the old oak stumps being still very common. The pines appear to be some forty years old. The soil of pine leaves is an inch to an inch and a half thick. The oldest little oaks here are five years old and six inches high.

Am surprised to see that the pasture west of this, where the little pitch pines were cut down last year, is now even more generally green with pines than two years ago.

What shall we say to that management that halts between two courses, — does neither this nor that, but botches both? I see many a pasture on which the pitch or white pines are spreading, where the bush-whack is from time to time used with a show of vigor, and I despair of my trees, — I say mine, for the farmer evidently does not mean they shall be his, — and yet this questionable work is so poorly done that those very fields grow steadily greener and more forest-like from year to year in spite of cows and bush-whack, till at length the farmer gives up the contest from sheer weariness, and finds himself the owner of a wood-lot. Now whether wood-lots or pastures are most profitable for him I will not undertake to say, but I am certain that a wood-lot and pasture combined is not profitable.

I see spatter-dock pads and pontederia in that little pool at south end of Beck Stow's. How did they get there? There is no stream in this case? It was perhaps rather reptiles and birds than fishes, then. Indeed we might as well ask how they got anywhere, for all the pools and fields have been stocked thus, and we are not to suppose as many new creations as pools. This suggests to inquire how any plant came where it is, — how, for instance, the pools which were stocked with lilies before we were born or this town was settled, and ages ago, were so stocked, as well as those which we dug. I think that we are warranted only in supposing that the former was stocked in the same way as the latter, and that there was not a sudden new creation, — at least since the first; yet I have no doubt that peculiarities more or less considerable have thus been gradually produced in the lilies thus planted in various pools, in consequence of their various conditions, though they all came originally from one seed.

We find ourselves in a world that is already planted, but is also still being planted as at first. We say of some plants that they grow in wet places and of others that they grow in desert places. The truth is that their seeds are scattered almost everywhere, but here only do they succeed. Unless you can show me the pool where the lily was created, I shall believe that the oldest fossil lilies which the geologist has detected (if this is found fossil) originated in that locality in a similar manner to these of Beck Stow's. We see thus how the fossil lilies which the geologist has detected are dispersed, as well as these which we carry in our hands to church.

The development theory implies a greater vital force in nature, because it is more flexible and accommodating, and equivalent to a sort of constant *new* creation.

Mr. Alcott tells me that the red squirrels which live in his elms go off to the woods (pitch pines behind his house) about June, and return in September, when the butternuts, etc., are ripe. Do they not go off for hazelnuts and pine seed? No doubt they are to be found where their food is.

Young oaks, especially white oaks, in open woodland hollows and on plains [are] almost annually killed down by frost, they are so tender. Large tracts in this town are bare for this reason. Hence it is very important that the little oaks, when they are tenderest, should have the shelter of pines and other trees as long as they can bear it, or perhaps till they get above the level of the frosts. I know of extensive open areas in the woods where it would be of no use to sow acorns or to set seedling oaks, for every one would be killed by the frost, as they have already been; but if you were to plant pines thinly there, or thickly at first and then thin them out, you could easily raise oaks, for often you have only got to protect them till they are five or six feet high, that they may be out of the way of ordinary frosts, whose surface is as level as that of a lake.

According to Loudon *(vide* Emerson on oaks), the best authorities say plant some two hundred and fifty acorns to an acre *(i.e.* some from three hundred to five hundred, others from sixty to one hundred), or about one and one half acorns to a rod, or two hundred and forty to an acre.

In my walk in Walden Woods yesterday I found that the seedling

oaks and chestnuts were most common under the fullest and densest white pines, as that of Brister Spring.

Oct. 19. P. M. — To Conantum.

Indian-summer-like and gossamer.

That white oak in Hubbard Grove which on the 7th was full of those glossy black acorns is still hanging full, to my surprise. Suspecting the cause, I proceed to cut them open, and find that they are all decayed or decaying. Even if not black within, they are already sour and softened. Yet Rice told me that he collected from this tree about a week ago some thousands of acorns and planted them in Sudbury. I can tell him that probably not more than half a dozen of them were alive, though they may then have looked well, as they do now externally. First, then, I was surprised at the abundance of the crop this year. Secondly, by the time I had got accustomed to that fact I was surprised at the vast proportion that were killed, apparently by frost. The squirrels are wiser than to gather these, but I see where they have gathered many black oak acorns, the ground beneath being strewn with their cups, which have each a piece bitten out in order to get out the acorn. I suspect that black and red oak acorns are not so easily injured by frost. Indeed, I find this to be the case as far as I look.

Sophia tells me that the large swamp white oak acorns in their cups, which she gathered a fortnight ago, are now all mouldy about the cups, or base of the acorn.

It is a remarkable fact, and looks like a glaring imperfection in Nature, that the labor of the oaks for the year should be lost to this extent. The softening or freezing of cranberries, the rotting of potatoes, etc., etc., seem trifling in comparison. The pigeons, jays, squirrels, and woodlands are thus impoverished. It is hard to say what great purpose is served by this seeming waste.

I frequently see an old and tall pine wood standing in the midst of a younger but more extensive oak wood, it being merely a remnant of an extensive pine wood which once occupied the whole tract, but, having a different owner, or for some other reason, it has not been cut. Sometimes, also, I see these pines of the same age reappear at half a mile distant, the intermediate pines having been cut for thirty

or forty years, and oaks having taken their place. Or the distant second growth of pines, especially if they stand on the land of another than he who owns the oaks, may, as we have seen, be a generation smaller and have sprung from the pines that stood where the oaks do. Two or three pines will run swiftly forward a quarter of a mile into a plain, which is their favorite field of battle, taking advantage of the least shelter, as a rock, or fence, that may be there, and intrench themselves behind it, and if you look sharp, you may see their plumes waving there. Or, as I have said, they will cross a broad river without a bridge, and as swiftly climb and permanently occupy a steep hill beyond.

At this season of the year, when each leaf acquires its peculiar color, Nature prints this history distinctly, as it were an illuminated edition. Every oak and hickory and birch and aspen sprinkled amid the pines tells its tale a mile off, and you have not to go laboriously through the wood examining the bark and leaves. These facts would be best illustrated by colors, — green, yellow, red, etc.

Pines take the first and longest strides. Oaks march deliberately in the rear.

The pines are the light infantry, *voltigeurs*, supplying the scouts and skirmishers; the oaks are the grenadiers, heavy-paced and strong, that form the solid phalanx.

It is evident to any who attend to the matter that pines are here the natural nurses of the oaks, and therefore they grow together. By the way, how nearly identical is the range of our pines with the range of our oaks? Perhaps oaks extend beyond them southward, where there is less danger of frost.

The *new* woodlands, *i.e.,* forests that spring up where there were no trees before, are pine (or birch or maple), and accordingly you may see spaces of bare pasture sod between the trees for many years. But oaks, in masses, are not seen springing up thus with old sod between them. They form a sprout-land, or stand amid the stumps of a recent pine lot.

It will be worth the while to compare seedling oaks with sprout-lands, to see which thrive best.

I see, on the side of Fair Haven Hill, pines which have spread, apparently from the north, one hundred rods, and the hillside begins

to wear the appearance of woodland, though there are many cows feeding amid the pines. The custom with us is to let the pines spread thus into the pasture, and at the same time to let the cattle wander there and contend with the former for the possession of the ground, from time to time coming to the aid of the cattle with a bush-whack. But when, after some fifteen or twenty years, the pines have fairly prevailed over us both, though they have suffered terribly and the ground is strewn with their dead, we then suddenly turn about, coming to the aid of the pines with a whip, and drive the cattle out. They shall no longer be allowed to scratch their heads on them, and we fence them in. This is the actual history of a great many of our wood-lots. While the English have taken great pains to learn how to create forests, this is peculiarly our mode. It is plain that we have thus both poor pastures and poor forests.

I examine that oak lot of Rice's next to the pine strip of the 16th. The oaks (at the southern end) are about a dozen years old. As I expected, I find the stumps of the pines which stood there before quite fresh and distinct, not much decayed, and I find by their rings that they were about forty years old when cut, while the pines which sprang from [them] are now about twenty-five or thirty. But further, and unexpectedly, I find the stumps, in great numbers, now much decayed, of an oak wood which stood there more than sixty years ago. They are mostly shells, the sap-wood rotted off and the inside turned to mould. Thus I distinguished four successions of trees.

Thus I can easily find in countless numbers in our forests, frequently in the third succession, the stumps of the oaks which were cut near the end of the last century. Perhaps I can recover thus generally the oak woods of the beginning of the last century, if the land has remained woodland. I have an advantage over the geologist, for I can not only detect the order of events but the time during which they elapsed, by counting the rings on the stumps. Thus you can unroll the rotten papyrus on which the history of the Concord forest is written.

It is easier far to recover the history of the trees which stood here a century or more ago than it is to recover the history of the men who walked beneath them. How much do we know — how little more can we know — of these two centuries of Concord life?

Go into a young oak wood, and commonly, if the oaks are not sprouts, then they were preceded by pines.

Of course, the gradual manner in which many wood-lots are cut — often only thinned out — must affect the truth of my statements in numerous instances. The regularity of the succession will be interfered with, and what is true of one end of a lot will not be true of the other.

If the ground chances to be broken or burned over or cleared the same year that a good crop of pine seed falls, then expect pines; not otherwise.

I examined the huckleberry bushes next the wall in that same dense pitch and white pine strip. I found that the oldest bushes were about two feet high and some eight or ten years old, and digging with spade and hands, I found that their roots did not go deep, but that they spread by a vigorous shoot which forked several times, running just under the leaves or in the surface soil, so that they could be easily pulled up. One ran seven feet before it broke, and was probably ten feet or more in length. And three or four bushes stood on this shoot, and though these bushes after a few years did not grow more than an inch in a year, these subterranean shoots had grown six to twelve inches at the end, and there seemed to be all the vigor of the plant. The largest bushes preserved still a trace of their origin from a subterranean shoot, the limbs being one-sided and the brash aslant. It is very likely, then, if not certain, that these roots are as old as the pine wood which overshadows them; or it is so long since the seedling huckleberry came up there. The pines were thirty years old, but some of the separate huckleberry bushes were ten, and were sending up new vigorous shoots still. The same was the case with the *Vaccinium vacillans* and the *Pennsylvanicum*, the last one, of course, on a smaller scale. You could see the *V. vacillans* growing in rows for several feet above the subterranean shoots, indicating where it was. The shoot turns up to make a bush thus:

Thus the roots of huckleberries may survive till the woods are cut again. They certainly will here. A huckleberry bush is apparently in its prime at five to seven years, and the oldest are ten to twelve years. Plants of this order (*Ericaceæ*) are said to be among the earlier ones among fossil plants, and they are likely to be among the last.

The oldest oak, fairly speaking, in this wood was a black, thirteen years old. Its root, as usual, ran not straight down but with a half-turn or twist (as well as to one side), which would make it harder to pull up at any rate.

The white oak acorn has very little bitterness and is quite agreeable to eat. When chestnuts are away I am inclined to think them as good as they. At any rate it braces my thought more, and does me more good to eat them, than it does to eat chestnuts. I feel the stronger even before I have swallowed one. It gives me heart and back of oak.

I found that the squirrels, or *possibly* mice, which have their holes about those old oak stumps ran along in various directions through the roots, whose insides are rotted away, leaving a wall of thin bark which prevents the earth falling in. Such are their highways underground. The holes above led to them.

On the monuments of the old settlers of this town, if they can be found, are recorded their names and ages and the time of their death, and so much can be read on these monuments of the oaks, with some additional reliable information, as where they lived, and how healthily, and what trees succeeded them, etc., etc.

Looking at Sophia's large collection of acorns from Sleepy Hollow and elsewhere, I cannot find a sound white oak one *(i.e.* not decayed and blackened), but the black and shrub oaks at least are sound. This suggests that the very fertile shrub oaks are more sure of succeeding and spreading, while the noblest oak of all may fail.

First, by examining the twigs (*vide* Coultas) you tell the age and the number of shoots and the leaves and the various accidents of the tree for half a dozen years past, — can read its history very minutely; and at length, when it is cut down, you read its ancient and general history on its stump.

If you would know the age of a young oak lot, look round for a sprout, — for there will commonly be some to be found even in a seedling wood, — cut, and count the rings. But if you have to count the rings of a seedling, begin about six inches from the ground, for it was probably so high when the previous wood was cut.

Oct 20. E. Hosmer tells me to-day that while digging mud at the Pokelogan the other day he found several fresh acorns planted an

inch or two deep under the grass just outside the oaks and bushes there. Almost every observant farmer finds one such deposit each year.

If that Merriam lot is fifteen rods square, then, instead of there being no oaks in it, there are some twenty-five hundred oaks in it, or far more oaks than pines, — say five times as many, for there are probably not nearly five hundred pines in the lot. This is only one of the thousand cases in which the proprietor and woodchopper tell you that there is not a single oak in the lot. So the tables were turned, and, so far as numbers were concerned, it would have been truer to say that this was an exclusively oak wood and that there were no pines in it. Truly appearances are deceptive.

P. M. — To Walden Woods to examine old stumps.

In Trillium Wood the trees are chiefly pine, and I judge them to be forty to fifty years old, though there are not a few oaks, etc. Beneath them I find some old pitch pine stumps and one white pine. They would not be seen by a careless observer; they are indistinct mounds and preserve no form nor marks of the axe. This is low ground. Part of the cores, etc., of the stumps are, nevertheless, preserved by fat.

I then look at Farrar's [?] hill lot east of the Deep Cut. This is oak, cut, as I remember, some twenty-five years ago, the trees say five to eight inches [in] diameter. I find beneath the oaks innumerable pitch pine stumps, well preserved, or rather, distinct, some of them two feet and more in diameter, with bark nearly three inches thick at the ground, but generally fifteen inches in diameter. Though apparently thoroughly rotten and of a rough (crumbly) conical form and more or less covered with fine moss (hypnum), they were firm within on account of the fat in flakes on the whole core, and frequently showed the trace of the axe in the middle. I could get cartloads of fat pine there now, often lifting out with my hands the whole core, a clear mass of yellow fat. When the stump was almost a mere mound mossed over, breaking off an inch or two deep of the crust, with the moss, I could still trace on one side the straight edge made by the axe. There were also, especially on the lower, or northern, side, some large oak stumps, no doubt of the same age.

These were much better preserved than the pines, — at least the part above ground. The whole shape and almost every stroke of the

axe apparent sometimes, as in a fresh stump. I counted from seventy to seventy-five rings on one. The present wood appears to be chiefly from the seed, with some sprouts. The latter two or more close together, with the old stump more or less overgrown. The sprouts, I think, were from small trees. (Methinks you do not see trees which have sprouted from old or large stumps two or three feet in diameter. I doubt if a very old wood, like E. Hubbard's, would send up sprouts from the stump.) I saw one large oak stump so much decayed that it may have belonged to a generation further back.

I next examined Ebby Hubbard's old oak and pine wood. The trees may be a hundred years old. The older or decaying trees have been cut out from time to time, neglecting these more recent stumps. The very oldest evidences of a tree were a hollow three or four feet across, in which you often slumped, — a hollow place in which squirrels have their holes covered with many layers of leaves, and perhaps with young oaks springing up in it, for the acorns rolled into it. But if you dug there, from under the moss (there was commonly a little green moss around it) and leaves and soil, in the midst of the virgin mould which the tree had turned to, you pulled up flakes and shoulder-blades of wood that might still be recognized for oak, portions preserved by some quality which they concentrated, like the fat leaves or veins of the pine, — the oak of oak. But for the most part it was but the mould and mildew of the grave, — the grave of a tree which was cut or died eighty or a hundred years ago there. It is with the graves of trees as with those of men, — at first an upright stump (for a monument), in course of time a mere mound, and finally, when the corpse has decayed and shrunk, a depression in the soil. In such a hollow it is better to plant a pine than an oak. The only other ancient traces of trees were perhaps the semiconical mounds which had been heaved up by trees which fell in some hurricane.

I saw where Ebby had tried a pitch pine with his axe, though there was not a green twig on it, and the woodpeckers had bored it from top to bottom, — effectually proved it, if he had not been blind.

Looked at that pitch and white pine wood just east of Close at Brister Spring, which I remember as pasture some thirty years ago. The pasture is still betrayed under the pines by the firmer, sward-like surface, there being fewer leaves and less of leafy mould formed, —

less virgin soil, — and by the patches of green *(pine)* moss and white cladonia peeping out here and there.

Young chestnuts (I dig up three or four) have not the large roots that oaks have.

I see the acorn after the tree is five or six years old.

Brassica Napus, or rape, a second crop, is blooming now, especially where grain has been cut and the field laid down to grass and clover. It has there little slender plants; rough, or bristly, lower leaves.

1st. There is the primitive wood, woodland which was woodland when the township was settled, and which has not been cut at all. Of this I know of none in Concord. Where is the nearest? There is, perhaps, a large tract in Winchendon.

2d. Second growth, the woodland which has been cut but once, — true second growth. This country has been so recently settled that a large part of the older States is covered now with this second growth, and the same name is occasionally still applied, though falsely, to those wood-lots which have been cut twice or many more times. Of this second growth I think that we have considerable left, and I remember much more. These are our forests which contain the largest and oldest trees, — shingle pines (very few indeed left) and oak timber.

3d. Primitive woodland, *i.e.*, which has always been woodland, never cultivated or converted into pasture or grain-field, nor burned over intentionally. Of two kinds, first, that which has only been thinned from time to time, and secondly, that which has been cut clean many times over. A larger *copsewood.*

4th. Woodland which has been cleared one or more times, enough to raise a crop of grain on it, burned over and perhaps harrowed or even plowed, and suffered to grow up again in a year or two. Call this “interrupted woodland” or “tamed.”

5th. *New woods*, or which have sprung up *de novo* on land which has been cultivated or cleared long enough to kill all the roots in it. (The 3d, 4th, and 5th are a kind of copsewood.)

6th. Artificial woods, or those which have been set out or raised from the seed, artificially.

It happens that we have not begun to set out and plant till all the

primitive wood is gone. All the *new woods* (or 5th kind) whose beginning I can (now) remember are pine or birch (maple, etc., I have not noticed enough). I suspect that the greater part (?) of our woodland is the 3d kind, or primitive woodland, never burned over intentionally nor plowed, though much of it is the 4th kind. Probably almost all the large wood cut ten or fifteen years ago (and since) here was second growth, and most that we had left was cut then.

Of the new woods I remember the beginning of E. Hubbard's east of Brister Spring; Bear Garden, pitch pine; Wheeler's pigeon-place, pitch pine; also his blackberry-field, pitch pine and a few white; West Fair Haven Spring woods, pitch pine and white; E. Hubbard's Close Mound, pitch pine; Conantum-top, pitch pine; Mason's pasture (?), white pine; behind Baker's (?), pitch pine; my field at Walden, pitch pine; Kettle Hill, pitch pine; Moore's com-hill, pitch pine, cut say'59; behind Moore's house (??), pitch pine (was it new?); front of Sleepy Hollow, poplars, pitch pine; E. Wood's, front of Colburn place (??), pitch pine, not new wood; John Hosmer's, beyond house (?), pitch pine; Fair Haven Hill-side, white pine, just begun; Merriam's pasture, beyond Beck Stow's, just begun, pitch pine; old coast behind Heywood's, pitch pine; Conant's white pine crescent in front of W. Wheeler's; J. P. Brown pasture, white pine; at Hemlocks, pitch pine; northwest of Assabet stone bridge, pitch pine; Tarbell's pitch pines; Baker's, above beech, pitch pine; Henry Shattuck's, pitch pine; northwest of Farmer's, pitch pine; William Brown's, pitch pine; north of H. Shattuck's, pitch pine; white and pitch pine south of Rice's lot; pitch pine northwest of old Corner schoolhouse, pitch pine southeast of new Comer schoolhouse; large pitch pine hill behind Hagar's in Lincoln.

In several of these new woods — pitch pine and birches — can see the old corn-hills still.

The woods within my recollection have gradually withdrawn further from the village, and woody capes which jutted from the forest toward the town are now cut off and separated by cleared land behind. The Irish have also made irruptions into our woods in several places, and cleared land.

Edmund Hosmer tells me of a gray squirrel which he kept in his old (Everett) house; that he would go off to the woods every summer,

and in the winter come back and into his cage, where he whirled the wire cylinder. He would be surprised to see it take a whole and large ear of com and run out a broken window and up over the roof of the com-bam with it, and also up the elms.

We have a kitten a third grown which often carries its tail almost flat on its back like a squirrel.

Oct. 22. P. M. — To Walden Woods.

See in the yard many chip-birds, but methinks the chestnut crown is not so distinct as in the spring, — has a pale line in middle of it, — and many, maybe females or young, have no chestnut at all. I do not find them so described.

Are not maples inclined to die in a white pine wood? There was the one in Merriam's grove and the sickly ones in our grove in the yard.

I notice that the first shrubs and trees to spring up in the sand on railroad cuts in the woods are sweet-fern, birches, willows, and aspens, and pines, white and pitch; but all but the last two chiefly disappear in the thick wood that follows. The former are the pioneers. Such sandy places, the edges of meadows, and sprout-lands are almost the only localities of willows with us.

In the Deep Cut big wood (Stow's), pines and oaks, there are thousands of little white pines as well as many oaks. After a mixed wood like this you may have a mixed wood, but after dense pines, commonly oak chiefly, yet not always; for, to my surprise, I find that in the pretty dense pitch pine wood of Wheeler's blackberry-field, where there are only several white pines old enough to bear, and accordingly more than a thousand pitch pine seeds to one white pine one, yet there are countless white pines springing up under the pitch pines (as well as many oaks), and very few or scarcely any little pitch pines, and they sickly, or a thousand white pine seedlings to one pitch pine, — the same proportion reversed (in inverse proportion). It is the same in the pigeon-place lot east of this. So if you should cut these pitch pines you would have next a white pine wood with some oaks in it, the pines taking the lead. Indeed, these white pines bid fair to supplant the pitch pines at last, for they grow well and steadily. This reminds me that, though I often see little white pines under

pines and under oaks, I rarely if ever (unless I am mistaken) see many young pitch pines there. How is it? Do the pitch pines require more light and air?

You may conveniently tell the age of a pine, especially white pine, by cutting off the lowest branch that is still growing and counting its rings. Then estimate or count the rings of a pine growing near *in an opening*, of the same height as to that branch, and add the two sums together.

I found in the midst of this pitch pine wood a white oak some eight feet high and an inch and a half thick at ground, which had borne a great many — say sixty or a hundred — large oak-balls, and the ground beneath and near by was strewn with the fragments of fifty of them, which some creature, probably a squirrel, — for a bird could hardly have opened the hard nut-like kernel within, — had opened, no doubt for their living contents, and all the inside was gone. They looked like egg-shells strewn about. Opening one, I found within the hard kernel a humpbacked black fly nearly half an inch long, body and wings, with a very large or full shining black abdomen and two small black spots on each wing. The only two that I open have flies in them. Harris says that this fly is the *Cynips confluens*, and that the grub becomes a chrysalis in the autumn and not, commonly, a fly till spring, though he has known this gall-fly to come out in October. It must have been squirrels (or mice) that opened them, for birds could not break into the hard kernel.

Counted the rings of a white pine stump in Hubbard's owl wood by railroad. Ninety-four years. So this was probably second growth.

Swamps are, of course, least changed with us, — are nearest to their primitive state of any woodland. Commonly they have only been cut, not redeemed.

I see how meadows were primitively kept in the state of meadow by the aid of water, — and even fire and wind. For example, Heywood's meadow, though it may have been flowed a hundred years ago by the dam below, has been bare almost ever since in the midst of the wood. Trees have not grown over it. Maples, alders, birches, pitch and white pines are slow to spread into it. I have named them in the order of their slowness. The last are the foremost, — furthest into the meadow, — but they are sickly-looking. You

may say that it takes a geological change to make a wood-lot there.

Looked at stumps in J. Hosmer's lot, hillside south of first Heywood meadow, cut eleven (?) years ago. One white pine perfect in shape, forty-one rings; two large oak stumps, each one hundred and nine rings; and a large pitch pine, probably same age. These stumps are all well preserved. The whole outline and the rings can for most part be counted; but they are successive ridges, and the bark is ready to fall off, and they are more or less mossed over with cockscomb moss. The main part of this lot north of this hole is apparently oak sprouts next railroad.

I next look through Emerson's lot (half-burned and cut last spring). The last year's growth (and present) chiefly oak, with a little pine. The stumps are chiefly oak and pitch pine, with apparently some hemlock (?) and chestnut and a little white pine. (So it seems the pitch pine and hemlock did not survive the old cutting; the pitch pine did not come up under itself.) The pitch pine stumps are all decayed but the core and the bark, and hardly in any instance show a trace of the axe. They are low rounded mounds, yet the inmost parts are solid fat, and the bark edge is very plain. The oak stumps are very much better preserved, — have half or two thirds their form, and show that proportion of the cutting, — yet the sap-wood is often gone (with the bark), and as often the inmost heart. You can partially count rings even. Yet some of these are as decayed as the pines, and all flaky, and, turned up, look like stumps of old teeth with their prongs. They (the oaks) are all loose to the foot, yet you will see the white bark lying about a white oak stump when all the rest is about gone. Most of the old stumps, both oaks and pines, can easily be found now, but the rings of not one oak even can be wholly counted, or nearly. I could not be sure about the hemlock and chestnut, only that there was *some* of both. There was little moss on these stumps, either pine or oak; the latter too crumbly.

The southeast part of this lot, beyond the deep cove, is apparently an oak sprout-land and good part pine. I see what were sprouts from a scarlet oak stump eighteen or more inches in diameter and from white oaks one foot in diameter; yet in the other lot, though there were so many large oak stumps, I did not notice that trees had ever sprung from them. You find plenty of old oak stumps without their

trees in the woods, which (if nothing else) shows that there is an end to this mode of propagation.

I could tell a white pine here when it was for the most part a mere rotten mound, by the regularity crosswise of the long knots a foot from the ground in the top of the rotten core, representing the peculiarly regular branches of the little white pine and the best preserved as the hardest and pitchiest part.

It is apparent that fires often hasten the destruction of these stumps. They are very apt to be charred.

I dug in the hollow where an oak had been, and though it was so completely decayed that I found not a particle that looked like decayed wood or even bark and my spade met with no resistance, yet there were perfectly open channels raying out from this hollow with the pellicle of the root for a wall still, which for a hundred years the earth had learned to respect. Indeed, these stumps, both of this age and more recent, are the very metropolis of the squirrels and mice. Such are their runways.

Yet what is the character of our gratitude to these squirrels, these planters of forests? We regard them as vermin, and annually shoot and destroy them in great numbers, because — if we have any excuse — they sometimes devour a little of our Indian com, while, perhaps, they are planting the nobler oak-com (acorn) in its place. In various parts of the country an army of grown-up boys assembles for a squirrel hunt. They choose sides, and the side that kills the greatest number of thousands enjoys a supper at the expense of the other side, and the whole neighborhood rejoices. Would it [not] be far more civilized and humane, not to say godlike, to recognize once in the year by some significant symbolical ceremony the part which the squirrel plays, the great service it performs, in the economy of the universe?

The Walden side of Emerson's main wood-lot is oak (except a few pines in the oaks at the northwest or railroad end), and the oaks are chiefly sprouts, some thirty years old. Yet, not to mention the pitch pine stumps, there are a great many oak stumps without sprouts, and yet not larger stumps than the others. How does this happen? They are all of the same age, *i.e.* cut at the same time.

Sometimes, evidently, when you see oak stumps from which no trees have sprung in the midst of a pine or birch wood, it may be because the land was cleared and burned over and cultivated after the oaks were cut.

Oct. 23. Anthony Wright tells me that he cut a pitch pine on Damon's land between the Peter Haynes road and his old farm, about'41, in which he counted two hundred and seventeen rings, which was therefore older than Concord, and one of the primitive forest. He tells me of a noted large and so-called primitive wood, Inches Wood, between the Harvard turnpike and Stow, sometimes called Stow Woods, in Boxboro and Stow. Also speaks of the wood north of Wetherbee's mill near Annursnack and belonging to W., as large and old, if not cut.

Melvin thinks that a fox would not on an average weigh more than ten pounds. Says that he saw a flock of brant yesterday by day. (Rarely seen by day or even by night here.) He says that Hildreth collects moss (probably cladonia) from the rocks for kindling.

There is no such mortality in nobler seeds — seeds of living creatures, as eggs of birds, for instance — as I have noticed in white oak acorns. What if the eggs of any species of bird should be addled to this extent, so that it should be hard to find a sound one? In Egypt, where they hatch eggs artificially in an oven, they can afford to return one chicken for every two eggs they receive (and do so) and yet find it profitable. It is true one third of human infants are said to die before they are five years old, but even this is a far less mortality than that of the acorns. The oak is a scarce bearer, yet it lasts a good while.

More or less rain to-day and yesterday.

Oct. 24. P. M. — To Walden Woods.

See three little checkered adders lying in the sun by a stump on the sandy slope of the Deep Cut; yet sluggish. They are seven or eight inches long. The dark blotches or checkers are not so brown as in large ones. There is a transverse dark mark on the snout and a forked light space on the back part [of] the head. —

Examine again Emerson's pond lot, to learn its age by the stumps

cut last spring. I judge from them that they were some five (?) years cutting over the part next the water, for I count the rings of many stumps and they vary in number from twenty-four or five to thirty, though twenty-six, seven, and eight are commonest, as near as I can count. It is hard to distinguish the very first ring, and often one or more beside before you reach the circumference. But, these being almost all sprouts, I know that they were pretty large the first year. I repeatedly see beside the new tree (cut last spring) the now well-rotted stump from which it sprang. But I do not see the stump from which the last sprang. I should like to know how long they may continue to spring from the stump. Here are shoots of this year which have sprung vigorously from stumps cut in the spring, which had sprung in like manner some twenty-eight or thirty years ago from a stump which is still very plain by their sides. I see that some of these thirty-year trees are sprouts from a white oak stump twenty inches in diameter, — four from one in one case. Sometimes, when a white pine stump is all crumbling beside, there is a broad shingle-like flake left from the centre to the circumference, the old ridge of the stump, only a quarter of an inch thick, and this betrays the axe in a straight inclined surface.

The southeast part of Emerson's lot, next the pond, is yet more exclusively oak sprouts, or oak from oak, with fewer pine stumps. I examine an oak seedling in this. There are two very slender shoots rising ten or more inches above the ground, which, traced downward, conduct to a little stub, which I mistook for a very old root or part of a larger tree, but, digging it up, I found it to be a true seedling. This seedling had died down to the ground six years ago, and then these two slender shoots, such as you commonly see in oak woods, had started. The root was a regular seedling root (fusiform if *straightened),* at least seven eighths of an inch thick, while the largest shoot was only one eighth of an inch thick, though six years old and ten inches high.

The root was probably ten years old when the seedling first died down, and is now some sixteen years old. Yet, as I say, the oak is only ten inches high. This shows how it endures and gradually pines and dies. As you look down on it, it has two turns, — and three as you look from the side, so firmly is it rooted. Any one will be

surprised on digging up some of these lusty oaken carrots.

Look at stumps in Heywood's lot, southeast side pond, from Emerson's to the swimming-place. They are white pine, oak, pitch pine, etc. I count rings of three white pine (from sixty to seventy). There are a few quite large white pine stumps; on one, ninety rings. One oak gives one hundred and sixteen rings. A pitch pine some fifteen or sixteen inches over gives about one hundred and thirty-five. All these are very easy, if not easier than ever, to count. The pores of the pines are distinct ridges, and the pitch is worn off. (Many white and pitch pines elsewhere cut this year cannot be counted, they are so covered with pitch.) I remember this as a particularly dense and good-sized wood, mixed pine and oak.

Mrs. Heywood's pitch pines by the shore, judging from some cut two or three years ago, are about eighty-five years old. As far as I have noticed, the pitch pine is the slowest-growing tree (of pines and oaks) and gives the most rings in the smallest diameter. —

Then there are the countless downy seeds (thistle-like) of the goldenrods, so fine that we do not notice them in the air. They cover our clothes like dust. No wonder they spread over all fields and far into the woods.

I see those narrow pointed yellow buds now laid bare so thickly along the slender twigs of the *Salix discolor*, which is almost bare of leaves.

Oct 25. P. M. — To Eb. Hubbard's wood and Sleepy Hollow.

See a little reddish-brown snake (bright-red beneath) in the path; probably *Coluber amamus.*

Cut one of the largest of the lilacs at the Nutting wall, eighteen inches from the ground. It there measures one and five sixteenths inches and has twenty distinct rings from centre, then about twelve very fine, not thicker than previous three; equals thirty-two in all. It evidently dies down many times, and yet lives and sends up fresh shoots from the root.

Jarvis's hill lot is oak, pitch pine, and some white, and quite old. There are a great many little white pines springing up under it, but I see no pitch. Yet the large pitch are much more common than the large white. Nevertheless the small white have come on much faster and more densely in the hollows just outside the large wood on the

south.

E. Hubbard's mound of pitch pines contains not one seed-bearing white pine, yet there are under these pines many little white pines (whose seed must have blown some distance), but scarcely one pitch pine. The latter, however, are seen along its edge and in the larger openings. So at Moore's pitch pine promontory south of the Foley house, cut off lately by Walcott. Where the large pines had stood are no little ones, but in the open pasture northward quite a little grove, which had spread from them. Yet from a hasty look at the south end of the Sleepy Hollow Cut pitch pines, it appeared that small pitch pines were abundant under them. *Vide* again.

I have seen an abundance of white oak acorns this year, and, as far as I looked, swamp white oak acorns were pretty numerous. Red oak acorns are also pretty common. Black and scarlet oak I find also, but not very abundant. I have seen but few shrub oak, comparatively. Of the above, only the white oak have decayed so remarkably. The others are generally sound, or a few wormy. The red oak, as far as I notice, are remarkably sound. The scarlet oak I cut this afternoon are *some* of them decaying, but not like the white oak. Only the white have sprouted at all, as far as I perceive.

I find some scarlet oak acorns on the back side northeast end of Sleepy Hollow which are rounder than usual, considerably like a filbert out of the shell. They are indistinctly marked with meridional lines and thus betray a relation to the black and black shrub oak.

I see an immense quantity of asparagus seed in the mist of its dead branches, on Moore's great field of it, near Hawthorne's. There must be a great many bushels of the seed, and the sight suggested how extensively the birds must spread it. I saw, accordingly, on Hawthorne's hillside, a dozen rods north of it, many plants (with their own seed) two or three feet high. It is planted in the remotest swamps in the town.

Saw in E. Hubbard's clintonia swamp a large spider with a great golden-colored abdomen as big as a hazelnut, on the wet leaves. There was a figure in brown lines on the back, in the form of a pagoda with its stories successively smaller. The legs were pale or whitish, with dark or brown bars.

Find many of those pale-brown roughish fungi (it looks like

Loudon's plate of *Scleroderma*, perhaps *verrucosum*), two to three inches in diameter. Those which are ripe are so softened at the top as to admit the rain through the skin (as well as after it opens), and the interior is shaking like a jelly, and if you open it you see what looks like a yellowish gum or jelly amid the dark fuscous dust, but it is this water colored by the dust; yet when they are half full of water they emit dust nevertheless. They are in various states, from a firm, hard and dry unopen[ed] to a half-empty and flabby moist cup.

See the yellow butterfly still and great devil's-needles.

Dug up and brought home last night three English cherry trees from Heywood's Peak by Walden. There are a dozen or more there, and several are as handsome as any that you will find in a nursery. They remind me of some much larger which used to stand above the cliffs. This species too comes up in sprout-lands like the wild rum cherry. The amount of it is that such a tree, whose fruit is a favorite with birds, will spring up far and wide and wherever the earth is bared of trees, but since the forest overpowers and destroys them, and also cultivation, they are only found young in sprout-lands or grown up along fences. It looks as if this species preferred a hilltop. Whether the birds are more inclined to convey the seeds there or they find the light and exposure and the soil there which they prefer. These have each one great root, somewhat like a long straight horn, making a right angle with the stem and running far off one side close to the surface.

The thistles which I now see have their heads recurved, which at least saves their down from so great a soaking. But when I pull out the down, the seed is for the most part left in the receptacle (?), in regular order there, like the pricks in a thimble. A slightly convex surface. The seeds set like cartridges in a circular cartridge-box, in hollow cylinders which look like circles *crowded* into more or less of a diamond, pentagonal, or hexagonal form. The perfectly dry and bristly involucre which hedges them round, so repulsive externally, is very neat and attractive within, — as smooth and tender toward its charge as it is rough and prickly externally toward the foes that might do it injury. It is a hedge of imbricated thin and narrow leafets of a light-brown color, beautifully glossy like silk, a most fit receptacle for the delicate downy parachutes of the seed, a cradle lined with silk

or satin. The latter are kept dry under this unsuspected silky or satiny ceiling, whose old and weather-worn and rough outside alone we see, like a mossy roof, little suspecting the delicate and glossy lining. I know of no object more unsightly to a careless glance than an empty thistle-head, yet, if you examine it closely, it may remind you of the silk-lined cradle in which a prince was rocked. Thus that which seemed a mere brown and worn-out relic of the summer, sinking into the earth by the roadside, turns out to be a precious casket.

I notice in the pitch pine wood behind Moore's the common pinweed *(Lechea major* or the next) growing on the top of a pitch pine stump which is yet quite in shape and firm, one foot from the ground, with its roots firmly set in it, reaching an inch or two deep. Probably the seed was blown there, perhaps over the snow when it was on a level with the stump.

Oct. 26. P. M. — To Baker's old chestnut lot near Flint's Pond.

As I go through what was formerly the dense pitch pine lot on Thrush Alley (G. Hubbard's), I observe that the present growth is scrub oak, birch, oaks of various kinds, white pines, pitch pines, willows, and poplars. Apparently, the birch, oaks, and pitch pines are the oldest of the *trees.* From the number of small white pines in the neighboring pitch pine wood, I should have expected to find larger and also more white pines here. It will finally become a mixed wood of oak and white and pitch pine. There is much cladonia in the lot.

Observed yesterday that the row of white pines set along the fence on the west side of Sleepy Hollow had grown very fast, apparently from about the time they were set out, or the last three years. Several had made about seven feet within the three years. Do they not grow the fastest at just this age, or after they get to be about five feet high?

I see to-day sprouts from chestnut stumps which are two and a half feet in diameter *(i.e.* the stumps). One of these large stumps is cut quite low and hollowing, so as to hold water as well as leaves, and the leaves prevent the water from drying up. It is evident that in such a case the stump rots sooner than if high and rooflike.

I remember that there were a great many hickories with R. W. E.'s pitch pines when I lived there, but now there are but few comparatively, and they appear to have died down several times and

come up again from the root. I suppose it is mainly on account of frosts, though perhaps the fires have done part of it. Are not hickories most commonly found on hills? There are a few hickories in the open land which I once cultivated there, and these may have been planted there by birds or squirrels. It must be more than thirty-five years since there was wood there.

I find little white pines under the pitch pines (of E.), near the pond end, and few or no little pitch pines, but between here and the road about as many of one as of the other, but the old pines are much less dense that way, or not dense at all.

This is the season of the fall when the leaves are whirled through the air like flocks of birds, the season of birch spangles, when you see afar a few clear-yellow leaves left on the tops of the birches.

It was a mistake for Britton to treat that Fox Hollow lot as he did. I remember a large old pine and chestnut wood there some, twenty years ago. He came and cut it off and burned it over, and ever since it has been good for nothing. I mean that acre at the bottom of the hollow. It is now one of those frosty hollows so common in Walden Woods, where little grows, sheep's fescue grass, sweet-fern, hazelnut bushes, and oak scrubs whose dead tops are two or three feet high, while the still living shoots are not more than half as high at their base. They have lingered so long and died down annually. At length I see a few birches and pines creeping into it, which at this rate in the course of a dozen years more will *suggest* a forest there. Was this wise?

Examined the stumps in the Baker chestnut lot which was cut when I surveyed it in the spring of'52. They were when cut commonly from fifty to sixty years old (some older, some younger). The sprouts from them are from three to six inches thick, and may average — the largest — four inches, and eighteen feet high. The wood is perhaps near half oak sprouts, and these are one and a half to four inches thick, or average two and a half, and not so high as the chestnut. Some of the largest chestnut stumps have sent up no sprout, yet others equally large and very much more decayed have sent up sprouts. Can this be owing to the different time when they were cut? The cutting was after April. The largest sprouts I chanced to notice were from a small stump in low ground. Some hemlock stumps there

had a hundred rings.

Was overtaken by a sudden thunder-shower.

Cut a chestnut sprout two years old. It grew about five and a half feet the first year and three and a half the next, and was an inch in diameter. The tops of these sprouts, the last few inches, had died in the winter, so that a side bud continued them, and this made a slight curve in the sprout, thus: — There was on a cross-section, of course, but one ring of pores within the wood, just outside the large pith, the diameter of the first year's growth being just half an inch, radius a fourth of an inch. The thickness of the second year's growth was the same, or one fourth, but it was distinctly marked to the naked eye with about seven concentric lighter lines, which, I suppose, marked so many successive growths or waves of growth, or seasons in its year. These were not visible through a microscope of considerable power, but best to the naked eye. Probably you could tell a seedling chestnut from a vigorous sprout, however old or large, provided the heart were perfectly sound to the pith, by the much more rapid growth of the last the first half-dozen years of its existence.

There are scarcely any chestnuts this year near Britton's, but I find as many as usual east of Flint's Pond.

Oct. 27. Emerson planted his lot with acorns (chiefly white oak) pretty generally the other day. There were a few scarlet oak acorns planted there on the south side in spring of'59. There is on the Lee farm, west of hill, a small wood-lot of oak and hickory, the south end chiefly hickory.

I have come out this afternoon to get ten seedling oaks out of a purely oak wood, and as many out of a purely pine wood, and then compare them. I look for trees one foot or less in height, and convenient to dig up. I could not find one in the last-named wood. I then searched in the large Woo dis Park, the most oaken parts of it, wood some twenty-five or thirty years old, but I found only three. There were many shrub oaks and others three or four feet high, but no more of the kind described. Two of these three had singularly old large and irregular roots, mere gnarled oblong knobs, as it were, with slender shoots, having died down many times. After searching here more than half an hour I went into the new pitch and white pine lot

just southwest, toward the old Lee cellar, and there were thousands of the seedling oaks only a foot high and less, quite reddening the ground now in some places, and these had perfectly good roots, though not so large as those near the Comer Spring (next to Rice's wall).

Here is a new but quite open pitch and white pine wood (with birches on south) on cladonia ground. It is so open that many pitch pines are springing up.

E. Wood's dense pitch (and white) pine wood in front of Lee house site conforms to the rule of few or no little pitch pines within it, but many white pines (though not many far within), while the pitch pines are springing up with white pines on the edge and even further toward the road.

The white pine wood southeast of this and not far north of railroad, against Wood's open land, is a *new* wood.

As I am coming out of this, looking for seedling oaks, I see a jay, which was screaming at me, fly to a white oak eight or ten rods from the wood in the pasture and directly alight on the ground, pick up an acorn, and fly back into the woods with it. This was one, perhaps the most effectual, way in which this wood was stocked with the numerous little oaks which I saw under that dense white pine grove. Where will you look for a jay sooner than in a dense pine thicket? It is there they commonly live, and build.

By looking to see what oaks grow in the open land near by or along the edge where the wood is extensively pine, I can tell surely what kinds of oaks I shall find under the pines.

What if the oaks are far off? Think how quickly a jay can come and go, and how many times in a day!

Swamp white oak acorns are pretty thick on the ground by the bridge, and all sound that I try. They have no more bitterness than the white oak acorns.

I have now examined many dense pine woods, both pitch and white, and several oak woods, in order to see how many and what kind of oak seedlings there were springing up in them, and I do not hesitate to say that seedlings under one foot high are *very* much more abundant under the pines than under the oaks. They prevail and are countless under the pines, while they are hard to find under the oaks,

and what you do find have commonly — for whatever reason — very old and decayed roots and feeble shoots from them.

If you expect oaks to succeed a dense and purely oak wood you must depend almost entirely on sprouts, but they will succeed abundantly to pine where there is not an oak stump for them to sprout from. Notwithstanding that the acorns are produced only by oaks and not by pines, the fact is that there are comparatively few seedling oaks a foot or less in height under the oaks but thousands under the pines. I would not undertake to get a hundred oaks of this size suitable to transplant under a dense and pure oak wood, but I could easily get thousands from under pines. What are the reasons for this? First it is certain that, generally speaking, the soil under old oaks is more exhausted for oaks than under old pines. Second, seedling oaks under oaks would be less protected from frosts in the spring just after leafing, yet the sprouts prevail. Third, squirrels and jays resort to evergreens with their forage, and the oaks may not bear so many acorns but that the squirrels may carry off nearly all the sound ones. These are some of the reasons that occur to me.

To be more minute: —

I dug up three oak seedlings in the Woodis Park oaks, nine in the small open pitch and white pine and adjoining on southwest, and ten in the pitch and white pine of wood between road and railroad.

Woodis Park is oak and pine some twenty-five years old (the oak). I chose the oaken parts, but there was always a pine within a rod or two. I looked here till I was discouraged, finding only three in three quarters of an hour. One was like those in pine woods; the other two had singular gnarled and twisted great roots. You would think you had come upon a dead but buried stump. The largest, for instance, was perhaps a red oak nine inches high by one eighth inch at ground and apparently three years old, a slender shoot. The root broke off at about eighteen inches depth, where it was one eighth inch thick, and at three inches below the surface it was one and three eighths inches thick by one inch (being flattish). Two or three of the side or horizontal fibres had developed into stout roots which ran quite horizontally twenty inches and then broke off, and were apparently as long as the tap-root. One of these at three inches below surface was about half an inch thick and perfectly horizontal. It was thus fixed

very firmly in the ground. I counted the dead bases or stubs of shoots (beside the present one) and several two or three times as large as this, which had formerly died down, being now perfectly decayed. If there was but one at a time and they decayed successively after living each three years only, — and they probably lived twice as long, — then the root would be thirty years old. But supposing there were one and a half shoots at a time, it would then be some twenty years old. I think that this root may be as old as the large oaks around, or some twenty-five years, more or less.

My next nine oaks, from the pines southwest, may be put with the ten from the E. Wood pines (leaving out one which was twice the required height). Their average age, *i.e.* of the present shoot, was four years, and average height seven inches. (This includes white oak, shrub oak, black, and apparently red oak.) The roots averaged about ten inches long by three eighths thick at thickest part. Quite a number were shrub oak, which partly accounts for their slenderness. But the rest were not so thick as those near Rice's wall. Of all the above roots, or the whole twenty-two, none ran directly and perpendicularly downward, but they turned to one side (just under the acorn) and ran more or less horizontally or aslant one to five inches, or say three inches on an average. —

Of the last nineteen, more than half had died down once at least, so that they were really considerably older than at first appeared. There are, in all cases, at the surface of the ground or head of the root, a ring of dormant buds, ready to shoot up when an injury happens to the original shoot. One shoot at least had been cut off, and so killed, by a rabbit.

See a very large flock of crows.

To speak from recollection of pines and oaks, I should say that our woods were chiefly pine and oak mixed, but we have also (to speak of the large growth, or trees) pure pine and pure oak woods. How are these three produced? Are not the pure pine woods commonly new woods, *i.e.* pioneers? After oaks have once got established, it must be hard to get them out without clearing the land. A pure oak wood may be obtained by cutting off at once and clean a pure and dense pine wood, and again sometimes by cutting the same oak wood. But pines are continually stealing into oaks, and oaks into

pines, where respectively they are not too dense, as where they are burned or otherwise thinned, and so mixed woods may arise.

Oct. 28. In a pine wood are the little oak seedlings which I have described, also, in the more open parts, little oaks three to six feet high, but unnoticed, and perhaps some other hardwood trees. The pines are cut, and the oaks, etc., soon fill the space, for there is nothing else ready to grow there.

Are not the most exclusively pine woods new woods, *i.e.*, those which have recently sprung up in open land, where oaks do not begin a forest? It may be that where evergreens most prevail in *our* woods, there at the date of their springing up the earth was most bare.

P. M. — To Lincoln.

Do I not see tree sparrows?

I see little larches two to six feet high in the meadow on the north side the Turnpike, six to twelve rods from Everett's seed-bearing ones. The seed was evidently blown from these.

There is quite a dense birch wood in the field north of the Cut on the Turnpike hill.

See much cat-tail whose down has recently burst and shows white on the south side of the heads. The *Polygonum aviculare* is in bloom as freshly and abundantly in some places as ever I saw it. Those great tufts of sedge in the meadows are quite brown and withered. I suppose they have been so since the beginning of the month.

Smith's black walnuts are about half of them fallen.

Measure the chestnut stump near the brook northeast of the old Brooks Tavern on Asa White's land. Its height from the ground will average but twenty inches. Measured one way, its diameter is six feet nine inches, and at right angles with this, eight feet five inches. Its average diameter seven feet seven inches. You might add three to four feet more for the whole stump above ground. Beginning at the outside, I count one hundred and two rings distinctly and am then fifteen inches from the apparent centre of the tree, for the middle is mostly rotted and gone. Measuring back fifteen inches and counting the rings, I get thirty-nine, which, added to one hundred and two, equals one hundred and forty-one for the probable age of the tree. This tree had grown very fast till the last fifty years of its existence,

but since comparatively slowly. It had grown nine inches in the last forty-nine years, or one seventh [sic] of an inch in a year, but fifteen inches in the previous forty, or three eighths of an inch in a year. There may possibly have been two shoots or trees grown together, yet I think not. I measured this June 1st, 1852, and it had then been cut, as I remember, but a short time, — a winter, perhaps two winters, before. This would carry its origin back to about 1710. Probably chestnuts did not grow so large in the primitive woods, and this was a forest tree, which, as it stood near the edge of the meadow, was left standing. Another much smaller was cut apparently at the same time near by. Having light and air and room, it grew larger than it would have done if its neighbors had not been cut.

I also measured the stumps of the two great chestnuts which were cut on Weston's land south of the pond some five or six years ago.

They are cut low, some eight or nine inches above ground. The southeasternmost one measures four feet in diameter and has about eighty rings only (I estimate the first five or six, the heart or core being gone). The other is four and five twelfths feet in diameter and has seventy-three rings only. Or, putting both together, you have an average growth of about a third of an inch in a year. These were as large as any I know standing hereabouts except the Strawberry Hill one, and yet it seems they [were] only some eighty years old. Another, half a mile east of there, cut perhaps some dozen years ago, was twenty-three inches in diameter and had sixty-three rings, and I saw one which had grown faster than any of the above. Yet another stump near the last on the high woodland near the pond was but just two feet in diameter and had one hundred and one rings distinct to the very core, and so fine there I think it was a seedling. From this sprouts had grown some fifteen years ago and [had been] cut last winter on account of a fire, and fresh shoots several feet high had put out from the last. The one that had grown slowly was soundest at the core. None of the three largest stumps described had sprouts from them. Is not the very rapid growth and the hollow or rotten core one sign of a sprout? We make a great noise going through the fallen leaves in the woods and wood-paths now, so that we cannot hear other sounds, as of birds or other people. It reminds me of the tumult of the waves dashing against each other or your boat. This is the dash

we hear as we sail the woods.

Cut a limb of a cedar (near the Irishman's shanty-site at Flint's Pond) some two inches thick and three and a half feet from the ground. It had about forty-one rings. Adding ten, you have say fifty years for the age of the tree. It was one foot in diameter at one foot above ground and twenty or more feet high, standing in the young wood. A little cedar five feet high near it had some fifteen to seventeen rings. See a great many chestnut sprouts full six feet high and more and an inch or more thick the first year.

Aaron's-rod has minute chaffy seeds, now ripe, which by their very lightness could be blown along the highways.

Oct. 29. P. M. — To Eb. Hubbard's old black birch hill.

Henry Shattuck's is a *new* pitch pine wood, say thirty years old. The western, or greater, part contains not a single seed-bearing white pine. It is a remarkable proof of my theory, for it contains thousands of little white pines but scarcely one little pitch pine. It is also well stocked with minute oak seedlings. It is a dense wood, say a dozen rods wide by three or four times as long, running east and west, with an oak wood on the north, from which the squirrels brought the acorns. A strip of nearly the same width of the pitch pine was cut apparently within a year on the south (a part of the above), and has just been harrowed and sown with rye, and still it is all dotted over with the little oak seedlings between the [stumps], which are perhaps unnoticed by Shattuck, but if he would keep his plow and fire out he would still have a pretty green patch there by next fall. A thousand little red flags (changed oak leaves) already wave over the green rye amid the stumps. The farmer stumbles over these in his walk, and sweats while he endeavors to clear the land of them, and yet wonders how oaks ever succeed to pines, as if he did not consider what *these* are. Where these pines are dense they are slender and tall. On the edge or in open land they are more stout and spreading.

Again, as day before yesterday, sitting on the edge of a pine wood, I see a jay fly to a white oak half a dozen rods off in the pasture, and, gathering an acorn from the ground, hammer away at it under its foot on a limb of the oak, with an awkward and rapid seesaw or teetering motion, it has to lift its head so high to acquire

the requisite momentum. The jays scold about almost every white oak tree, since we hinder their coming to it.

At some of the white oaks visited on the 11th, where the acorns were so thick on the ground and trees, I now find them perhaps nearly half picked up, yet perhaps little more than two thirds spoiled. The good appear to be all sprouted now. There are certainly many more sound ones here than at Beck Stow's and Hubbard's Grove, and it looks as if the injury had been done by frost, but perhaps some of it was done by the very heavy rains of September alone.

Yesterday and to-day I have walked rapidly through extensive chestnut woods without seeing what I thought was a seedling chestnut, yet I can soon find them in our Concord pines a quarter or half a mile from the chestnut woods. Several have expressed their surprise to me that they cannot find a seedling chestnut to transplant. I think that [it] is with them precisely as with the oaks; not only a seedling is more difficult to distinguish in a chestnut wood, but it is really far more rare there than in the adjacent pine, mixed, and oak woods. After considerable experience in searching for these and seedling oaks, I have learned to neglect the chestnut and oak woods and go only to the neighboring woods of a different species for them. Only that course will pay.

On the side of E. Hubbard's hill I see an old chestnut stump some two feet in diameter and nearly two feet high, and its outside and form well kept, yet all the inside gone; and from this shot up four sprouts in a square around it, which were cut down seven or eight years ago. Their rings number forty-six, and they are quite sound, so that the old stump was cut some fifty-three years ago. This is the oldest stump of whose age I am certain. Hence I have no doubt that there are many stumps left in this town which were cut in the last century. I am surprised to find on this hill (cut some seven or eight years ago) many remarkably old stumps wonderfully preserved, especially on the north side the hill, — walnuts, white oak and other oaks, and black birch. One white oak is eighteen and a half inches in diameter and has one hundred and forty-three rings. This is very one-sided in its growth, the centre being just four inches from the north side, or thirty-six rings to an inch. Of course I counted the other side. Another, close by, gave one hundred and forty-one rings, another

white oak fifteen and a half inches in diameter had one hundred and fifty-five rings. It has so smooth (sawed off) and solid, almost a polished or marble-like, surface that I could not at first tell what kind of wood it was. Another white oak the same as last in rings, *i.e.* one hundred and fifty-five, twenty-four inches [in] diameter. All these were sound to the very core, so that I could see the first circles, and I suspect that they were seedlings.

The smaller, but oldest ones had grown very slowly at first, and yet more slowly at last, but after some sixty-five years they had then grown much faster for about fifteen years, and then grew slower and slower to the last. The rings were exceedingly close together near the outside, yet not proportionably difficult to count. For aught that appeared, they might have continued to grow a century longer. The stumps are far apart, so that this formed an open grove, and that probably made the wood sounder and more durable. On the south slope many white pines had been cut about forty-six years ago, or when the chestnut was, amid the oaks. I suppose that these were seedlings, and perhaps the hill was cleared soon after the settlement of the town, and after a while pines sprang up in the open land, and seedling oaks under the pines, and, the latter being cut near the end of the seventeenth century, those oaks sprang up, with or without pines, but all but these were cut down when they were about sixty years old.

If these are seedlings, then seedlings make much the best timber. I should say that the pasture oaks *generally* must be seedlings on account of their age, being part of the primitive wood.

I suspect that sprouts, like the chestnut, for example, may grow very rapidly, and make large trees in comparatively few years, but they will be decaying [?] as fast at the core as they are growing at the circumference. The stumps of chestnuts, especially sprouts, are very shaky. It is with men as with trees; you must grow slowly to last long. The oldest of these oaks began their existence about 1697.

I doubt if there were any as old trees in our primitive wood as stood in this town fifty years ago. The healthiest of the primitive wood, having at length more room, light, and air, probably grew larger than its ancestors.

Some of the black birch stumps gave about One hundred rings.

The pasture oak which Sted Buttrick cut some seven or eight years ago, northeast of this, was, as near as I could tell, — one third was calculation, — some one hundred years old only, though larger than any of these.

The fine chips which are left on the centre of a large stump preserve it moist there, and rapidly hasten its decay.

The site of the last-named pasture oak was easily discovered, by a very large open grass-sward where no sweet-fern, lambkill, huckleberry, and brakes grew, as they did almost everywhere else. This may be because of the cattle assembling under the oak, and so killing the bushes and at the same time manuring the ground for grass.

There is more chestnut in the northern part of the town than I was aware of. The first large wood north of Ponkawtasset is oak and chestnut. East of my house.

Oct. 30. P. M. — To Tarbell pitch pines, etc.

Quite a sultry, cloudy afternoon, — hot walking in woods and lowland where there is no air.

J. Hosmer cut off the northernmost part of his pitch pine between roads, *i.e.* next the factory road, last winter. Here was a remarkable example of little white pines under pitch pines with scarcely any little pitch pines. He has accordingly cut off all the pitch pines — and they are some thirty-five years old — and left the white pines, now on an average five to eight feet high and forming already a pretty dense wood (E. Wood is doing the same thing now opposite the Colburn place), a valuable and salable woodland, while a great many little oaks, birches, black cherries, etc., are springing up in their midst; so that it may finally be a mixed wood, if the pines do not overshadow it too quickly. Yet there were only three or four seed-bearing white pines in the grove, — or as big as the pitch pines were. The white pines left are as thick as the pitch pines were under which they sprang up; quite dense enough to grow. I am more and more struck by the commonness of this phenomenon of seedling white pines under older pitch pines and the rareness with which pitch pines spring up under older pitch pines. Yet, going to the open land on east side of the wood, I find that it is mainly the little pitch pines that are

spreading into the field there and extending the wood, some a dozen rods from its edge in the grass; and their relative proportion is reversed, *i e* there are fifty to one hundred little pitch pines here to one white pine. He had also cut off some, a few, birches, and their sprouts had come up, as well as seedlings.

The oak seedlings between the young pitch pines were manifestly springing up with new vigor, though many may finally be choked by the white pines. Omitting such as were of the character of sprouts, though not cut *(i.e.,* had shot up from old roots to three feet high merely on account of the influx of light and air), I measured this year's growth of the first four which were under a foot high, here where the pitch pines had been cut, and found it to average five and a half inches. The growth of [the] first four in the adjacent pitch pine wood not cut averaged seven and a half. As may be seen, this was not nearly fair enough to the partially cleared part, for I should have included the higher shoots.

The higher parts of this lot are cladonia land. I measured the diameter of several of the pitch pine stumps and counted the rings, with this result: —

Diameter (exclusive of bark)	— Rings 7 1/2 inches
— 29	
7 1/2	— 33
6 —	40
6 1/2 —	33
6 —	40
— 7 —	30
7)48 3/4 —	7)240
7 —	34

That is, they averaged seven inches in diameter (or eight with bark) and were thirty-four years old. Had grown (68)7.0(.10) about one tenth of an inch a year from the centre.

White pines will find their way up between pitch pines if they are not very large and exceedingly dense, but pitch pines will not grow up under pitch pines.

I see nowadays in the pitch pine woods countless white toadstools

which have recently been devoured and broken in pieces and left on the ground and occasionally on the branches or forks of trees, no doubt by the squirrels. They appear to make a considerable part of their food at this season.

See a small copper butterfly.

In what I have called the Loring lot, next west of Hosmer's pitch pine on the back road, though far the greater part numerically is still shrub oak, there is now a considerable growth of young oaks rising above the shrub oaks. These oaks, as far as I observe, are almost, if not quite, all sprouts from small stumps which were unnoticed at first, and there are also a very few seedling white and other oaks no higher than the shrub oaks; *i.e.,* though you may think his oak sprout-land all shrub oak, it probably is not, as will appear when the other kinds rise above the shrubs. Probably the shrub oaks can bear exposure when young better than the nobler oaks, and if the squirrels plant other acorns under them, — which may be doubted, — then it will turn out that they serve as nurses to the others.

I measure amid these young oaks a white pine stump.

Diameter (exclusive of bark) — inches	Rings 13 1/2 — 85
Another 28 —	52
24 —	46
3)65 1/2 —	133
22 —	"

Average growth one half inch a year at the level at which stumps are sawed.

This lot is now as exclusively oak as it was pines before. You must search to find a few little white pines scattered in it. But why, if there are so many little white pines under the adjacent pitch pines, which are left when the pitch pines are cut, were there no more to be left under the pitch pine part (along the road) of this lot? I think of no reason, unless the pitch pines on this lot were too old and dense. Again, I notice that Hosmer's pitch pines have not spread west at all into this clearing, but only east into the grass ground.

Into this Loring lot years ago the squirrels brought acorns, and hence the oaks which now cover it. Also the wind blew its own seeds

into an open strip across the road, and a dense pitch and white pine wood sprang up there. Already, the Loring lot having been cut seven or eight years, the squirrels are carrying the shrub oak acorns from it into that pine strip, and the pine seed from the most forward of that strip is blowing back into the shrub oak land.

Another advantage the shrub oak has over other oaks [is] that it gets to fruit so quickly — certainly in three or four years after the pines are cut — and then bears so profusely.

See a great flock of blackbirds, probably grackles.

Examine Tarbell's pitch pine grove. This is all of one age and very dense. The largest trees on the north side, as estimated by sawing a branch, are twenty-eight to thirty years old. Tarbell says this grove came up in 1826 on land which had been burnt over, — in fact open land. It is so dense that, though it has been thoroughly trimmed up and is only a dozen or fifteen rods wide, you cannot see through it in some directions.

About as dense a pitch pine grove as I know. It is twenty rods from the nearest wood on one side and five times as far from any other, and yet it is well planted with seedling oaks. Looking hastily to where they are most numerous, I counted ten within fifteen square feet, but only five pitch pines within any equal area; *i.e.* there were twice as many oaks as large pines there.

This wood also proves my theory of little white pines in large pitch pines. There is not a seed-bearing white pine, or one six feet high, in the wood, nor less than twenty rods from it, and yet there is a thriving little white pine some two feet high at every rod or two within this wood, and though not *very* numerous, they are conspicuously more numerous and thriving than the pitch pines, yet on the edge the little pitch pines were as much more numerous than the white.

Having seen this fall a great many pitch pine twigs which had been cut off and dropped under the trees by squirrels, I tried the other night while in bed to account for it. I began by referring it to their necessities, and, remembering my own experience, I said then it was done either for food, shelter, clothing, or fuel, but throwing out the last two, which they do not use, it was either for food or shelter. But I never see these twigs used in their nests. Hence I presume it was for

food, and as all that I know them to eat on the pitch pine is its seeds, my swift conclusion was that they cut off these twigs in order to come at the cones and also to make them more portable. I am to-day convinced of this, — for I have been looking after it for a day or two. As usual, the ground under this grove is quite strewn with the twigs, but here is one eleven inches long and nearly half an inch thick cut off close below two closed cones, one cone-stem also being partly cut. Also, three or four rods west from this grove, in open land, I see three twigs which have been dropped close together. One is just two feet long and cut off where half an inch thick and more than one foot below three cones (two on one branch and one on another), and the cones are left. Another is still larger, and the other smaller, but their cones are gone. The greater part of the twigs have been cut off above the cones, — mere plumes.

So even the squirrels carry and spread the pine seed far over the fields. I suspect that they bury these cones like nuts. I have seen the cones collected ready to be carried off, where they did not live. It is remarkable to consider how rudely they strip and spoil the trees. It is remarkable how they carried some of these great twigs with their burden of cones.

The fact that the lower limbs of pines growing within a wood always die shows how much they depend on light and air. They are only a green spiring top.

Measure one of Tarbell's black birch stumps: 23 inches [in] diameter (exclusive of bark), 60 rings. A log from a different one: 21 inches, 71 (?) rings. A white oak stump near by: 15 inches, 90 rings (on brow of bank). A black (?) oak stump: 32 inches [in] diameter, 84 rings.

Examine a dozen white pines in a field, and conclude from these that they begin to grow faster the fifth or sixth year, counting by the whorls of branches.

J. Hosmer cut off his little pitch pine grove west of Clamshell, and left the single large old pine which seeded it to do him the same service again; and here now, where for the second time (since) he has sown winter-rye, I see the ineffectual oak sprouts uplifting a few colored leaves still and blushing for him.

The squirrels have no notion of starving in a hard winter, and

therefore they are unceasingly employed in the fall in foraging. Every thick wood, especially evergreens, is their storehouse against necessity, and they pack it as thickly as they can with nuts and seeds of all kinds. The squirrel which you see at this season running so glibly along the fence with his tail waving over his head, with frequent pauses on a post or stone, which you watch, perhaps, for twenty or thirty rods, has probably a nut or two in his mouth which he is conveying to yonder thicket.

Evidently a great deal depends on the locality and other conditions of a stump to affect its durability. The oak stump at Clamshell cut some twenty years since barely shows a trace of the axe, while the chestnut stump on Hubbard's hill, cut more than fifty years ago, is much better preserved.

Oct. 31. P. M. — To Wheeler's artificial pine wood.

Exclusive and dense white pine woods are not nearly so common in this town as the same kind of pitch pine woods. They are more likely to have oaks in them. There is a dense birch wood in Witherell Vale.

Among old stumps I have not named fhose white pine ones used as fences with their roots. I think that some of these must be older than any left in the ground. I remember some on the Comer road, which apparently have not changed for more than thirty years, and are said to be ninety years old. Lying thus high and dry, they are almost indestructible, and I can still easily count the rings of many of these. I count one hundred and twenty-six rings on one this afternoon, and who knows but it is a hundred years since it was cut? They decay much faster left upright in the ground than lying on their sides on the surface, supposing it open land in both cases.

Perhaps these great pine roots which grew in a swamp were provided with some peculiar quality by which to resist the influence of moisture and so endure the changes of the weather.

Yes, these dense and stretching oak forests, whose withered leaves now redden and rustle on the hills for many a New England mile, were all planted by the labor of animals. For after some weeks of close scrutiny I cannot avoid the conclusion that our modem oak woods sooner or later spring up from an acorn, not where it has

fallen from its tree, for that is the exception, but where it has been dropped or placed by an animal. Consider what a vast work these forest-planters are doing!

I do not state the facts exactly in the order in which they were observed, but select out of very numerous observations extended over a series of years the most important ones, and describe them in their natural order.

So far as our noblest hardwood forests are concerned, the animals, especially squirrels and jays, are our greatest and almost only benefactors. It is to them that we owe this gift. It is not in vain that the squirrels live in or about every forest tree, or hollow log, and every wall and heap of stones.

Looked at the white pine grove set out by the father of Francis Wheeler some twenty-two or three years ago southwest of his house. They are in three or four irregular rows some eighteen rods long by four wide, — some one hundred trees, covering half an acre of sandy hillside. Probably not so many trees as Emerson's, but making more show. They are trimmed up. There are neither small white nor pitch pines beneath them, but I see that the seeds of the pitch pines which grow below them have been blown *through* this grove and come up thickly along its outer edge.

Look at a pure strip of old white pine wood on the hillside west of this. There are no little white pines coming up under them, but plenty of them in the open hollows around and under its edge. This I commonly notice. White pines, it is true, may come up in the more open parts of any wood, whether a pine or oak or mixed wood, in more open places caused by cutting, for instance; but the pitch pine requires much more of an opening.

I see by the road east of White Pond a large white pine wood with some oaks in it. There are no little white pines where it is dense, but one rod off across the road eastward there is a dense row concealing the lower rail (many quite under it) for many rods, — the only place where they are allowed to grow there.

Many a man's field has a dense border of pitch pines which strayed into it when the adjacent woods were of that species, though they are now hardwood.

Consider what a demand for arrowheads there must be, that the

surface of the earth should be thus sprinkled with them, — the arrowhead and all the disposition it implies toward both man and brute. There they lie, pointed still, making part of the sands of almost every field.

I cut two shrub oaks (in different places) which have respectively ten and twenty rings. The last was a large and old one in a hedge.

I first noticed the pitch pine twigs cut off by squirrels the 16th. Think how busy they were about that time in every pitch pine grove all over the State, cutting off the twigs and collecting the cones! While the farmer is digging his potatoes and gathering his com he little thinks of this harvest of pine cones which the squirrel is gathering in the neighboring woods still more sedulously than himself.

I saw on the 28th, close by the stump of the easternmost big chestnut at Flint's Pond, the *Phallus impudicus.*

I hear the sound of the flail in M. Miles's bam, and gradually draw near to it from the woods, thinking many things. I find that the thresher is a Haynes of Sudbury, and he complains of the hard work and a lame back. Indeed, he cannot stand up straight. So all is not gold that glitters. This sound is not so musical after I have withdrawn. It was as well to have heard this music afar off. He complains also that the weather is not fit for his work, — that it is so muggy that he cannot dry the sheaves, and the grain will not fly out when struck. The floor, too, is uneven, and he pointed out one board more prominent on which he had broken two or three swingles.

He thought that there were larger trees in Sudbury, on what was John Hunt's land, now occupied by Thompson, near the old store, than in Inches Woods. Said there was a tree by the roadside on the farm of the late William Read in West Acton which nobody thereabouts knew the name of, but he had been South, and knew it to be a China-berry tree planted by a robin, for they are very fond of its fruit.

NOVEMBER, 1860

Nov. 1. 2 p. M. — To Tommy Wheeler wood-lot.

A perfect Indian-summer day, and wonderfully warm. 72 + at 1 P. M. and probably warmer at two.

The butterflies are out again, — probably some new broods. I see the common yellow and two *Vanessa Antiopa*, and yellow-winged grasshoppers with blackish edges.

A striped snake basks in the sun amid dry leaves. Very much gossamer on the withered grass is shimmering in the fields, and flocks of it are sailing in the air.

Measure some pine stumps on Tommy Wheeler's land, about that now frosty hollow, cut as I judge from sprouts four years ago.

First the pitch pine: —

1	is	18½	inches [in]	diameter	and has 145 (?)	rings
2		18	"	"	" 137	"
3		20	"	"	" 128	"
4		21	"	"	" 148	"
5		21	"	"	" 140	"
6		22¾	"	"	" 160 + 4 (Counted the last 64 at home)	
7		20	"	"	" 167 or 168 (?)	
7	)	141¼			7)1026+4	

Average 20 — Average 147+1, or 148

That is, they all together averaged in growth from first to last about a fifteenth of an inch in a year. But they grew very slowly indeed for the last fifty or more years. They did nearly half (?) their growing in the first third of their existence. For example, (I measure now on that side where I counted, *i.e.* the broadest, so that my figures are not absolutely but relatively true), —

No. 2	grew	5	inches	in	first	32	years				
5	"	$4\frac{1}{2}$	"		"	50	and	$3\frac{3}{8}$	in	second	50
6	"	$7\frac{1}{4}$	"		"	50	"	$2\frac{1}{2}$	"	"	
7	"	$4\frac{1}{2}$	"		"	50	"	$2\frac{3}{4}$	"	"	
		$21\frac{1}{4}$				182		$3)8\frac{1}{2}$			150

A little more than $\frac{1}{9}$ inch a year. Average $\frac{1}{18}$ inch.

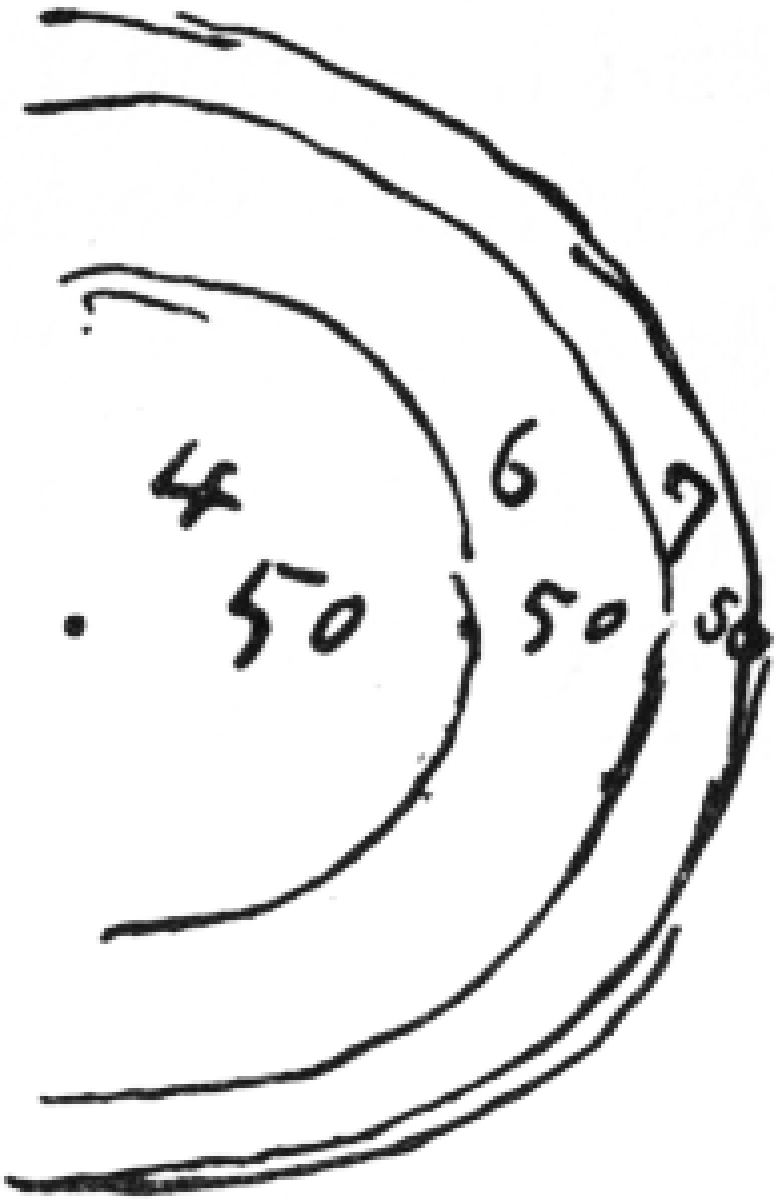
The 7th grew only something less than three inches (which was all of the sap) in the last sixty-seven or eight years, or one twenty-second of an inch a year only. Indeed, in one case, the 6th, the outside had grown only one and one fourth inches in sixty-four years, or about one fiftieth of an inch in a year, just one inch in the last fifty-three years, or one fifty-third of an inch a year, — equal to the finest scales. I should say that they averaged but one thirty-sixth part of an inch the third or last fifty years.

1st 50	2d 50	3d 50
$\frac{1}{9}$ inch	$\frac{1}{18}$	$\frac{1}{36}$

That is, their rate of growth the three successive periods of fifty years diminishes in geometrical progression, the quotient being two.

The seven pitch pine stumps measured on the 30th averaged thirty-four years and had grown a tenth of an inch in a year. This is a perfect and remarkable agreement, and quite unlooked for. They were a mile apart, and I was not reminded of those previous measurements until I chanced to compare them afterward.

I may therefore take this to be [the] average growth of a pitch pine for the first fifty years. But I have not yet taken into the account the fact that, though the thickness of the layer is less, its superficies, or extent, is greater, as the diameter of the tree increases. Let us compare the three portions of wood.



If the diameter at the end of the first fifty years is four, the second fifty, six, and the third fifty, seven, then the amount of wood added each term will be (to omit very minute fractions) twelve and a half, fifteen and a half, and ten respectively. So that, though in the second

fifty the rings are twice as near together, yet considerably more wood is produced than in the first, but in the third fifty the tree is evidently enfeebled, and it probably is not profitable (so far as bulk is concerned) to let it grow any more.

The very oldest trees whose rings I have counted *(i.e.* these pitch pines and the oaks on Eb. Hubbard's hill) grew thus slowly at last, which I think indicates that a tree has a definite age after which it grows more languidly or feebly, and thus gradually ceases to grow at all, — dies and decays. I should say that these pitch pines flourished till they were about a hundred years old, and that they then began to grow with less vigor, though their old age (in this sense) might be a third or more of their whole life. Two or three more were dead or nearly dead when sawed four years ago, and I saw the rotted stumps of some others.

There were twenty or thirty of the pitch pines, — though I measured the largest of them, — and they were all but one or two perfectly sound to the core, and the inmost rings were the plainest. The sap was only from one and three quarters to three inches thick, and was the most decayed. (It was one and three quarters inches thick in No. 6.) The bark was generally from two to two and three quarters inches thick. This would have added four and three quarters to the average diameter of the trees, or made it twenty-four and three quarters. That is, where sawed off, which was rather low, or say eight to ten inches above ground.

There were also as many or more large white pines mixed with them. One of *24* inches diameter had 78 rings; second, 31 inches, 96 rings. Also one hemlock *21* inches, 81 rings. This had grown with remarkable equality throughout and was very easy to count. An oak (probably black), 14 inches, 94 rings.

About a hundred and fifty years ago, then, there came up in and around this hollow in the woods a grove of pitch pines. Perhaps some came up twenty or thirty years earlier, which have now died and decayed. When the first had grown for about sixty years, many white pines sprang up amid and under them, as we see happen to-day.

I occasionally (or frequently) see white pines springing up in a sprout-land when other trees have failed to fill it up for some years.

No. 6, having 164 rings and having been cut four years, sprang up

at least one hundred and sixty-eight years ago, or about the year 1692, or fifty-seven years after the settlement, 1635.

In another case I counted fifteen rings (with a microscope) within the last quarter of an inch, which was at the rate of one sixtieth of an inch in a year, — equal, I think, to the finest scales ordinarily used.

WHITE PINE WOODS

The small dense grove of Clark's (?), north of Boze's [sic] Meadow.

Near road, southwest of Tarbell's.

Abel Hosmer's, north and northwest of house.

Mason's pasture (south of this, younger white pine with cedars intermixed). —

The Holden Swamp woods as seen from north (except southwest part).

Northeast part of Baker Farm, quite young.

Behind Martial Miles's, southwest of cold pond-hole.

East side Second Division Brook, very extensive.

I have seen that a great many pitch pine cones have been cut off this fall, but it chances that I have not seen where they were eaten or stripped. I conclude, therefore, that they must be collected into some hole in a tree or in the earth, — there can hardly be a doubt of this, — and possibly some are buried as nuts are. What stores of them there must be collected in some places now!

PITCH PINE WOODS

Young, north of Loring's Pond.

Just beyond Concord bound on right hand, this side Wetherbee's, extensive and large. (Tarbell says that when he came to town in'26 these were just about as large as his now. Sixty to seventy years old, then.)

Heywood's small grove southeast of Peter's.

Large, southeast Copan.

Beyond Nathan Barrett's, both sides road, large.
Hill behind Abner Buttrick's.
Lane south of second Garfield house.
Southwest of Brooks's Pigeon-Place.
North G. M. Barrett's, by College Road.
Northeast of Sam Barrett's mill.
Northwest of Sam Barrett's mill, west of pond.

Nov. 2. P. M. — To D. Wetherbee's old oak lot. As several days past, it has been cloudy and misty in the morning and fairer and warmer, if not Indian summer, in the afternoon; yet the mist lingers in drops on the cobwebs and grass until night.

HARDWOOD LOTS

Wetherbee's.
Blood's.
G. M. Barrett's hillside, behind house.
Walnuts (young) of Smith's Hill, Lincoln.
" " " Annursnack, above orchard.
" " Fair Haven Hill slope.
Also north side of path from Springs to bars.
" " site of Britton's shanty.
South side of Bear Hill, Lincoln.

Saw off a very large and old-looking shrub oak on a pitch pine plain, twelve or more feet in height and three and one half inches in diameter (the wood) at one foot from the ground, where it has just twenty-seven rings. The first fourteen rings occupied one and a quarter inches from the centre, where the whole radius was but one and three quarters. It evidently began to grow more slowly when fifteen years old.

Wetherbee's oak lot may contain four or five acres. The trees are white, red, scarlet, and swamp white oaks, maple, white pine, and ash. They are unusually large and old. Indeed, I doubt if there is another hereabouts of oaks as large. It is said that Wetherbee left them for the sake of mast for pigeons.

I measure a white oak at three feet from the ground, —— eight feet four and one half inches in circumference. Another white oak at same height is six and three quarters in circumference; a red oak is six feet two inches in circumference; another, eight and a half; another, seven and four twelfths; and the scarlet oaks are of the same character, though the above were the largest, or among the largest. These oaks, though they form a wood, are some of them about as spreading as a pasture oak *(i.e.* one or two white ones near the outside), but generally they rise much higher before they branch. The white oaks have peculiarly smooth *tawny-white* boles for eight or ten feet up, the coarser flakes of the bark having scaled off so far. The red oaks, as well as scarlet, have a coarser and rougher, more deeply furrowed bark, and the trees rise higher before branching (commonly). One not very large had no limb for thirty feet or more, standing aslant. In the lowest part, on the brook, they were swamp white oaks and maples. The maples, being old, had a rough, dark, scaly bark. There were a few white pines straggling into this wood (only one large one).

Many of the oaks have been cut, and I counted about one hundred and ten rings on one small white oak, from which I should infer that the trees would average much more than that, perhaps between a hundred and fifty and two hundred years. Such a wood has got to be very rare in this neighborhood. Even the gray brushy tops of this attract your attention at a distance.

As you approach the wood, and even walk through it, the trees do not affect you as large, but as surely as you go quite up to one you are surprised. The very lichens and mosses which cover the rocks under these trees seem, and probably are in some respects, peculiar. Such a wood, at the same time that it suggests antiquity, imparts an unusual dignity to the earth.

It is pleasing to see under the trees great rocks covered with polypody, which has caught a great crop of shining brown oak leaves to contrast with its green. This oak wood is now bare and the leaves just fairly fallen.

This is probably one of those woods, like Ebby Hubbard's, which was never cut off but only cut out of.

I think it would be worth the while to introduce a school of

children to such a grove, that they may get an idea of the primitive oaks before they are all gone, instead of hiring botanists to lecture to them when it is too late. Why, you do not now often meet with a respectable oak stump even, for they too have decayed.

I see a this year's sound red oak acorn tucked into a crevice in the bark of a white oak a foot or more from the ground.

Even in this old oak wood there is to be observed a resemblance to the primitive woods. The ground, never having been cleared nor cultivated, has a more primitive look; there are more ferns on it, and the rocks are far greener, with these and with lichens, never having been burned and bleached white by sun and fire.

Lee of the Corner speaks of an oak lot of his in Sudbury, which he bought in'31 and cut off (last and all of it last winter), but from the older stumps no sprouts have come up, but good ones from the younger.

You see the tufts of indigo now broken off and dropped exactly bottom up in the pastures, as if an industrious farmer had been collecting it by handfuls, which he had dropped thus.

It would be just as sensible for them to treat their young orchards or nurseries of apple trees in the same way, *i.e.,* to burn them over and raise rye there a year or two, thinking to do them good.

As for the *Vaccinia*, I am disposed to agree with those who derive the name from *bacca*, a berry, for one species or another of this large family is the berry of berries in most northern parts of the world. They form an under-shrub, or sort of lower forest, even throughout our woodlands generally, to say nothing of open fields and hills. They form a humble and more or less dormant, but yet vivacious forest under a forest, which bides its time.

This wonderful activity of the squirrels in collecting and dispersing and planting nuts and acorns, etc., etc., every autumn is the more necessary since the trees on whose fruit they mainly live are not annual plants like the wheat which supplies *our* staff of life. If the wheat crop fails this year, we have only to sow more the next year, and reap a speedy harvest, but if the forests were to be planted only at intervals equal to the age of the trees, there would be danger, what with fires and blight and insects, of a sudden failure and famine. It is important that there be countless trees in every stage of growth, —

that there be an annual planting, as of wheat. Consider the amount of work they have to do, the area to be planted!

More or less rainy to-day.

I hear that geese went over to-day, alighted in Walden.

Nov. 4. P. M. — To Tommy Wheeler's lot.

As I go over John Hosmer's High Level, there being considerable wind, I notice for the first time that peculiar blueness of the river agitated by the wind and contrasting with the tawny fields, a fall phenomenon. Tarbell's white pine grove northwest of the Irishman's, in the swamp, and some thirty to forty years old, is so dense that there is no growth under it, only a tawny carpet of pine-needles.

In the Tommy Wheeler lot south of the old pitch pine hollow, I see the stumps of many white pines and oaks which were cut some four years ago, and no fire has been set there. These oak stumps have generally fifty-three or fifty-four rings, though some pitch pines and oaks are much older; but I scarcely see a stump of this age even which has sent up any shoots. I notice one. The sprouts are from a much younger growth. It is evident that all the larger stumps were too old and effete, young as they were. In two or three cases I notice these stumps of oaks cut some four years ago and having fifty-three or four rings (from which no shoot has put forth), two together, half inclosing in a semicircle a very old and almost completely decayed stump, which, of course, was cut some fifty-eight years ago. These sprouts are rarely sound quite to the core. Perhaps the rest are sprouts whose stumps have quite disappeared, and this, *i.e.* the great age of the roots, may account for its sending up no more sprouts. I see, then, that the stumps of trees which were cut sixty years ago are still very common to be seen in our woods.

I have but little doubt that if Wetherbee's old oak lot should now be cut no sprouts would come up from the stumps. It is by seeds that oaks would have to be renewed there, if at all; but rather it is time for a different growth, *i.e.* for pines, and if he contemplates the removal of these oaks he should be considering how to favor the growth of pines there. They are already appearing thinly on various sides within that wood.

I frequently notice the seeds of small fruits and weeds left on

stumps by birds and mice and even foxes (in their excrement).

There is *primitive wood* which has never been touched by the civilized man. We have none of this.

Then there is *primitive woodland*, *i.e.,* which has never been cut clean off, and which in age now is mostly second growth.

Then there is *primitive copsewood*, *i.e.,* which has been cut clean off but suffered to grow up again without further clearing or burning.

Then copsewood of other kinds.

Sophia brings me the drawer which held her acorns (almost all red oak). It is seventeen and a half inches by twelve and a half and two inches deep, and I count, crawling about on the bottom, one hundred and seventy-three great full-grown grubs with brown heads, which have come out of the acorns by a hole, oftenest at the edge of the cup on one side. And many of the grubs had been thrown away, and probably some had crawled away within a month, and no doubt more are still to come out. Also the bottom of this box is covered with four or five times as many minute pink grubs which may be the progeny of the former: here are at least eight hundred and sixty-five (or say one thousand) grubs to about four quarts of acorns *with their cups* (the box was hardly more than half full). I find that sixty red oak acorns with their cups make one pint. There were, therefore, about five hundred acorns to one hundred and seventy-three large grubs already out in the box, to say nothing of those that have been thrown and have crawled away, nor of the seven or eight hundred *young* grubs and probably more yet to be produced. Not quite half of the acorns, then, have grubs in them. Now add the squirrels, jays, crows, and other birds and quadrupeds that feed on them, and the effect of the winter's cold and rain, and how many of the acorns of this year will be fit to plant next spring?

It appears that nearly half of these red oaks have already manifestly been destroyed by worms. It is evident that there will be at least two grubs to one of these acorns, though of course the grubs will not always be with the acorn. This is one of the nut weevils, and since they come from eggs laid by a beetle, it would seem that many eggs must have been *recently* laid.

White birch seed has but recently begun to fall. I see a quarter of an inch of many catkins bare. May have begun for a week. To-day

also I see distinctly the tree sparrows, and probably saw them, as supposed, some days ago. Perhaps they feed on the birch seed as the linarias do. Thus the birch begins to shed its seed about the time our winter birds arrive from the north.

Nov. 5. P. M. — To Blood's oak lot.

Measure the great white oak near the bars of the bridle-road just beyond the northeast corner of the Holden (?) farm. At the ground it is about nineteen feet in circumference. At three feet from the ground it is eleven feet and seven inches in circumference, and the same at five feet and apparently more above this. It is about sixteen feet to the lowest limb. The whole trunk standing aslant. It has a black and quite rough bark, not at all like that of the white oaks of Wetherbee's and Blood's lots. There is a large open space amid the huckleberry bushes beneath it, covered with a short and peculiarly green sward, and this I see is the case with other oaks a quarter of a mile off.

There is a large chestnut in the lot east of this, and I observe that its top is composed of many small branches and twigs disposed very regularly and densely, brush-wise, with a firm, distinct, more than semicircular edge against the horizon, very unlike the irregular, open, and more scraggy-twigged oak.

Blood's oak lot may contain about a dozen acres. It consists of red, black, white, and swamp white oaks, and a very little maple. The following are some of the largest that I saw. I measured one black oak which was, at three feet high, four feet eight inches in circumference; another, five feet six inches; and another the same. A red oak was six feet three inches; another, seven feet four inches; another, seven feet four inches; another, seven feet. One swamp white oak was six feet four inches. A white oak was seven feet seven inches, and another the same. The diameter of a third at one foot from ground (sawed off) was thirty-one and a half inches average.

This is quite a dense wood-lot, even without considering the size of the trees, and I was rather surprised to see how much spread there was to the tops of the trees in it, especially to the white oaks. The trees here rise far higher before branching, however, than in open land; some black oaks (if not others) were very straight and thirty to forty feet high without a limb. I think that there was not so much

difference in color between the trunks of black and red oaks as commonly. The red oaks were oftener smooth, or smoothish, the largest of them. I saw very little decay. Considering their number and closeness, the trees were on the whole larger than I should have expected, though of course not nearly so large as the largest pasture oaks, — one to two and a half feet in diameter, or say generally (the sizable trees) a foot and a half in diameter. This will probably do for a specimen of a primitive oak forest hereabouts. Such probably was the size and aspect of the trees.

As for its age, I saw the stump of a white oak (not quite so large as those I measured) which had been sawed off at about one foot from the ground within four or five years, perfectly level and sound to the core, and thirty-one and a half inches in diameter. The first thirty-three (?) rings were so close and indistinct as to be impossible to count exactly (occupying three quarters of an inch of the centre); the rest was perfectly distinct. In all one hundred and forty-seven rings; or, by inches from middle, thirty-nine, nine, six, seven, five, eleven, six, four, four, five, six, nine, ten, twelve, and then three quarters of an inch left. From which it appears that it grew much the fastest at about the age of eighty-nine years and very much the slowest for the first thirty-three years.

I am struck by the fact that the more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core, and I think that the same is true of human beings. We do not wish to see children precocious, making great strides in their early years like sprouts, producing a soft and perishable timber, but better if they expand slowly at first, as if contending with difficulties, and so are solidified and perfected. Such trees continue to expand with nearly equal rapidity to an extreme old age.

Another white oak stump, not so large but somewhat decayed, had one hundred and sixty and more rings. So that you may say this wood is a hundred to a hundred and sixty years old.

I was struck by the orderly arrangement of the trees, as if each knew its own place; and it was just so at Wetherbee's lot. This being an oak wood, and like that, somewhat meadow [sic] in the midst, the swamp white oaks with a very few maples occupied that part, and I think it likely that a similar selection of the ground might have been

detected often in the case of the other oaks, as the white compared with the red. As if in the natural state of things, when sufficient time is given, trees will be found occupying the places most suitable to each, but when they are interfered with, some are prompted to grow where they do not belong and a certain degree of confusion is produced. That is, our forest generally is in a transition state to a settled and normal condition.

Many young white pines — the largest twenty years old — are distributed through this wood, and I have no doubt that if let alone this would in a hundred years look more like a pine wood than an oak one.

Hence we see that the white pine may introduce itself into a primitive oak wood of average density.

The only sounds which I heard were the notes of the jays, evidently attracted by the acorns, and the only animal seen was a red squirrel, while there were the nests of several gray squirrels in the trees.

Last evening, the weather being cooler, there was an arch of northern lights in the north, with some redness. Thus our winter is heralded.

It is evident that the pasture oaks are commonly the survivors or relics of old oak woods, — not having been set out of course, nor springing up often in the bare pasture, except sometimes along fences. I see that on the outskirts of Wetherbee's and Blood's lots are some larger, more spreading and straggling trees, which are not to be distinguished from those. Such trees are often found as stragglers beyond a fence in an adjacent lot. Or, as an old oak wood is very gradually thinned out, it becomes open, grassy, and park-like, and very many owners are inclined to respect a few larger trees on account of old associations, until at length they begin to value them for shade for their cattle. These are oftenest white oaks. I think that they grow the largest and are the hardiest. This final arrangement is in obedience to the demand of the cow. She says, looking at the oak woods: "Your tender twigs are good, but grass is better. Give me a few at intervals for shade and shelter in storms, and let the grass grow far and wide between them."

No doubt most of those white pines in pastures which branch

close to the ground, their branches curving out and upward harpwise without one erect leading shoot, were broken down when young by cows. The cow does not value the pine, but rubs it out by scratching her head on it.

Nov. 6. Sawed off half of an old pitch pine stump at Tommy Wheeler's hollow. I found that, though the surface was entire and apparently sound except one or two small worm-holes, and the sap was evidently decaying, yet within, or just under the surface, it was extensively honeycombed by worms, which did not eat out to the surface. Those rings included in the outmost four or five inches were the most decayed, — including the sap-wood.

Nov. 7. To Cambridge and Boston.

Nov. 8. 2 P. M. — To Mt. Misery *via* sugar maples and Lee's Bridge.

The white oak near the English cress at three feet is nine feet and one twelfth in circumference and has a rough and dark bark. By its branching so low, it suggests that it may have stood in comparatively open ground most of its life, or such as the outmost oaks in Blood's wood toward his house.

I notice along the Corner road, beyond Abiel Wheeler's, quite a number of little white pines springing up against the south wall, whose seed must have been blown from Hubbard's Grove some fifty rods east. They extend along a quarter of a mile at least. Also a wet and brushy meadow some forty rods in front of Garfield's is being rapidly filled with white pines whose seeds must have been blown an equal distance.

We need not be surprised at these results when we consider how persevering Nature is, and how much time she has to work in, though she works slowly. A great pine wood may drop many millions of seeds in one year, and if only half a dozen are conveyed a quarter of a mile and lodge against some fence, and only one comes, up and lives there, yet in the course of fifteen or twenty years there are fifteen or twenty young trees there, and they begin to make a show and betray their origin. It does not imply any remarkable rapidity or

success in Nature's operations.

In the wood north of the sugar maples a hickory but two feet in circumference has eighty-six rings. A white oak twenty-six inches [in] diameter has one hundred and twenty-eight rings.

The sugar maples occupy, together with oaks of the same size, about thirty rods, or say ten rods by three. The largest about five inches [in] diameter, but generally quite small. They have sprung from quite small stumps, commonly not bigger than themselves at most. They are peculiar among maples in retaining yet a part of their leaves, — a delicate fawn(?)-color, pale brown.

There is quite a pitch pine wood on the lane beyond the second Garfields, but though there are *very* few little white pines under it (no large ones), these are under the densest part, and there are no little pitch pines, though they are common in the more open parts. Seed-bearing pines are distant here. I observe on the trunk of one of the largest of these pitch pines (which may be forty years old), standing on the outside the wood, minute or short branches, commonly mere tufts of needles in rings around the trunk, — reminding you even of the branches of the horse-tail, they are in this case so regular, — perfectly horizontal and six to twelve inches apart. Some are two or three years old, but only three to six inches long. These seem to represent the old whorls of branches. Perhaps, the tree growing slowly at the top, the dormant buds here are stimulated. I afterward see in another wood an outside pitch pine, a tall one, on which some of these tufts had apparently developed into branches four or five feet long, in imperfect whorls, the top being partly dead.

A white oak stump, roadside west of Abel Minott house site, nineteen and one half inches [in] diameter (wood), sixty-five rings. A pitch pine standing on opposite side more westerly is five and nine twelfths feet in circumference at three feet.

I observe on the west side of Mt. Misery, cut off apparently last winter, mulleins, very tall, sprung up, — as well as fire-weed and goldenrods. I saw an abundance of mulleins in a young wood-lot with much bare ground, burnt over a year or so ago, behind Mason's on the bridle-road, on the 5th, so that the mullein too might be called a fire-weed. But I notice that those plants so called, as the epilobium and senecio, and which are supposed to owe their origin to the fire,

generally spring up on a surface made bare by whatever cause. They are the first weeds after a clearing or cutting.

On this same Mt. Misery (cut last winter), an oak stump (apparently black) eleven and one half inches [in] diameter, sixty-one rings; a white oak, thirteen inches, fifty-eight rings. I count four or more of these stumps, — which are as plain as usual, — and make from fifty-four to sixty-one rings, say average fifty-eight years. Yet in several of these instances they were manifestly sprouts, and there was the old stump cut 58+1 years ago. These stumps did not show any trace of the axe, but there was one which lay on its side, apparently of the same date, but from which no sprout had come, which was much better preserved and did show the traces of the axe plainly. These recent stumps, though only some sixty years old, had in no case sprouted again, and I think that this is because they are sprouts, and that the vitality of the stock was so nearly exhausted. These old stumps are frequently half inclosed in the recent stump. I think that I readily detected the sprout also by the greater breadth of the rings the first few years.

The stumps of trees which were cut in the last century —— oaks at least — must be not uncommon in our woods.

Looking from this hill, I think that I see considerably more oak than pine wood.

Edward Hoar's pitch pine and white pine lot on the south side of this hill is evidently a new wood. You see the green moss, the cladonia, and birches (which I think do not spring up within an old wood), and even feel with your feet an old cow-path and see an old apple tree inclosed in the wood. Are not birches interspersed with pines a sign of a new wood?

When a pitch pine wood is cut, that fringe or edging of little pitch pines which commonly surrounds it may remain to grow up and in a measure represent it. Also, apparently, when for any reason, as from frost, land where the wood has been cut remains comparatively bare for several years and becomes only grassy, pitch pines (as well as white pines) may catch there thickly.

I constantly meet now with those tufts of indigo-weed (turned black) now broken off and dropped exactly bottom up, as it were dropped by a careful hand in woodland paths or in pastures, as if an

industrious fanner or a simpler had been collecting it by handfuls and had dropped his parcels thus. The fact is that they grow up many stems close together, and their branches are so interlaced as not to be easily separated; so that the wind operates the more powerfully and breaks them all off together at the ground, and then, on account of their form, these parcels are deposited exactly bottom up commonly, and you see three or four to fifteen or more stems within a diameter of four or five inches, looking just as if somebody had plucked them and laid them together. I also see the fly-away grass going over a wall or rock from time to time.

The *Salix sericea* has just blackened the ground with its leaves.

These are annual phenomena.

Dr. (?) Manasseh Cutler, in the first volume of the Boston Academy's Reports for 1785, speaks of whortleberries only in the half-converted or disparaging way in which the English do, — and have reason to, — saying that children love to eat them in milk. His eyes had not been opened to their significance; they were without honor in their native country. But I have no doubt that he ate them himself in secret.

Nov. 9. 12 M. — To Inches' Woods in Boxboro.

This wood is some one and three quarters miles from West Acton, whither we went by railroad. It is in the east part of Boxboro, on both sides of the Harvard turnpike. We walked mostly across lots from West Acton to a part of the wood about half a mile north of the turnpike, — and the woods appeared to reach as much further north. We then walked in the midst of the wood in a southwesterly by west direction, about three quarters of a mile, crossing the turnpike west of the maple swamp and the brook, and thence south by east nearly as much more, — all the way in the woods, and chiefly old oak wood. The old oak wood, as we saw from the bare hill at the south end, extends a great deal further west and northwest, as well as north, than we went, and must be at least a mile and a half from north to south by a mile to a mile and a quarter *possibly* from east to west. Or there *may* be a thousand acres of old oak wood. The large wood is chiefly oak, and that white oak, though black, red, and scarlet oak are also common. White pine is in considerable quantity, and large pitch pine

is scattered here and there, and saw some chestnut at the south end. Saw no hemlock or birch to speak of.

Beginning at the north end of our walk, the trees which I measured were (all at three feet from ground except when otherwise stated): a black oak, ten feet [in] circumference, trunk tall and of regular form; scarlet oak, seven feet three inches, by Guggins Brook; white oak, eight feet; white oak, ten feet, forks at ten feet; white oak, fifteen feet (at two and a half feet, bulging very much near ground; trunk of a pyramidal form; first branch at sixteen feet; this just north of turnpike and near Guggins Brook); white oak, nine feet four inches (divides to two at five feet); white oak, nine feet six inches (divides to two at five feet); red oak, eight feet (south of road); white pine, nine feet; a scarlet or red oak stump cut, twenty and a half inches [in] diameter, one hundred and sixty rings.

I was pleased to find that the largest of the white oaks, growing thus in a dense wood, often with a pine or other tree within two or three feet, were of pasture oak size and even form, the largest commonly branching low. Very many divide to two trunks at four or five feet only from the ground. You see some white oaks and even some others in the midst of the wood nearly as spreading as in open land.

Looking from the high bare hill at the south end, the limits of the *old* oak wood (so far as we could overlook it) were very distinct, its tops being a mass of gray brush, — contorted and intertwisted twigs and boughs, —— while the younger oak wood around it, or bounding it, though still of respectable size, was still densely clothed with the reddish-brown leaves.

This famous oak lot — like Blood's and Wetherbee's —— is a place of resort for those who hunt the gray squirrel. They have their leafy nests in the oak-tops.

It is an endless maze of gray oak trunks and boughs stretching far around. The great mass of individual trunks which you stand near is very impressive.

Many sturdy trunks (they commonly stand a little aslant) are remarkably straight and round, and have so much regularity in their roughness as to suggest smoothness. The older or largest white oaks were of a rougher and darker bark than Wetherbee's and Blood's,

though often betraying the same tendency to smoothness, as if a rough layer had been stripped off near the ground.

I noticed that a great many trunks (the bark) had been gnawed near the ground, — different kinds of oak and chestnut, — perhaps by squirrels.

Nov. 10. Cheney gives me a little history of the Inches Woods. He says it was a grant to Jekil (John (?) Jekil) by the crown, and that it amounted to half of Boxboro as well as much of Stow and Acton. That Jekil had a summer house where Squire Hosmer's house stands in Stow, before the Revolution, but at that time withdrew into Boston. It was a great event when he used to come out to Stow in the summer. Boxboro was a part of Stow then. Mr. Hosmer had charge of the lands for Inches, and the kitchen of his house was partly the old summer house of Jekil, and he also remembered an old negro named York, who had been a slave of Jekil, and he, the negro, said that twenty of the thirty acres bought of Inches by Hosmer, behind his house, was once fenced in with a paling or picket fence ten or fifteen feet high, and formed a park in which Jekil kept deer. The neighbors used to come and peep through the paling at the deer. Henderson Inches, hearing of these lands about the time of the Revolution, went to the heirs of Jekil and purchased the whole tract quite cheap, and they had been a fortune to the family since. Many farms have been made of parts of the wood, and thousands of dollars' worth of wood have been sold at a time.

Had realized maybe $150,000 from it. Cheney had heard that there were about four hundred acres of the Inches lands left. Henderson Inches died two or three years ago, and now his heirs wished to sell, but would not divide it, but sell in one body. Ruggles, Nourse, and Mason wished to buy, but not the whole. Except what has been sold, or generally, Inches would not have it cut. He was sharp and stood out for his price, and also liked to keep it. Hence it is a primitive oak wood and said to be the most of one in Massachusetts.

Collier tells me that his sunflower-head (now dried) measures just twenty-one and a half inches [in] diameter, — the solid part.

Most think that Inches Wood was worth more twenty or thirty

years ago, — that the oaks are now decayed within. Some have suggested that it would be much for the benefit of Boxboro to have it cut off and made into farms, but Boxboro people answer no, that they get a good deal more in taxes from it now than they would then.

How little there is on an ordinary map! How little, I mean, that concerns the walker and the lover of nature. Between those lines indicating roads is a plain blank space in the form of a square or triangle or polygon or segment of a circle, and there is naught to distinguish this from another area of similar size and form. Yet the one may be covered, in fact, with a primitive oak wood, like that of Boxboro, waving and creaking in the wind, such as may make the reputation of a county, while the other is a stretching plain with scarcely a tree on it. The waving woods, the dells and glades and green banks and smiling fields, the huge boulders, etc., etc., are not on the map, nor to be inferred from the map.

That grand old oak wood is just the most remarkable and memorable thing in Boxboro, and yet if there is a history of this town written anywhere, the history or even mention of this is probably altogether omitted, while that of the first (and may be last) parish is enlarged on.

What sort of cultivation, or civilization and improvement, is ours to boast of, if it turns out that, as in this instance, unhandselled nature is worth more even by our modes of valuation than our improvements are, — if we leave the land poorer than we found it? Is it good economy, to try it by the lowest standards, to cut down all our forests, if a forest will pay into the town treasury a greater tax than the farms which may supplant it, — if the oaks by steadily growing according to their nature leave our improvements in the rear?

How little we insist on truly grand and beautiful natural features! How many have ever heard of the Boxboro oak woods? How many have ever explored them? I have lived so long in this neighborhood and but just heard of this noble forest, — probably as fine an oak wood as there is in New England, only eight miles west of me.

I noticed young white pines springing up in the more open places and dells. There were considerable tracts of large white pine wood and also pine and oak mixed, especially on the hills. So I see that the character of a primitive wood may gradually change, as from oak to

pine, the oaks at last decaying and not being replaced by oaks.

Though a great many of those white oaks of the Inches Wood branch quite as low and are nearly as spreading as pasture oaks, yet generally they rise up in stately columns thirty or forty or fifty feet, diminishing very little. The black and red and scarlet oaks are especially columnar and tall, without branches for a long distance, and these trees are shaped more in their trunks like an elm than a pasture oak. They commonly stand aslant at various angles. When, in the midst of this great oak wood, you look around, you are struck by the great mass of gray-barked wood that fills the air. The leaves of these old oaks are now fairly fallen, and the ground is densely covered with their rustling reddish-brown scales.

A peculiarity of this, as compared with much younger woods, is that there is little or no underwood and you walk freely in every direction, though in the midst of a dense wood. You walk, in fact, *under* the wood.

The wood not having been cut to any extent, and the adjacent country being very little occupied, I did not notice a single cart-path where a wheel-track was visible, —— at most a slight vista, and one footpath. I knew that I was near the southwest edge by the crowing of a cock.

This wood is said to have been a great resort for pigeons. We saw one large pigeon-place on the top of the hill where we first entered it. Now used.

Seeing this, I can realize how this country appeared when it was discovered. Such were the oak woods which the Indian threaded hereabouts.

Such a wood must have a peculiar fauna to some extent. Warblers must at least pass through it in the spring, which we do not see here.

We have but a faint conception of a full-grown oak forest stretching uninterrupted for miles, consisting of sturdy trees from one to three and even four feet in diameter, whose interlacing branches form a complete and uninterrupted canopy. Many trunks old and hollow, in which wild beasts den. Hawks nesting in the dense tops, and deer glancing between the trunks, and occasionally the Indian with a face the color of the faded oak leaf.

Grimes said that he could almost clasp the loins of my lynx as it

hung up by the heels before it was skinned; it was so slender there that a man with a large hand could have done it.

Richardson in his "Fauna Boreali-Americana," which I consulted at Cambridge on the 7th, says that the French-Canadians call the Canada lynx indifferently *Le Chat* or *Le Peeshoo*, and Charlevoix falsely calls it *Carcajou,* which is the wolverene, and hence much confusion and error among naturalists. "Seven to nine thousand are annually procured by the Hudson's Bay Company. It is found on the Mackenzie River as far north as latitude 66°." Easily killed by a stroke with a small stick on the back! (?) Breeds once a year and has two young. Never attacks man. A poor runner, but a good swimmer. Audubon and Bachman repeat Richardson. According to Pennant, Lawson and Catesby repeat the falsehoods about its dropping from trees on deer, etc.

Observed in the dropping of a fox the other day, with fur, some quarter-shaped (or triangular segments) seeds, and roughish, which may have been seeds of rose hips. They were white. So are the sweet-briar hips, but the common wild rose hips are brownish. Were they prinos seeds? If rose hips, then the fox enjoys what Manasseh Cutler in 1785 called "the conserve of hepps of the London dispensatory" without the sugar.

Elijah Wood, senior, tells me that about 1814 (or before 1815, in which year he was married, and while he still lived at his father's on Carlisle road), as he was riding to town on horseback in the evening alone to singing to prepare for Thanksgiving, he stopped to let his horse drink at the brook beyond Winn's, when he heard a cry from some wild beast just across the river. It affected him so that he did not stop to let his horse drink much. When he returned later, — now with others, — they all heard it, as if answering to their shouts, somewhat further up the river. It was also heard by some teamsters, and also an animal supposed to be the same was said to have been seen by a woman crossing the road just west of where Wood now lives. It was thought to be a wolverene.

I have now measured in all eight pitch pine stumps at the Tommy Wheeler hollow, sawed off within a foot of the ground.

I measured the longest diameter, and then at right angles with that, and took the average, and then selected that side of the stump on

which the radius was of average length and counted the number of rings in each inch, beginning at the centre, thus: —

	1st (pos)	1st inch	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Radius	Rings, in all
2		9—	12+	9—	9+	11½	16½ (?)	26 (?)	25	26	in ½ inch 17	26	in ½ inch 38	38	168
		10—	7+	6	6½	5	6½	9½	11	12½	19	26		11½	164
3		13—	11	9	11	15	21	16	20	28	32			10	176 (?); more correctly, 169
4		15	12	10	16	24	40	18	16	16	in 1½ inch 8			9½+	148
5 diam. 19½		12	13	2	8	11	23	17	31	32	in 2 inch 28			9½	171 *I have this; more correctly, 166*
6		15	13	11	14	18	10	23	23	21	in 1+ inch 16			9½+	171
7		13	11	11	11	22	20	42	in ½ inch 24					7½	168
8		15	13	12	13	11	14	14	19	28	in 1 inch 20			9½	About 160
		103	91	77	803	1171	145	165½	139	183½	51	33		Av. R. about 9½	Av. age 162 or 163 years
9		13—	11	10	11	16	18—	21—	19	23+	25+	33		Av. Diam. 10.	

Of these eight, average growth about one seventeenth of an inch per year.

Calling the smallest number of rings in an inch in each tree 1, the comparative slowness of growth of the inches is thus expressed, *viz.:* —

1	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.	1.6	2.3	3.7	3.6	3.7		
2	2.	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.	1.3	1.9	2.1	2.7	3.8	6.6
3	1.4	1.2	1.	1.2	1.7	2.3	1.6	2.2	3.1	3.4	
4	1.5	1.2	1.	1.6	2.4	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.5		
5	1.3	1.3	1.	1.	1.2	2.4	1.9	2.3	3.4		
6	1.4	1.2	1.	1.3	1.6	1.7	2.1	1.9	1.9	2.5	
7	1.2	1.	1.	1.	2.	2.6	3.8	3.6			
8	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.	1.3	1.3	1.7	2.5	3.6	

From the line *x* I calculate the average rate of growth in diameter (or radius) each successive ten years thus (in decimals of an inch): —

1 to 10	10 to 20	20–30	30–40	40–50	50–60	60–70
(.77)	(.87)	(.96)	(.95)	(.78+)	(.66)	(.55+)
70–80	80–90	90–100	100–110	110–120		120–130
(.54–)	(.48–)	(.48+)	(.53–)	(.51)		(.43+)
130–140	140–150	150–160	160–170	170–180		180–190
(.43+)	(.403)	(.40)	(.36+)	(.30)		(.30)

Of course the error is great in proportion as the in number of rings in an inch exceeds ten.

They grew in the first decade more than in any decade after their fiftieth year, and continued to grow with pretty regularly accelerated growth up to about the end of the third decade, or say about the twenty-ninth year, when they were increasing fastest in diameter, — 1.92 inches in ten years. They continued to grow at nearly the same rate through the fourth decade, and then their rate of growth very suddenly decreased, —— *i.e.,* in fifth decade, or from the fortieth to the fiftieth years, when they grew only about the same as in the first decade. In the sixth and seventh decades the rate of growth steadily

decreased as fast as it had increased in the first three decades, and it continued to decrease through the eighth, ninth, and tenth decades, though much more slowly. In the eleventh and twelfth decades, or from one hundred to one hundred and twenty years, the rate was accelerated, or they grew faster than from eighty to one hundred, but after the twelfth decade the rate of growth steadily decreased to the last, when it was less than one third what it was in the third decade. When growing fastest, or between the twentieth and thirtieth year, the radius often was not increased one inch in ten years. But after they were one hundred and sixty years old they did not grow four tenths of an inch in ten years — or one twenty-fifth of an inch in one year. On an average, by accurate observation these eight trees were gaining the most in diameter at about the thirtieth year, and least (with one exception) in the last ten years of their existence.

Many have inferred that it is most profitable to cut pitch pine when about thirty (or forty) years old, but they seem to forget that the most rapid increase in diameter when the tree is only ten or fifteen years old does not indicate so great bulk of wood added to the tree, as a much less increase in diameter when it is fifty or one hundred years old. Indeed these trees, slowly as they appeared to grow at last, increased in bulk far more rapidly in the last twenty years than in the first twenty, — or as thirty-six to ten.

The absolute area of the annual rings (which is in the same proportion as the bulk of wood formed) each ten years is (calculated from the measurement on the third page back): —

	1st 10 yrs.	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1st tree	inch 3.9	7.9	16.5	28.1	23.2	21.6	18.1	15.7	15.7	18.8	16.3	19.7	20.5	20.5	14.		
2	3.1	17.3	35.3	53.4	43.2	44.8	41.4	33.	31.4	22.3	20.	20.	10.	13.	13.	12.	
3	2.4	6.7	15.6	13.6	13.2	18.4	16.6	17.4	25.5	24.6	25.6	21.3	10.	13.	18.2	18.7	18.7
4	2.1	5.	10.2	15.1	18.8	12.4	11.8	18.7	18.2	20.	22.7	23.7	22.5	25.6	22.7		
5*	2.0	6.8	13.6	22.3	25.4	18.2	15.	18.6	24.	23.	21.4	19.	16.7	15.7	17.2	15.1	13.1
6	2.1	4.7	8.7	14.3	15.7	15.7	15.7	18.	18.2	17.8	17.8	21.	22.4	24.2	25.4	23.4	21.3
7	2.4	6.7	12.	17.1	17.1	13.8	12.7	11.9	11.9	11.3	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.9	11.8	11.8	
8	2.	4.	7.8	13.1	16.5	23.9	25.2	25.2	29.2	2.8	24.7	20.2	19.1	19.1	14.9		
		20.3	78.1	123.7	183.0	174.1	166.1	158.4	153.5	174.1	165.6	170.7	157.8	153.9	157.0	143.8	84.0	53.1
Av.		2.6	7.4	15.6	22.9	21.7	20.8	19.8	19.2	21.8	20.7	20.—	19.9	19.1	19.6	18.	16.8	19.4

* By actually measuring the space covered by each successive ten rings for the fifth tree I got .9, .6, 1, 1.1, 1, .7, .5, .6, .6½, .5, .6, .47, .28, .34, .25, .31, .25.

According to the above, most wood is made in the fourth decade, though there is but little decrease in amount afterward.

There is a loss of time if you cut at thirty or even forty years, for,

supposing that a new pitch pine were at once to take the place of the old one, at the end of forty years more you would only have got (2.6 + 7.4 + 15.5 + 22.9 =) 48.5 of wood more, instead of (21.7 + 20.8 + 19.5 + 19.2 =) 81.2 more, which you would have had by this time if you had let the tree stand. Or if you had cut it at eighty years, you would only have 129.7 of wood after eighty years more, instead of the 155.9 that might have grown. Or even if you should cut every forty years, you would after one hundred and sixty years have got only 194 of wood to 285.6 that you might have had. From which I infer that the greater bulk of wood made in the third and fourth decade is so little more than that made in any succeeding ten years of the tree's age, and so much more than that made in the previous ten years, that if you want this kind of wood it is best to let the tree stand as long as it is sound and growing.

To be sure, the above calculation supposes the tree to increase in height in proportion to its age — which is hardly the case — and also that the same number of large trees can stand on the same area as of small ones. But even after these deductions, when we consider the proportionally greater value of large timber of this kind, it must be best to let it grow as long as it will.

The same is true until the last forty years makes less wood than the first forty. The first forty makes 48.5; the last, 76.8. However, the time of cutting may depend partly on the number of trees that stand on a given area and also on whether they are wanted for fuel or for lumber, many small being about as good for the former use as a few large; *i.e.,* these trees made more wood any other forty years than the first. Why, then, employ them then only?

Nov. 10 *and* 11 were rainy, raising the river considerably on to the meadows.

Nov. 13. P. M. — To Mt. Misery.

A white birch *(Betula alba)* west edge of Trillium Wood, two feet seven inches [in] circumference at three feet.

On the Moore and Hosmer lot, cut in'52 (I think), west of railroad, south of Heywood's meadow, an oak stump fifteen and a half inches [in] diameter, ninety-three rings; another, white oak,

fourteen and a half inches [in] diameter, ninety-four rings. In the first case there were two stumps of same age, evidently sprouts from an older stock, they curving around it, but I observed only a slight hollow where apparently the old stump had been. In the second case there was but one stump, but that rather concave on one side where there was a deep hollow in the earth. In both of these cases the tenacious mould, covered slightly with a fine greenish lichen, appeared heaved up about where the old stump had been. It was a good hundred years since that old stump was cut. The inmost rings of the recent stumps were coarse, as with sprouts.

Near these apparently a black (?) oak, or maybe a chestnut (?), twenty inches [in] diameter and seventy-four rings, but the centre was within four inches of the westerly side.

A white oak standing by the fence west of Spanish Brook dam on Morse's lot, circumference six feet and two twelfths at three feet. Near by a hornbeam a foot and a half [in] circumference at three feet.

J. Baker's pitch pines south of upper wood-path north of his house abundantly confirm the rule of *young* white pines under pitch pines. That fine young white pine wood west of this is partly of these which were left when the pitch pines were cut.

Baker's hill between farm and Pleasant Meadow, oak (apparently a black), diameter twenty-six, seventy-one rings. The stumps here were cut some five or six years ago and have fifty to sixty rings. Commonly no sprouts from those of this age here.

On top of Mt. Misery, looked again at those old stumps (of the 8th). There are three or four quite plain, just showing themselves above the surface, with rounded, flaky, decaying and crumbling edge, close to the recent stump of the shoot or shoots which sprang from them and which were cut last winter. One of these recent stumps, counted to-night, gives sixty years, but the first two or three are uncertain. Hence this old stump is as old as the century.

There are several perfectly dry and exposed stumps on bare rocky shelves, or else lying on rocks on their sides, quite well preserved and showing the marks of the axe, which I have but little doubt are of the same age, preserved by being tipped out of the earth many years ago.

Am surprised at the very slow growth of some hickory (stumps) along the wall on the top of this hill, — so fine I did not count quite accurately.

One was	10 inches	in diameter	with		104 rings
" "	$6\frac{1}{2}$	"	"	*about*	115 "
" "	$14\frac{1}{2}$	"	"	"	84 "
" "	$11\frac{3}{4}$	"	"		121 "

I think that the oak stumps have lasted unusually long on this hill, on account of their having originally grown slowly here and since been so much exposed to the light and air over and amid the rocks.

Nov. 14. River two feet four inches above summer level (and at height) on account of rain of 10th and 11th and 12th.

The red maple on south edge of Trillium Wood is six feet three inches in circumference at three feet.

Yellow butterflies still.

Almost all holes in and about stumps have nutshells or nuts in them.

Nov. 16. This and yesterday Indian-summer days.

P. M. — To Inches Woods.

Walked over these woods again, — first from Harvard turnpike at where Guggins Brook leaves it, which is the east edge of the old wood, due north along near the edge of the wood, and at last more northwest along edge to the cross-road, a strong mile.

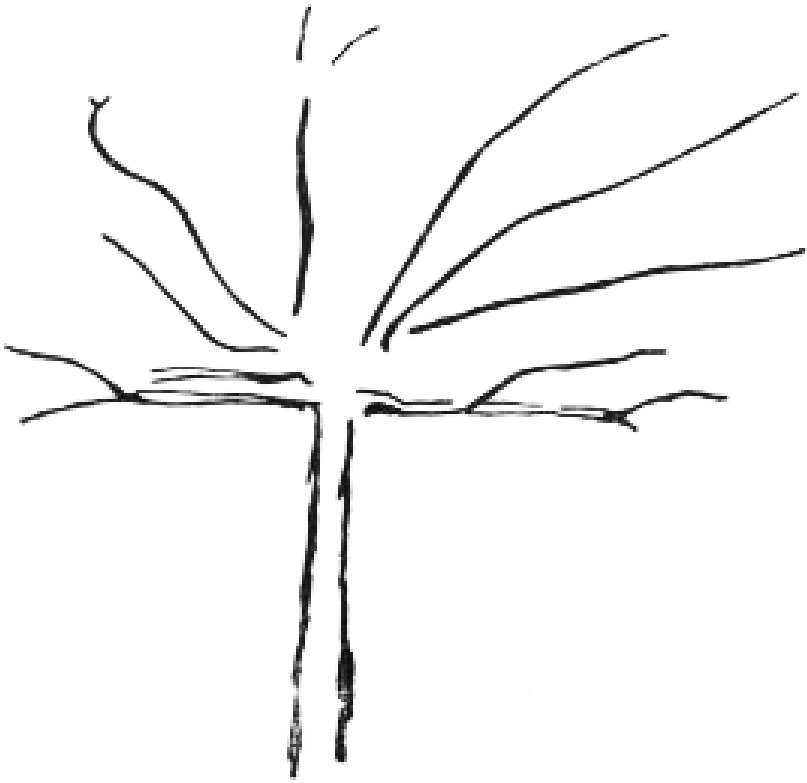
I observe that the black, red, and scarlet oaks are generally much more straight and perpendicular than the white, and not branched below. The white oak is much oftener branched below and is more irregular, — curved or knobby.

The first large erect black oak measured on the 9th was by the path at foot of hill southeast of pigeon-place. Another, more north, is (all at three feet when not otherwise stated) ten and a half [feet] in circumference.

There is not only a difference between most of the white oaks within Blood's wood and the pasture oaks without, — the former having a very finely divided and comparatively soft tawnyish bark,

and the latter a very coarse rugged and dark-colored bark, — but there is here a similar difference within this wood; *i.e.,* some of the white oaks have a hard, rugged bark, in very regular oblong squares or checkers (an agreeably regular *roughness* like a coat of mail), while others have a comparatively finely divided and soft bark.

I see one white oak shaped like this: —



It happens oftenest here, I think, that the very largest white oaks have the most horizontal branches and branch nearest the ground, which would at first suggest that *these* trees were a different variety from the more upright and rather smaller ones, but it may be that these are older, and for that reason had more light and room and so temptation to spread when young.

A white oak $6\frac{3}{4}$ in circumference
" " " $8\frac{4}{12}$
" " " $6\frac{11}{12}$

The last one grows close against a rock (some three feet high), and it has grown over the top and sides of this rock to the breadth of twelve and eighteen inches in a thin, close-fitting, saddle-like manner, very remarkable and showing great vigor in the tree.

Here, too, coming to water, I see the swamp white oak rising out of it, elm-like in its bark and trunk. Red maples also appear here with them. It is interesting to see thus how surely the character of the ground determines the growth. It is evident that in a wood that has been let alone for the longest period the greatest regularity and harmony in the disposition of the trees will be observed, while in our ordinary woods man has often interfered and favored the growth of other kinds than are best fitted to grow there naturally. To some, which he does not want, he allows no place at all.

Hickories occasionally occur, — sometimes scaly-barked, if not shagbarks, — also black birch and a few little sugar maples.

Still going north, a white pine nine feet [in] circumference.

The wood at the extreme north end (along the road) is considerably smaller. After proceeding west along the road, we next went west by south through a maple and yellow birch swamp, in which a black oak eight feet and four twelfths [in] circumference, a red maple six feet and a half, a black birch seven feet, a black birch eight feet. And in the extreme northwesterly part of the wood, close to the road, are many large chestnuts, — one eleven and three quarters feet [in] circumference with many great knobs or excrescences, another twelve and seven twelfths.

We next walked across the open land by the road to the high hill northeast of Boxboro Centre. In this neighborhood are many very large chestnuts, of course related to the chestnut wood just named. 1st, along this road just over the north wall, beyond a new house, one 13 11/12 feet in circumference; 2d, 16, a few rods more west by the wall; then, perhaps fifty or sixty rods more west and maybe eight or

ten rods north from the road, along a wall, the 3d, 15 2/12; and then, near the road, southwest from this, the 4th, 15 4/12; and some rods further north, toward hill and house of O. and J. Wetherbee, the 5th, 137/12; then northeast, in lower ground (?), the 6th, 16 feet, at ground 21 2/3; then, near base of hill, beyond house, the 7th,16 2/12 at two feet from ground; next, some rods west of the hill, the 8th, 178/12- at three feet, at ground 23 1/2; and then, a considerable distance north and further down the hill, the 9th, 13 4/12 (There [were] also four other good-sized chestnuts on this hillside, with the last three.) Or these nine trees averaged about 15 1/4 feet in circumference. The 3d tree had a limb four or five feet from the ground, which extended horizontally for a rod toward the south, declining a little toward the earth, and this was nine feet in circumference about eighteen inches from the tree. The 7th had a large limb broken off at one foot above the ground on the side, whose stump prevented measuring at the ordinary height. As I remember, the 8th was the finest tree.

These nine (or thirteen) trees are evidently the relics of one chestnut wood of which a part remains and makes the northwest part of Inches Wood, and the trees are all within about a quarter of a mile southeast and northwest, the first two being by themselves at the southeast.

The chestnut is remarkable for branching low, occasionally so low that you cannot pass under the lower limb. In several instances a large limb had fallen out on one side. Commonly, you see great rugged strips of bark, like straps or iron clamps made to bind the tree together, three or four inches wide and as many feet long, running more or less diagonally across the trunk and suggesting a very twisted grain, while the grain of the recent bark beneath them may be perpendicular. Perhaps this may be owing to old portions of the bark which still adhere, being wrenched aside by the unequal growth of the wood. I think that all these old trunks show this.

Frank Brown tells me of a chestnut in his neighborhood nineteen feet and eight(?) inches in circumference at three feet.

White oaks within a wood commonly, at Wetherbee's and Blood's woods, have lost the outside rough and rugged bark near the base, like a jacket or vest cast off, revealing that peculiar smooth

tawny-white inner garment or shirt. Probably the moisture and shade of a wood softens the bark and causes it to scale off. Apparently outside trees do not lose this outer bark, but it becomes far more rugged and dark exposed to the light and air, forming a strong coat of mail such as they need.

Most of the white oaks in Inches Wood are of a slight ashy tinge and have a rather loose, scaly bark, but the larger, losing this below, become tawny-white.

Having returned into Inches Wood, not far west of the meadow (which is west of the brook), at the angle made by the open land, a black oak stump recently cut, about one foot high and twenty-one inches in diameter, had only one hundred and six rings. A white oak only nine inches in diameter near by had eighty rings. I suspect that the smaller white oaks are much older comparatively (with the large) than their size would indicate, as well as sounder and harder wood. A white oak at three feet, six and one half in circumference. A black oak had been recently cut into at the west base of Pigeon Hill, and I counted about eighty-five rings in the outside three inches. The tree (wood only) was some twenty-three inches in diameter.

Looking at this wood from the Boxboro hill, the white pines appeared to be confined chiefly to the higher land, forming a ridge from north to south. Young white pines have very generally come in (a good many being twenty feet high or more), though in some places much more abundantly than in others, all over this oak wood, though not high enough to be seen at a distance or from hills (except the first-named larger trees); but though there are very many large pitch pines in this wood, especially on the hills or moraines, young pitch pines are scarcely to be seen. I saw some only in a dell on the south side the turnpike. If these oaks were cut off with care, there would very soon be a dense white pine wood there. The white pines are not now densely planted, except in some more open places, but come up stragglingly every two or three rods. The natural succession is rapidly going on here, and as fast as an oak falls, its place is supplied by a pine or two. I have no doubt that, *if entirely let alone*, this which is now an oak wood would have become a white pine wood.

Measured on the map, this old woodland is fully a mile and a half

long from north to south — one mile being north [of] the turnpike — and will average half a mile from east to west. Its extreme width, measuring due east and west, is from Guggins Brook on the turnpike to the first church. (It runs considerably further southeast, however, on to the high hill.) There is a considerable tract on the small road south [of] the turnpike covered with second growth. There is, therefore, some four hundred acres of this old wood.

There is a very little beech and hemlock and yellow birch in this wood. Many large black birches at the northwest end. Chestnuts at the northwest and southeast ends.

The bark of the oaks is very frequently gnawed near the base by a squirrel or other animal.

Guggins Brook unites with Heather Meadow Brook, and then with Fort Pond Brook just this side of West Acton, and thus the water of this old oak wood comes into the Assabet and flows by our North Bridge. The seeds of whatever trees water will transport, provided they grow there, may thus be planted along our river.

I crossed the brook in the midst of the wood where there was no path, but four or five large stones had evidently been placed by man at convenient intervals for stepping-stones, and possibly this was an old Indian trail.

You occasionally see a massive old oak prostrate and decaying, rapidly sinking into the earth, and its place is evidently supplied by a pine rather than an oak.

There is now remarkably little life to be seen there. In my two walks I saw only one squirrel and a chickadee. Not a hawk or a jay. Yet at the base of very many oaks were acorn-shells left by the squirrels. In a perfectly round hole made by a woodpecker in a small dead oak five feet from the ground, were three good white oak acorns placed.

In the midst of the wood, west of the brook, is a natural meadow, — *i.e.* in a natural state, — a narrow strip without trees, yet not very wet. Evidently swamp white oaks and maples might grow there. The greater part of this wood is strewn with large rocks, more or less flat or table-like, very handsomely clothed with moss and polypody. The surface of the ground is finely diversified, there being hills, dells, moraines, meadows, swamps, and a fine brook in the midst of all.

Some parts are very thickly strewn with rocks (as at the northwest), others quite free from them. Nowhere any monotony.

It is very pleasant, as you walk in the shade below, to see the cheerful sunlight reflected from the maze of oak boughs above. They would be a fine sight after one of those sticking snows in the winter.

On the north end, also, the first evidence we had that we were coming out of the wood — approaching its border — was the crowing of a cock.

Nov. 17. P. M. — To Blood's woods.

Sawed off a branch of creeping juniper two inches [in] diameter with fifteen rings.

On one square of nine rods in Blood's wood, which seemed more dense than the average, are thirteen sizable trees. This would give about two hundred and thirty to an acre, but probably there are not more than one hundred and eighty to an acre, take the wood through. This is but little more than one to a square rod. Yet this is a quite dense wood. That very solid white oak stump recently sawed in this wood was evidently a seedling, the growth was so extremely slow at first. If I found the case to be the same with the other oaks here, I should feel sure that these were all seedlings and therefore had been preceded by pines or at least some dense evergreens, or possibly birches. When I find a dense oak wood, whether sprouts or seedlings, I affirm that evergreens once stood [there] and, if man does not prevent, will grow again. This I must believe until I find a dense oak wood planted under itself or in open land.

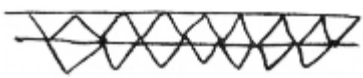
Minot Pratt's elm is sixteen and a quarter feet [in] circumference at three feet.

These tawny-white oaks are thus by their color and character the lions among trees, or rather, not to compare them with a foreign animal, they are the cougars or panthers — the American lions — among the trees, for nearly such is that of the cougar which walks beneath and amid or springs upon them. There is plainly this harmony between the color of our chief wild beast of the cat kind and our chief tree.

How they do things in West Acton. As we were walking through West Acton the other afternoon, a few rods only west of the centre,

on the main road, the Harvard turnpike, we saw a rock larger than a man could lift, lying in the road, exactly in the wheel-track, and were puzzled to tell how it came there, but supposed it had slipped off a drag, — yet we noticed that it was peculiarly black. Returning the same way in the twilight, when we had got within four or five rods of this very spot, looking up, we saw a man in the field, three or four rods on one side of that spot, running off as fast as he could. By the time he had got out of sight over the hill it occurred to us that he was blasting rocks and had just touched one off; so, at the eleventh hour, we turned about and ran the other way, and when we had gone a few rods, off went two blasts, but fortunately none of the rocks struck us. Some time after we had passed we saw the men returning. They looked out for themselves, but for nobody else. This is the way they do things in West Acton. We now understood that the big stone was blackened by powder.

Silas Hosmer tells me how — and — sold the Heywood lot between the railroad and Fair Haven. They lotted it off in this wise:



i.e. in triangles, and, carrying plenty of liquor, they first treated all round, and then proceeded to sell at auction, but the purchasers, excited with liquor, were not aware when the stakes were pointed out that the lots were not as broad in the rear as in front, and the wood standing cost them as much as it should have done delivered at the door.

I frequently see the heads of teasel, called fuller's thistle, floating on our river, having come from factories above, and thus the factories which use it may distribute its seeds by means of the streams which turn their machinery, from one to another. The one who first cultivated the teasel extensively in this town is said to have obtained the seed when it was not to be purchased — the culture being monopolized — by sweeping a wagon which he had loaned to a teasel-raiser.

The growth of very old trees, as appears by calculating the bulk of wood formed, is feebler at last than when in middle age, or say in pitch pine at one hundred and sixty than at forty or fifty, especially

when you consider the increased number of leaves, and this, together with the fact that old stumps send up no shoots, shows that trees are not indefinitely long-lived.

I have a section of a chestnut sprout — and not at all a rank one — which has 6 rings in the first inch, or 4 rings in five eighths of an inch, but a section of a chestnut seedling has 10 rings in five eighths of an inch.

A section of a white oak sprout, far from rank, has 4 rings in first five eighths of an inch; of a seedling ditto, 16 or 17 in first five eighths of an inch; of a seedling ditto, 8 — in first five eighths of an inch; of a very slow-grown sprout, 6 — in first five eighths of an inch. Or in the white oaks the proportion is as five to twelve.

The first seedling oak has the rough and tawny light-brown bark of an old tree, while the first sprout is quite smooth-barked.

A seedling white birch has 10 rings in first seven eighths of an inch.

A sprout white birch has 5 rings in first seven eighths of an inch. The first has the white bark of an old tree; the second, a smooth and reddish bark.

When a stump is sound to the pith I can commonly tell whether it was a seedling or a sprout by the rapidity of the growth at first. A seedling, it is true, may have died down many times till it is fifteen or twenty years old, and so at last send up a more vigorous shoot than at first, but generally the difference is very marked.

Nov. 19. P. M. — To Mt. Misery.

Saw off a hickory stump which is scarcely six and a half inches in diameter and has nearly a hundred rings. (It is the one of November 13th, and then called about 115 (??). Counting it now in the evening, I make 92.) It is surprising how quickly this wood decays. This tree was cut last winter, and then evidently was perfectly sound, as appears from the surface, but on sawing it off three inches lower I find that it is rotted entirely through and is soft and no part sound, so that I cannot count it on the new face. In less than one year this stump is worthless, even for fuel!

I look again at the old oak stumps on this hill. One evidently, *i.e. surely*, a sprout (the older stump beside it), a white oak, grew nearly

If inches in the first twelve years; another oak, a sprout (with older stump), If inches in the first eleven or twelve years; a white oak (without an older stump), If inches in the first twelve years; probably the last a sprout also, for, as seen on last page, a white oak seedling grows only 5/8 of an inch in twelve years. There was also a hickory sprout stump of the same age with the others, though of course the old stump was long since gone. It was plainly seen to be a sprout by the very rapid growth at first and the concave form of one side.

My rule of small white pines under pitch pines is so true of E. Hoar's land that he very easily got a hundred white pines there to set by his house.

Mr. Bradshaw says that he got a little auk in Wayland last week, and heard of two more, one in Weston and the other in Natick. Thinks they came with the storm of the 10th and 11th.

He tells me of a small oak wood of old trees called More's, half a mile east of Wayland, behind the graveyard.

Nov. 20. P. M. — To R. W. E.'s hill.

I see a pitch pine several years old on the west slope of the railroad embankment, sixty rods by pacing from the nearest pitch pine, which was in Trillium Wood. I have seen several such. This tree would soon sow itself in our yards if they were neglected.

In the Moore and Hosmer lot which I surveyed in'49-'50, beyond Heywood meadow, a white oak stump ten inches [in] diameter with seventy rings (cut in winter of'49-'50), evidently a sprout, though the old stump appears to have been entirely overgrown and so concealed.

I see, on the southwest or railroad side, near top, of Emerson's hill, a great many oak stumps (which were sprouts) with the older stump still very plain.

One (probably black oak) with 35 rings cut some 2 years = 37.
2d, " " " " " " " " " " = 37.
3d, " " " " " " " " " " = 37.

(This last *old* stump being small and almost overgrown between the stumps of the sprouts and seen — a sliver of it — in a hole between them.) Also lower down-hill, toward railroad, old chestnut stumps with the stumps of sprouts of R. W. E.'s cutting twenty-five

to thirty and odd years old, cut some dozen years ago; stumps, then, some forty years old.

Also, on the pond end of the hilltop, amid the piles of stones, where I suppose was a pasture once, I see oak stumps cut just thirty-eight years ago beside the stumps of their sprouts cut last winter, and here are many sprouts coming up the second time; but on the other end [of] the hill I notice no sprouts the second time. There were many oaks where these piles of stone are, some seventy or eighty years ago, then, at least, and I think that if this ever was a pasture they must have been preceded by pines. These oak stumps, cut about thirty-eight years ago, are quite fresh, especially the white oak on the top of this rocky hill. So at Mt. Misery. Such is evidently a favorable locality for their preservation. Indeed, it is very common to see oak stumps forty years old in such places. They are the rule here.

Decidedly finger-cold to-night.

Nov. 21. If you cut a dense mixed wood of pine and oak in which no little pines have sown themselves, it is evident that a wood exclusively of oak sprouts may succeed, as I see is the case with part of R. W. E.'s hillside toward the pond.

I see a little pitch pine which bore a cone at twenty-two inches from the ground when it was only seven or eight years old. It is now a dozen years old and has borne two more since, and scattered the seed.

P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill.

On what was Stow's lot, southwest the Boiling Spring, adjacent to Wheeler's field, I count the rings of four oak stumps which are from eighteen to twenty-two inches in diameter. They are all about 120, and the oaks are evidently all from the seed. This was both a pine and oak wood, and I suspect that about one hundred and twenty years [ago] pines were cut or burned or blown down or decayed there and these oaks succeeded. These stumps are now in the very best condition for counting, having been cut nine or ten years ago. But not so with the pitch pine stumps (one is twenty-three inches in diameter) cut about a year later on what was R. Brown's, higher up. Their sap and more is covered with green and red cockspur lichens so thickly you cannot see the rings. On this lot (now open Wheeler

lot) are not only these old pitch pine stumps (a few), but the stumps of oak sprouts forty-four years old, with the older stumps by their side, or half overgrown, yet quite plain, which last there were cut (44 + 9 =) 53 years ago. No sprouts from them.

In early times probably less wood was cut at once; commonly only the winter's wood for the owners' use. This Brown lot was variously treated apparently.

See young beeches near the upper edge of Stow's, about midway on Wheeler, near where some stones have been hauled into Stow's from Wheeler's land.

Another finger-cold evening, which I improve in pulling my turnips — the usual amusement of such weather — before they shall be frozen in. It is worth the while to see how green and lusty they are yet, still adding to their stock of nutriment for another year; and between the green and also withering leaves it does me good to see their great crimson round or scalloped tops, sometimes quite above ground, they are so bold. They remind you of rosy cheeks in cool weather, and indeed there is a relationship. All kinds of harvestry, even pulling turnips when the first cold weather numbs your fingers, are interesting, if you have been the sower, and have not sown too many.

Got a section to-day of a white cedar railroad sleeper which I am told came from the eastward and was brought up from Charlestown. First count gives 254 rings; second, on opposite side, where the centre is less plain, 246 rings; average, 250. Its diameter is 16 1/4 inches, or nearly 31 rings to an inch. This is the oldest, as well as slowest-growing, tree that I have counted the rings of. I see other sleepers nearly as old. Some smaller, or say 10 1/2 inches in diameter, had 125 rings in the first three inches and then grew much faster; as if they were at first part of a very dense thicket and grew very slowly, but afterward, prevailing over the rest, grew faster. This sleeper had, of course, been cut a year at least. It may not have been the butt end of the log, or at any rate it must have been several years old before it reached the height at which it was cut, so that it must have begun to exist before the settlement of Jamestown. It was a flourishing young cedar of at least some fifteen summers when the Pilgrims came over. Thus the cars on our railroad, and all their

passengers, roll over the trunks of trees *sleeping* beneath them which were planted years before the first white man settled in New England.

Nov. 22. P. M. — To northwest part of Sudbury.

The *Linaria Canadensis* is still freshly blooming. It is the freshest flower I notice now.

Considerable ice, lasting all day, on the river meadows and cold pools.

I measure the stump of that white pine which I used to see on the Marlborough road. It is thirty inches in diameter and has 85 rings.

There are two small clumps of laurel close to the left side this road, by the woods, just this side the Sudbury line, going to Maynard's.

Here is a dense oak wood. I see many little white pines sprung up along its edge in the road, but scarcely one within the wood. They, too, want light and air, though not so much as the pitch pine.

All the sound white oak acorns that I see now have sprouted, and many have sent a root down into the earth. This is often four inches long. But I see no black nor scarlet nor red oak acorns sprouted, though I find sound ones. The white are evidently very much more sensitive and tender than they.

This is a very beautiful November day, — a cool but clear, crystalline air, through which even the white pines with their silvery sheen are an affecting sight. It is a day to behold and to ramble over the hard (stiffening) and withered surface of the tawny earth. Every plant's down glitters with a silvery light along the Marlborough road, — the sweet-fern, the lespedeza, and bare blueberry twigs, to say nothing of the weatherworn tufts of *Andropogon scoparius.* A thousand bare twigs gleam like cobwebs in the sun. I rejoice in the bare, bleak, hard, and barren-looking surface of the tawny pastures, the firm outline of the hills, so convenient to walk over, and the air so bracing and wholesome. Though you are finger-cold toward night, and you cast a stone on to your first ice, and see the unmelted crystals under every bank, it is glorious November weather, and only November fruits are out. On some hickories you see a thousand black nuts against the sky.

There is quite a white cedar swamp behind the old tavern south of Maynard's.

You walk fast and far, and every apple left out is grateful to your invigorated taste. You enjoy not only the bracing coolness, but all the heat and sunlight that there is, reflected back to you from the earth. The sandy road itself, lit by the November sun, is beautiful. Shrub oaks and young oaks generally, and hazel bushes and other hardy shrubs, now more or less bare, are your companions, as if it were an iron age, yet in simplicity, innocence, and strength a golden one.

(Day before yesterday the rustling of the withered oak leaves in the wind reminded me of the similar sound produced by snow falling on them.)

It is glorious to consider how independent man is of all enervating luxuries; and the poorer he is in respect to them, the richer he is. Summer is gone with all its infinite wealth, and still nature is genial to man. Though he no longer bathes in the stream, or reclines on the bank, or plucks berries on the hills, still he beholds the same inaccessible beauty around him. What though he has no juice of the grape stored up for him in cellars; the air itself is wine of an older vintage, and far more sanely exhilarating, than any cellar affords. It is ever some gouty senior and not a blithe child that drinks, or cares for, that so famous wine.

Though so many phenomena which we lately admired have now vanished, others are more remarkable and interesting than before. The smokes from distant chimneys, not only greater because more fire is required, but more distinct in the cooler atmosphere, are a very pleasing sight, and conduct our thoughts quickly to the roof and hearth and family beneath, revealing the homes of men.

Maynard's yard and frontage, and all his bams and fences, are singularly neat and substantial, and the highroad is in effect converted into a private way through his grounds. It suggests unspeakable peace and happiness. Yet, strange to tell, I noticed that he had a tiger instead of a cock for a vane on his bam, and he himself looked overworked. He had allowed the surviving forest trees to grow into ancestral trees about his premises, and so attach themselves to him as if he had planted them. The dusty highway was so subdued that it seemed as if it were lost there. He had all but

stretched a bar across it. Each traveller must have felt some misgivings, as if he were trespassing.

However, the farmer's life expresses only such content as an ox in his yard chewing the cud.

What though your hands are numb with cold, your sense of enjoyment is not benumbed. You cannot now find an apple but it is sweet to taste.

Simply to see to a distant horizon through a clear air, — the fine outline of a distant hill or a blue mountain-top through some new vista, — this is wealth enough for one afternoon.

We journeyed into the foreign land of Sudbury to see how the Sudbury men — the Hayneses, and the Puffers, and the Brighams — live. We traversed their pastures and their wood-lots, and were home again at night.

Nov. 23. George Minott tells me that sixty years ago wood was only two or three dollars a cord here — and some of that hickory. Remembers when Peter Wheeler, sixty or more years ago, cut off all at once over a hundred acres of wood stretching from Flint's Pond to Goose Pond, — since cut again in part by Britton, and owned now partly by the Stows.

Most of us are still related to our native fields as the navigator to undiscovered islands in the sea. We can any autumn discover a new fruit there which will surprise us by its beauty or sweetness. So long as I saw one or two kinds of berries in my walks whose names I did not know, the proportion of the unknown seemed indefinitely if not infinitely great.

Famous fruits imported from the tropics and sold in our markets — as oranges, lemons, pineapples, and bananas — do not concern me so much as many an unnoticed wild berry whose beauty annually lends a new charm to some wild walk, or which I have found to be palatable to an outdoor taste.

The tropical fruits are for those who dwell within the tropics; their fairest and sweetest parts cannot be exported nor imported. Brought here, they chiefly concern those whose walks are through the market-place. It is not the orange of Cuba, but the checkerberry of the neighboring pasture, that most delights the eye and the palate of the

New England child. What if the Concord Social Club, instead of eating oranges from Havana, should spend an hour in admiring the beauty of some wild berry from their own fields which they never attended to before? It is not the foreignness or size or nutritive qualities of a fruit that determine its absolute value.

It is not those far-fetched fruits which the speculator imports that concerns us chiefly, but rather those which you have fetched yourself in your basket from some far hill or swamp, journeying all the long afternoon in the hold of a basket, consigned to your friends at home, the first of the season.

We cultivate imported shrubs in our front yards for the beauty of their berries, when yet more beautiful berries grow unregarded by us in the surrounding fields.

As some beautiful or palatable fruit is perhaps the noblest gift of nature to man, so is a fruit with which a man has in some measure identified himself by cultivating or collecting it one of the most suitable presents to a friend. It was some compensation for Commodore Porter, who may have introduced some cannon-balls and bombshells into ports where they were not wanted, to have introduced the Valparaiso squash into the United States. I think that this eclipses his military glory.

As I sail the unexplored sea of Concord, many a dell and swamp and wooded hill is my Ceram and Amboyna.

At first, perchance, there would be an abundant crop of rank garden weeds and grasses in the cultivated land, —— and rankest of all in the cellar-holes, — and of pinweed, hardhack, sumach, blackberry, thimble-berry, raspberry, etc., in the fields and pastures. Elm, ash, maples, etc., would grow vigorously along old garden limits and main streets. Garden weeds and grasses would soon disappear. Huckleberry and blueberry bushes, lambkill, hazel, sweet-fern, barberry, elder, also shad-bush, choke-berry, andromeda, and thorns, etc., would rapidly prevail in the deserted pastures. At the same time the wild cherries, birch, poplar, willows, checkerberry would reestablish themselves. Finally the pines, hemlock, spruce, larch, shrub oak, oaks, chestnut, beech, and walnuts would occupy the site of Concord once more. The apple and perhaps all exotic trees and shrubs and a great part of the indigenous ones named above

would have disappeared, and the laurel and yew would to some extent be an underwood here, and perchance the red man once more thread his way through the mossy, swamp-like, primitive wood.

Nov. 24. P. M. — To Easterbrooks's.

Under the two white oaks by the second wall southeast of my house, on the east side the wall, I am surprised to find a great many sound acorns still, though every one is sprouted, — frequently more than a dozen on the short sward within a square foot, each with its radicle two inches long penetrated into the earth. But many have had their radicle broken or eaten off, and many have it now dead and withered. So far as my observation goes there, by far the greatest number of white oak acorns were destroyed by decaying (whether in consequence of frost or wet), both before and soon after falling. Not nearly so many have been carried off by squirrels and birds or consumed by grubs, though the number of acorns of all kinds lying under the trees is now comparatively small to what it was early in October.

It is true these two trees are exceptions and I do not find sound ones nearly as numerous under others.

Nevertheless, the sound white oak acorns are not so *generally* and *entirely* picked up as I supposed. However, there are a great many more shells or cups than acorns under the trees; even under these two trees, I think, there are not more than a third as many of any kind — sound or hollow — as there were, and generally those that remain are a very small fraction of what there were. It will be worth the while to see how many of these sprouted acorns are left and are sound in the spring. It is remarkable that all sound white oak acorns (and many which are not now sound) are sprouted, and that I have noticed no other kind sprouted, — though I have not seen the chestnut oak and little chinquapin at all. It remains to be seen how many of the above will be picked up by squirrels, etc., or destroyed by frost and grubs in the winter.

The first spitting of snow — a flurry or squall — from out a gray or slate-colored cloud that came up from the west. This consisted almost entirely of pellets an eighth of an inch or less in diameter. These drove along almost horizontally, or curving upward like the

outline of a breaker, before the strong and chilling wind. The plowed fields were for a short time whitened with them. The green moss about the bases of trees was very prettily spotted white with them, and also the large beds of cladonia in the pastures. They come to contrast with the red cockspur lichens on the stumps, which you had not noticed before. Striking against the trunks of the trees on the west side they fell and accumulated in a white line at the base. Though a slight touch, this was the first wintry scene of the season. The air was so filled with these snow pellets that we could not see a hill half a mile off for an hour. The hands seek the warmth of the pockets, and fingers are so benumbed that you cannot open your jack-knife. The rabbits in the swamps enjoy it, as well as you. Methinks the winter gives them more liberty, like a night. I see where a boy has set a box trap and baited it with half an apple, and, a mile off, come across a snare set for a rabbit or partridge in a cow-path in a pitch pine wood near where the rabbits have nibbled the apples which strew the wet ground. How pitiable that the most that many see of a rabbit should be the snare that some boy has set for one! —

The bitter-sweet of a white oak acorn which you nibble in a bleak November walk over the tawny earth is more to me than a slice of imported pineapple. We do not think much of table-fruits. They are especially for aldermen and epicures. They do not feed the imagination. That would starve on them. These wild fruits, whether eaten or not, are a dessert for the imagination. The south may keep her pineapples, and we will be content with our strawberries.

Nov. 25. I count the rings in a spruce plank from the railroad bridge, which extend five and a half inches from the centre of the tree, and make them 146, — 1/26 + to a ring. This is slower growth than I find in a black spruce to-day at —

Ministerial Swamp, P. M. — It is 101/2 feet high, 21/2 inches [in] diameter just above ground, and has 21 rings, 1 /17 inch to a ring. A larch near by is 21 feet high, inches [in] diameter, and has 20 rings, which makes + to a ring. The larch has made nearly twice as much wood as the spruce in the same time.

The cones of the spruce which I see are still closed. A few sugar maple seeds still hang on.

Last night and to-day are very cold and blustering. Winter weather has come suddenly this year. The house was shaken by wind last night, and there was a general deficiency of bedclothes. This morning some windows were as handsomely covered with frost as ever in winter. I wear mittens or gloves and my greatcoat. There is much ice on the meadows now, the broken edges shining in the sun. Now for the phenomena of winter, — the red buds of the high blueberry and the purple berries of the smilax.

As I go up the meadow-side toward Clamshell, I see a very great collection of crows far and wide on the meadows, evidently gathered by this cold and blustering weather. Probably the moist meadows where they feed are frozen up against them. They flit before me in countless numbers, flying very low on account of the strong northwest wind that comes over the hill, and a cold gleam is reflected from the back and wings of each, as from a weather-stained shingle. Some perch within three or four rods of me, and seem weary. I see where they have been pecking the apples by the meadow-side. An immense cohort of cawing crows which sudden winter has driven near to the habitations of man. When I return after sunset I see them collecting and hovering over and settling in the dense pine woods west of E. Wood's, as if about to roost there. Yesterday I saw one flying over the house, its wings so curved by the wind that I thought it a black hawk.

How is any scientific discovery made? Why, the discoverer takes it into his head first. He must all but see it.

I see several little white pines in Hosmer's meadow just beyond Lupine Hill, which must have sprung from seed which came some fifty rods, — probably blown so far in the fall. There are also a few in the road beyond Dennis's, which probably were blown from his swamp wood. So that there is nothing to prevent their springing up all over the village in a very few years — but our own plows and spades. They have also come up quite numerously in the young woodland north of J. P. B.'s Cold Pool (probably blown from the wood south of the pond), though they are evidently half a dozen years younger than the oaks there. I look at this large white pine wood by the pool to see if little ones come up under it. What was recently pasture comes up within a rod of this high wood on the

north side, and, though the fence is gone, the different condition and history of the ground is very apparent by the different aspect of the little pines. There the old white pines are dense, and there are no little ones under them, but only a rod north they are very abundant, forming a dense thicket only two or three feet high bounded by a straight line on the south (or east and west), where the edge of the open land was within a rod of the great pines. Here they sprang up abundantly in the open land close by, but not at all under the pines. Yet within the great wood, wherever it is more open from any cause, I see a great many little pines springing up. Though they are thin and feeble comparatively, yet most of them will evidently come to be trees. White pines will spring up in the more open parts of a white pine wood, even under pines, though they are thin and feeble just in proportion to the density of the larger pines, and, where the large trees are quite dense, they will not spring up at all.

How commonly you see pitch pines, white pines, and birches filling up a pasture, and, when they are a dozen or fifteen years old, shrub and other oaks beginning to show themselves, inclosing apple trees and walls and fences gradually and so changing the whole aspect of the region. These trees do not cover the whole surface equally at present, but are grouped very agreeably after natural laws which they obey. You remember, perhaps, that fifteen years ago there was not a single tree in this pasture, — not a germinating seed of one, — and now it is a pretty dense forest ten feet high. I confess that I love to be convinced of this inextinguishable vitality in Nature. I would rather that my body should be buried in a soil thus wide-awake than in a mere inert and dead earth. The cow-paths, the hollows where I slid in the winter, the rocks, are fast being enveloped and becoming rabbit-walks and hollows and rocks in the woods.

How often you make a man richer in spirit in proportion as you rob him of earthly luxuries and comforts!

I see much oak wood cut at thirty years of age, — sprout wood.

Many stumps which have only twenty-five or thirty rings send up no shoots, because they are the sprouts from old stumps, which you may still see by their sides, and so are really old trees and exhausted. The chopper should foresee this when he cuts down a wood.

The bass by Dugan's cut a year ago. It is hard to count, so indistinct its rings, but I make 46 to 50 in a diameter of some twenty inches. The sprouts are quite peculiar, so light an ash-color with red tips and large blunt red buds.

The old pitch pines (*vide* back two or three weeks) one hundred and sixty years old, that stood on the south side of the Tommy Wheeler hollow, were twenty-three in number on a space about twelve rods by three (or thirty-six rods), with half a dozen white pines and as many oaks, the last two say twenty to fifty years younger than the pitch pines. Probably some of the pitch pines have died and left no trees, so that it may originally have been a pretty dense grove of pitch pines. There were as many more pitch pines (not to mention the oaks and white pines) on the other side of the hollow. These were on a slope toward the north. Now, four years after they were cut, this hillside is covered with hazel bushes, huckleberries, young oaks, red maples, *Viburnum nudum*, and a few little white pines, but the hollow below them has little beside grass (fine sedge) in it. It will be long before anything catches there. It is remarkable that no pitch pines grew there before, nor oaks, and very few white pines, which were the only trees there.

Some pitch pines have shed their seeds.

Nov. 26. P. M. — To E. Hubbard's Wood.

I see in the open field east of Trillium Wood a few pitch pines springing up, from seeds blown from the wood a dozen or fifteen rods off. Here is one just noticeable on the sod — though by most it would be mistaken for a single sprig of moss — which came from the seed this year. It is, as it were, a little green star with many rays, half an inch in diameter, lifted an inch and a half above the ground on a slender stem. What a feeble beginning for so long-lived a tree! By the next fall it will be a star of greater magnitude, and in a few years, if not disturbed, these seedlings will alter the face of nature here. How significant, how ominous, the presence of these green moss-like stars is to the grass, heralding its doom! Thus from pasture this portion of the earth's surface becomes forest. These which are now mistaken for mosses in the grass may become lofty trees which will endure two hundred years, under which no vestige of this grass

will be left.

In Hubbard's Wood at north end I measure the stump of either a red or black oak: 21 inches [in] diameter and 141 rings.

I examine quite a number of oak stumps thereabouts and find them all seedlings. This, of course, must be the case with old forests generally, for in the beginning the trees were not cut.

A red oak about in middle of the wood	6½ feet	circumference	at 3 ft.
A canoe birch,	45 inches	"	" " "
Another " "	45½ "	"	" " "
A white oak on the east side rather toward south,	7 feet	"	" " "

Some of the white oaks have a very loose scaly bark, commencing half a dozen feet from the ground. I see pitch pine bark four to five inches thick at the ground. There are in this wood many little groves of white pines two to four feet high, quite dense and green, but these are in more open spaces, and are vigorous just In proportion to the openness. There are also seedling oaks and chestnuts ten to thirty years old, yet not nearly so numerous as the pines. The large wood is mixed oak and pine, — more oak at the north and more pine, especially pitch pine, at the south. The prospect is that in course of time the white pines will very greatly prevail over all other trees here. This is also the case with Inches', Blood's, and Wetherbee's woods.

If I am not mistaken, an evidence of more openness where the little pines are is to be found in the greater prevalence of pyrola and lycopodiums there. There are even some healthy *Juniperus repens* in the midst of these woods. Though the pitch pines are the prevailing trees at the south end, I see no young pitch pines under them.

Perhaps this is the way that a natural succession takes place. Perhaps oak seedlings do not so readily spring up and thrive within a mixed white pine and oak wood as pines do, — in the more open parts, — and thus, as the oaks decay, they are replaced by pines rather than by oaks.

But where did the pitch pines stand originally? Who cleared the land for its seedlings to spring up in? It is commonly referred to very poor and sandy land, yet I find it growing on the best land also. The expression "a pitch pine plain" is but another name for a poor and

sandy level. It grows both on the sand and [in] the swamp, and the fact that it grows on the sand chiefly is not so much evidence that it prefers it as that other trees have excluded it from better soil. If you cut down the pines on the pitch pine plain, oaks will come up there too. Who knows but the fires or clearings of the Indians may have to do with the presence of these trees there? They regularly cleared extensive tracts for cultivation, and these were always level tracts where the soil was light — such as they could turn over with their rude hoes. Such was the land which they are known to have cultivated extensively in this town, as the Great Fields and the rear of Mr. Dennis's, — sandy plains. It is in such places chiefly that you find their relics in any part of the county. They did not cultivate such soil as our maple swamps occupy, or such a succession of hills and dales as this oak wood covers. Other trees will grow where the pitch pine does, but the former will maintain its ground there the best. I know of no tree so likely to spread rapidly over such areas when abandoned by the aborigines as the pitch pines — and next birches and white pines.

While I am walking in the oak wood or counting the rings of a stump, I hear the faint note of a nuthatch like the creak of a limb, and detect [it] on the trunk of an oak much nearer than I suspected, and its mate or companion not far off. This is a constant phenomenon of the late fall or early winter; for we do not hear them in summer that I remember. I heard one not long since in the street.

I see one of those common birch fungi on the side of a birch stake which has been used to bound a lot sold at auction, three feet or more from the ground, and its face is toward the earth as usual, though the birch is bottom up.

I saw that nuthatch to-day pick out from a crevice in the bark of an oak trunk, where it was perpendicular, something white once or twice and pretty large. May it not have been the meat of an acorn? Yet commonly they are steadily hopping about the trunks in search of insect food. Possibly some of those acorn-shells I see about the base of trees may have been dropped from the crevices in the bark above by birds — nuthatch or jay — as well as left by squirrels.

Mother says that Lidy Bay, an Indian woman (so considered), used to live in the house beyond Cæsar's and made baskets, which

she brought to town to sell, with a ribbon about her hat. She had a husband.

The value of these wild fruits is not in the mere possession or eating of them, but in the sight or enjoyment of them. The very derivation of the word "fruit" would suggest this. It is from the Latin *fructus*, meaning that which is *used* or *enjoyed.* If it were not so, then going a-berrying and going to market would be nearly synonymous expressions. Of course it is the spirit in which you do a thing which makes it interesting, whether it is sweeping a room or pulling turnips. Peaches are unquestionably a very beautiful and palatable fruit, but the gathering of them for the market is not nearly so interesting as the gathering of huckleberries for your own use.

A man fits out a ship at a great expense and sends it to the West Indies with a crew of men and boys, and after six months or a year it comes back with a load of pineapples. Now, if no more gets accomplished than the speculator commonly aims at, — if it simply turns out what is called a successful venture, — I am less interested in this expedition than in some child's first excursion a-huckleberrying, in which it is introduced into a new world, experiences a new development, though it brings home only a gill of huckleberries in its basket. I know that the newspapers and the politicians declare otherwise, but they do not alter the fact. Then, I think that the fruit of the latter expedition was finer than that of the former. It was a more fruitful expedition. The value of any experience is measured, of course, not by the amount of money, but the amount of development we get out of it. If a New England boy's dealings with oranges and pineapples have had more to do with his development than picking huckleberries or pulling turnips have, then he rightly and naturally thinks more of the former; otherwise not.

Do not think that the fruits of New England are mean and insignificant, while those of some foreign land are noble and memorable. Our own, whatever they may be, are far more important to us than any others can be. They educate us, and fit us to live in New England. Better for us is the wild strawberry than the pineapple, the wild apple than the orange, the hazelnut or pignut than the cocoanut or almond, and not on account of their flavor merely, but the part they play in our education.

In the Massachusetts Historical Collections, First Series, volume x, Rev. John Gardner of Stow furnishes a brief historical notice of that town in a letter dated 1767. He says, "The Indian names of this place were Pompociticut and Shabbukin, from two notable hills."

I anticipated the other day that if anybody should write the history of Boxboro, once a part of Stow, he would be pretty sure to omit to notice the most interesting thing in it — its forest — and lay all the stress on the history of its parish; and I find that I had conjectured rightly, for Mr. Gardner, after telling us who was his predecessor in the ministry and where he himself was settled, goes on to say: "As for any remarkables, I am of the mind there have been the fewest of any town of our standing in the Province.... I can't call to mind above one thing worthy of publick notice, and that is the grave of Mr. John Green," who, it appears, "was made... clerk of the exchequer" by Cromwell. "Whether he was excluded the Act of Oblivion or not I cannot tell," says Mr. Gardner. At any rate he tells us that he returned to New England, "lived and died, and lies buried in this place." I can assure Mr. Gardner that he was not excluded from the act of oblivion.

However, Boxboro was less peculiar for its woods a hundred years ago.

I have been surprised when a young man who had undertaken to write the history of a country town, — his native place, — the very name of which suggested a hundred things to me, referred to it, as the crowning fact of his story, that that town was the residence of General So-and-so and the family mansion was still standing.

Nov. 28. P. M. — To Annursnack.

Looking from the hilltop, I should say that there was more oak woodland than pine to be seen, especially in the north and northeast, but it is somewhat difficult to distinguish all in the gleaming sunlight of midafternoon. Most of the oak, however, is quite young. As for pines, I cannot say surely which kind is most prevalent, not being certain about the most distant woods. The white pine is much the most dispersed, and grows oftener in low ground than the pitch pine does. It oftenest forms mixed woods with oak, etc., growing in straight or meandering lines, occasionally swelling into a dense

grove. The pitch pines commonly occupy a dry soil — a plain or brow of a hill, often the site of an old grain-field or pasture — and are much the most seclusive, for, being a new wood, oaks, etc., have had no opportunity to grow up there, if they could. I look down now on the top of a pitch pine wood southwest of Brooks's Pigeon-place, and its top, so nearly level, has a peculiarly rich and crispy look in the sun. Its limbs are short and its plumes stout as compared with the white pine and are of a yellowish green.

There are many handsome young walnuts ten or twelve feet high scattered over the southeast side of Annursnack, or above the orchard. How came they there? Were they planted before a wood was cut? It is remarkable how this tree loves a hillside.

Behind G. M. Barrett's bam a scarlet oak stump 18 1/2 inches [in] diameter and about 94 rings, which has sent up a sprout two or three years since. On the plain just north of the east end of G. M. B.'s oaks, many oaks were sawed off about a year ago. Those I look at are seedlings and very sound and rings very distinct and handsome. Generally no sprouts from them, though one white oak sprout had been killed by frost. One white oak, 17 inches [in] diameter, has 100 rings. A second, 16 1/2 """"also 100"

The last has two centres which coalesced at the thirtieth ring, which went round them both including old bark between them. This was an instance of natural grafting.

Many seem to be so constituted that they can respect only somebody who is dead or something which is distant.

The less you get, the happier and the richer you are. The rich man's son gets cocoanuts, and the poor man's, pignuts; but the worst of it is that the former never goes a-cocoanutting, and so he never gets the cream of the cocoanut as the latter does the cream of the pignut.

That on which commerce seizes is always the very coarsest part of a fruit, — the mere husk and rind, in fact, — for her hands are very clumsy. This is what fills the holds of ships, is exported and imported, pays duties, and is finally sold at the shops.

It is a grand fact that you cannot make the finer fruits or parts of fruits matter of commerce. You may buy a servant or slave, in short, but you cannot buy a friend. You can't buy the finer part of any fruit

— *i.e.* the highest use and enjoyment of it. You cannot buy the pleasure which it yields to him who truly plucks it; you can't buy a good appetite even.

What are all the oranges imported into England to the hips and haws in her hedges? She could easily spare the one, but not the others. Ask Wordsworth, or any of her poets, which is the most to him.

The mass of men are very easily imposed on. They have their runways in which they always travel, and are sure to fall into any pit or box trap set therein. Whatever a great many grown-up boys are seriously engaged in is considered great and good, and, as such, is sure of the recognition of the churchman and statesman. What, for instance, are the blue juniper berries in the pasture, which the cowboy remembers so far as they are beautiful merely, to church or state? Mere trifles which deserve and get no protection. As an object of beauty, though significant to all who really live in the country, they do not receive the protection of any community. Anybody may grub up all that exist. But as an article of commerce they command the attention of the civilized world. I read that "several hundred tons of them are imported annually from the continent" into England to flavor gin with; "but even this quantity," says my author, "is quite insufficient to meet the enormous consumption of the fiery liquid, and the deficiency is made up by spirits of turpentine." Go to the English Government, which, of course, is representative of the people, and ask, What is the use of juniper berries? The answer is, To flavor gin with. This is the gross abuse of juniper berries, with which an enlightened Government —— if ever there shall be one — will have nothing to do.

Let us make distinctions, call things by the right names.

Nov. 29. Get up my boat, 7 A. M. Thin ice of the night is floating down the river. I hear that some boys went on to Goose Pond on the 26th and skated. It must have been thin.

P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill.

The pitch pine twigs have been so generally cut off by the squirrels for the sake of the cones that I easily detect the fertile trees, when going through a pitch pine wood, by seeing the green twigs

strewn on the ground beneath. But few of the trees bear, and these are the ones.

The Bear Garden pitch pines are so generally open that young pitch pines of all sizes are intermixed with the others. There are many small white pines beside, but few if any seed-bearing ones.

I proceed through Potter's young wood south of this grove (toward Fair Haven Hill-side) and here I find by the stumps what I remember, — that a pitch pine wood was cut, some ten or twelve years ago, judging from the state of the stumps. It was for density, apparently, such a grove as now stands northward of this. It is a very poor soil. Shrub oaks chiefly appear to have succeeded to the pines, and now the growth consists of oaks, shrub and others (the latter four to six feet high), pitch pines two to ten feet high, and white birches. The soil is but poorly clad, owing to its barrenness and the prevalence of shrub oak at first. Probably the largest of these young pitch pines were such as stood in the open wood when it was cut — as they now do northward; but apparently the majority have been sown since, as others are still being sown by the large pitch pines there are left here and there quite numerously, the ground is still so open and bare on account of the feeble growth of the oaks. The white birches have as yet done the best, the pines next. It will ere long be a mixed oak and pitch pine wood, the pines not standing so dense as in new woods, though pretty thick in spots. This shows how a mixed wood of this character may arise, owing first to the existence of young pitch pines under the old when cut, — the latter being so open as to admit of their growth, — and secondly to the barren soil and shrub oaks, which fail to cover it for a long time, so that even after six or eight years pitch pines may catch there from seed-bearing trees which are left.

I am pleased to find an evidence that the pitch pine wood cut down here a dozen years ago was just such a *new* wood as that now standing on [the] north. It is this. Along the southwest edge of this portion of the lot, where the almost abrupt descent begins, I see many stones which were cast over the edge of the bank in great heaps when it was cultivated.

The small pitch pine grove above the western Fair Haven spring fully proves my theory of white pines in pitch pine, though there is

hardly a seed-bearing white pine there. Young white pines are rapidly spreading up Fair Haven Hill-side, though the nearest seed-bearing white pines are across the river, thirty to sixty rods off.

I remember when this hillside above the spring was clear of wood. In fact, I was here when this field was cleared and the brush burned, some thirty-five years ago. Yet I now see a good many hickories both within and without the pines, five feet high, more or less. I feel about sure that these are not from stumps or old roots which have existed in the ground so long. How then did they come here? The[y] even keep in advance of the pines on some sides a rod or two further into the open land. I am constrained to believe that they were planted there by quadrupeds or birds. If so, the walnut differs from the oak in the mode of its spreading; for I do not see oaks anywhere thus springing up in groves in grass ground, in advance of pines. It will be worth the while to ascertain the age of these exactly.

It is remarkable that the walnut loves a hillside so. I saw such a grove yesterday on Annursnack. Here is another of still larger trees a little lower down the hill; and there is a much more extensive one on the similar slope of Smith's Hill. Are animals more likely to plant walnuts in open land than acorns? or is it that walnuts are more likely to live there when planted? What a lover of the hills is this tree! I may be mistaken about those on Smith's Hill, after all.

Fair Haven Pond is skimmed over, all but the channel.

Can that be the skeleton of a raccoon which I find (killed not long since) on the Cliff Hill? Measured by my book it — the body from shoulder to tail — is 15} inches long; tail, 13 1/2; hind leg, 14 1/2. *Vide* skull and foot.

If a man has spent all his days about some business, by which he has merely got to be rich, as it is called, *i.e.,* has got much money, many houses and barns and wood-lots, then his life has been a failure, I think; but if he has been trying to better his condition in a higher sense than this, has been trying to invent something, to be somebody, — *i.e.,* to invent and get a patent for himself, — so that all may see his originality, though he should never get above board, — and great inventors, you know, commonly die poor, — I shall think him comparatively successful.

From the Cliff I see more oak than pine.

Every interest, as the codfish and the mackerel, gets represented but the huckleberry interest. The first discoverers and explorers of the land make report of this fruit, but the last make comparatively little account of them.

You would say that some men had been tempted to live in this world at all only by the offer of a bounty by the general government — a bounty on living — to any one who will consent to be *out* at this era of the world, the object of the governors being to create a nursery for their navy. I told such a man the other day that I had got a Canada lynx here in Concord, and his instant question was, "Have you got the reward for him?" What reward? Why, the ten dollars which the State offers. As long as I saw him he neither said nor thought anything about the lynx, but only about this reward. "Yes," said he, "this State offers ten dollars reward." You might have inferred that ten dollars was something rarer in his neighborhood than a lynx even, and he was anxious to see it on that account. I have thought that a lynx was a bright-eyed, four-legged, furry beast of the cat kind, very *current*, indeed, though its natural gait is by leaps. But he knew it to be a draught drawn by the cashier of the wildcat bank on the State treasury, payable at sight. Then I reflected that the first money was of leather, or a whole creature (whence *pecunia,* from *pecus*, a herd), and, since leather was at first furry, I easily understood the connection between a lynx and ten dollars, and found that all money was traceable right back to the original wildcat bank. But the fact was that, instead of receiving ten dollars for the lynx which I had got, I had paid away some dollars in order to get him. So, you see, I was away back in a gray antiquity behind the institution of money, — further than history goes.

This reminded me that I once saw a cougar recently killed at the Adirondacks which had had its ears clipped. This was a ten-dollar cougar.

Yet, though money can buy no fine fruit whatever, and we are never made truly rich by the possession of it, the value of things generally is commonly estimated by the amount of money they will fetch. A thing is not valuable — *e g.* a fine situation for a house — until it is convertible into so much money, that is, can cease to be what it is and become something else which you prefer. So you will

see that all prosaic people who possess only the commonest sense, who believe strictly in this kind of wealth, are speculators in fancy stocks and continually cheat themselves, but poets and all discerning people, who have an object in life and know what they want, speculate in real values. The mean and low values of anything depend on it[s] convertibility into something else — *i.e.* have nothing to do with its intrinsic value.

This world and our life have practically a similar value only to most. The value of life is what anybody will give you for living. A man has his price at the South, is worth so many dollars, and so he has at the North. Many a man here sets out by saying,'I will make so many dollars by such a time, or before I die, and that is his price, as much as if he were knocked off for it by a Southern auctioneer.

We hear a good deal said about moonshine by so-called practical people, and the next day, perchance, we hear of their failure, they having been dealing in fancy stocks; but there really never is any moonshine of this kind in the practice of poets and philosophers; there never are any hard times or failures with them, for they deal with permanent values.

DECEMBER, 1860

Dec. 1. P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill.

Yesterday, rain, raising river somewhat. Examined the young hickories on Fair Haven Hill slope to see how old they are. I sawed off three at two or three inches below the surface, and also higher up. These were about three feet high. The rings are very hard to discern, but I judge the smallest of them (which is about one inch in diameter and three feet high) to be seven years old. The other two are probably older, yet not nearly so old as the pines whose beginning I remember. It therefore must be that these hickories have sprung up from nuts within seven to twenty-five years past. They are most numerous in openings four or five rods over amid the pines, and are also found many rods from the pines in the open pasture, and also especially along walls, though yet very far from other trees of any kind. I infer, therefore, that animals plant them, and perhaps their growing along walls may be accounted for in part by the fact that the squirrels with nuts oftenest take that road. What is most remarkable is that they should be planted so often in open land, on a bare hillside, where oaks rarely are. I do not know of a grove of oaks springing up in this manner, — with broad intervals of bare sward between them, and away from pines.

How is this to be accounted for? Yet I did notice oak seedlings coming up in this manner in Potter's open field beyond Bear Garden.

It is wonderful how much these hickories have endured and prevailed over. Though I searched the whole hillside, not only for the smallest, but the most perpendicular and soundest, each of the three that I sawed off had died down once at least, years ago. Though it might not betray any scar above ground, on digging I found it an inch below the surface.

Most of these small ones consist of several stems from one root, and they are often of such fantastic forms and so diseased that they seem to be wholly dead at a little distance, and yet evidently many of them make erect, smooth, and sound trees at last, all defects smoothed over or obliterated. Some which have thus died down and sprung up again are in the form of rude harps and the like. These had

great tap-roots considerably larger just beneath the surface than the stock above, and they were so firmly set in the ground that, though the tree was scarcely an inch in diameter and you had dug around it to the depth of three or four inches, it was impossible to pull one up; yet I did not notice any side roots, so high. They are iron trees, so rigid and so firm set are they. It may be that they are more persistent at the root than oaks, and so at last succeed in becoming trees in these localities where oaks fail. They may be more persevering. Perhaps, also, cattle do not browse them, but do oaks. It will be very suggestive to a novice just to go and dig up a dozen seedling oaks and hickories and see what they have had to contend with. Theirs is like the early career of genius.

Measured a great red maple near the south end of E. Hubbard's swamp, dividing in two at the ground, the largest trunk 7 feet and 10 inches at three feet and draped for three or four feet up with the pulmonaria (?) lichen. This the largest I know. Another is 5 1/2 feet, a third 5 1/4, a fourth in open land just south of turnpike 6 1/6.

Dec. 2. P. M. — To Smith's Hickory Hill-side.

I come *via* Britton's to see if I can find a seedling hickory under half a dozen years old. After searching long amid the very numerous young hickories at Britton's shanty and Smith's Hill I fail to find one so recently planted. I find many at the last place only one or two feet, but they invariably have great roots, and old stubs which have died down are visible at or beneath the surface of the ground. It is very common — almost the rule — to find from one to three from one root each one inch in diameter and two or three feet high, while the common stock beneath the ground is two inches in diameter. Pulling at one at Britton's, which was two feet and a quarter in height, it came up easily, to my surprise, and I found that it had broken off at just one foot below the surface, being quite decayed there. It was three quarters of an inch in diameter at the surface, and increased regularly for five or six inches downward till it was one inch in diameter. There was the stub of an old shoot, and the root was suddenly enlarged to about one and a half inches in diameter and held about the same to where it broke off, at a foot below the surface. There was another stub about three inches above the ground, and the

more recent growth above this was the work of about four years. This last had died, and this year two shoots had put out at six and eight inches above the ground and had grown two and four inches respectively. Here were evident, then, at the very least, four efforts to rise to a tree.

The first stub was about the diameter of the whole tree at present (above ground). Call it, then,	4 years
The second was probably two years old when it died (at least)	2
The third (forming the present tree)	4
The fourth (growth of this year)	1
	11

This little hickory, two feet and a quarter high and three quarters of an inch in diameter, standing in open land, was then at least eleven years old. What more the root would have revealed if I had dug deeper, I do not know. The fact that the lowest observed stub was nearly six inches below the surface, showing plainly to the eye that the earth had been heaped up about, was significant and suggested that this root might have survived in the ground through clearing and burning and subsequent cultivation. I remember well when the field was cultivated, I should think within ten or twelve years. It must be seventeen or eighteen years since the woods were cut here; since which time a peach orchard (which I selected) has been raised, a premium obtained for it, and the trees died and gone some years ago, also an apple orchard. The hickories are on the site and in the midst of these; and what makes it the more likely that these hickories may be from roots of young seedlings left in the ground is the fact that there are sprouts from several large chestnut stumps in the midst of the orchard, which, by their size, have probably been cut down once or twice since the tree was cut, and yet survived. What is true of these chestnut sprouts may be true of the hickories.

On Smith's Hill I selected a large and healthy-looking one (hickory), sawed it off, and found it nearly dead. It was four years old. It had been cut down before to a stub, which showed five years

more. I did not look beneath the surface. The leading shoot was perfectly withered and dead. The same was very commonly the case, except when the tree had got above a certain height. I do not think that a single hickory has been planted in either of these places for some years at least. Indeed, why should squirrels bring the nuts to these particular localities where other hickories already stood? which they must do, supposing them to be planted still, and not to be all of one age.

They seem to be able to resist fire, cultivation, and frost. The last is apparently their great enemy at present. It is astonishing how many efforts they make, how persistent they are. Thus much is certain, at least.

In surrounding young wood they are common, and have got up three or four times as high. It may be that when pine and oaks and hickories, young and old, are cut off and the land cleared, the two former are exterminated but the hickories are tough and stubborn and do not give up the ground. I cannot as yet account for their existence in these two localities otherwise. Yet I still think that some must have been planted on Fair Haven Hill *without the pines* in a manner in which oaks are not, within a dozen years. Or perchance, if the oaks are *so* planted, they fail to come up?

In Stow's wood at Saw Mill Brook an old chestnut stump. Two sprouts from this were cut three years ago and have forty-two rings. From the stumps of the sprouts, other sprouts three years old have grown. The old stump was cut there forty-five years ago. The centre of the stumps of each of these sprouts is hollow for one and a half inches in diameter. See a chestnut stump, a seedling sawed off, with seventy-five rings and no sprout from it. Commonly the sprouts stand in a circle around the stump, — often a dozen or more of them.

Dec. 3. P. M. — To Hill.

The hickory which was blown down by the wall has been cut up into lengths. The end of one some twelve feet from ground *apparently* is sixteen inches in diameter and has 112 rings distinct, the first 50 within five and three quarters inches. The bark is one inch thick.

Measured the three white oaks on the southeast side of hill.

The northernmost at three feet is 10 feet in circumference.

"southeastemmost """""10 1/3 "— "

"southwestemmost """""11 1/2 "— "

I find no young hickories springing up on the *open* hillside. Yet, if they do so elsewhere, why should they not here, where nuts are abundant? But, under and about the hickory which stands near the white oak (under the north side of the hill), there are many small hickories two to four feet high amid the birches and pines, — the largest of which birches and pines have been lately cut off.

I am inclined to think now that both oaks and hickories are occasionally planted in open land a rod or two or more beyond the edge of a pine or other wood, but that the hickory roots are more persistent under these circumstances and hence oftener succeed there.

As for the planting of acorns, it is to be observed that they do not require to be buried but merely transported and dropped on the surface in a suitable place. All the sound white oak acorns that I can find have now sent down their radicle under these circumstances, though, no doubt, far the greatest part of them will be killed this winter.

Talking with Walcott and Staples to-day, they declared that John Brown did wrong. When I said that I thought he was right, they agreed in asserting that he did wrong because he threw his life away, and that no man had a right to undertake anything which he knew would cost him his life. I inquired if Christ did not foresee that he would be crucified if he preached such doctrines as he did, but they both, though as if it was their only escape, asserted that they did not believe that he did. Upon which a third party threw in, "You do not think that he had so much foresight as Brown." Of course, they as good as said that, if Christ *had* foreseen that he would be crucified, he would have "backed out." Such are the principles and the logic of the mass of men.

It is to be remembered that by good deeds or words you encourage yourself, who always have need to witness or hear them.

Dec. 4. The first snow, four or five inches, this evening.

Talk about slavery! It is not the peculiar institution of the South. It exists wherever men are bought and sold, wherever a man allows

himself to be made a mere thing or a tool, and surrenders his inalienable rights of reason and conscience. Indeed, this slavery is more complete than that which enslaves the body alone. It exists in the Northern States, and I am reminded by what I find in the newspapers that it exists in Canada. I never yet met with, or heard of, a judge who was not a slave of this kind, and so the finest and most unfailing weapon of injustice. He fetches a slightly higher price than the black man only because he is a more valuable slave.

It appears that a colored man killed his would-be kidnapper in Missouri and fled to Canada. The bloodhounds have tracked him to Toronto and now demand him of her judges. From all that I can learn, they are playing their parts like judges. They are servile, while the poor fugitive in their jail is free in spirit at least.

This is what a Canadian writes to the *New York Tribune:* "Our judges may be compelled to render a judgment adverse to the prisoner. Depend upon it, they will not do it unless *compelled* [his italics]. And then the poor fellow will be taken back, and probably burned to death by the brutes of the South." Compelled! By whom? Does God compel them? or is it some other master whom they serve? Can't they hold out a little longer against the *tremendous pressure?* If they are fairly represented, I would n't trust their courage to defend a setting hen of mine against a weasel. Will this excuse avail them when the real day of judgment comes? They have not to fear the slightest bodily harm: no one stands over them with a stick or a knife even [?]. They have at the worst only to resign their places and not a mouse will squeak about it. And yet they are likely to assist in tying this victim to the stake! Would that his example might teach them to break their own fetters! They appear not to know what kind of justice that is which is to be done though the heavens fall. Better that the British Empire be destroyed than that it should help to reënslave this man!

This correspondent suggests that the "good people" of New York may rescue him as he is being carried back. There, then, is the only resort of justice, — not where the judges are, but where the mob is, where human hearts are beating, and hands move in obedience to their impulses. Perhaps his fellow-fugitives in Torontomay not feel compelled to surrender him. Justice, departing from the Canadian

soil, leaves her last traces among these.

What is called the religious world very generally deny virtue to all who have not received the Gospel. They accept no god as genuine but the one that bears a Hebrew name. The Greenlander's *Pirksoma* [?] (he that is above), or any the like, is always the name of a false god to them.

C. says that Walden was first frozen over on the 16th December.

Dec. 22. This evening and night, the second important snow, there having been sleighing since the 4th, and now, —

Dec. 23, — there is seven or eight inches of snow at least. Larks were about our house the middle of this month.

Dec. 26. Melvin sent to me yesterday a perfect *Strix asio,* or red owl of Wilson, — not at all gray. This is now generally made the same with the *nævia*, but, while some consider the red the old, others consider the red the young. This is, as Wilson says, a bright "nut brown" like a hazelnut or dried hazel bur (not *hazel).* It is twenty-three inches [in] alar extent by about eleven long. Feet extend one inch beyond tail. Cabot makes the old bird red; Audubon, the young. How well fitted these and other owls to withstand the winter! a mere core in the midst of such a muff of feathers! Then the feet of this are feathered finely to the claws, looking like the feet of a furry quadruped. Accordingly owls are common here in winter; hawks, scarce.

It is no worse, I allow, than almost every other practice which custom has sanctioned, but that is the worst of it, for it shows how bad the rest are. To such a pass our civilization and division of labor has come that A, a professional huckleberry-picker, has hired B's field and, we will suppose, is now gathering the crop, perhaps with the aid of a patented machine; C, a professed cook, is superintending the cooking of a pudding made of some of the berries; while Professor D, for whom the pudding is intended, sits in his library writing a book, —— a work on the Vaccinieæ, of course. And now the result of this downward course will be seen in that book, which should be the ultimate fruit of the huckleberry-field and account for

the existence of the two professors who come between D and A. It will be worthless. There will be none of the spirit of the huckleberry in it. The reading of it will be a weariness to the flesh. To use a homely illustration, this is to save at the spile but waste at the bung. I believe in a different kind of division of labor, and that Professor D should divide himself between the library and the huckleberry-field.

Dec. 30. *Sunday.* I saw the crows a week ago perched on the swamp white oaks over the road just beyond Wood's Bridge, and many acorns and bits of bark and moss, evidently dropped or knocked off by them, lay on the snow beneath. One sat within twenty feet over my head with what looked like a piece of acorn in his bill.

To-day I see that they have carried these same white oak acorns, cups and all, to the ash tree by the riverside, some thirty rods southeast, and dropped them there. Perhaps they find some grubs in the acorns, when they do not find meat. The crows now and of late frequent thus the large trees by the river, especially swamp white oak, and the snow beneath is strewn with bits of bark and moss and with acorns (commonly worthless). They are foraging. Under the first swamp white oak in Hubbard's great meadow (Cyanean) I see a little snap-turtle (shell some one and a quarter inches in diameter — on his second year, then) on its back on the ice — shell, legs, and tail perfect, but head pulled off, and most of the inwards with it by the same hole (where the neck was). What is left smells quite fresh, and this head must have been tom off to-day — or within a day or two. I see two crows on the next swamp white oak westward, and I can scarcely doubt that they did it. Probably one found the young turtle at an open and springy place in the meadow, or by the river, where they are constantly preying, and flew with it to this tree. Yet it is possible (?) that it was frozen to death when they found it.

I also saw under the oak where the crows were one of those large brown cocoons of the *Attacus Cecropia*, which no doubt they had tom off.

Eben Conant's sons tell me that there has been a turtle dove associating with their tame doves and feeding in the yard from time to time for a fortnight past. They saw it to-day.

The traveller Burton says that the word *Doab*, "which means the

land embraced by the bifurcation of two streams, has no English equivalent." ("Lake Regions of Central Africa," page 72.)

It is remarkable how universally, as it respects soil and exposure, the whortleberry family is distributed with us, one kind or another (of those of which I am speaking) flourishing in every soil and locality, — the Pennsylvania and Canada blueberries especially in elevated cool and airy places — on hills and mountains, and in openings in the woods and in sprout-lands; the high blueberry in swamps, and the second low blueberry in intermediate places, or almost anywhere but in swamps hereabouts; while we have two kinds confined to the Alpine tops of our highest mountains. The family thus ranges from the highest mountain-tops to the lowest swamps and forms the prevailing small shrubs of a great part of New England. Not only is this true of the family, but *hereabouts* of the genus *Gaylussacia*, or the huckleberries proper, alone. I do not know of a spot where any shrub grows in this neighborhood but one or another species or variety of the *Gaylussacia* may also grow there. It is stated in Loudon (page 1076) that all the plants of this order "require a peat soil, or a soil of a close cohesive nature," but this is not the case with the huckleberry. The huckleberry grows on the tops of our highest hills; no pasture is too rocky or barren for it; it grows in such deserts as we have, standing in pure sand; and, at the same time, it flourishes in the strongest and most fertile soil. One variety is peculiar to quaking bogs where there can hardly be said to be any soil beneath, not to mention another but unpalatable species, the hairy huckleberry, which is found in bogs. It extends through all our woods more or less thinly, and a distinct species, the dangle-berry, belongs especially to moist woods and the edges of swamps.

Such care has nature taken to furnish to birds and quadrupeds, and to men, a palatable berry of this kind, slightly modified by soil and climate, wherever the consumer may chance to be. Com and potatoes, apples and pears, have comparatively a narrow range, but we can fill our basket with whortleberries on the summit of Mt. Washington, above almost all the shrubs with which we are familiar, — the same kind which they have in Greenland, — and again, when we get home, with another species in Beck Stow's Swamp.

I find that in Bomare's "Dictionnaire Raisonné" the *Vitis Idœa* (of

many kinds) is called “raisin des bois.” Our word “berry,” according to lexicographers, is from the Saxon *beria*, a grape or cluster of grapes; but it must acquire a new significance here, if a new word is not substituted for it.

According to Father Rasies’ Dictionary, the Abenaki word for bluets was, fresh, *satar* (in another place *sate, tar);* dry, *sakisatar.*

First there is the early dwarf blueberry, the smallest of the whortleberry shrubs with us, and the first to ripen its fruit, not commonly an erect shrub, but more or less reclined and drooping, often covering the earth with a sort of dense matting. The twigs are green, the flowers commonly white. Both the shrub and its fruit are the most tender and delicate of any that we have.

The *Vaccinium Canadense* may be considered a more northern form of the same.

Some ten days later comes the high blueberry, or swamp blueberry, the commonest stout shrub of our swamps, of which I have been obliged to cut down not a few when running lines as a surveyor through the low woods. They are a pretty sure indication of water, and, when I see their dense curving tops ahead, I prepare to wade, or for a wet foot. The flowers have an agreeable sweet and berry-promising fragrance, and a handful of them plucked and eaten have a subacid taste agreeable to some palates.

At the same time with the last the common low blueberry is ripe. This is an upright slender shrub with a few long wand-like branches, with green bark and pink-colored recent shoots and glaucous-green leaves. The flowers have a considerable rosy tinge, of a delicate tint.

The last two more densely flowered than the others.

The huckleberry, as you know, is an upright shrub, more or less stout depending on the exposure to the sun and air, with a spreading, bushy top, a dark-brown bark, and red recent shoots, with thick leaves. The flowers are much more red than those of the others.

As in old times they who dwelt on the heath remote from towns were backward to adopt the doctrines which prevailed there, and were therefore called heathen in a bad sense, so we dwellers in the huckleberry pastures, which are our heath lands, are slow to adopt the notions of large towns and cities and may perchance be nicknamed huckleberry people. But the worst of it is that the

emissaries of the towns care more for our berries than for our salvation.

In those days the very race had got a bad name, and *ethnicus* was only another name for heathen.

All our hills are or have been huckleberry hills, the three hills of Boston and, no doubt, Bunker Hill among the rest.

In May and June all our hills and fields are adorned with a profusion of the pretty little more or less bellshaped flowers of this family, commonly turned toward the earth and more or less tinged with red or pink and resounding with the hum of insects, each one the forerunner of a berry the most natural, wholesome, palatable that the soil can produce.

The early low blueberry, which I will call "bluet," adopting the name from the Canadians, is probably the prevailing kind of whortleberry in New England, for the high blueberry and huckleberry are unknown in many sections. In many New Hampshire towns a neighboring mountain-top is the common berry-field of many villages, and in the berry season such a summit will be swarming with pickers. A hundred at once will rush thither from all the surrounding villages, with pails and buckets of all descriptions, especially on a Sunday, which is their leisure day. When camping on such ground, thinking myself quite out of the world, I have had my solitude very unexpectedly interrupted by such an advent, and found that the week-days were the only Sabbath-days there.

For a mile or more on such a rocky mountain-top this will be the prevailing shrub, occupying every little shelf from several rods down to a few inches only in width, and then the berries droop in short wreaths over the rocks, sometimes the thickest and largest along a seam in a shelving rock, — either that light mealy-blue, or a shining black, or an intermediate blue, without bloom. When, at that season, I look from Concord toward the blue mountain-tops in the horizon, I am reminded that near at hand they are equally blue with berries.

The mountain-tops of New England, often lifted above the clouds, are thus covered with this beautiful blue fruit, in greater profusion than in any garden.

What though the woods be cut down, this emergency was long ago foreseen and provided for by Nature, and the interregnum is not

allowed to be a barren one. She is full of resources: she not only begins instantly to heal that scar, but she consoles (compensates?) and refreshes us with fruits such as the forest did not produce. To console us she heaps our baskets with berries.

The timid or ill-shod confine themselves to the land side, where they get comparatively few berries and many scratches, but the more adventurous, making their way through the open swamp, which the bushes overhang, wading amid the water andromeda and sphagnum, where the surface quakes for a rod around, obtain access to those great drooping clusters of berries which no hand has disturbed. There is no wilder and richer sight than is afforded from such a point of view, of the edge of a blueberry swamp where various wild berries are intermixed.

As the sandalwood is said to diffuse its perfume around the woodman who cuts it, so in this case Nature rewards with unexpected fruits the hand that lays her waste.

1861

Jan. 3. The third considerable snow-storm.

The berries which I celebrate appear to have a range — most of them — very nearly coterminous with what has been called the Algonquin Family of Indians, whose territories are now occupied by the Eastern, Middle, and Northwestern States and the Canadas, and completely surrounded those of the Iroquois, who occupied what is now the State of New York. These were the small fruits of the Algonquin and Iroquois families. The Algonquins appear to have described this kind of fruits generally by words ending in the syllables *meenar.*

It is true we have in the Northern States a few wild plums and inedible crab-apples, a few palatable grapes and nuts, but I think that our various species of berries are our *wild fruits* to be compared with the more celebrated ones of the tropics, and that, taking all things into consideration, New England will bear comparison with the West India Islands. I have not heard of any similar amusement there superior to huckleberrying here, the object not being merely to get a shipload of something which you can eat or sell.

Why should the Ornamental Tree Society confine its labors to the highway only? An Englishman laying out his ground does not regard simply the avenues and walks. Does not the landscape deserve attention?

What are the natural features which make a township handsome? A river, with its waterfalls and meadows, a lake, a hill, a cliff or individual rocks, a forest, and ancient trees standing singly. Such things are beautiful; they have a high use which dollars and cents never represent. If the inhabitants of a town were wise, they would seek to preserve these things, though at a considerable expense; for such things educate far more than any hired teachers or preachers, or any at present recognized system of school education. I do not think him fit to be the founder of a state or even of a town who does not foresee the use of these things, but legislates chiefly for oxen, as it were.

Far the handsomest thing I saw in Boxboro was its noble oak

wood. I doubt if there is a finer one in Massachusetts. Let her keep it a century longer, and men will make pilgrimages to it from all parts of the country; and yet it would be very like the rest of New England if Boxboro were ashamed of that woodland.

I have since heard, however, that she is contented to have that forest stand instead of the houses and farms that might supplant [it], because the land pays a much larger tax to the town now than it would then.

I said to myself, if the history of this town is written, the chief stress is probably laid on its parish and there is not a word about this forest in it.

It would be worth the while if in each town there were a committee appointed to see that the beauty of the town received no detriment. If we have the largest boulder in the county, then it should not belong to an individual, nor be made into door-steps.

As in many countries precious metals belong to the crown, so here more precious natural objects of rare beauty should belong to the public.

Not only the channel but one or both banks of every river should be a public highway. The only use of a river is not to float on it.

Think of a mountain-top in the township — even to the minds of the Indians a sacred place — only accessible through private grounds! a temple, as it were, which you cannot enter except by trespassing and at the risk of letting out or letting in somebody's cattle! in fact the temple itself in this case private property and standing in a man's cow-yard, — for such is commonly the case!

New Hampshire courts have lately been deciding — as if it was for them to decide — whether the top of Mt. Washington belonged to A or to B; and, it being decided in favor of B, as I hear, he went up one winter with the proper officer and took formal possession of it. But I think that the top of Mt. Washington should not be private property; it should be left unappropriated for modesty and reverence's sake, or if only to suggest that earth has higher uses than we put her to. I know it is a mere figure of speech to talk about temples nowadays, when men recognize none, and, indeed, associate the word with heathenism.

It is true we as yet take liberties and go across lots, and steal, or

"hook," a good many things, but we naturally take fewer and fewer liberties every year, as we meet with more resistance. In old countries, as England, going across lots is out of the question. You must walk in some beaten path or other, though it may [be] a narrow one. We are tending to the same state of things here, when practically a few will have grounds of their own, but most will have none to walk over but what the few allow them.

Thus we behave like oxen in a flower-garden. The true fruit of Nature can only be plucked with a delicate hand not bribed by any earthly reward, and a fluttering heart. No hired man can help us to gather this crop.

How few ever get beyond feeding, clothing, sheltering, and warming themselves in this world, and begin to treat themselves as human beings, — as intellectual and moral beings! Most seem not to see any further, — not to see over the ridge-pole of their bams, — or to be exhausted and accomplish nothing more than a full bam, though it may be accompanied by an empty head. They venture a little, run some risks, when it is a question of a larger crop of com or potatoes; but they are commonly timid and count their coppers, when the question is whether their children shall be educated. He who has the reputation of being the thriftiest farmer and making the best bargains is really the most thriftless and makes the worst. It is safest to invest in knowledge, for the probability is that you can carry that with you wherever you go.

But most men, it seems to me, do not care for Nature and would sell their share in all her beauty, as long as they may live, for a stated sum — many for a glass of mm. Thank God, men cannot as yet fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth! We are safe on that side for the present. It is for the very reason that some do not care for those things that we need to continue to protect all from the vandalism of a few.

We cut down the few old oaks which witnessed the transfer of the township from the Indian to the white man, and commence our museum with a cartridge-box taken from a British soldier in 1775!

He pauses at the end of his four or five thousand dollars, and then only fears that he has not got enough to carry him through, — that is,

merely to pay for what he will eat and wear and burn and for his lodging for the rest of his life. But, pray, what does he stay here for? Suicide would be cheaper. Indeed, it would be nobler to found some good institution with the money and then cut your throat. If such is the whole upshot of their living, I think that it would be most profitable for all such to be carried or put through by being discharged from the mouth of a cannon as fast as they attained to years of such discretion.

As boys are sometimes required to show an excuse for being absent from school, so it seems to me that men should show some excuse for being here. Move along; you may come upon the town, sir.

I noticed a week or two ago that one of my white pines, some six feet high with a thick top, was bent under a great burden of very moist snow, almost to the point of breaking, so that an ounce more of weight would surely have broken it. As I was confined to the house by sickness, and the tree had already been four or five days in that position, I despaired of its ever recovering itself; but, greatly to my surprise, when, a few days after, the snow had melted off, I saw the tree almost perfectly upright again.

It is evident that trees will bear to be bent by this cause and at this season much more than by the hand of man. Probably the less harm is done in the first place by the weight being so gradually applied, and perhaps the tree is better able to bear it at this season of the year.

Jan. 8. Trees, etc., covered with a dense hoar frost. It is not leaf-like, but composed of large spiculæ — spearlike — on the northeast sides of the twigs, the side from which the mist was blown. All trees are bristling with these spiculæ on that side, especially firs and arbor-vitæ.

They taught us not only the use of com and how to plant it, but also of whortleberries and how to dry them for winter, and made us baskets to put them in. We should have hesitated long to eat some kinds, if they had not set us the example, knowing by old experience that they were not only harmless but salutary. I have added a few to my number of edible berries by walking behind an Indian in Maine, who ate such as I never thought of tasting before. Of course they

made a much greater account of wild fruits than we do.

It appears from the above evidence that the Indians used their dried berries commonly in the form of huckleberry cake, and also of huckleberry porridge or pudding.

What we call huckleberry cake, made of Indian meal and huckleberries, was evidently the principal cake of the aborigines, and was generally known and used by them all over this part of North America, as much or more than plum-cake by us. They enjoyed it all alone ages before our ancestors heard of Indian meal or huckleberries.

We have no national cake so universal and well known as this was in all parts of the country where com and huckleberries grew.

If you had travelled here a thousand years ago, it would probably have been offered you alike on the Connecticut, the Potomac, the Niagara, the Ottawa, and the Mississippi.

Botanists have long been inclined to associate this family in some way with Mt. Ida, and, according to Toumefort arrange [sic] whortleberries were what the ancients meant by the vine of Mt. Ida, and the common English raspberry is called *Rubus Idœus* from the old Greek name. The truth of it seems to be that blueberries and raspberries flourish best in cool and airy situations on hills and mountains, and I can easily believe that something like them, at least, grows on Mt. Ida. But Mt. Monadnock is as good as Mt. Ida, and probably better for blueberries, though it does not [sic] mean "bad rock," — but the worst rocks are the best for blueberries and for poets.

Jan. 11. Horace Mann brings me the contents of a crow's stomach in alcohol. It was killed in the village within a day or two. It is quite a mass of frozen-thawed apple, — pulp and skin, — with a good many pieces of skunk-cabbage berries one fourth inch or less in diameter, and commonly showing the pale-brown or blackish outside, interspersed, looking like bits of acorns, — never a whole or even half a berry, — and two little bones as of frogs (?) or mice (?) or *tadpoles;* also a street pebble a quarter of an inch in diameter, hard to be distinguished in appearance from the cabbage seeds.

I presume that every one of my audience knows what a

huckleberry is, — has seen a huckleberry, gathered a huckleberry, and, finally, has tasted a huckleberry, — and, that being the case, I think that I need offer no apology if I make huckleberries my theme this evening.

What more encouraging sight at the end of a long ramble than the endless successive patches of green bushes, — perhaps in some rocky pasture, — fairly blackened with the profusion of fresh and glossy berries?

There are so many of these berries in their season that most do not perceive that birds and quadrupeds make any use of them, since they are not felt to rob us; yet they are more important to them than to us. We do not notice the robin when it plucks a berry, as when it visits our favorite cherry tree, and the fox pays his visits to the field when we are not there.

Jan. 14. Coldest morning yet; 20° (?).

Pliny says, "In minimis Natura praestat" (Nature excels in the least things). The *Wellingtonia gigantea*, the famous California tree, is a great thing; the seed from which it sprang, a little thing; and so are all seeds or origins of things.

Richard Porson said: "We all speak in metaphors. Those who appear not to do it, only use those which are worn out, and are overlooked as metaphors. The original fellow is therefore regarded as only witty; and the dull are consulted as the wise." He might have said that the former spoke a dead language.

John Home Tooke is reported in "Recollections" by Samuel Rogers as having said: "Read few books well. We forget names and dates; and reproach our memory. They are of little consequence. We feel our limbs enlarge and strengthen; yet cannot tell the dinner or dish that caused the alteration. Our minds improve though we cannot name the author, and have forgotten the particulars." I think that the opposite would be the truer statement, books differ so immensely in their nutritive qualities, and good ones are so rare.

Gosse, in his "Letters from Alabama," says that he thinks he saw a large dragon-fly (*Æslona*), which was hawking over a brook, catch and devour some minnows about one inch long, and says it is known that "the larvæ of the greater water-beetles (*Dyticidæ*) devour fish."

It is the discovery of science that stupendous changes in the earth's surface, such as are referred to the Deluge, for instance, are the result of causes still in operation, which have been at work for an incalculable period. There has not been a sudden re-formation, or, as it were, new creation of the world, but a steady progress according to existing laws. The same is true in detail also. It is a vulgar prejudice that some plants are "spontaneously generated," but science knows that they come from seeds, *i.e.* are the result of causes still in operation, however slow and unobserved. It is a common saying that "little strokes fall great oaks," and it does not imply much wisdom in him who originated it. The sound of the axe invites our attention to such a catastrophe; we can easily count each stroke as it is given, and all the neighborhood is informed by a loud crash when the deed is consummated. But such, too, is the rise of the oak; little strokes of a different kind and often repeated raise great oaks, but scarcely a traveller hears these or turns aside to converse with Nature, who is dealing them the while.

Nature is slow but sure; she works no faster than need be; she is the tortoise that wins the race by her perseverance; she knows that seeds have many other uses than to reproduce their kind. In raising oaks and pines, she works with a leisureliness and security answering to the age and strength of the trees. If every acorn of this year's crop is destroyed, never fear! she has more years to come. It is not necessary that a pine or an oak should bear fruit every year, as it is that a pea-vine should. So, botanically, the greatest changes in the landscape are produced more gradually than we expected. If Nature has a pine or an oak wood to produce, she manifests no haste about it.

Thus we should say that oak forests are produced by a kind of accident, *i.e.* by the failure of animals to reap the fruit of their labors. Yet who shall say that they have not a fair knowledge of the value of their labors — that the squirrel when it plants an acorn, or the jay when it lets one slip from under its foot, has not a transient thought for its posterity?

Possibly here, a thousand years hence, every oak will know the human hand that planted it.

How many of the botanist's *arts* and inventions are thus but the

rediscovery of a lost art, *i.e.* lost to him here or elsewhere!

Horace Mann told me some days ago that he found, near the shore in that muddy bay by the willows in the rear of Mrs. Ripley's, a great many of the *Sternothœrus odoratus,* assembled, he supposed, at their breedingtime, or, rather, about to come out to lay their eggs. He waded in [and] collected — I think he said — about a hundred and fifty of them for Agassiz!

I see in the Boston *Journal* an account of robins in numbers on the savin trees in that neighborhood, feeding on their berries. This suggests that they may plant its berries as well as the crows.

Jan. 15. More snow last night, and still the first that fell remains on the ground. Rice thinks that it is two feet deep on a level now. We have had no thaw yet.

Rice tells me that he baits the "seedees" and the jays and crows to his door nowadays with com. He thinks he has seen one of these jays stow away somewhere, without swallowing, as many as a dozen grains of com, for, after picking it up, it will fly up into a tree near by and deposit so many successively in different crevices before it descends.

Speaking of Roman wormwood springing up abundantly when a field which has been in grass for twenty years or more is plowed, Rice says that, if you carefully examine such a field before it is plowed, you will find very short and stinted specimens of wormwood and pigweed there, — and remarkably full of seed too!

Feb. 5. Horace Mann brings me a screech owl, which was caught in Hastings's bam on the meeting-house avenue. It had killed a dove there. This is a decidedly gray owl, with none of the reddish or nut brown of the specimen of December 26, though it is about the same size, and answers exactly to Wilson's mottled owl.

Rice brings me an oak stick with a woodpecker's hole in it by which it reached a pupa.

The first slight rain and thaw of this winter was February 2d.

Feb. 8. Coldest day yet; — 22° at least (all we can read), at 8 A. M., and, [so far] as I can learn, not above —— 6° all day.

Feb. 15. A little thunder and lightning late in the afternoon. I see two flashes and hear two claps.

A kitten is so flexible that she is almost double; the hind parts are equivalent to another kitten with which the fore part plays. She does not discover that her tail belongs to her till you tread upon it.

How eloquent she can be with her tail! Its sudden swellings and vibrations! She jumps into a chair and then stands on her hind legs to look out the window; looks steadily at objects far and near, first turning her gaze to this side then to that, for she loves to look out a window as much as any gossip. Ever and anon she bends back her ears to hear what is going on within the room, and all the while her eloquent tail is reporting the progress and success of her survey by speaking gestures which betray her interest in what she sees.

Then what a delicate hint she can give with her tail! passing perhaps underneath, as you sit at table, and letting the tip of her tail just touch your legs, as much as to say, I am here and ready for that milk or meat, though she may not be so forward as to look round at you when she emerges.

Only skin-deep lies the feral nature of the cat, unchanged still. I just had the misfortune to rock on to our cat's leg, as she was lying playfully spread out under my chair. Imagine the sound that arose, and which was excusable; but what will you say to the fierce growls and flashing eyes with which she met me for a quarter of an hour thereafter? No tiger in its jungle could have been savager.

Feb. 21. I have just read a book called "Carolina Sports by Land and Water; including Incidents of Devil-Fishing, Wild-cat, Deer and Bear Hunting, Etc. By the Hon. Wm. Elliott."

The writer is evidently a regular sportsman, and describes his sporting with great zest. He was withal the inventor and institutor of devil-fishing, which consists in harpooning a monstrous salt-water fish, and represents himself in a plate harpooning him. His motive, however, was not profit or a subsistence, but sport.

However, I should have found nothing peculiar in the book, if it did not contain, near the end, so good an example of human inconsistency. I quote some sentences in the order in which they

occur, only omitting the intermediate pages. After having described at length his own sporting exploits, using such words as these, for instance. Being in pursuit of a wildcat, he says (page 163): —

"It was at this moment that Dash, espying something in motion in the leafy top of a bay-tree, cracked off his Joe Manton with such good effect, that presently we heard a heavy body come tumbling through the limbs until it splashed into the water. Then came a stunning burst from the hounds — a clash from the whole orchestra in full chorus! — a growl from the assailed, with an occasional squeak on the part of the assailants, which showed that the game was not all on one side. We were compelled, all the while, to be delighted ear-witnesses only of the strife, which resulted in the victory of the hounds." This proved to be a raccoon, though they thought it the wildcat. —

Again (page 168), being in pursuit of another cat, which had baffled them a long time with great cunning, he says: "The cat, with huge leaps, clambered up a tree; and now he had reached the very pinnacle, and as he gathered himself up to take a flying leap for a neighboring tree, I caught up my gun, and let slip at him in mid-flight. The arrowy posture in which he made his pitch, was suddenly changed, as the shot struck him to the heart; and doubling himself up, after one or two wild gyrations, into a heap, he fell dead, from a height of full fifty feet, into the very jaws of the dogs!"

Again (page 178), being [in] pursuit of a deer, which he had wounded, and his gun being discharged, he tried to run him down with his horse, but, as he tells us, "the noble animal refused to trample on his fellow quadruped," so he made up for it by kicking the deer in the side of the head with his spurred boot. The deer enters a thicket and he is compelled to pursue the panting animal on foot. "A large fallen oak lies across his, path; he gathers himself up for the leap, and falls exhausted directly across it. Before he could recover his legs, and while he lay thus poised on the tree, I fling myself at full length upon the body of the struggling deer — my left hand clasps his neck, while my right detaches the knife; whose fatal blade, in another moment, is buried in his throat. There he lay in his blood, and I remained sole occupant of the field." Opposite is a plate which represents him in the act of stabbing the deer.

Page 267. — He tells us that his uncle once had a young wildcat, — a mere kitten, — but that, to prevent its worrying the poultry, "a cord was fastened round his neck, and a clog attached to the end." Still he would endeavor to catch the fowls.

"My uncle one day invited several of his friends, to witness this development of natural propensity in his savage pet. The kitten, with his clog attached, was let out of the box; and it was curious to observe with what stealthy pace he approached the spot where the poultry were feeding. They scarcely seemed to notice the diminutive thing that was creeping toward them; when, crouching low, and measuring exactly the distance which separated them, he sprang upon the back of the old rooster, and hung on by claw and teeth to the feathers, while the frightened bird dragged him, clog and all, over the yard. After several revolutions had been made, the cat let go his hold on the back of the fowl, and, with the quickness of lightning, *caught the head* in his mouth, clinched his teeth, shut his eyes, stiffened his legs, and hung on with the most desperate resolution, while the fowl, rolling over in agony, buffeted him with his wings. All in vain! In a few seconds more he was dead, and we looked with abhorrence on the savage animal, that had just taken his first degree in blood. In this case, there could have been no teaching — no imitation. It was the undoubted instinct of a cruel nature! We wondered that this young beast of prey should have known, from this instinct, *the vital part of its victim I* — and we wondered still more, that in the providence of God, he had seen fit to create an animal with an instinct so murderous. Philosophy is ready with her explanation, and our abhorrence may be misplaced, since from his very organization, he is compelled to destroy life *in order to live*! Yet, knowing this, our abhorrence still continues; whence we may draw the consolatory conclusion — that the instincts of a man naturally differ from those of a wild-cat."

A few pages further (page 282) in a chapter called "Random Thoughts on Hunting," which is altogether a eulogy on that pursuit, he praises it because it develops or cultivates among other qualities "the *observation*, that familiarizes itself with the nature and habits of the quarry — the *sagacity* that anticipates its projects of escape — and the *promptitude* that defeats them! — the rapid glance, the

steady aim, the quick perception, the ready execution; these are among the faculties and qualities continually called into pleasing exercise."

Physician, heal thyself!

This plucking and stripping a pine cone is a business which he and his family understand perfectly. That is their *forte.* I doubt if you could suggest any improvement. After ages of experiment their instinct has settled on the same method that our reason would finally, if we had to open a pine cone with our teeth; and they were thus accomplished before our race knew that a pine cone contained any seed.

He does not prick his fingers, nor pitch his whiskers, nor gnaw the solid core any more than is necessary. Having sheared off the twigs and needles that may be in his way, — for like a skillful woodchopper he first secures room and verge enough, — he neatly cuts off the stout stem of the cone with a few strokes of his chisels, and it is his. To be sure, he may let it fall to the ground and look down at it for a moment curiously, as if it were not his; but he is taking note where it lies and adding it to a heap of a hundred more like it in his mind, and it now is only so much the more his for his seeming carelessness. And, when the hour comes to open it, observe how he proceeds. He holds it in his hands, — a solid embossed cone, so hard it almost rings at the touch of his teeth. He pauses for a moment perhaps, — but not because he does not know how to begin, — he only listens to hear what is in the wind, not being in a hurry.

He knows better than try to cut off the tip and work his way downward against a *chevaux-de-frise* of advanced scales and prickles, or to gnaw into the side for three quarters of an inch in the face of many armed shields. But he does not have to think of what he knows, having heard the latest æolian rumor. If there ever was an age of the world when the squirrels opened their cones wrong end foremost, it was not the golden age at any rate. He whirls the cone bottom upward in a twinkling, where the scales are smallest and the prickles slight or none and the short stem is cut so close as not to be in his way, and then he proceeds to cut through the thin and tender bases of the scales, and each stroke tells, laying bare at once a couple of seeds. And then he strips it as easily as if its scales were chaff, and

so rapidly, twirling it as he advances, that you cannot tell how he does it till you drive him off and inspect his unfinished work.

Feb. 27. 2 P. M. — It is very pleasant and warm, and the ground half bare. As I am walking down the Boston road under the hill this side Clark's, it occurs to me that I have just heard the twitter of a bluebird. (C. heard one the 26th.) I stop and listen to hear it again, but cannot tell whether it comes from the buttonwoods high over my head or from the lower trees on the hilltop. It is not the complete bluebird warble, but the twitter only. And now it seems to come from Pratt's house, where the window is open, and I am not sure but it is a caged bird. I walk that way, and now think that I distinguish the minstrel in a black speck in the top of a great elm on the Common. Messer is shingling Clark's bam; so, to make sure, I cross over and ask him if he has heard a bluebird to-day, and he says he has several times. When I get to the elm near Minott's I hear one warble distinctly. Miss Minott and Miss Potter have both died within a fortnight past, and the cottage on the hillside seems strangely deserted; but the first bluebird comes to warble there as usual.

Mother hears a robin to-day.

Buttonwood sap flows fast from wounds made last fall.

Feb. 28. P. M. — Down Boston road under the hill.

Air full of bluebirds as yesterday. The sidewalk is bare and almost dry the whole distance under the hill.

Turn in at the gate this side of Moore's and sit on the yellow stones rolled down in the bay of a digging, and examine the radical leaves, etc., etc.

Where the edges of grassy banks have caved I see the fine fibrous roots of the grass which have been washed bare during the winter extending straight downward two feet (and how much further within the earth I know not), — a pretty dense grayish mass.

The buttonwood seed has apparently scarcely begun to fall yet, — only two balls under one tree, but they loose and broken.

March 3. *Sunday.* Hear that there was a flock of geese in the river last night. See and hear song sparrows to-day; probably here for

several days.

It is an exceedingly warm and pleasant day. The snow is suddenly all gone except heels, and — what is more remarkable — the frost is generally out of the ground, *e g.* in our garden, for the reason that it has not been in it. The snow came December 4th, before the ground was frozen to any depth, has been unusually deep, and the ground has not been again exposed till now. Hence, though we have had a little very cold weather and a good deal of steady cold, the ground generally has not been frozen.

March 8. I just heard peculiar faint sounds made by the air escaping from a stick which I had just put into my stove. It sounded to my ear exactly like the peeping of the hylodes in a distant pool, a cool and breezy spring evening, — as if it were designed to remind me of that season.

Saw the *F. hyemails* March 4th.

To continue subject of March 3d, —

It is remarkable that, though in ordinary winters, when the ground is alternately bare and covered with snow several times, or is not covered till after it is frozen, it may be frozen a foot or more in depth generally, yet, if it is kept covered with snow, though only a thin coating, from first to last, it will not be frozen at all.

For example, the ground was half bare on the 27th, the walk under the Boston road hills pretty fair on the 28th, and the 3d, after rain, the earth was bare, the ways were about settled, the melted snow and rain having been soaked up at once by the thirsty and open ground. There was probably no frost on level ground except where the earth had of late been partly exposed in the middle of the road. The recent rain and melting accordingly raised the river less than it otherwise would. There has been no breaking up of the frost on roads, — no bad travelling as usual, — but as soon as the snow is gone, the ways are settled.

In short, Nature uses all sorts of conveyances, from the rudest drag to a balloon, but she will get her seeds along in due season.

Is it not possible that Loudon is right as it respects the primitive distribution of the birch? Are not the dense patches always such as have sprung up in open land (commonly old fields cleared by man),

as is the case with the pitch pine? It disappears at length from a dense oak or pine wood. Perhaps originally it formed dense woods only where a space had been cleared for it by a burning, as now at the eastward. Perhaps only the oaks and white pines could (originally) possess the soil here against all comers, maple succeeding because it does not mind a wet foot.

Suppose one were to take such a boxful of birch seed as I have described into the meeting-house belfry in the fall, and let some of it drop in every wind, but always more in proportion as the wind was stronger, and yet so husband it that there should be some left for every gale even till far into spring; so that this seed might be blown toward every point of the compass and to various distances in each direction. Would not this represent a single birch tree on a hill? Of which trees (though only a part on hills) we have perhaps a million. And yet some feel compelled to suppose that the birch trees which spring up after a burning are spontaneously generated — for want of seed! It is true [it] does not come up in great quantities at the distance I have spoken of, but, if only one comes up there this year, you may have a million seeds matured there a few years hence.

It is true that the greater part of these seeds fall near the trees which bore them, and comparatively few germinate; yet, when the surface is in a favorable condition, they may spring up in very unexpected places.

A lady tells me that she met Deacon S. of Lincoln with a load of hay, and she, noticing that as he drove under the apple trees by the side of the road a considerable part of the hay was raked off by their boughs, informed him of it. But he answered, “It is not mine yet. I am going to the scales with it and intend to come back this way.”

March 11. C. says that Walden is almost entirely open to-day, so that the lines on my map would not strike any ice, but that there is ice in the deep cove. It will be open then the 12th or 13th. This is earlier than I ever knew it to open. Fair Haven was solid ice two or three days ago, and probably is still, and Goose Pond is to-day all ice. Why, then, should Walden have broken up thus early? for it froze over early and the winter was steadily cold up to February at least. I think it must have been because the ice was uncommonly covered

with snow, just as the earth was, and so, as there was little or no frost in the earth, the ice also was thin, and it did not increase upward with snow ice as much as usual because there was no thaw or rain at all till February 2d, and then very little. According to all accounts there has been no skating on Walden the past winter on account of the snow. It was unusually covered with snow. This shows how many things are to be taken into account in judging of such a pond. I have not been able to go to the pond the past winter. I infer that, if it has broken up thus early, it must be because the ice was thin, and that it was thin not for want of cold generally, but because of the abundance of snow which lay on it.

The water is now high on the meadows and there is no ice there, owing to the recent heavy rains. Yet C. thinks it has been higher a few weeks since.

C. observes where mice (?) have gnawed the pitch pines the past winter. Is not this a phenomenon of a winter of deep snow only? as that when I lived at Walden, — a hard winter for them. I do not commonly observe it on a large scale.

My Aunt Sophia, now in her eightieth year, says that when she was a little girl my grandmother, who lived in Keene, N. H., eighty miles from Boston, went to Nova Scotia, and, in spite of all she could do, her dog Bob, a little black dog with his tail cut off, followed her to Boston, where she went aboard a vessel. Directly after, however, Bob returned to Keene. One day, Bob, lying as usual under his mistress's bed in Keene, the window being open, heard a dog bark in the street, and instantly, forgetting that he was in the second story, he sprang up and jumped out the chamber window. He came down squarely on all fours, but it surprised or shocked him so that he did not run an inch, — which greatly amused the children, — my mother and aunts.

The seed of the willow is exceedingly minute, — as I measure, from one twentieth to one twelfth of an inch in length by one fourth as much in width, — and is surrounded at base by a tuft of cotton-like hairs about one fourth of an inch long rising around and above it, forming a kind of parachute. These render it the most buoyant of the seeds of any of our trees, and it is borne the furthest horizontally with the least wind. It falls very slowly even in the still air of a chamber,

and rapidly ascends over a stove. It floats the most like a mote of any, — in a meandering manner, — and, being enveloped in this tuft of cotton, the seed is hard to detect.

Each of the numerous little pods, more or less ovate and beaked, which form the fertile catkin is closely packed with down and seeds. At maturity these pods open their beaks, which curve back, and gradually discharge their burden like the milkweed. It would take a delicate gin indeed to separate these seeds from their cotton.

If you lay bare any spot in our woods, however sandy, — as by a railroad cut, — no shrub or tree is surer to plant itself there sooner or later than a willow (commonly *S. humilis* or *tristis)* or poplar.

We have many kinds, but each is confined to its own habitat. I am not aware that the *S. nigra* has ever strayed from the river's brink. Though many of the *S. alba* have been set along our causeways, very few have sprung up and maintained their ground elsewhere.

The principal habitat of most of our species, such as love the water, is the river's bank and the adjacent river meadows, and when certain kinds spring up in an inland meadow where they were not known before, I feel pretty certain that they come from the river meadows. I have but little doubt that the seed of four of those that grow along the railroad causeway was blown from the river meadows, *viz. S. pedicellaris*, *lucida, Torreyana*, and *petiolaris.*

The barren and fertile flowers are usually on separate plants. I observe [?] that the greater part of the white willows set out on our causeways are sterile ones. You can easily distinguish the fertile ones at a distance when the pods are bursting. And it is said that no sterile weeping willows have been introduced into this country, so that it cannot be raised from the seed. Of two of the indigenous willows common along the brink of our river I have detected but one sex.

The seeds of the willow thus annually fill the air with their lint, being wafted to all parts of the country, and, though apparently not more than one in many millions gets to be a shrub, yet so lavish and persevering is Nature that her purpose is completely answered.

March 16. A severe, blocking-up snow-storm.

March 18. Tree sparrows have warbled faintly for a week.

When I pass by a twig of willow, though of the slenderest kind, rising above the sedge in some dry hollow early in December, or in midwinter above the snow, my spirits rise as if it were an oasis in the desert. The very name "sallow" (*salix*, from the Celtic *sal-lis*, near water) suggests that there is some natural sap or blood flowing there. It is a divining wand that has not failed, but stands with its root in the fountain.

The fertile willow catkins are those green caterpillarlike ones, commonly an inch or more in length, which develop themselves rapidly after the sterile yellow ones which we had so admired are fallen or effete. Arranged around the bare twigs, they often form green wands eight to eighteen inches long. A single catkin consists of from twenty-five to a hundred little pods, more or less ovate and beaked, each of which is closely packed with cotton, in which are numerous seeds so small that they are scarcely discernible by ordinary eyes.

I do not know what they mean who call this the emblem of despairing love! "The willow, worn by forlorn paramour!" It is rather the emblem of love and sympathy with all nature. It may droop, — it is so lithe, supple, and pliant, — but it never weeps. The willow of Babylon blooms not the less hopefully with us, though its other half is not in the New World at all, and never has been. It droops, not to represent David's tears, but rather to snatch the crown from Alexander's head. (Nor were poplars ever the weeping sisters of Phaëton, for nothing rejoices them more than the sight of the Sun's chariot, and little reck they who drives it.)

Ah, willow! willow! Would that I always possessed thy good spirits.

No wonder its wood was anciently in demand for bucklers, for, take the whole tree, it is not only soft and pliant but tough and resilient (as Pliny says?), not splitting at the first blow, but closing its wounds at once and refusing to transmit its hurts.

I know of one foreign species which introduced itself into Concord as [a] withe used to tie up a bundle of trees. A gardener stuck it in the ground, and it lived, and has its descendants.

Herodotus says that the Scythians divined by the help of willow rods. I do not know any better twigs for this purpose.

How various are the habits of men! Mother says that her father-in-law, Captain Minott, not only used to roast and eat a long row of little wild apples, reaching in a semicircle from jamb to jamb under the andirons on the reddened hearth (I used to buy many a pound of Spanish brown at the stores for mother to redden the jambs and hearth with), but he had a quart of new milk regularly placed at the head of his bed, which he drank at many draughts in the course of the night. It was so the night he died, and my grandmother discovered that he was dying, by his not turning over to reach his milk. I asked what he died of, and mother answered apoplexy! at which I did not wonder. Still this habit may not have caused it.

I have a cousin, also, who regularly eats his bowl of bread and milk just before going to bed, however late. He is a very stirring man.

You can't read any genuine history — as that of Herodotus or the Venerable Bede — without perceiving that our interest depends not on the subject but on the man, — on the manner in which he treats the subject and the importance he gives it. A feeble writer and without genius must have what he thinks a great theme, which we are already interested in through the accounts of others, but a genius — a Shakespeare, for instance — would make the history of his parish more interesting than another's history of the world.

Wherever men have lived there is a story to be told, and it depends chiefly on the story-teller or historian whether that is interesting or not. You are simply a witness on the stand to tell what you know about your neighbors and neighborhood. Your account of foreign parts which you have never seen should by good rights be less interesting.

March 22. A driving northeast snow-storm yesterday and last night, and to-day the drifts are high over the fences and the trains stopped. The Boston train due at 8.30 A. M. did not reach here till five this afternoon. One side of all the houses this morning was one color, — *i.e.* white with the moist snow plastered over them, — so that you could not tell whether they had blinds or not.

When we consider how soon some plants which spread rapidly, by seeds or roots, would cover an area equal to the surface of the

globe, how soon some species of trees, as the white willow, for instance, would equal in mass the earth itself, if all their seeds became full-grown trees, how soon some fishes would fill the ocean if all their ova became full-grown fishes, we are tempted to say that every organism, whether animal or vegetable, is contending for the possession of the planet, and, if any one were sufficiently favored, supposing it still possible to grow, as at first, it would at length convert the entire mass of the globe into its own substance. Nature opposes to this many obstacles, as climate, myriads of brute and also human foes, and of competitors which may preoccupy the ground. Each suggests an immense and wonderful greediness and tenacity of life (I speak of the species, not individual), as if bent on taking entire possession of the globe wherever the climate and soil will permit. And each prevails as much as it does, because of the ample preparations it has made for the contest, — it has secured a myriad chances, — because it never depends on spontaneous generation to save it.

A writer in the *Tribune* speaks of cherries as one of the trees which come up numerously when the forest is cut or burned, though not known there before. This may be true because there was no one knowing in these matters in that neighborhood. But I assert that it *was* there before, nevertheless; just as the little oaks are in the pine woods, but never grow up to trees till the pines are cleared off. Scarcely any plant is more sure to come up in a sprout-land here than the wild black cherry, and yet, though only a few inches high at the end of the first year after the cutting, it is commonly several years old, having maintained a feeble growth there so long. There is where the birds have dropped the stones, and it is doubtful if those dropped in pastures and open land are as likely to germinate. Yet the former rarely if ever get to be trees.

Rice told me a month ago that when the earth became bare the jays, though they still came round the house, no longer picked up the com he had scattered for them. I suggested that it was because they were now able to vary their diet.

Of course natural successions are taking place where a swamp is gradually filling up with sphagnum and bushes and at length trees, *i.e.,* where the soil is changing.

Botanists talk about the possibility and impossibility of plants being naturalized here or there. But what plants have not been naturalized? Of course only those which grow to-day exactly where the original plant of the species was created. It is true we do not know whether one or many plants of a given kind were originally created, but I think it is the most reasonable and simple to suppose that only one was, — to suppose as little departure as possible from the existing order of things. They commenced to spread themselves at once and by whatever means they possessed as far as they could, and they are still doing so. Many were common to Europe and America at the period of the discovery of the latter country, and I have no doubt that they had naturalized themselves in one or the other country. This is more philosophical than to suppose that they were independently created in each.

I suppose that most have seen — at any rate I can show them — English cherry trees, so called, coming up not uncommonly in our woods and under favorable circumstances becoming full-grown trees. Now I think that they will not pretend that they came up there in the same manner before this country was discovered by the whites. But, if cherry trees come up by spontaneous generation, why should they not have sprung up there in that way a thousand years ago as well as now?

If the pine seed is spontaneously generated, why is it not so produced in the Old World as well as in America? I have no doubt that it can be raised from the seed in corresponding situations there, and that it will seem to spring up just as mysteriously there as it does here. Yet, if it will grow so *after* the seed has been carried thither, why should it not before, if the seed is unnecessary to its production?

The above-mentioned cherry trees come up, though they are comparatively few, just like the red cherry, and, no doubt, the same persons would consider them as spontaneously generated. But why did Nature defer raising that species here by spontaneous generation, until we had raised it from the stones?

It is evident that Nature's designs would not be accomplished if seeds, having been matured, were simply dropped and so planted directly beneath their parent stems, as many will always be in any case. The next consideration with her, then, after determining to

create a seed, must have been how to get it transported, though to never so little distance, — the width of the plant, or less, will often be sufficient, — even as the eagle drives her young at last from the neighborhood of her eyrie, — for their own good, since there is not food enough there for all, — without depending on botanists, patent offices, and seedsmen. It is not enough to have matured a seed which will reproduce its kind under favorable conditions, but she must also secure it those favorable conditions. Nature has left nothing to the mercy of man. She has taken care that a sufficient number of every kind of seeds, from a cocoa-nut to those which are invisible, shall be transported and planted in a suitable place.

A seed, which is a plant or tree in embryo, which has the principle of growth, of life, in it, is more important in my eyes, and in the economy of Nature, than the diamond of Kohinoor.

When we hear of an excellent fruit or a beautiful flower, the first question is if any man has got the seeds in his pocket; but men's pockets are only one of the means of conveyances which Nature has provided.

March 30. High water, — up to sixth slat (or gap) above Smith's second post. It is said to have been some nine inches higher about a month ago, when the snow first went off.

R. W. E. lately found a Norway pine cut down in Stow's wood by Saw Mill Brook.

According to Channing's account, Walden must have skimmed nearly, if not entirely, over again once since the 11th or 12th, or after it had been some time completely clear. It seems, then, that in some years it may thaw and freeze again.

April 2. A drifting snow-storm, perhaps a foot deep on an average.

Pratt thought the cowslip was out the 4th.

April 6. Am surprised to find the river fallen some nine inches notwithstanding the melted snow. But I read in Blodget that the equivalent in water is about one tenth. Say one ninth in this case, and you have one and one third inches, and this falling on an unfrozen surface, the river at the same time falling from a height, shows why it

was no more retarded (far from being absolutely raised).

There is now scarcely a button-ball to be seen on Moore's tree, where there were many a month ago or more. The balls have not fallen entire, but been decomposed and the seed dispersed gradually, leaving long, stringy stems and their cores dangling still. It is the storms of February and March that disperse them.

The (are they cinnamon?) sparrows are the finest singers I have heard yet, especially in Monroe's garden, where I see no tree sparrows. Similar but more prolonged and remarkable and loud.

April 7. Sunday. Round the two-mile square.

I see where the common great tufted sedge *(Carex stricta*) has started under the water on the meadows, now *April* 22. It was high water again about a week ago, —— Mann thinks with[in] three or four inches as high as at end of winter.

He obtained to-day the buffle-headed duck, diving in the river near the Nine-Acre Comer bridge. I identify it at sight as my bird seen on Walden.

I hear a chip-bird.

April 23. Think I hear bay-wings. Toads ring.

April 25. Horace Mann brings me apparently a pigeon hawk. The two middle tail-feathers are not tipped with white and are pointed almost as a woodpecker's.

May 1. Water in our neighbors' cellars quite generally. May it not be partly owing to the fact that the ground was not frozen the last winter to any depth, and so the melted snow as well as rain has been chiefly absorbed by it?

May 4. H. Mann brings me two small pewees, but not yellowish about eye and bill, and bill is all black. Also a white-throat sparrow, Wilson's thrush, and myrtle-bird.

May 5. Hear the seringo note.

May 11. A boy brings me a salamander from S. Mason's. Sent it to Mann. What kind?

Set out for Minnesota *via* Worcester.

May 12. *Sunday.* In Worcester.

Rode to east side of Quinsigamond Pond with Blake and Brown and a dry humorist, a gentleman who has been a sportsman and was well acquainted with dogs. He said that he once went by water to St. John, N. B., on a sporting excursion, taking his dog with him; but the latter had such a remarkable sense of decency that, seeing no suitable place aboard the vessel, he did not yield to the pressing demands of nature and, as the voyage lasted several days, swelled up very much. At length his master, by taking him aside and setting him the example, persuaded him to make water only. When at length he reached St. John, and was leading his dog by a rope up a long hill there which led to the town, he was compelled to stop repeatedly for his dog to empty himself and was the observed of all observers. This suggested that a dog could be educated to be far more cleanly in some respects than men are.

He also states that a fox does not regard all dogs, — or, rather, avoid them, — but only hunting dogs. He one day heard the voices of hounds in pursuit of a fox and soon after saw the fox come trotting along a path in which he himself was walking. Secreting himself behind a wall he watched the motions of the fox, wishing to get a shot at him, but at that moment his dog, a spaniel, leapt out into the path and advanced to meet the fox, which stood still without fear to receive him. They smelled of one another like dogs, and the sportsman was prevented from shooting the fox for fear of hitting his dog. So he suddenly showed himself in the path, hoping thus to separate them and get a shot. The fox immediately cantered backward in the path, but his dog ran after him so directly in a line with the fox that he was afraid to fire for fear of killing the dog.

May 13. Worcester to Albany.

The latter part of the day rainy. The hills come near the railroad between Westfield and Chester Village. Thereafter in Massachusetts they may be as high or higher, but are somewhat further off.

The leafing is decidedly more advanced in western Massachusetts than in eastern. Apple trees are greenish. Red elder-berry is apparently just beginning to bloom.

Put up at the Delavan House. Not so good as costly.

May 14. Albany to Suspension Bridge.

Albany to Schenectady a level pitch pine plain with also white pine, white birch, and shad-bush in bloom, with *hills* at last. No houses; only two or three huts on the edge of woods without any road. These were the last pitch pines that I saw on my westward journey.

It is amusing to observe how a kitten regards the attic, kitchen, or shed where it was bred as its castle to resort to in time of danger. It loves best to sleep on some elevated place, as a shelf or chair, and for many months does not venture far from the back door where it first saw the light. Two rods is a great range for it, but so far it is tempted, when the dew is off, by the motions of grasshoppers and crickets and other such small game, sufficiently novel and surprising to it. They frequently have a wheezing cough, which some refer to grasshoppers' wings across their windpipes. The kitten has been eating grasshoppers.

If some member of the household with whom they are familiar — their mistress or master — goes forth into the garden, they are then encouraged to take a wider range, and for a short season explore the more distant bean and cabbage rows, or, if several of the family go forth at once, — as it were a reconnaissance in force, — the kitten does a transient scout duty outside, but yet on the slightest alarm they are seen bounding back with great leaps over the grass toward the castle, where they stand panting on the door-step, with their small lower jaws fallen, until they fill up with courage again. A cat looks down with complacency on the strange dog from the corn-bam window.

The kitten when it is two or three months old is full of play. Ever and anon she takes up her plaything in her mouth and carries it to another place, — a distant corner of the room or some other nook, as under a rocker, — or perchance drops it at your feet, seeming to delight in the mere carriage of it, as if it were her prey — tiger-like.

In proportion to her animal spirits are her quick motions and sudden whirlings about on the carpet or in the air. She may make a great show of scratching and biting, but let her have your hand and she will presently lick it instead.

They are so naturally stealthy, skulking and creeping about, affecting holes and darkness, that they will enter a shed rather by some hole under the door-sill than go over the sill through the open door.

Though able to bear cold, few creatures love warmth more or sooner find out where the fire is. The cat, whether she comes home wet or dry, directly squeezes herself under the cooking-stove, and stews her brain there, if permitted. If the cat is in the kitchen, she is most likely to be found under the stove.

This (October 5) is a rainy or drizzling day at last, and the robins and sparrows are more numerous in the yard and about the house than ever. They swarm on the ground where stood the heap of weeds which was burned yesterday, picking up the seeds which rattled from it. Why should these birds be so much more numerous about the house such a day as this? I think of no other reason than because it is darker and fewer people are moving about to frighten them. Our little mountain-ash is all alive with them. A dozen robins on it at once busily reaching after and plucking the berries, actually make the whole tree shake. There are also some little birds (I think purple finches) with them. A robin will swallow half a dozen berries, at least, in rapid succession before it goes off, and apparently it soon comes back for more.

The reason why naturalists make so little account of color is because it is so insignificant to them; they do not understand it. But the lover of flowers or animals makes very much of color. To a fancier of cats it is not indifferent whether one be black or gray, for the color expresses *character.*

Prescott is not inclined to go to the wars again (October,'61), and so Concord has no company to represent her at present. Cyrus Warren thinks that Derby, the first lieutenant (and butcher that was), would do for captain as well as Prescott, and adds, as his principal qualification, "There is n't one in the company can cut up a crittur like him."

Henry Mitchell of the Coast Survey (page 317) has invented a new kind of pile, to be made of some heavy and strong wood and "so cut that the lower portion of it, for a space of six or eight feet, presents the appearance of a number of inverted frustums of cones, placed one above another." When this is swayed to and fro by the waves, instead of being loosened and washed out, it sinks deeper and deeper. This, as Professor Bache (in Coast Survey Report for 1859, page 30) says, "is a device borrowed from nature, he [Mitchell] having observed that certain seed vessels, by virtue of their forms, bury themselves in the earth when agitated by wind or water." No seeds are named, but they must be similar to the seed of the porcupine grass of the West.

Young Macey, who has been camping on Monadnock this summer, tells me that he found one of my spruce huts made last year in August, and that as many as eighteen, reshingling it, had camped in it while he was there.

See a large hornets' nest on a maple (September 29), the *half immersed* leaves turned scarlet.

Four little kittens just born; lay like stuffed skins of kittens in a heap, with pink feet; so flimsy and helpless they lie, yet blind, without any stiffness or ability to stand.

Edward Lord Herbert says in his autobiography, "It is well known to those that wait in my chamber, that the shirts, waistcoats, and other garments I wear next my body, are sweet, beyond what either easily can be believed, or hath been observed in any else, which sweetness also was found to be in my breath above others, before I used to take tobacco."

The kitten can already spit at a fortnight old, and it can mew from the first, though it often makes the motion of mewing without uttering any sound.

The cat about to bring forth seeks out some dark and secret place for the purpose, not frequented by other cats.

The kittens' ears are at first nearly concealed in the fur, and at a fortnight old they are mere broad-based triangles with a side foremost. But the old cat is ears for them at present, and comes running hastily to their aid when she hears them mew and licks them into contentment again. Even at three weeks the kitten cannot fairly

walk, but only creeps feebly with outspread legs. But thenceforth its ears visibly though gradually lift and sharpen themselves.

At three weeks old the kitten begins to walk in a staggering and creeping manner and even to play a little with its mother, and, if you put your ear close, you may hear it purr. It is remarkable that it will not wander far from the dark corner where the cat has left it, but will instinctively find its way back to it, probably by the sense of touch, and will rest nowhere else. Also it is careful not to venture too near the edge of a precipice, and its claws are ever extended to save itself in such places. It washes itself somewhat, and assumes many of the attitudes of an old cat at this age. By the disproportionate size of its feet and head and legs now it reminds you [of] a lion.

I saw it scratch its ear to-day, probably for the first time; yet it lifted one of its hind legs and scratched its ear as effectually as an old cat does. So this is instinctive, and you may say that, when a kitten's ear first itches, Providence comes to the rescue and lifts its hind leg for it. You would say that this little creature was as perfectly protected by its instinct in its infancy as an old man can be by his wisdom. I observed when she first noticed the figures on the carpet, and also put up her paws to touch or play with surfaces a foot off. By the same instinct that they find the mother's teat before they can see they scratch their ears and guard against falling.

After a violent easterly storm in the night, which clears up at noon (November 3, 1861), I notice that the surface of the railroad causeway, composed of gravel, is singularly marked, as if stratified like some slate rocks, on their edges, so that I can tell within a small fraction of a degree from what quarter the rain came. These lines, as it were of stratification, are perfectly parallel, and straight as a ruler, diagonally across the flat surface of the causeway for its whole length. Behind each little pebble, as a protecting boulder, an eighth or a tenth of an inch in diameter, extends northwest a ridge of sand an inch or more, which it has protected from being washed away, while the heavy drops driven almost horizontally have washed out a furrow on each side, and on all sides are these ridges, half an inch apart and perfectly parallel.

All this is perfectly distinct to an observant eye, and yet could easily pass unnoticed by most. Thus each wind is self-registering.

THE END OF THE JOURNALS

The Criticism



HENRY DAVID THOREAU: HIS CHARACTER AND OPINIONS by Robert Louis Stevenson

I

Thoreau's thin, penetrating, big-nosed face, even in a bad woodcut, conveys some hint of the limitations of his mind and character. With his almost acid sharpness of insight, with his almost animal dexterity in act, there went none of that large, unconscious geniality of the world's heroes. He was not easy, not ample, not urbane, not even kind; his enjoyment was hardly smiling, or the smile was not broad enough to be convincing; he had no waste lands nor kitchen-midden in his nature, but was all improved and sharpened to a point. "He was bred to no profession," says Emerson; "he never married; he lived alone; he never went to church; he never voted; he refused to pay a tax to the State; he ate no flesh, he drank no wine, he never knew the use of tobacco; and, though a naturalist, he used neither trap nor gun. When asked at dinner what dish he preferred, he answered, 'the nearest.'" So many negative superiorities begin to smack a little of the prig. From his later works he was in the habit of cutting out the humorous passages, under the impression that they were beneath the dignity of his moral muse; and there we see the prig stand public and confessed. It was "much easier," says Emerson acutely, much easier for Thoreau to say *no* than *yes*; and that is a characteristic which depicts the man. It is a useful accomplishment to be able to say *no*, but surely it is the essence of amiability 2 to prefer to say *yes* where it is possible. There is something wanting in the man who does not hate himself whenever he is constrained to say no. And there was a great deal wanting in this born dissenter. He was almost shockingly devoid of weaknesses; he had not enough of them to be truly polar with humanity; whether you call him demi-god or demi-man, he was at least not altogether one of us, for he was not touched with a feeling of our infirmities. The world's heroes have room for all positive qualities, even those which are disreputable, in the capacious theatre

of their dispositions. Such can live many lives; while a Thoreau can live but one, and that only with perpetual foresight.

He was no ascetic, rather an Epicurean of the nobler sort; and he had this one great merit, that he succeeded so far as to be happy. "I love my fate to the core and rind," he wrote once; and even while he lay dying, here is what he dictated (for it seems he was already too feeble to control the pen): "You ask particularly after my health. I *suppose* that I have not many months to live, but of course know nothing about it. I may say that I am enjoying existence as much as ever, and regret nothing." It is not given to all to bear so clear a testimony to the sweetness of their fate, nor to any without courage and wisdom; for this world in itself is but a painful and uneasy place of residence, and lasting happiness, at least to the self-conscious, comes only from within. Now Thoreau's content and ecstasy in living was, we may say, like a plant that he had watered and tended with womanish solicitude; for there is apt to be something unmanly, something almost dastardly, in a life that does not move with dash and freedom, and that fears the bracing contact of the world. In one word, Thoreau was a skulker. He did not wish virtue to go out of him among his fellow-men, but slunk into a corner to hoard it for himself. He left all for the sake of certain virtuous self-indulgences. It is true that his tastes were noble; that his ruling passion was to keep himself 3 unspotted from the world; and that his luxuries were all of the same healthy order as cold tubs and early rising. But a man may be both coldly cruel in the pursuit of goodness, and morbid even in the pursuit of health. I cannot lay my hands on the passage in which he explains his abstinence from tea and coffee, but I am sure I have the meaning correctly. It is this: He thought it bad economy and worthy of no true virtuoso to spoil the natural rapture of the morning with such muddy stimulants; let him but see the sun rise, and he was already sufficiently inspirited for the labours of the day. That may be reason good enough to abstain from tea; but when we go on to find the same man, on the same or similar grounds, abstain from nearly everything that his neighbours innocently and pleasurably use, and from the rubs and trials of human society itself into the bargain, we recognise that valetudinarian healthfulness which is more delicate than sickness itself. We need have no respect for a state of artificial

training. True health is to be able to do without it. Shakespeare, we can imagine, might begin the day upon a quart of ale, and yet enjoy the sunrise to the full as much as Thoreau, and commemorate his enjoyment in vastly better verses. A man who must separate himself from his neighbours' habits in order to be happy, is in much the same case with one who requires to take opium for the same purpose. What we want to see is one who can breast into the world, do a man's work, and still preserve his first and pure enjoyment of existence.

Thoreau's faculties were of a piece with his moral shyness; for they were all delicacies. He could guide himself about the woods on the darkest night by the touch of his feet. He could pick up at once an exact dozen of pencils by the feeling, pace distances with accuracy, and gauge cubic contents by the eye. His smell was so dainty that he could perceive the fœtor of dwelling-houses as he passed them by at night; his palate so unsophisticated that, like a child, he disliked the taste of wine — or perhaps, living in 4 America, had never tasted any that was good; and his knowledge of nature was so complete and curious that he could have told the time of year, within a day or so, by the aspect of the plants. In his dealings with animals he was the original of Hawthorne's Donatello. He pulled the woodchuck out of its hole by the tail; the hunted fox came to him for protection; wild squirrels have been seen to nestle in his waistcoat; he would thrust his arm into a pool and bring forth a bright, panting fish, lying undismayed in the palm of his hand. There were few things that he could not do. He could make a house, a boat, a pencil, or a book. He was a surveyor, a scholar, a natural historian. He could run, walk, climb, skate, swim, and manage a boat. The smallest occasion served to display his physical accomplishment; and a manufacturer, from merely observing his dexterity with the window of a railway carriage, offered him a situation on the spot. "The only fruit of much living," he observes, "is the ability to do some slight thing better." But such was the exactitude of his senses, so alive was he in every fibre, that it seems as if the maxim should be changed in his case, for he could do most things with unusual perfection. And perhaps he had an approving eye to himself when he wrote: "Though the youth at last grows indifferent, the laws of the universe are not indifferent, *but*

are for ever on the side of the most sensitive."

II

Thoreau had decided, it would seem, from the very first to lead a life of self-improvement: the needle did not tremble as with richer natures, but pointed steadily north; and as he saw duty and inclination in one, he turned all his strength in that direction. He was met upon the threshold by a common difficulty. In this world, in spite of its many agreeable features, even the most sensitive must undergo some drudgery to live. It is not possible 5 to devote your time to study and meditation without what are quaintly but happily denominated private means; these absent, a man must contrive to earn his bread by some service to the public such as the public cares to pay him for; or, as Thoreau loved to put it, Apollo must serve Admetus. This was to Thoreau even a sourer necessity than it is to most; there was a love of freedom, a strain of the wild man, in his nature, that rebelled with violence against the yoke of custom; and he was so eager to cultivate himself and to be happy in his own society, that he could consent with difficulty even to the interruptions of friendship. "*Such are my engagements to myself* that I dare not promise," he once wrote in answer to an invitation; and the italics are his own. Marcus Aurelius found time to study virtue, and between whiles to conduct the imperial affairs of Rome; but Thoreau is so busy improving himself that he must think twice about a morning call. And now imagine him condemned for eight hours a day to some uncongenial and unmeaning business! He shrank from the very look of the mechanical in life; all should, if possible, be sweetly spontaneous and swimmingly progressive. Thus he learned to make lead-pencils, and, when he had gained the best certificate, and his friends began to congratulate him on his establishment in life, calmly announced that he should never make another. "Why should I?" said he; "I would not do again what I have done once." For when a thing has once been done as well as it wants to be, it is of no further interest to the self-improver. Yet in after years, and when it became needful to support his family, he returned patiently to this mechanical art — a step more than worthy of himself.

The pencils seem to have been Apollo's first experiment in the

service of Admetus; but others followed. “I have thoroughly tried school-keeping,” he writes, “and found that my expenses were in proportion, or rather out of proportion, to my income; for I was obliged to dress and train, not to say, think and believe, accordingly, and 6 I lost my time into the bargain. As I did not teach for the benefit of my fellow-men, but simply for a livelihood, this was a failure. I have tried trade, but I found that it would take ten years to get under way in that, and that then I should probably be on my way to the devil.” Nothing, indeed, can surpass his scorn for all so-called business. Upon that subject gall squirts from him at a touch. “The whole enterprise of this nation is not illustrated by a thought,” he writes; “it is not warmed by a sentiment; there is nothing in it for which a man should lay down his life, nor even his gloves.” And again: “If our merchants did not most of them fail, and the banks too, my faith in the old laws of this world would be staggered. The statement that ninety-six in a hundred doing such business surely break down is perhaps the sweetest fact that statistics have revealed.” The wish was probably father to the figures; but there is something enlivening in a hatred of so genuine a brand, hot as Corsican revenge, and sneering like Voltaire.

Pencils, school-keeping, and trade being thus discarded one after another, Thoreau, with a stroke of strategy, turned the position. He saw his way to get his board and lodging for practically nothing; and Admetus never got less work out of any servant since the world began. It was his ambition to be an Oriental philosopher; but he was always a very Yankee sort of Oriental. Even in the peculiar attitude in which he stood to money, his system of personal economics, as we may call it, he displayed a vast amount of truly down-East calculation, and he adopted poverty like a piece of business. Yet his system is based on one or two ideas which, I believe, come naturally to all thoughtful youths, and are only pounded out of them by city uncles. Indeed, something essentially youthful distinguishes all Thoreau’s knock-down blows at current opinion. Like the posers of a child, they leave the orthodox in a kind of speechless agony. These know the thing is nonsense. They are sure there must be an answer, yet 7 somehow cannot find it. So it is with his system of economy. He cuts through the subject on so new a plane that the accepted

arguments apply no longer; he attacks it in a new dialect where there are no catch-words ready made for the defender; after you have been boxing for years on a polite, gladiatorial convention, here is an assailant who does not scruple to hit below the belt.

"The cost of a thing," says he, "is *the amount of what I will call life* which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run." I have been accustomed to put it to myself, perhaps more clearly, that the price we have to pay for money is paid in liberty. Between these two ways of it, at least, the reader will probably not fail to find a third definition of his own; and it follows, on one or other, that a man may pay too dearly for his livelihood, by giving, in Thoreau's terms, his whole life for it, or, in mine, bartering for it the whole of his available liberty, and becoming a slave till death. There are two questions to be considered — the quality of what we buy, and the price we have to pay for it. Do you want a thousand a year, a two thousand a year, or a ten thousand a year livelihood? and can you afford the one you want? It is a matter of taste; it is not in the least degree a question of duty, though commonly supposed so. But there is no authority for that view anywhere. It is nowhere in the Bible. It is true that we might do a vast amount of good if we were wealthy, but it is also highly improbable; not many do; and the art of growing rich is not only quite distinct from that of doing good, but the practice of the one does not at all train a man for practising the other. "Money might be of great service to me," writes Thoreau; "but the difficulty now is that I do not improve my opportunities, and therefore I am not prepared to have my opportunities increased." It is a mere illusion that, above a certain income, the personal desires will be satisfied and leave a wider margin for the generous impulse. It is as difficult to be generous, or anything else except perhaps a member 8 of Parliament, on thirty thousand as on two hundred a year.

Now Thoreau's tastes were well defined. He loved to be free, to be master of his times and seasons, to indulge the mind rather than the body; he preferred long rambles to rich dinners, his own reflections to the consideration of society, and an easy, calm, unfettered, active life among green trees to dull toiling at the counter of a bank. And such being his inclination he determined to gratify it. A poor man must save off something; he determined to save off his

livelihood. “When a man has attained those things which are necessary to life,” he writes, “there is another alternative than to obtain the superfluities; *he may adventure on life now*, his vacation from humbler toil having commenced.” Thoreau would get shelter, some kind of covering for his body, and necessary daily bread; even these he should get as cheaply as possible; and then, his vacation from humbler toil having commenced, devote himself to Oriental philosophers, the study of nature, and the work of self-improvement.

Prudence, which bids us all go to the ant for wisdom and hoard against the day of sickness, was not a favourite with Thoreau. He preferred that other, whose name is so much misappropriated: Faith. When he had secured the necessaries of the moment, he would not reckon up possible accidents or torment himself with trouble for the future. He had no toleration for the man “who ventures to live only by the aid of the mutual insurance company, which has promised to bury him decently.” He would trust himself a little to the world. “We may safely trust a good deal more than we do,” says he. “How much is not done by us! or what if we had been taken sick?” And then, with a stab of satire, he describes contemporary mankind in a phrase: “All the day long on the alert, at night we unwillingly say our prayers and commit ourselves to uncertainties.” It is not likely that the public will be much affected by Thoreau, when they blink the direct injunctions 9 of the religion they profess; and yet, whether we will or no, we make the same hazardous ventures; we back our own health and the honesty of our neighbours for all that we are worth; and it is chilling to think how many must lose their wager.

In , twenty-eight years old, an age by which the liveliest have usually declined into some conformity with the world, Thoreau, with a capital of something less than five pounds and a borrowed axe, walked forth into the woods by Walden Pond, and began his new experiment in life. He built himself a dwelling, and returned the axe, he says with characteristic and workmanlike pride, sharper than when he borrowed it; he reclaimed a patch, where he cultivated beans, peas, potatoes, and sweet corn; he had his bread to bake, his farm to dig, and for the matter of six weeks in the summer he worked at surveying, carpentry, or some other of his numerous dexterities, for hire. For more than five years this was all that he required to do

for his support, and he had the winter and most of the summer at his entire disposal. For six weeks of occupation, a little cooking and a little gentle hygienic gardening, the man, you may say, had as good as stolen his livelihood. Or we must rather allow that he had done far better; for the thief himself is continually and busily occupied; and even one born to inherit a million will have more calls upon his time than Thoreau. Well might he say, "What old people tell you you cannot do, you try and find you can." And how surprising is his conclusion: "I am convinced that *to maintain oneself on this earth is not a hardship, but a pastime*, if we will live simply and wisely; *as the pursuits of simpler nations are still the sports of the more artificial*."

When he had enough of that kind of life, he showed the same simplicity in giving it up as in beginning it. There are some who could have done the one, but, vanity forbidding, not the other; and that is perhaps the story of the hermits; but Thoreau made no fetich of his own example, and did what he wanted squarely. And five years is long 0 enough for an experiment, and to prove the success of transcendental Yankeeism. It is not his frugality which is worthy of note; for, to begin with, that was inborn, and therefore inimitable by others who are differently constituted; and again, it was no new thing, but has often been equalled by poor Scotch students at the universities. The point is the sanity of his view of life, and the insight with which he recognised the position of money, and thought out for himself the problem of riches and a livelihood. Apart from his eccentricities, he had perceived, and was acting on, a truth of universal application. For money enters in two different characters into the scheme of life. A certain amount, varying with the number and empire of our desires, is a true necessary to each one of us in the present order of society; but beyond that amount, money is a commodity to be bought or not to be bought, a luxury in which we may either indulge or stint ourselves, like any other. And there are many luxuries that we may legitimately prefer to it, such as a grateful conscience, a country life, or the woman of our inclination. Trite, flat, and obvious as this conclusion may appear, we have only to look round us in society to see how scantily it has been recognised; and perhaps even ourselves, after a little reflection, may decide to spend a

trifle less for money, and indulge ourselves a trifle more in the article of freedom.

III

"To have done anything by which you earned money merely," says Thoreau, "is to be" (have been, he means) "idle and worse." There are two passages in his letters, both, oddly enough, relating to firewood, which must be brought together to be rightly understood. So taken, they contain between them the marrow of all good sense on the subject of work in its relation to something broader than mere livelihood. Here is the first: "I suppose I 1 have burned up a good-sized tree to-night — and for what? I settled with Mr. Tarbell for it the other day; but that wasn't the final settlement. I got off cheaply from him. At last one will say: 'Let us see, how much wood did you burn, sir?' And I shall shudder to think that the next question will be, 'What did you do while you were warm?'" Even after we have settled with Admetus in the person of Mr. Tarbell, there comes, you see, a further question. It is not enough to have earned our livelihood. Either the earning itself should have been serviceable to mankind, or something else must follow. To live is sometimes very difficult, but it is never meritorious in itself; and we must have a reason to allege to our own conscience why we should continue to exist upon this crowded earth. If Thoreau had simply dwelt in his house at Walden, a lover of trees, birds, and fishes, and the open air and virtue, a reader of wise books, an idle, selfish self-improver, he would have managed to cheat Admetus, but, to cling to metaphor, the devil would have had him in the end. Those who can avoid toil altogether and dwell in the Arcadia of private means, and even those who can, by abstinence, reduce the necessary amount of it to some six weeks a year, having the more liberty, have only the higher moral obligation to be up and doing in the interest of man.

The second passage is this: "There is a far more important and warming heat, commonly lost, which precedes the burning of the wood. It is the smoke of industry, which is incense. I had been so thoroughly warmed in body and spirit, that when at length my fuel was housed, I came near selling it to the ashman, as if I had extracted all its heat." Industry is, in itself and when properly chosen, delightful and profitable to the worker; and when your toil has been a

pleasure, you have not, as Thoreau says, “earned money merely,” but money, health, delight, and moral profit, all in one. “We must heap up a great pile of doing for a small diameter of being,” he says in another place; and then exclaims, “How admirably the artist is made to accomplish 2 his self-culture by devotion to his art!” We may escape uncongenial toil, only to devote ourselves to that which is congenial. It is only to transact some higher business that even Apollo dare play the truant from Admetus. We must all work for the sake of work; we must all work, as Thoreau says again, in any “absorbing pursuit — it does not much matter what, so it be honest”; but the most profitable work is that which combines into one continued effort the largest proportion of the powers and desires of a man’s nature; that into which he will plunge with ardour, and from which he will desist with reluctance; in which he will know the weariness of fatigue, but not that of satiety; and which will be ever fresh, pleasing, and stimulating to his taste. Such work holds a man together, braced at all points; it does not suffer him to doze or wander; it keeps him actively conscious of himself, yet raised among superior interests; it gives him the profit of industry with the pleasures of a pastime. This is what his art should be to the true artist, and that to a degree unknown in other and less intimate pursuits. For other professions stand apart from the human business of life; but an art has its seat at the centre of the artist’s doings and sufferings, deals directly with his experiences, teaches him the lessons of his own fortunes and mishaps, and becomes a part of his biography. So says Goethe:

“Spät erklingt was früh erklang;
Glück und Unglück wird Gesang.”

Now Thoreau’s art was literature; and it was one of which he had conceived most ambitiously. He loved and believed in good books. He said well, “Life is not habitually seen from any common platform so truly and unexaggerated as in the light of literature.” But the literature he loved was of the heroic order. “Books, not which afford us a cowering enjoyment, but in which each thought is of unusual daring; such as an idle man cannot read, and a timid one would not be entertained by, which 3 even make us dangerous to existing

institutions — such I call good books." He did not think them easy to be read. "The heroic books," he says, "even if printed in the character of our mother-tongue, will always be in a language dead to degenerate times; and we must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than common use permits out of what wisdom and valour and generosity we have." Nor does he suppose that such books are easily written. "Great prose, of equal elevation, commands our respect more than great verse," says he, "since it implies a more permanent and level height, a life more pervaded with the grandeur of the thought. The poet often only makes an irruption, like the Parthian, and is off again, shooting while he retreats; but the prose writer has conquered like a Roman and settled colonies." We may ask ourselves, almost with dismay, whether such works exist at all but in the imagination of the student. For the bulk of the best of books is apt to be made up with ballast; and those in which energy of thought is combined with any stateliness of utterance may be almost counted on the fingers. Looking round in English for a book that should answer Thoreau's two demands of a style like poetry and sense that shall be both original and inspiriting, I come to Milton's "Areopagitica," and can name no other instance for the moment. Two things at least are plain: that if a man will condescend to nothing more commonplace in the way of reading, he must not look to have a large library; and that if he proposes himself to write in a similar vein, he will find his work cut out for him.

Thoreau composed seemingly while he walked, or at least exercise and composition were with him intimately connected; for we are told that "the length of his walk uniformly made the length of his writing." He speaks in one place of "plainness and vigour, the ornaments of style," which is rather too paradoxical to be comprehensively true. In another he remarks: "As for style of 4 writing, if one has anything to say it drops from him simply as a stone falls to the ground." We must conjecture a very large sense indeed for the phrase "if one has anything to say." When truth flows from a man, fittingly clothed in style and without conscious effort, it is because the effort has been made and the work practically completed before he sat down to write. It is only out of fulness of

thinking that expression drops perfect like a ripe fruit; and when Thoreau wrote so nonchalantly at his desk, it was because he had been vigorously active during his walk. For neither clearness, compression, nor beauty of language, come to any living creature till after a busy and prolonged acquaintance with the subject on hand. Easy writers are those who, like Walter Scott, choose to remain contented with a less degree of perfection than is legitimately within the compass of their powers. We hear of Shakespeare and his clean manuscript; but in face of the evidence of the style itself and of the various editions of *Hamlet*, this merely proves that Messrs. Hemming and Condell were unacquainted with the common enough phenomenon called a fair copy. He who would recast a tragedy already given to the world must frequently and earnestly have revised details in the study. Thoreau himself, and in spite of his protestations, is an instance of even extreme research in one direction; and his effort after heroic utterance is proved not only by the occasional finish, but by the determined exaggeration of his style. "I trust you realise what an exaggerator I am — that I lay myself out to exaggerate," he writes. And again, hinting at the explanation: "Who that has heard a strain of music feared lest he should speak extravagantly any more for ever?" And yet once more, in his essay on Carlyle, and this time with his meaning well in hand: "No truth, we think, was ever expressed but with this sort of emphasis, that for the time there seemed to be no other." Thus Thoreau was an exaggerative and a parabolical writer, not because he loved the literature of the East, but from a desire that people should understand 5 and realise what he was writing. He was near the truth upon the general question; but in his own particular method, it appears to me, he wandered. Literature is not less a conventional art than painting or sculpture; and it is the least striking, as it is the most comprehensive of the three. To hear a strain of music, to see a beautiful woman, a river, a great city, or a starry night, is to make a man despair of his Lilliputian arts in language. Now, to gain that emphasis which seems denied to us by the very nature of the medium, the proper method of literature is by selection, which is a kind of negative exaggeration. It is the right of the literary artist, as Thoreau was on the point of seeing, to leave out whatever does not suit his purpose. Thus we

extract the pure gold; and thus the well-written story of a noble life becomes, by its very omissions, more thrilling to the reader. But to go beyond this, like Thoreau, and to exaggerate directly, is to leave the saner classical tradition, and to put the reader on his guard. And when you write the whole for the half, you do not express your thought more forcibly, but only express a different thought which is not yours.

Thoreau's true subject was the pursuit of self-improvement combined with an unfriendly criticism of life as it goes on in our societies; it is there that he best displays the freshness and surprising trenchancy of his intellect; it is there that his style becomes plain and vigorous, and therefore, according to his own formula, ornamental. Yet he did not care to follow this vein singly, but must drop into it by the way in books of a different purport. "Walden, or Life in the Woods"; "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers"; "The Maine Woods," — such are the titles he affects. He was probably reminded by his delicate critical perception that the true business of literature is with narrative; in reasoned narrative, and there alone, that art enjoys all its advantages, and suffers least from its defects. Dry precept and disembodied disquisition, as they can only be read with an effort of abstraction, 6 can never convey a perfectly complete or a perfectly natural impression. Truth, even in literature, must be clothed with flesh and blood, or it cannot tell its whole story to the reader. Hence the effect of anecdote on simple minds; and hence good biographies and works of high, imaginative art, are not only far more entertaining, but far more edifying, than books of theory or precept. Now Thoreau could not clothe his opinions in the garment of art, for that was not his talent; but he sought to gain the same elbow-room for himself, and to afford a similar relief to his readers, by mingling his thoughts with a record of experience.

Again, he was a lover of nature. The quality which we should call mystery in a painting, and which belongs so particularly to the aspect of the external world and to its influence upon our feelings, was one which he was never weary of attempting to reproduce in his books. The seeming significance of nature's appearances, their unchanging strangeness to the senses, and the thrilling response which they waken in the mind of man, continued to surprise and stimulate his

spirits. It appeared to him, I think, that if we could only write near enough to the facts, and yet with no pedestrian calm, but ardently, we might transfer the glamour of reality direct upon our pages; and that, if it were once thus captured and expressed, a new and instructive relation might appear between men's thoughts and the phenomena of nature. This was the eagle that he pursued all his life long, like a schoolboy with a butterfly net. Hear him to a friend: "Let me suggest a theme for you — to state to yourself precisely and completely what that walk over the mountains amounted to for you, returning to this essay again and again until you are satisfied that all that was important in your experience is in it. Don't suppose that you can tell it precisely the first dozen times you try, but at 'em again; especially when, after a sufficient pause, you suspect that you are touching the heart or summit of the matter, reiterate your blows there, and account for the mountain to yourself. Not that the story need be long, 7 but it will take a long while to make it short." Such was the method, not consistent for a man whose meanings were to "drop from him as a stone falls to the ground." Perhaps the most successful work that Thoreau ever accomplished in this direction is to be found in the passages relating to fish in the "Week." These are remarkable for a vivid truth of impression and a happy suitability of language, not frequently surpassed.

Whatever Thoreau tried to do was tried in fair, square prose, with sentences solidly built, and no help from bastard rhythms. Moreover, there is a progression — I cannot call it a progress — in his work towards a more and more strictly prosaic level, until at last he sinks into the bathos of the prosy. Emerson mentions having once remarked to Thoreau: "Who would not like to write something which all can read, like 'Robinson Crusoe'? and who does not see with regret that his page is not solid with a right materialistic treatment which delights everybody?" I must say in passing, that it is not the right materialistic treatment which delights the world in "Robinson," but the romantic and philosophic interest of the fable. The same treatment does quite the reverse of delighting us when it is applied, in "Colonel Jack," to the management of a plantation. But I cannot help suspecting Thoreau to have been influenced either by this identical remark or by some other closely similar in meaning. He

began to fall more and more into a detailed materialistic treatment; he went into the business doggedly, as one who should make a guide-book; he not only chronicled what had been important in his own experience, but whatever might have been important in the experience of anybody else; not only what had affected him, but all that he saw or heard. His ardour had grown less, or perhaps it was inconsistent with a right materialistic treatment to display such emotions as he felt; and, to complete the eventful change, he chose, from a sense of moral dignity, to gut these later works of the saving quality of humour. He was not one of those authors who 8 have learned, in his own words, "to leave out their dulness." He inflicts his full quantity upon the reader in such books as "Cape Cod," or "The Yankee in Canada." Of the latter he confessed that he had not managed to get much of himself into it. Heaven knows he had not, nor yet much of Canada, we may hope. "Nothing," he says somewhere, "can shock a brave man but dulness." Well, there are few spots more shocking to the brave than the pages of "The Yankee in Canada."

There are but three books of his that will be read with much pleasure: the "Week," "Walden," and the collected letters. As to his poetry, Emerson's word shall suffice for us, it is so accurate and so prettily said: "The thyme and marjoram are not yet honey." In this, as in his prose, he relied greatly on the goodwill of the reader, and wrote throughout in faith. It was an exercise of faith to suppose that many would understand the sense of his best work, or that any could be exhilarated by the dreary chronicling of his worst. "But," as he says, "the gods do not hear any rude or discordant sound, as we learn from the echo; and I know that the nature towards which I launch these sounds is so rich that it will modulate anew and wonderfully improve my rudest strain."

IV

"What means the fact," he cries, "that a soul which has lost all hope for itself can inspire in another listening soul such an infinite confidence in it, even while it is expressing its despair?" The question is an echo and an illustration of the words last quoted; and it forms the key-note of his thoughts on friendship. No one else, to my knowledge, has spoken in so high and just a spirit of the kindly relations; and I doubt whether it be a drawback that these lessons should come from one in many ways so unfitted to be a teacher in this branch. The very coldness and egoism 9 of his own intercourse gave him a clearer insight into the intellectual basis of our warm, mutual tolerations; and testimony to their worth comes with added force from one who was solitary and disobliging, and of whom a friend remarked, with equal wit and wisdom, "I love Henry, but I cannot like him."

He can hardly be persuaded to make any distinction between love and friendship; in such rarefied and freezing air, upon the mountain-tops of meditation, had he taught himself to breathe. He was, indeed, too accurate an observer not to have remarked that "there exists already a natural disinterestedness and liberality" between men and women; yet, he thought, "friendship is no respecter of sex." Perhaps there is a sense in which the words are true; but they were spoken in ignorance; and perhaps we shall have put the matter most correctly, if we call love a foundation for a nearer and freer degree of friendship than can be possible without it. For there are delicacies, eternal between persons of the same sex, which are melted and disappear in the warmth of love.

To both, if they are to be right, he attributes the same nature and condition. "We are not what we are," says he, "nor do we treat or esteem each other for such, but for what we are capable of being." "A friend is one who incessantly pays us the compliment of expecting all the virtues from us, and who can appreciate them in us." "The friend asks no return but that his friend will religiously accept and wear and not disgrace his apotheosis of him." "It is the merit and preservation of friendship that it takes place on a level

higher than the actual characters of the parties would seem to warrant." This is to put friendship on a pedestal indeed; and yet the root of the matter is there; and the last sentence, in particular, is like a light in a dark place, and makes many mysteries plain. We are different with different friends; yet if we look closely we shall find that every such relation reposes on some particular apotheosis of oneself; with each friend, 0 although we could not distinguish it in words from any other, we have at least one special reputation to preserve: and it is thus that we run, when mortified, to our friend or the woman that we love, not to hear ourselves called better, but to be better men in point of fact. We seek this society to flatter ourselves with our own good conduct. And hence any falsehood in the relation, any incomplete or perverted understanding, will spoil even the pleasure of these visits. Thus says Thoreau again: "Only lovers know the value of truth." And yet again: "They ask for words and deeds, when a true relation is word and deed."

But it follows that since they are neither of them so good as the other hopes, and each is, in a very honest manner, playing a part above his powers, such an intercourse must often be disappointing to both. "We may bid farewell sooner than complain," says Thoreau, "for our complaint is too well grounded to be uttered." "We have not so good a right to hate any as our friend."

"It were treason to our love
And a sin to God above,
One iota to abate
Of a pure, impartial hate."

Love is not blind, nor yet forgiving. "O yes, believe me," as the song says, "Love has eyes!" The nearer the intimacy, the more cuttingly do we feel the unworthiness of those we love; and because you love one, and would die for that love to-morrow, you have not forgiven, and you never will forgive, that friend's misconduct. If you want a person's faults, go to those who love him. They will not tell you, but they know. And herein lies the magnanimous courage of love, that it endures this knowledge without change.

It required a cold, distant personality like that of Thoreau, perhaps, to recognise and certainly to utter this truth; for a more

human love makes it a point of honour not to acknowledge those faults of which it is most conscious. But his point of view is both high and dry. He 1 has no illusions; he does not give way to love any more than to hatred, but preserves them both with care like valuable curiosities. A more bald-headed picture of life, if I may so express myself, has seldom been presented. He is an egoist; he does not remember, or does not think it worth while to remark, that, in these near intimacies, we are ninety-nine times disappointed in our beggarly selves for once that we are disappointed in our friend; that it is we who seem most frequently undeserving of the love that unites us; and that it is by our friend's conduct that we are continually rebuked and yet strengthened for a fresh endeavour. Thoreau is dry, priggish, and selfish. It is profit he is after in these intimacies; moral profit, certainly; but still profit to himself. If you will be the sort of friend I want, he remarks naively, "my education cannot dispense with your society." His education! as though a friend were a dictionary. And with all this, not one word about pleasure, or laughter, or kisses, or any quality of flesh and blood. It was not inappropriate, surely, that he had such close relations with the fish. We can understand the friend already quoted, when he cried: "As for taking his arm, I would as soon think of taking the arm of an elm-tree!"

As a matter of fact he experienced but a broken enjoyment in his intimacies. He says he has been perpetually on the brink of the sort of intercourse he wanted, and yet never completely attained it. And what else had he to expect when he would not, in a happy phrase of Carlyle's, "nestle down into it"? Truly, so it will be always if you only stroll in upon your friends as you might stroll in to see a cricket match; and even then not simply for the pleasure of the thing, but with some afterthought of self-improvement, as though you had come to the cricket match to bet. It was his theory that people saw each other too frequently, so that their curiosity was not properly whetted, nor had they anything fresh to communicate; but friendship must be something else than a society for mutual improvement — indeed, 2 it must only be that by the way, and to some extent unconsciously; and if Thoreau had been a man instead of a manner of elm-tree, he would have felt that he saw his friends too seldom, and

have reaped benefits unknown to his philosophy from a more sustained and easy intercourse. We might remind him of his own words about love: “We should have no reserve; we should give the whole of ourselves to that business. But commonly men have not imagination enough to be thus employed about a human being, but must be coopering a barrel, forsooth.” Ay, or reading Oriental philosophers. It is not the nature of the rival occupation, it is the fact that you suffer it to be a rival, that renders loving intimacy impossible. Nothing is given for nothing in this world; there can be no true love even on your own side, without devotion; devotion is the exercise of love, by which it grows; but if you will give enough of that, if you will pay the price in a sufficient “amount of what you call life,” why then, indeed, whether with wife or comrade, you may have months and even years of such easy, natural, pleasurable, and yet improving intercourse as shall make time a moment and kindness a delight.

The secret of his retirement lies not in misanthropy, of which he had no tincture, but part in his engrossing design of self-improvement and part in the real deficiencies of social intercourse. He was not so much difficult about his fellow human beings as he could not tolerate the terms of their association. He could take to a man for any genuine qualities, as we see by his admirable sketch of the Canadian woodcutter in “Walden”; but he would not consent, in his own words, to “feebly tabulate and paddle in the social slush.” It seemed to him, I think, that society is precisely the reverse of friendship, in that it takes place on a lower level than the characters of any of the parties would warrant us to expect. The society talk of even the most brilliant man is of greatly less account than what you will get from him in (as the French say) a little committee. And Thoreau wanted geniality; he had not enough of the 3 superficial, even at command; he could not swoop into a parlour and, in the naval phrase, “cut out” a human being from that dreary port; nor had he inclination for the task. I suspect he loved books and nature as well and near as warmly as he loved his fellow-creatures, — a melancholy, lean degeneration of the human character.

“As for the dispute about solitude and society,” he thus sums up: “Any comparison is impertinent. It is an idling down on the plain at

the base of the mountain instead of climbing steadily to its top. Of course you will be glad of all the society you can get to go up with. Will you go to glory with me? is the burden of the song. It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, and when we do soar the company grows thinner and thinner till there is none at all. It is either the tribune on the plain, a sermon on the mount, or a very private ecstasy still higher up. Use all the society that will abet you." But surely it is no very extravagant opinion that it is better to give than to receive, to serve than to use our companions; and above all, where there is no question of service upon either side, that it is good to enjoy their company like a natural man. It is curious and in some ways dispiriting that a writer may be always best corrected out of his own mouth; and so, to conclude, here is another passage from Thoreau which seems aimed directly at himself: "Do not be too moral; you may cheat yourself out of much life so.... *All fables, indeed, have their morals; but the innocent enjoy the story.*"

V

"The only obligation," says he, "which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right." "Why should we ever go abroad, even across the way, to ask a neighbour's advice?" "There is a nearer neighbour within, who is incessantly telling us how we should behave. *But we wait for the neighbour without to tell us of some false, 4 easier way.*" "The greater part of what my neighbours call good I believe in my soul to be bad." To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end of life. It is "when we fall behind ourselves" that "we are cursed with duties and the neglect of duties." "I love the wild," he says, "not less than the good." And again: "The life of a good man will hardly improve us more than the life of a freebooter, for the inevitable laws appear as plainly in the infringement as in the observance, and" (mark this) "*our lives are sustained by a nearly equal expense of virtue of some kind*." Even although he were a prig, it will be owned he could announce a startling doctrine. "As for doing good," he writes elsewhere, "that is one of the professions that are full. Moreover, I have tried it fairly, and, strange as it may seem, am satisfied that it does not agree with my constitution. Probably I should not conscientiously and deliberately forsake my particular calling to do the good which society demands of me, to save the universe from annihilation; and I believe that a like but infinitely greater steadfastness elsewhere is all that now preserves it. If you should ever be betrayed into any of these philanthropies, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does, for it is not worth knowing." Elsewhere he returns upon the subject, and explains his meaning thus: "If I ever *did* a man any good in their sense, of course it was something exceptional and insignificant compared with the good or evil I am constantly doing by being what I am."

There is a rude nobility, like that of a barbarian king, in this unshaken confidence in himself and indifference to the wants, thoughts, or sufferings of others. In his whole works I find no trace of pity. This was partly the result of theory, for he held the world too mysterious to be criticised, and asks conclusively: "What right have I

to grieve who have not ceased to wonder?" But it sprang still more from constitutional indifference and superiority; and he grew up healthy, composed, and unconscious from 5 among life's horrors, like a green bay-tree from a field of battle. It was from this lack in himself that he failed to do justice to the spirit of Christ; for while he could glean more meaning from individual precepts than any score of Christians, yet he conceived life in such a different hope, and viewed it with such contrary emotions, that the sense and purport of the doctrine as a whole seems to have passed him by or left him unimpressed. He could understand the idealism of the Christian view, but he was himself so unaffectedly unhuman that he did not recognise the human intention and essence of that teaching. Hence he complained that Christ did not leave us a rule that was proper and sufficient for this world, not having conceived the nature of the rule that was laid down; for things of that character that are sufficiently unacceptable become positively non-existent to the mind. But perhaps we shall best appreciate the defect in Thoreau by seeing it supplied in the case of Whitman. For the one, I feel confident, is the disciple of the other; it is what Thoreau clearly whispered that Whitman so uproariously bawls; it is the same doctrine, but with how immense a difference! the same argument, but used to what a new conclusion! Thoreau had plenty of humour until he tutored himself out of it, and so forfeited that best birthright of a sensible man; Whitman, in that respect, seems to have been sent into the world naked and unashamed; and yet by a strange consummation, it is the theory of the former that is arid, abstract, and claustral. Of these two philosophies, so nearly identical at bottom, the one pursues Self-improvement — a churlish, mangy dog; the other is up with the morning, in the best of health, and following the nymph Happiness, buxom, blithe, and debonair. Happiness, at least, is not solitary; it joys to communicate; it loves others, for it depends on them for its existence; it sanctions and encourages to all delights that are not unkind in themselves; if it lived to a thousand, it would not make excision of a single humorous passage; and while the self-improver 6 dwindles towards the prig, and, if he be not of an excellent constitution, may even grow deformed into an Obermann, the very name and appearance of a happy man breathe of good-nature, and

help the rest of us to live.

In the case of Thoreau, so great a show of doctrine demands some outcome in the field of action. If nothing were to be done but build a shanty beside Walden Pond, we have heard altogether too much of these declarations of independence. That the man wrote some books is nothing to the purpose, for the same has been done in a suburban villa. That he kept himself happy is perhaps a sufficient excuse, but it is disappointing to the reader. We may be unjust, but when a man despises commerce and philanthropy alike, and has views of good so soaring that he must take himself apart from mankind for their cultivation, we will not be content without some striking act. It was not Thoreau's fault if he were not martyred; had the occasion come, he would have made a noble ending. As it is, he did once seek to interfere in the world's course; he made one practical appearance on the stage of affairs; and a strange one it was, and strangely characteristic of the nobility and the eccentricity of the man. It was forced on him by his calm but radical opposition to negro slavery. "Voting for the right is doing nothing for it," he saw; "it is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail." For his part, he would not "for an instant recognise that political organisation for *his* government which is the *slave's* government also." "I do not hesitate to say," he adds, "that those who call themselves Abolitionists should at once effectually withdraw their support, both in person and property, from the government of Massachusetts." That is what he did: in he ceased to pay the poll-tax. The highway-tax he paid, for he said he was as desirous to be a good neighbour as to be a bad subject; but no more poll-tax to the State of Massachusetts. Thoreau had now seceded, and was a polity unto himself; or, as he explains it with admirable 7 sense, "In fact, I quietly declare war with the State after my fashion, though I will still make what use and get what advantage of her I can, as is usual in such cases." He was put in prison; but that was a part of his design. "Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name — ay, if *one* HONEST man, in this State of Massachusetts, *ceasing to hold slaves*, were actually to withdraw from this copartnership, and be locked up in the county gaol therefor,

it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be; what is once well done is done for ever." Such was his theory of civil disobedience.

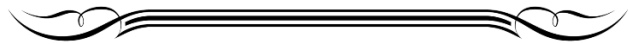
And the upshot? A friend paid the tax for him; continued year by year to pay it in the sequel; and Thoreau was free to walk the woods unmolested. It was a *fiasco*, but to me it does not seem laughable; even those who joined in the laughter at the moment would be insensibly affected by this quaint instance of a good man's horror for injustice. We may compute the worth of that one night's imprisonment as outweighing half a hundred voters at some subsequent election; and if Thoreau had possessed as great a power of persuasion as (let us say) Falstaff, if he had counted a party however small, if his example had been followed by a hundred or by thirty of his fellows, I cannot but believe it would have greatly precipitated the era of freedom and justice. We feel the misdeeds of our country with so little fervour, for we are not witnesses to the suffering they cause; but when we see them wake an active horror in our fellow-man, when we see a neighbour prefer to lie in prison rather than be so much as passively implicated in their perpetration, even the dullest of us will begin to realise them with a quicker pulse.

Not far from twenty years later, when Captain John Brown was taken at Harper's Ferry, Thoreau was the first to come forward in his defence. The committees wrote 8 to him unanimously that his action was premature. "I did not send to you for advice," said he, "but to announce that I was to speak." I have used the word "defence"; in truth he did not seek to defend him, even declared it would be better for the good cause that he should die; but he praised his action as I think Brown would have liked to hear it praised.

Thus this singularly eccentric and independent mind, wedded to a character of so much strength, singleness, and purity, pursued its own path of self-improvement for more than half a century, part gymnosophist, part backwoodsman; and thus did it come twice, though in a subaltern attitude, into the field of political history.

Note. — For many facts in the above essay, among which I may mention the incident of the squirrel, I am indebted to "Thoreau: His Life and Aims," by H. A. Page, *i.e.*, as is well known, Dr Japp.

BROOK FARM AND CONCORD by Henry James



A Chapter from 'Hawthorne'

The history of the little industrial and intellectual association which formed itself at this time in one of the suburbs of Boston has not, to my knowledge, been written; though it is assuredly a curious and interesting chapter in the domestic annals of New England. It would of course be easy to overrate the importance of this ingenious attempt of a few speculative persons to improve the outlook of mankind. The experiment came and went very rapidly and quietly, leaving very few traces behind it. It became simply a charming personal reminiscence for the small number of amiable enthusiasts who had had a hand in it. There were degrees of enthusiasm, and I suppose there were degrees of amiability; but a certain generous brightness of hope and freshness of conviction pervaded the whole undertaking and rendered it, morally speaking, important to an extent of which any heed that the world in general ever gave to it is an insufficient measure. Of course it would be a great mistake to represent the episode of Brook Farm as directly related to the manners and morals of the New England world in general — and in especial to those of the prosperous, opulent, comfortable part of it. The thing was the experiment of a coterie — it was unusual, unfashionable, unsuccessful. It was, as would then have been said, an amusement of the Transcendentalists — a harmless effusion of Radicalism. The Transcendentalists were not, after all, very numerous; and the Radicals were by no means of the vivid tinge of those of our own day. I have said that the Brook Farm community left no traces behind it that the world in general can appreciate; I should rather say that the only trace is a short novel, of which the principal merits reside in its qualities of difference from the affair itself. *The Blithedale Romance* is the main result of Brook Farm; but *The Blithedale Romance* was very properly never recognised by the Brook Farmers as an accurate portrait of their little colony.

Nevertheless, in a society as to which the more frequent complaint

is that it is monotonous, that it lacks variety of incident and of type, the episode, our own business with which is simply that it was the cause of Hawthorne's writing an admirable tale, might be welcomed as a picturesque variation. At the same time, if we do not exaggerate its proportions, it may seem to contain a fund of illustration as to that phase of human life with which our author's own history mingled itself. The most graceful account of the origin of Brook Farm is probably to be found in these words of one of the biographers of Margaret Fuller: "In Boston and its vicinity, several friends, for whose character Margaret felt the highest-honour, were earnestly considering the possibility of making such industrial, social, and educational arrangements as would simplify economies, combine leisure for study with healthful and honest toil, avert unjust collisions of caste, equalise refinements, awaken generous affections, diffuse courtesy, and sweeten and sanctify life as a whole." The reader will perceive that this was a liberal scheme, and that if the experiment failed, the greater was the pity. The writer goes on to say that a gentleman, who afterwards distinguished himself in literature (he had begun by being a clergyman), "convinced by his experience in a faithful ministry that the need was urgent for a thorough application of the professed principles of Fraternity to actual relations, was about staking his all of fortune, reputation, and influence, in an attempt to organize a joint-stock company at Brook Farm." As Margaret Fuller passes for having suggested to Hawthorne the figure of Zenobia in *The Blithedale Romance*, and as she is probably, with one exception, the person connected with the affair who, after Hawthorne, offered most of what is called a personality to the world, I may venture to quote a few more passages from her Memoirs — a curious, in some points of view almost a grotesque, and yet, on the whole, as I have said, an extremely interesting book. It was a strange history and a strange destiny, that of this brilliant, restless, and unhappy woman — this ardent New Englander, this impassioned Yankee, who occupied so large a place in the thoughts, the lives, the affections, of an intelligent and appreciative society, and yet left behind her nothing but the memory of a memory. Her function, her reputation, were singular, and not altogether reassuring: she was a talker, she was *the* talker, she was the genius of talk. She had a magnificent, though by

no means an unmitigated, egotism; and in some of her utterances it is difficult to say whether pride or humility prevails — as for instance when she writes that she feels "that there is plenty of room in the Universe for my faults, and as if I could not spend time in thinking of them when so many things interest me more." She has left the same sort of reputation as a great actress. Some of her writing has extreme beauty, almost all of it has a real interest, but her value, her activity, her sway (I am not sure that one can say her charm), were personal and practical. She went to Europe, expanded to new desires and interests, and, very poor herself, married an impoverished Italian nobleman. Then, with her husband and child, she embarked to return to her own country, and was lost at sea in a terrible storm, within sight of its coasts. Her tragical death combined with many of the elements of her life to convert her memory into a sort of legend, so that the people who had known her well, grew at last to be envied by later comers. Hawthorne does not appear to have been intimate with her; on the contrary, I find such an entry as this in the American Note-Books in 1841: "I was invited to dine at Mr. Bancroft's yesterday, with Miss Margaret Fuller; but Providence had given me some business to do; for which I was very thankful!" It is true that, later, the lady is the subject of one or two allusions of a gentler cast. One of them indeed is so pretty as to be worth quoting: —

"After leaving the book at Mr. Emerson's, I returned through the woods, and, entering Sleepy Hollow, I perceived a lady reclining near the path which bends along its verge. It was Margaret herself. She had been there the whole afternoon, meditating or reading, for she had a book in her hand with some strange title which I did not understand and have forgotten. She said that nobody had broken her solitude, and was just giving utterance to a theory that no inhabitant of Concord ever visited Sleepy Hollow, when we saw a group of people entering the sacred precincts. Most of them followed a path which led them away from us; but an old man passed near us, and smiled to see Margaret reclining on the ground and me standing by her side. He made some remark upon the beauty of the afternoon, and withdrew himself into the shadow of the wood. Then we talked about autumn, and about the pleasures of being lost in the woods, and about the crows, whose voices Margaret had heard; and about

the experiences of early childhood, whose influence remains upon the character after the recollection of them has passed away; and about the sight of mountains from a distance, and the view from their summits; and about other matters of high and low philosophy."

It is safe to assume that Hawthorne could not on the whole have had a high relish for the very positive personality of this accomplished and argumentative woman, in whose intellect high noon seemed ever to reign, as twilight did in his own. He must have been struck with the glare of her understanding, and, mentally speaking, have scowled and blinked a good deal in conversation with her. But it is tolerably manifest, nevertheless, that she was, in his imagination, the starting-point of the figure of Zenobia; and Zenobia is, to my sense, his only very definite attempt at the representation of a character. The portrait is full of alteration and embellishment; but it has a greater reality, a greater abundance of detail, than any of his other figures, and the reality was a memory of the lady whom he had encountered in the Roxbury pastoral or among the wood-walks of Concord, with strange books in her hand and eloquent discourse on her lips. *The Blithedale Romance* was written just after her unhappy death, when the reverberation of her talk would lose much of its harshness. In fact, however, very much the same qualities that made Hawthorne a Democrat in polities — his contemplative turn and absence of a keen perception of abuses, his taste for old ideals, and loitering paces, and muffled tones — would operate to keep him out of active sympathy with a woman of the so-called progressive type. We may be sure that in women his taste was conservative.

It seems odd, as his biographer says, "that the least gregarious of men should have been drawn into a socialistic community;" but although it is apparent that Hawthorne went to Brook Farm without any great Transcendental fervour, yet he had various good reasons for casting his lot in this would-be happy family. He was as yet unable to marry, but he naturally wished to do so as speedily as possible, and there was a prospect that Brook Farm would prove an economical residence. And then it is only fair to believe that Hawthorne was interested in the experiment, and that though he was not a Transcendentalist, an Abolitionist, or a Fourierite, as his companions were in some degree or other likely to be, he was

willing, as a generous and unoccupied young man, to lend a hand in any reasonable scheme for helping people to live together on better terms than the common. The Brook Farm scheme was, as such things go, a reasonable one; it was devised and carried out by shrewd and sober-minded New Englanders, who were careful to place economy first and idealism afterwards, and who were not afflicted with a Gallic passion for completeness of theory. There were no formulas, doctrines, dogmas; there was no interference whatever with private life or individual habits, and not the faintest adumbration of a rearrangement of that difficult business known as the relations of the sexes. The relations of the sexes were neither more nor less than what they usually are in American life, excellent; and in such particulars the scheme was thoroughly conservative and irreproachable. Its main characteristic was that each individual concerned in it should do a part of the work necessary for keeping the whole machine going. He could choose his work and he could live as he liked; it was hoped, but it was by no means demanded, that he would make himself agreeable, like a gentleman invited to a dinner-party. Allowing, however, for everything that was a concession to worldly traditions and to the laxity of man's nature, there must have been in the enterprise a good deal of a certain freshness and purity of spirit, of a certain noble credulity and faith in the perfectibility of man, which it would have been easier to find in Boston in the year 1840, than in London five-and-thirty years later. If that was the era of Transcendentalism, Transcendentalism could only have sprouted in the soil peculiar to the general locality of which I speak — the soil of the old New England morality, gently raked and refreshed by an imported culture. The Transcendentalists read a great deal of French and German, made themselves intimate with George Sand and Goethe, and many other writers; but the strong and deep New England conscience accompanied them on all their intellectual excursions, and there never was a so-called "movement" that embodied itself, on the whole, in fewer eccentricities of conduct, or that borrowed a smaller licence in private deportment. Henry Thoreau, a delightful writer, went to live in the woods; but Henry Thoreau was essentially a sylvan personage and would not have been, however the fashion of his time might have turned, a man

about town. The brothers and sisters at Brook Farm ploughed the fields and milked the cows; but I think that an observer from another clime and society would have been much more struck with their spirit of conformity than with their *déréglements*. Their ardour was a moral ardour, and the lightest breath of scandal never rested upon them, or upon any phase of Transcendentalism.

A biographer of Hawthorne might well regret that his hero had not been more mixed up with the reforming and free-thinking class, so that he might find a pretext for writing a chapter upon the state of Boston society forty years ago. A needful warrant for such regret should be, properly, that the biographer's own personal reminiscences should stretch back to that period and to the persons who animated it. This would be a guarantee of fulness of knowledge and, presumably, of kindness of tone. It is difficult to see, indeed, how the generation of which Hawthorne has given us, in *Blithedale*, a few portraits, should not at this time of day be spoken of very tenderly and sympathetically. If irony enter into the allusion, it should be of the lightest and gentlest. Certainly, for a brief and imperfect chronicler of these things, a writer just touching them as he passes, and who has not the advantage of having been a contemporary, there is only one possible tone. The compiler of these pages, though his recollections date only from a later period, has a memory of a certain number of persons who had been intimately connected, as Hawthorne was not, with the agitations of that interesting time. Something of its interest adhered to them still — something of its aroma clung to their garments; there was something about them which seemed to say that when they were young and enthusiastic, they had been initiated into moral mysteries, they had played at a wonderful game. Their usual mark (it is true I can think of exceptions) was that they seemed excellently good. They appeared unstained by the world, unfamiliar with worldly desires and standards, and with those various forms of human depravity which flourish in some high phases of civilisation; inclined to simple and democratic ways, destitute of pretensions and affectations, of jealousies, of cynicism, of snobbishness. This little epoch of fermentation has three or four drawbacks for the critic — drawbacks, however, that may be overlooked by a person for whom it has an

interest of association. It bore, intellectually, the stamp of provincialism; it was a beginning without a fruition, a dawn without a noon; and it produced, with a single exception, no great talents. It produced a great deal of writing, but (always putting Hawthorne aside, as a contemporary but not a sharer) only one writer in whom the world at large has interested itself. The situation was summed up and transfigured in the admirable and exquisite Emerson. He expressed all that it contained, and a good deal more, doubtless, besides; he was the man of genius of the moment; he was the Transcendentalist *par excellence*. Emerson expressed, before all things, as was extremely natural at the hour and in the place, the value and importance of the individual, the duty of making the most of one's self, of living by one's own personal light and carrying out one's own disposition. He reflected with beautiful irony upon the exquisite impudence of those institutions which claim to have appropriated the truth and to dole it out, in proportionate morsels, in exchange for a subscription. He talked about the beauty and dignity of life, and about every one who is born into the world being born to the whole, having an interest and a stake in the whole. He said "all that is clearly due to-day is not to lie," and a great many other things which it would be still easier to present in a ridiculous light. He insisted upon sincerity and independence and spontaneity, upon acting in harmony with one's nature, and not conforming and compromising for the sake of being more comfortable. He urged that a man should await his call, his finding the thing to do which he should really believe in doing, and not be urged by the world's opinion to do simply the world's work. "If no call should come for years, for centuries, then I know that the want of the Universe is the attestation of faith by my abstinence.... If I cannot work, at least I need not lie." The doctrine of the supremacy of the individual to himself, of his originality and, as regards his own character, *unique* quality, must have had a great charm for people living in a society in which introspection, thanks to the want of other entertainment, played almost the part of a social resource.

In the United States, in those days, there were no great things to look out at (save forests and rivers); life was not in the least spectacular; society was not brilliant; the country was given up to a

great material prosperity, a homely *bourgeois* activity, a diffusion of primary education and the common luxuries. There was therefore, among the cultivated classes, much relish for the utterances of a writer who would help one to take a picturesque view of one's internal possibilities, and to find in the landscape of the soul all sorts of fine sunrise and moonlight effects. "Meantime, while the doors of the temple stand open, night and day, before every man, and the oracles of this truth cease never, it is guarded by one stern condition; this, namely — it is an intuition. It cannot be received at second hand. Truly speaking, it is not instruction but provocation that I can receive from another soul." To make one's self so much more interesting would help to make life interesting, and life was probably, to many of this aspiring congregation, a dream of freedom and fortitude. There were faulty parts in the Emersonian philosophy; but the general tone was magnificent; and I can easily believe that, coming when it did and where it did, it should have been drunk in by a great many fine moral appetites with a sense of intoxication. One envies, even, I will not say the illusions, of that keenly sentient period, but the convictions and interests — the moral passion. One certainly envies the privilege of having heard the finest of Emerson's orations poured forth in their early newness. They were the most poetical, the most beautiful productions of the American mind, and they were thoroughly local and national. They had a music and a magic, and when one remembers the remarkable charm of the speaker, the beautiful modulation of his utterance, one regrets in especial that one might not have been present on a certain occasion which made a sensation, an era — the delivery of an address to the Divinity School of Harvard University, on a summer evening in 1838. In the light, fresh American air, unthickened and undarkened by customs and institutions established, these things, as the phrase is, told.

Hawthorne appears, like his own Miles Coverdale, to have arrived at Brook Farm in the midst of one of those April snow-storms which, during the New England spring, occasionally diversify the inaction of the vernal process. Miles Coverdale, in *The Blithedale Romance*, is evidently as much Hawthorne as he is any one else in particular. He is indeed not very markedly any one, unless it be the spectator,

the observer; his chief identity lies in his success in looking at things objectively and spinning uncommunicated fancies about them. This indeed was the part that Hawthorne played socially in the little community at West Roxbury. His biographer describes him as sitting "silently, hour after hour, in the broad old-fashioned hall of the house, where he could listen almost unseen to the chat and merriment of the young people, himself almost always holding a book before him, but seldom turning the leaves." He put his hand to the plough and supported himself and the community, as they were all supposed to do, by his labour; but he contributed little to the hum of voices. Some of his companions, either then or afterwards, took, I believe, rather a gruesome view of his want of articulate enthusiasm, and accused him of coming to the place as a sort of intellectual vampire, for purely psychological purposes. He sat in a corner, they declared, and watched the inmates when they were off their guard, analysing their characters, and dissecting the amiable ardour, the magnanimous illusions, which he was too cold-blooded to share. In so far as this account of Hawthorne's attitude was a complaint, it was a singularly childish one. If he was at Brook Farm without being of it, this is a very fortunate circumstance from the point of view of posterity, who would have preserved but a slender memory of the affair if our author's fine novel had not kept the topic open. The complaint is indeed almost so ungrateful a one as to make us regret that the author's fellow-communists came off so easily. They certainly would not have done so if the author of *Blithedale* had been more of a satirist. Certainly, if Hawthorne was an observer, he was a very harmless one; and when one thinks of the queer specimens of the reforming genus with which he must have been surrounded, one almost wishes that, for our entertainment, he had given his old companions something to complain of in earnest. There is no satire whatever in the *Romance*; the quality is almost conspicuous by its absence. Of portraits there are only two; there is no sketching of odd figures — no reproduction of strange types of radicalism; the human background is left vague. Hawthorne was not a satirist, and if at Brook Farm he was, according to his habit, a good deal of a mild sceptic, his scepticism was exercised much more in the interest of fancy than in that of reality.

There must have been something pleasantly bucolic and pastoral in the habits of the place during the fine New England summer; but we have no retrospective envy of the denizens of Brook Farm in that other season which, as Hawthorne somewhere says, leaves in those regions, "so large a blank — so melancholy a deathspot — in lives so brief that they ought to be all summer-time." "Of a summer night, when the moon was full," says Mr. Lathrop, "they lit no lamps, but sat grouped in the light and shadow, while sundry of the younger men sang old ballads, or joined Tom Moore's songs to operatic airs. On other nights there would be an original essay or poem read aloud, or else a play of Shakspeare, with the parts distributed to different members; and these amusements failing, some interesting discussion was likely to take their place. Occasionally, in the dramatic season, large delegations from the farm would drive into Boston, in carriages and waggons, to the opera or the play. Sometimes, too, the young women sang as they washed the dishes in the Hive; and the youthful yeomen of the society came in and helped them with their work. The men wore blouses of a checked or plaided stuff, belted at the waist, with a broad collar folding down about the throat, and rough straw hats; the women, usually, simple calico gowns and hats." All this sounds delightfully Arcadian and innocent, and it is certain that there was something peculiar to the clime and race in some of the features of such a life; in the free, frank, and stainless companionship of young men and maidens, in the mixture of manual labour and intellectual flights — dish-washing and æsthetics, wood-chopping and philosophy. Wordsworth's "plain living and high thinking" were made actual. Some passages in Margaret Fuller's journals throw plenty of light on this. (It must be premised that she was at Brook Farm as an occasional visitor; not as a labourer in the Hive.)

"All Saturday I was off in the woods. In the evening we had a general conversation, opened by me, upon Education, in its largest sense, and on what we can do for ourselves and others. I took my usual ground: — The aim is perfection; patience the road. Our lives should be considered as a tendency, an approximation only.... Mr. R. spoke admirably on the nature of loyalty. The people showed a good deal of the *sans-culotte* tendency in their manners, throwing themselves on the floor, yawning, and going out when they had heard

enough. Yet as the majority differ with me, to begin with — that being the reason this subject was chosen — they showed on the whole more interest and deference than I had expected. As I am accustomed to deference, however, and need it for the boldness and animation which my part requires, I did not speak with as much force as usual.... Sunday. — A glorious day; the woods full of perfume; I was out all the morning. In the afternoon Mrs. R. and I had a talk. I said my position would be too uncertain here, as I could not work. —— said 'they would all like to work for a person of genius.' ... 'Yes,' I told her; 'but where would be my repose when they were always to be judging whether I was worth it or not?.... Each day you must prove yourself anew.' ... We talked of the principles of the community. I said I had not a right to come, because all the confidence I had in it was as an *experiment* worth trying, and that it was part of the great wave of inspired thought.... We had valuable discussion on these points. All Monday morning in the woods again. Afternoon, out with the drawing party; I felt the evils of the want of conventional refinement, in the impudence with which one of the girls treated me. She has since thought of it with regret, I notice; and by every day's observation of me will see that she ought not to have done it. In the evening a husking in the barn ... a most picturesque scene.... I stayed and helped about half an hour, and then took a long walk beneath the stars. Wednesday.... In the evening a conversation on Impulse.... I defended nature, as I always do; — the spirit ascending through, not superseding, nature. But in the scale of Sense, Intellect, Spirit, I advocated the claims of Intellect, because those present were rather disposed to postpone them. On the nature of Beauty we had good talk. —— seemed in a much more reverent humour than the other night, and enjoyed the large plans of the universe which were unrolled.... Saturday, — Well, good-bye, Brook Farm. I know more about this place than I did when I came; but the only way to be qualified for a judge of such an experiment would be to become an active, though unimpassioned, associate in trying it.... The girl who was so rude to me stood waiting, with a timid air, to bid me good-bye."

The young girl in question cannot have been Hawthorne's charming Priscilla; nor yet another young lady, of a most humble

spirit, who communicated to Margaret's biographers her recollections of this remarkable woman's visits to Brook Farm; concluding with the assurance that "after a while she seemed to lose sight of my more prominent and disagreeable peculiarities, and treated me with affectionate regard."

Hawthorne's farewell to the place appears to have been accompanied with some reflections of a cast similar to those indicated by Miss Fuller; in so far at least as we may attribute to Hawthorne himself some of the observations that he fathers upon Miles Coverdale. His biographer justly quotes two or three sentences from *The Blithedale Romance*, as striking the note of the author's feeling about the place. "No sagacious man," says Coverdale, "will long retain his sagacity if he live exclusively among reformers and progressive people, without periodically returning to the settled system of things, to correct himself by a new observation from that old standpoint." And he remarks elsewhere that "it struck me as rather odd that one of the first questions raised, after our separation from the greedy, struggling, self-seeking world, should relate to the possibility of getting the advantage over the outside barbarians in their own field of labour. But to tell the truth, I very soon became sensible that, as regarded society at large, we stood in a position of new hostility rather than new brotherhood." He was doubtless oppressed by the "sultry heat of society," as he calls it in one of the jottings in the Note-Books. "What would a man do if he were compelled to live always in the sultry heat of society, and could never bathe himself in cool solitude?" His biographer relates that one of the other Brook Farmers, wandering afield one summer's day, discovered Hawthorne stretched at his length upon a grassy hillside, with his hat pulled over his face, and every appearance, in his attitude, of the desire to escape detection. On his asking him whether he had any particular reason for this shyness of posture— "Too much of a party up there!" Hawthorne contented himself with replying, with a nod in the direction of the Hive. He had nevertheless for a time looked forward to remaining indefinitely in the community; he meant to marry as soon as possible and bring his wife there to live. Some sixty pages of the second volume of the American Note-Books are occupied with extracts from his letters to his future wife and from

his journal (which appears however at this time to have been only intermittent), consisting almost exclusively of descriptions of the simple scenery of the neighbourhood, and of the state of the woods and fields and weather. Hawthorne's fondness for all the common things of nature was deep and constant, and there is always something charming in his verbal touch, as we may call it, when he talks to himself about them. "Oh," he breaks out, of an October afternoon, "the beauty of grassy slopes, and the hollow ways of paths winding between hills, and the intervals between the road and wood-lots, where Summer lingers and sits down, strewing dandelions of gold and blue asters as her parting gifts and memorials!" He was but a single summer at Brook Farm; the rest of his residence had the winter-quality.

But if he returned to solitude, it was henceforth to be as the French say, a *solitude à deux*. He was married in July 1842, and betook himself immediately to the ancient village of Concord, near Boston, where he occupied the so-called Manse which has given the title to one of his collections of tales, and upon which this work, in turn, has conferred a permanent distinction. I use the epithets "ancient" and "near" in the foregoing sentence, according to the American measurement of time and distance. Concord is some twenty miles from Boston, and even to day, upwards of forty years after the date of Hawthorne's removal thither, it is a very fresh and well-preserved looking town. It had already a local history when, a hundred years ago, the larger current of human affairs flowed for a moment around it. Concord has the honour of being the first spot in which blood was shed in the war of the Revolution; here occurred the first exchange of musket-shots between the King's troops and the American insurgents. Here, as Emerson says in the little hymn which he contributed in 1836 to the dedication of a small monument commemorating this circumstance —

"Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world."

The battle was a small one, and the farmers were not destined individually to emerge from obscurity; but the memory of these

things has kept the reputation of Concord green, and it has been watered, moreover, so to speak, by the life-long presence there of one of the most honoured of American men of letters — the poet from whom I just quoted two lines. Concord is indeed in itself decidedly verdant, and is an excellent specimen of a New England village of the riper sort. At the time of Hawthorne's first going there it must have been an even better specimen than to-day — more homogeneous, more indigenous, more absolutely democratic. Forty years ago the tide of foreign immigration had scarcely begun to break upon the rural strongholds of the New England race; it had at most begun to splash them with the salt Hibernian spray. It is very possible, however, that at this period there was not an Irishman in Concord; the place would have been a village community operating in excellent conditions. Such a village community was not the least honourable item in the sum of New England civilisation. Its spreading elms and plain white houses, its generous summers and ponderous winters, its immediate background of promiscuous field and forest, would have been part of the composition. For the rest, there were the selectmen and the town-meetings, the town-schools and the self-governing spirit, the rigid morality, the friendly and familiar manners, the perfect competence of the little society to manage its affairs itself. In the delightful introduction to the *Mosses*, Hawthorne has given an account of his dwelling, of his simple occupations and recreations, and of some of the characteristics of the place. The Manse is a large, square wooden house, to the surface of which — even in the dry New England air, so unfriendly to mosses and lichens and weather-stains, and the other elements of a picturesque complexion — a hundred and fifty years of exposure have imparted a kind of tone, standing just above the slow-flowing Concord river, and approached by a short avenue of over-arching trees. It had been the dwelling-place of generations of Presbyterian ministers, ancestors of the celebrated Emerson, who had himself spent his early manhood and written some of his most beautiful essays there. "He used," as Hawthorne says, "to watch the Assyrian dawn, and Paphian sunset and moonrise, from the summit of our eastern hill." From its clerical occupants the place had inherited a mild mustiness of theological association — a vague reverberation of

old Calvinistic sermons, which served to deepen its extra-mundane and somnolent quality. The three years that Hawthorne passed here were, I should suppose, among the happiest of his life. The future was indeed not in any special manner assured; but the present was sufficiently genial. In the American Note-Books there is a charming passage (too long to quote) descriptive of the entertainment the new couple found in renovating and re-furnishing the old parsonage, which, at the time of their going into it, was given up to ghosts and cobwebs. Of the little drawing-room, which had been most completely reclaimed, he writes that "the shade of our departed host will never haunt it; for its aspect has been as completely changed as the scenery of a theatre. Probably the ghost gave one peep into it, uttered a groan, and vanished for ever." This departed host was a certain Doctor Ripley, a venerable scholar, who left behind him a reputation of learning and sanctity which was reproduced in one of the ladies of his family, long the most distinguished woman in the little Concord circle. Doctor Ripley's predecessor had been, I believe, the last of the line of the Emerson ministers — an old gentleman who, in the earlier years of his pastorate, stood at the window of his study (the same in which Hawthorne handled a more irresponsible quill) watching, with his hands under his long coat-tails, the progress of Concord fight. It is not by any means related, however, I should add, that he waited for the conclusion to make up his mind which was the righteous cause.

Hawthorne had a little society (as much, we may infer, as he desired), and it was excellent in quality. But the pages in the Note-Books which relate to his life at the Manse, and the introduction to the *Mosses*, make more of his relations with vegetable nature, and of his customary contemplation of the incidents of wood-path and way-side, than of the human elements of the scene; though these also are gracefully touched upon. These pages treat largely of the pleasures of a kitchen-garden, of the beauty of summer-squashes, and of the mysteries of apple-raising. With the wholesome aroma of apples (as is indeed almost necessarily the case in any realistic record of New England rural life) they are especially pervaded; and with many other homely and domestic emanations; all of which derive a sweetness from the medium of our author's colloquial style. Hawthorne was

silent with his lips; but he talked with his pen. The tone of his writing is often that of charming talk — ingenious, fanciful, slow-flowing, with all the lightness of gossip, and none of its vulgarity. In the preface to the tales written at the Manse he talks of many things and just touches upon some of the members of his circle — especially upon that odd genius, his fellow-villager, Henry Thoreau. I said a little way back that the New England Transcendental movement had suffered in the estimation of the world at large from not having (putting Emerson aside) produced any superior talents. But any reference to it would be ungenerous which should omit to pay a tribute in passing to the author of *Walden*. Whatever question there may be of his talent, there can be none, I think, of his genius. It was a slim and crooked one; but it was eminently personal. He was imperfect, unfinished, inartistic; he was worse than provincial — he was parochial; it is only at his best that he is readable. But at his best he has an extreme natural charm, and he must always be mentioned after those Americans — Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Lowell, Motley — who have written originally. He was Emerson's independent moral man made flesh — living for the ages, and not for Saturday and Sunday; for the Universe, and not for Concord. In fact, however, Thoreau lived for Concord very effectually, and by his remarkable genius for the observation of the phenomena of woods and streams, of plants and trees, and beasts and fishes, and for flinging a kind of spiritual interest over these things, he did more than he perhaps intended toward consolidating the fame of his accidental human sojourn. He was as shy and ungregarious as Hawthorne; but he and the latter appear to have been sociably disposed towards each other, and there are some charming touches in the preface to the *Mosses* in regard to the hours they spent in boating together on the large, quiet Concord river. Thoreau was a great voyager, in a canoe which he had constructed himself, and which he eventually made over to Hawthorne, and as expert in the use of the paddle as the Red men who had once haunted the same silent stream. The most frequent of Hawthorne's companions on these excursions appears, however, to have been a local celebrity — as well as Thoreau a high Transcendentalist — Mr. Ellery Channing, whom I may mention, since he is mentioned very explicitly in the preface to

the *Mosses*, and also because no account of the little Concord world would be complete which should omit him. He was the son of the distinguished Unitarian moralist, and, I believe, the intimate friend of Thoreau, whom he resembled in having produced literary compositions more esteemed by the few than by the many. He and Hawthorne were both fishermen, and the two used to set themselves afloat in the summer afternoons. "Strange and happy times were those," exclaims the more distinguished of the two writers, "when we cast aside all irksome forms and strait-laced habitudes, and delivered ourselves up to the free air, to live like the Indians or any less conventional race, during one bright semicircle of the sun. Rowing our boat against the current, between wide meadows, we turned aside into the Assabeth. A more lovely stream than this, for a mile above its junction with the Concord, has never flowed on earth — nowhere indeed except to lave the interior regions of a poet's imagination.... It comes flowing softly through the midmost privacy and deepest heart of a wood which whispers it to be quiet; while the stream whispers back again from its sedgy borders, as if river and wood were hushing one another to sleep. Yes; the river sleeps along its course and dreams of the sky and the clustering foliage...." While Hawthorne was looking at these beautiful things, or, for that matter, was writing them, he was well out of the way of a certain class of visitants whom he alludes to in one of the closing passages of this long Introduction. "Never was a poor little country village infested with such a variety of queer, strangely-dressed, oddly-behaved mortals, most of whom took upon themselves to be important agents of the world's destiny, yet were simply bores of a very intense character." "These hobgoblins of flesh and blood," he says in a preceding paragraph, "were attracted thither by the wide-spreading influence of a great original thinker who had his earthly abode at the opposite extremity of our village.... People that had lighted on a new thought or a thought they fancied new, came to Emerson, as the finder of a glittering gem hastens to a lapidary, to ascertain its quality and value." And Hawthorne enumerates some of the categories of pilgrims to the shrine of the mystic counsellor, who as a general thing was probably far from abounding in their own sense (when this sense was perverted), but gave them a due measure of plain practical

advice. The whole passage is interesting, and it suggests that little Concord had not been ill-treated by the fates — with "a great original thinker" at one end of the village, an exquisite teller of tales at the other, and the rows of New England elms between. It contains moreover an admirable sentence about Hawthorne's pilgrim-haunted neighbour, with whom, "being happy," as he says, and feeling therefore "as if there were no question to be put," he was not in metaphysical communion. "It was good nevertheless to meet him in the wood-paths, or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure intellectual gleam diffused about his presence, like the garment of a shining one; and he so quiet, so simple, so without pretension, encountering each man alive as if expecting to receive more than he could impart!" One may without indiscretion risk the surmise that Hawthorne's perception, of the "shining" element in his distinguished friend was more intense than his friend's appreciation of whatever luminous property might reside within the somewhat dusky envelope of our hero's identity as a collector of "mosses." Emerson, as a sort of spiritual sun-worshipper, could have attached but a moderate value to Hawthorne's cat-like faculty of seeing in the dark.

"As to the daily coarse of our life," the latter writes in the spring of 1843, "I have written with pretty commendable diligence, averaging from two to four hours a day; and the result is seen in various magazines. I might have written more if it had seemed worth while, but I was content to earn only so much gold as might suffice for our immediate wants, having prospect of official station and emolument which would do away with the necessity of writing for bread. These prospects have not yet had their fulfilment; and we are well content to wait, for an office would inevitably remove us from our present happy home — at least from an outward home; for there is an inner one that will accompany us wherever we go. Meantime, the magazine people do not pay their debts; so that we taste some of the inconveniences of poverty. It is an annoyance, not a trouble." And he goes on to give some account of his usual habits. (The passage is from his Journal, and the account is given to himself, as it were, with that odd, unfamiliar explicitness which marks the tone of this record throughout.) "Every day I trudge through snow and slosh

to the village, look into the post-office, and spend an hour at the reading-room; and then return home, generally without having spoken a word to any human being.... In the way of exercise I saw and split wood, and physically I was never in a better condition than now." He adds a mention of an absence he had lately made. "I went alone to Salem, where I resumed all my bachelor habits for nearly a fortnight, leading the same life in which ten years of my youth flitted away like a dream. But how much changed was I! At last I had got hold of a reality which never could be taken from me. It was good thus to get apart from my happiness for the sake of contemplating it."

These compositions, which were so unpunctually paid for, appeared in the *Democratic Review*, a periodical published at Washington, and having, as our author's biographer says, "considerable pretensions to a national character." It is to be regretted that the practice of keeping its creditors waiting should, on the part of the magazine in question, have been thought compatible with these pretensions. The foregoing lines are a description of a very monotonous but a very contented life, and Mr. Lathrop justly remarks upon the dissonance of tone of the tales Hawthorne produced under these happy circumstances. It is indeed not a little of an anomaly. The episode of the Manse was one of the most agreeable he had known, and yet the best of the *Mosses* (though not the greater number of them) are singularly dismal compositions. They are redolent of M. Montégut's pessimism. "The reality of sin, the pervasiveness of evil," says Mr. Lathrop, "had been but slightly insisted upon in the earlier tales: in this series the idea bursts up like a long-buried fire, with earth-shaking strength, and the pits of hell seem yawning beneath us." This is very true (allowing for Mr. Lathrop's rather too emphatic way of putting it); but the anomaly is, I think, on the whole, only superficial. Our writer's imagination, as has been abundantly conceded, was a gloomy one; the old Puritan sense of sin, of penalties to be paid, of the darkness and wickedness of life, had, as I have already suggested, passed into it. It had not passed into the parts of Hawthorne's nature corresponding to those occupied by the same horrible vision of things in his ancestors; but it had still been determined to claim this later comer as its own, and since his heart and his happiness were to escape, it insisted on setting

its mark upon his genius — upon his most beautiful organ, his admirable fancy. It may be said that when his fancy was strongest and keenest, when it was most itself, then the dark Puritan tinge showed in it most richly; and there cannot be a better proof that he was not the man of a sombre *parti-pris* whom M. Montégut describes, than the fact that these duskiest flowers of his invention sprang straight from the soil of his happiest days. This surely indicates that there was but little direct connection between the products of his fancy and the state of his affections. When he was lightest at heart, he was most creative, and when he was most creative, the moral picturesqueness of the old secret of mankind in general and of the Puritans in particular, most appealed to him — the secret that we are really not by any means so good as a well-regulated society requires us to appear. It is not too much to say, even, that the very condition of production of some of these unamiable tales would be that they should be superficial, and, as it were, insincere. The magnificent little romance of *Young Goodman Brown*, for instance, evidently means nothing as regards Hawthorne's own state of mind, his conviction of human depravity and his consequent melancholy; for the simple reason that if it meant anything, it would mean too much. Mr. Lathrop speaks of it as a "terrible and lurid parable;" but this, it seems to me, is just what it is not. It is not a parable, but a picture, which is a very different thing. What does M. Montégut make, one would ask, from the point of view of Hawthorne's pessimism, of the singularly objective and unpreoccupied tone of the Introduction to the *Old Manse*, in which the author speaks from himself, and in which the cry of metaphysical despair is not even faintly sounded?

We have seen that when he went into the village he often came home without having spoken a word to a human being. There is a touching entry made a little later, bearing upon his mild taciturnity. "A cloudy veil stretches across the abyss of my nature. I have, however, no love of secrecy and darkness. I am glad to think that God sees through my heart, and if any angel has power to penetrate into it, he is welcome to know everything that is there. Yes, and so may any mortal who is capable of full sympathy, and therefore worthy to come into my depths. But he must find his own way there;

I can neither guide nor enlighten him." It must be acknowledged, however, that if he was not able to open the gate of conversation, it was sometimes because he was disposed to slide the bolt himself. "I had a purpose," he writes, shortly before the entry last quoted, "if circumstances would permit, of passing the whole term of my wife's absence without speaking a word to any human being." He beguiled these incommunicative periods by studying German, in Tieck and Bürger, without apparently making much progress; also in reading French, in Voltaire and Rabelais. "Just now," he writes, one October noon, "I heard a sharp tapping at the window of my study, and, looking up from my book (a volume of Rabelais), behold, the head of a little bird, who seemed to demand admittance." It was a quiet life, of course, in which these diminutive incidents seemed noteworthy; and what is noteworthy here to the observer of Hawthorne's contemplative simplicity, is the fact that though he finds a good deal to say about the little bird (he devotes several lines more to it) he makes no remark upon Rabelais. He had other visitors than little birds, however, and their demands were also not Rabelaisian. Thoreau comes to see him, and they talk "upon the spiritual advantages of change of place, and upon the *Dial*, and upon Mr. Alcott, and other kindred or concatenated subjects." Mr. Alcott was an arch-transcendentalist, living in Concord, and the *Dial* was a periodical to which the illuminated spirits of Boston and its neighbourhood used to contribute. Another visitor comes and talks "of Margaret Fuller, who, he says, has risen perceptibly into a higher state since their last meeting." There is probably a great deal of Concord five-and-thirty years ago in that little sentence!

Extracts from AMERICAN NOTEBOOKS by Nathaniel Hawthorne



September 1, 1842. Mr. Thoreau dined with us yesterday. He is a singular character — a young man with much of wild original nature still remaining in him; and so far as he is sophisticated, it is in a way and method of his own. He is as ugly as sin, long-nosed, queer-mouthed, and with uncouth and rustic, though courteous manners, corresponding very well with such an exterior. But his ugliness is of an honest and agreeable fashion, and becomes him much better than beauty. He was educated, I believe, at Cambridge, and foremerly kept school in this town; but for two or three years back, he has repudiated all regular modes of getting a living, and seems inclined to lead a sort of Indian life among civilized men — an Indian life, I mean, as respects the absence of any systematic effort for a livelihood. He has been for some time an inmate of Mr. Emerson's family; and, in requital, he labors in the garden, and performs such other offices as may suit him — being entertained by Mr. Emerson for the sake of what true manhood there is in him.

Mr. Thoreau is a keen and delicate observer of nature — a genuine observer — which, I suspect, is almost as rare a character as even an original poet; and Nature, in return for his love, seems to adopt him as her especial child, and shows him secrets which few others are allowed to witness. He is familiar with beast, fish, fowl, and reptile, and has strange stories to tell of adventures, and friendly passages with these lower brethren of mortality. Herb and flower, likewise, wherever they grow, whether in garden or wildwood, are his familiar friends. He is also on intimate terms with the clouds, and can tell the portents of storms. It is a characteristic trait that he has a great regard for the memory of the Indian tribes, whose wild life would have suited him so well; and strange to say, he seldom walks over a ploughed field without picking up an arrow-point, a spearhead, or other relic of the red men — as if their spirits willed him to be the inheritor of their simple wealth.

With all this he has more than a tincture of literature, — a deep and true taste for poetry, especially for the elder poets, and he is a good writer, — at least he has written a good article, a rambling disquisition on Natural History, in the last *Dial*, which, he says, was chiefly made up from journals of his own observations. Methinks this article gives a very fair image of his mind and character, — so true, innate, and literal in observation, yet giving the spirit as well as letter of what he sees, even as a lake reflects its wooded banks, showing every leaf, yet giving the wild beauty of the whole scene. Then there are in the article passages of cloudy and dreamy metaphysics, and also passages where his thoughts seem to measure and attune themselves into spontaneus verse, as they rightfully may, since there is real poetry in them. There is a basis of good sense and of moral truth, too, throughout the article, which also is a reflection of his character; for he is not unwise to think and feel, and I find him a healthy and wholesome man to know.

After dinner (at which we cut the first watermelon and muskmelon that our garden has ripened) Mr. Thoreau and I walked up the bank of the river; and, at a certain point, he shouted for his boat. Forthwith, a young man paddled it across the river, and Mr. Thoreau and I voyaged farther up the stream, which soon became more beautiful than any picture, with its dark and quiet sheet of water, half shaded, half sunny, between high and wooded banks. The late rains have swollen the stream so much that many trees are standing up to their knees, as it were, in the water, and boughs, which lately swung high in air, now dip and drink deep of the passing wave. As to the poor cardinals which glowed upon the bank a few days since, I could see only a few of their scarlet hats, peeping above the tide. Mr. Thoreau managed the boat so perfectly, either with two paddles or with one, that it seemed instinct with his own will, and to require no physical effort to guide it. He said that, when some Indians visited Concord a few years since, he found that he had acquired, without a teacher, their precise method of propelling and steering a canoe. Nevertheless he was desirous of selling the boat of which he is so fit a pilot, and which was built by his own hands; so I agreed to take it, and accordingly became possessor of the Musketaquid. I wish I could acquire the aquatic skill of the original

owner.

THE FORESTER by Amos Bronson Alcott

Alcott's tribute to Thoreau was first published in the Atlantic Monthly in April, 1862.

Then bless thy secret growth, nor catch
At noise, hut thrive unseen and dumb,
Keep clean, hear fruit, earn life, and watch
Till the white-winged reapers come. — HENRY VAUGHAN.

I HAD never thought of knowing a man so thoroughly of the country as this friend of mine, and so purely a son of Nature. Perhaps he has the profoundest passion for it of any one living; and had the human sentiment been as tender from the first, and as pervading, we might have had pastorals of which Virgil and Theocritus would have envied him the authorship, had they chanced to be his contemporaries. As it is, he has come nearer the antique spirit than any of our native poets, and touched the fields and groves and streams of his native town with a classic interest that shall not fade. Some of his verses are suffused with an elegiac tenderness, as if the woods and fields bewailed the absence of their forester, and murmured their griefs meanwhile to one another, — responsive like idyls. Living in close companionship with Nature, his Muse breathes the spirit and voice of poetry; his excellence lying herein: for when the heart is once divorced from the senses and all sympathy with common things, then poetry has fled, and the love that sings.

The most welcome of companions, this plain countryman. One shall not meet with thoughts invigorating like his often: coming so scented of mountain and field breezes and rippling springs, so like a luxuriant clod from under forest-leaves, moist and mossy with earth-spirits. His presence is tonic, like ice-water in dog-days to the parched citizen pent in chambers and under brazen ceilings. Welcome as the gurgle of brooks, the dripping of pitchers, then drink and be cool! He seems one with things, of Nature's essence and core, knit of strong timbers, most like a wood and its inhabitants. There are

in him sod and shade, woods and waters manifold, the mould and mist of earth and sky. Self-poised and sagacious as any denizen of the elements, he has the key to every animals brain, every plant, every shrub and were an Indian to flower forth, and reveal the secrets hidden in his cranium, it would not be more surprising than the speech of our Sylvanus. He must belong to the Homeric age, — is older than pastures and gardens, as if he were of the race of heroes, and one with the elements. He, of all men, seems to be the native New-Englander, as much so as the oak, the granite ledge, our best sample of an indigenous American, untouched by the Old Country, unless he came down from Thor, the Northman; as yet unfathered by any, and a nondescript in the books of natural history.

A peripatetic philosopher, and out of doors for the best parts of his days and nights, he has manifold weather and seasons in him, and the manners of an animal of probity and virtues unstained. Of our moralists he seems the wholesomest; and the best republican citizen in the world, — always at home, and minding his own affairs. Perhaps a little over-confident sometimes, and stiffly individual, dropping society clean out of his theories, while standing friendly in his strict sense of friendship, there is in him an integrity and sense of justice that make possible and actual the virtues of Sparta and the Stoics, and all the more welcome to us in these times of shuffling and of pusillanimity. Plutarch would have made him immortal in his pages, had he lived before his day. Nor have we any so modern as he, — his own and ours; too purely so to be appreciated at once. A scholar by birthright, and an author, his fame has not yet travelled far from the banks of the rivers he has described in his books; but I hazard only the truth in affirming of his prose, that in substance and sense it surpasses that of any naturalist of his time, and that he is sure of a reading in the future. There are fairer fishes in his pages than any now swimming in our streams, and some sleep of his on the banks of the Merrimack by moonlight that Egypt never rivalled; a morning of which Memnon might have envied the music, and a greyhound that was meant for Adonis; some frogs, too, better than any of Aristophanes. Perhaps we have had no eyes like his since Pliny's time. His senses seem double, giving him access to secrets not easily read by other men: his sagacity resembling that of the beaver and the

bee, the dog and the deer; an instinct for seeing and judging, as by some other or seventh sense, dealing with objects as if they were shooting forth from his own mind mythologically, thus completing Nature all round to his senses, and a creation of his at the moment. I am sure he knows the animals, one by one, and everything else knowable in our town, and has named them rightly as Adam did in Paradise, if he be not that ancestor himself. His works are pieces of exquisite sense, celebrations of Natures virginity, exemplified by rare learning and original observations. Persistently independent and manly, he criticizes men and times largely, urging and defending his opinions with the spirit and pertinacity befitting a descendant of him of the Hammer. A head of mixed genealogy like his, Franco-Norman crossed by Scottish and New-England descent, may be forgiven a few characteristic peculiarities and trenchant traits of thinking, amidst his great common sense and fidelity to the core of natural things. Seldom has a head circumscribed so much of the sense of Cosmos as this footed intelligence, — nothing less than all out-of-doors sufficing his genius and scopes, and, day by day, through all weeks and seasons, the year round.

If one would find the wealth of wit there is in this plain man, the information, the sagacity, the poetry, the piety, let him take a walk with him, say of a winters afternoon, to the Blue Water, or anywhere about the outskirts of his village-residence. Pagan as he shall outwardly appear, yet he soon shall be seen to be the hearty worshipper of whatsoever is sound and wholesome in Nature, — a piece of russet probity and sound sense that she delights to own and honor. His talk shall be suggestive, subtile, and sincere, under as many masks and mimicries as the shows he passes, and as significant, — Nature choosing to speak through her chosen mouth-piece, — cynically, perhaps, sometimes, and searching into the marrows of men and times he chances to speak of; to his discomfort mostly, and avoidance. Nature, poetry, life, — not politics, not strict science, not society as it is, — are his preferred themes: the new Pantheon, probably, before he gets far, to the naming of the gods some coming Angelo, some Pliny, is to paint and describe. The world is holy, the things seen symbolizing the Unseen, and worthy of worship so, the Zoroastrian rites most becoming a nature so fine as

ours in this thin newness, this worship being so sensible, so promotive of possible pieties, — calling us out of doors and under the firmament, where health and wholesomeness are finely insinuated into our souls, — not as idolaters, but as idealists, the seekers of the Unseen through images of the Invisible.

I think his religion of the most primitive type, and inclusive of all natural creatures and things, even to "the sparrow that falls to the ground," — though never by shot of his, — and, for whatsoever is manly in man, his worship may compare with that of the priests and heroes of pagan times. Nor is he false to these traits under any guise, — worshipping at unbloody altars, a favorite of the Unseen, Wisest, and Best. Certainly he is better poised and more nearly self-reliant than other men.

Perhaps he deals best with matter, properly, though very adroitly with mind, with persons, as he knows them best, and sees them from Natures circle, wherein he dwells habitually. I should say he inspired the sentiment of love, if, indeed, the sentiment he awakens did not seem to partake of a yet purer sentiment, were that possible, — but nameless from its excellency. Friendly he is, and holds his friends by bearings as strict in their tenderness and consideration as are the laws of his thinking, — as prompt and kindly equitable, — neighborly always, and as apt for occasions as he is strenuous against meddling with others in things not his.

I know of nothing more creditable to his greatness than the thoughtful regard, approaching to reverence, by which he has held for many years some of the best persons of his time, living at a distance, and wont to make their annual pilgrimage, usually on foot, to the master, — a devotion very rare in these times of personal indifference, if not of confessed unbelief in persons and ideas.

He has been less of a housekeeper than most, has harvested more wind and storm, sun and sky; abroad night and day with his leash of keen scents, hounding any game stirring, and running it down, for certain, to be spread on the dresser of his page, and served as a feast to the sound intelligences, before he has done with it. We have been accustomed to consider him the salt of things so long that they must lose their savor without his to season them. And when he goes hence, then Pan is dead, and Nature ailing throughout.

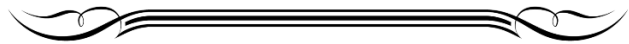
His friend sings him thus, with the advantages of his Walden to show him in Nature: —

"It is not far beyond the Village church,
After we pass the wood that skirts the road,
A Lake, — the blue-eyed Walden, that doth smile
Most tenderly upon its neighbor Pines;
And they, as if to recompense this love,
In double beauty spread their branches forth.
This Lake has tranquil loveliness and breadth
And, of late years, has added to its charms;
For one attracted to its pleasant edge
Has built himself a little hermitage,
Where with much piety he passes life.

"More fitting place I cannot fancy now,
For such a man to let the line run off
The mortal reel, — such patience hath the Lake
Such gratitude and cheer is in the Pines.
But more than either lake or forests depths
This man has in himself: a tranquil man,
With sunny sides where well the fruit is ripe,
Good front and resolute bearing to this life,
And some serener virtues, which control
This rich exterior prudence, — virtues high,
That in the principles of Things are set,
Great by their nature, and consigned to him,
Who, like a faithful Merchant does account
To God for what he spends, and in what way.
Thrice happy art thou, Walden, in thyself!
Such purity is in thy limpid springs, —
In those green shores which do reflect in thee,
And in this man who dwells upon thy edge,
A holy man within a Hermitage.
May all good showers fall gently into thee,
May thy surrounding forests long be spared,
And may the Dweller on thy tranquil marge

There lead a life of deep tranquillity,
Pure as thy Waters, handsome as thy Shores,
And with those virtues which are like the Stars!”

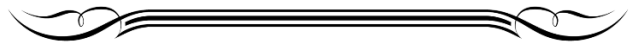
A FABLE FOR CRITICS by James Russell Lowell



“There comes —— , for instance; to see him’s a rare sport,
Tread in Emerson’s tracks with legs painfully short;
How he jumps, how he strains, and gets red in the face,
To keep step with the mystagogue’s natural pace!
He follows as close as a stick to a rocket,
His fingers exploring the prophet’s each pocket.
Fie, for shame, brother bard; with good fruit of your own,
Can’t you let Neighbor Emerson’s orchards alone?
Besides, ’tis no use, you’ll not find e’en a core, —
—— has picked up all the windfalls before.
They might stirp every tree, and E. never would catch ‘em,
His Hesperides have no rude dragon to watch ‘em;
When they send him a dishful, and ask him to try ‘em,
He never suspects how the sly rogues came by ‘em;
He wonders why ’tis there are none such his trees on,
And thinks ‘em the best he has tasted this season.

1848

HENRY D. THOREAU by Elbert Hubbard



Seeing how all the world's ways came to nought,
And how Death's one decree merged all degrees,
He chose to pass his time with birds and trees,
Reduced his life to sane necessities:
Plain meat and drink and sleep and noble thought.
And the plump kine which waded to the knees
Through the lush grass, knowing the luxuries
Of succulent mouthfuls, had our gold-disease
As much as he, who only Nature sought.

Who gives up much the gods give more in turn:
The music of the spheres for dross of gold;
For o'er-officious cares, flame-songs that burn
Their pathway through the years and never old.
And he who shunned vain cares and vainer strife
Found an eternity in one short life.



HENRY THOREAU

As a rule, the man who can do all things equally well is a very mediocre individual. Those who stand out before a groping world as beacon-lights were men of great faults and unequal performances. It is quite needless to add that they do not live on account of their faults or imperfections, but in spite of them.

Henry David Thoreau's place in the common heart of humanity grows firmer and more secure as the seasons pass; his life proves for us again the paradoxical fact that the only men who really succeed are those who fail.

Thoreau's obscurity, his poverty, his lack of public recognition in life, either as a writer or lecturer, his rejection as a lover, his failure in business, and his early death, form a combination of calamities that make him as immortal as a martyr. Especially does an early death sanctify all and make the record complete, but the death of a naturalist while right at the height of his ability to see and enjoy — death from tuberculosis of a man who lived most of the time in the open air — these things array us on the side of the man 'gainst unkind Fate, and cement our sympathy and love.

Nature's care forever is for the species, and the individual is sacrificed without ruth that the race may live and progress. This dumb indifference of Nature to the individual — this apparent contempt for the man — seems to prove that the individual is only a phenomenon. Man is merely a manifestation, a symptom, a symbol, and his quick passing proves that he isn't the Thing. Nature does not care for him — she produces a million beings in order to get one who has thoughts — all are swept into the dustpan of oblivion but the one who thinks; he alone lives, embalmed in the memories of generations unborn.

One of the most insistent errors ever put out was that statement of Rousseau, paraphrased in part by T. Jefferson, that all men are born free and equal. No man was ever born free, and none are equal, and would not remain so an hour, even if Jove, through caprice, should make them so.

The Thoreau race is dead. In Sleepy Hollow Cemetery at Concord there is a monument marking a row of mounds where a half-dozen Thoreaus rest. The inscriptions are all of one size, but the name of one alone lives, and he lives because he had thoughts and expressed

them. If any of the tribe of Thoreau gets into Elysium, it will be by tagging close to the only man among them who glorified his Maker by using his reason.

Nothing should be claimed as truth that can not be demonstrated, but as a hypothesis (borrowed from Henry Thoreau) I give you this: Man is only the tool or vehicle — Mind alone is immortal — Thought is the Thing.

Heredity does not account for the evolution of Henry Thoreau. His father was of French descent — a plain, stolid, little man who settled in Concord with his parents when a child; later he tried business in Boston, but the march of commerce resolved itself into a double-quick, and John Thoreau dropped out of line, and turned to the country village of Concord, where he hoped that between making lead-pencils and gardening he might secure a living.

He moved better than he knew.

John Thoreau's wife was Cynthia Dunbar, a tall and handsome woman, with a ready tongue and nimble wit. Her attentions were largely occupied in looking after the affairs of the neighbors, and as the years went by her voice took on the good old metallic twang of the person who discusses people, not principles.

Henry Thoreau was the third child in the family of seven. He was born in an old house on the Virginia Road, Concord, about a mile and a half from the village. This house was the home of Mrs. Thoreau's mother, but the Thoreaus had taken refuge there, temporarily, to escape a financial blizzard which seems to have hit no one else but themselves.

John Thoreau was assisted in the pencil-making by the whole family. The Thoreaus used to sell their pencils down at Cambridge, fifteen miles away, and Harvard professors, for the most part, used the Concord article in jotting down their sublime thoughts. At ten years of age, Thoreau had a furtive eye on Harvard, directed thither, they say, by his mother. All the best people in Concord, who had sons, sent them to Harvard — why shouldn't the Thoreaus? The spirit of emulation and family pride were at work.

Henry was educated principally because he wasn't very strong, nor was he on good terms with work, and these are classic reasons

for imparting classical education to youth, aspiring or otherwise.

The Concord Academy prepared Henry for college, and when he was sixteen, he trudged off to Cambridge and was duly entered in the Harvard Class of Eighteen Hundred Thirty-seven. At Harvard, his cosmos seemed to be of such a slaty gray that no one said, "Go to — we will observe this youth and write anecdotes about him, for he is going to be a great man." The very few in his class who remembered him wrote their reminiscences long years afterward, with memories refreshed by magazine accounts written by pious pilgrims from Michigan.

In college pranks and popular amusements he took no part, neither was he a "grind," for he impressed himself on no teacher or professor so that they opened their mouths and made prophecies.

Once safely through college, and standing on the threshold (I trust I use the right expression), Henry Thoreau refused to accept his diploma and pay five dollars for it — he said it wasn't worth the money.

In his "Walden," Thoreau expresses his opinion of college training this way: "If I wished a boy to know something about the arts and sciences I would not pursue the common course, which is merely to send him into the neighborhood of some professor, where everything is professed and practised but the art of life. To my astonishment, I was informed when I left college that I had studied navigation! Why, if I had taken one turn down the harbor I would have known more about it."

It is well to remember, however, that Thoreau had no ambitions to become a navigator. His mission was simply to paddle his own canoe on Walden Pond and Concord River. The men who really launched him on his voyage of discovery were Ellery Channing and Ralph Waldo Emerson — both Harvard men. Had he not been a college man, it is quite probable he would never have caught the speaker's eye. His efforts in working his way through college, assisted by his poverty-stricken parents, proved his quality. And as for his life in a shanty on the shores of Walden Pond, the occurrence is too commonplace to mention, were it not for the fact that the solitary occupant of the shanty was a Harvard graduate who used no tobacco.

Harvard prepares a youth for life — but here is a man who,

having prepared for life, deliberately turns his back on life and lives in the woods.

A genuine woodsman is no curiosity, but a civilized woodsman is. The tendency of colleges is to turn men from Nature to books; from bonfires to stoves, steam-heat and cash-registers; but Thoreau, by reversing all rules, suddenly found himself, and others, explaining his position in print.

Harvard supplied him the alternating current; he influenced the people in his environment, and he was influenced by his environment.

But without Harvard there would have been no Thoreau. Having earned his diploma, he had the privilege of declining it; and having gone to college, it was his right to affirm the emptiness of the classics. Only the man with a goodly bank-balance can wear rags with impunity.

John Thoreau made his lead-pencils and peddled them out, and we hear of his saying, "Pencils, I fear, are going out of fashion — people are buying nothing but these miserable new-fangled steel pens." When called upon to surrender, Paul Jones replied, "We haven't yet begun to fight." The truth was, the people had not really begun to use pencils. Pencils weren't going out of fashion, but John Thoreau was. The poor man moved here and there, evicted by rapacious landlords and taken in by his relatives, who didn't care whether he was a stranger or not. If he owed them ten dollars, they took fifty dollars' worth of pencils and called it square.

Then they undersold John one-half, and he said times were scarce.

This, it need not be explained, was in Massachusetts.

A hundred years ago, these men who whittled useful things out of wood during the long winter days were everywhere in New England. The sons of these men invented machines to make the same things, and thus were started the New England manufactories. It was brains against hands, cleverness against skill, initiative against plodding industry. And the man who can tell of the sorrow and suffering of all those industrious sparrows that were caught and wound around flying shuttles, or stamped beneath the swift presses of invention, hadn't yet been born. God doesn't seem to care for sparrows — three-fourths of

all that are hatched die in the nest or fall fluttering to the ground and perish, Grant Allen says.

Comparatively few persons can adjust themselves happily to new conditions: the rest are pushed and broken and bent — and die.

When Dixon and Faber invented machines that could be fed automatically, and turn out more pencils in a day than John Thoreau could in a year, John was out of the game.

John had brought up his children to work, and Henry became an expert pencil-maker. Henry, we say, should have found employment with Faber and Company, as foreman, or else evaded their patents and made a pencil-machine of his own. Instead, however, he settled down and made pencils just like his father used to make, and in the same way. He peddled out a few to his friends, but his business instinct was shown in that he himself tells how one year he made a thousand dollars' worth of pencils, but was obliged to sacrifice them all to cancel a debt of one hundred dollars.

And yet there are people who declare that genius is not transmissible.

John Thoreau failed at pencil-making, but Henry Thoreau failed because he played the flute morning, noon and night, and went singing the immunity of Pan. He fished, and tramped the woods and fields, looking, listening, dreaming and thinking.

At Keswick, where the water comes down at Lodore, there is a pencil-factory that has been there since the days of William the Conqueror. The wife of Coleridge used to work there and get money that supported her philosopher-husband and their children. Southey lived near, and became Poet Laureate of England through the right exercise of Keswick pencils; Wordsworth lived only a few miles away, and once he brought over Charles and Mary Lamb, and bought pencils for both, with their names stamped on them. The good old man who now keeps the pencil-factory explained these things to me, and also explained the direct relationship of good lead-pencils to literature, but I do not remember what it was.

If Henry Thoreau had held on a few years, until the pilgrims began to arrive at Concord, he could have gotten rich selling souvenir pencils. But he just dozed and dreamed and tramped and philosophized; and when he wrote he used an eagle's quill, with ink

he himself distilled from elderberries, and at first, birch-bark sufficed for paper. “Wild men and wild things are the only ones that have life in abundance,” he used to say.

Brook Farm was a serious, sober experiment inaugurated by the Reverend George Ripley with intent to live the ideal life — the life of useful effort, direct honesty, simplicity and high thinking.

But Thoreau could not be induced to join the community — he thought too much of his liberty to entrust it to a committee. He was interested in the experiment, but not enough to visit the experimenters. Emerson looked in on them, remained one night, and went back home to continue his essay on Idealism.

Hawthorne remained long enough to get material for his “Blithedale Romance.” Margaret Fuller secured good copy and the cordial and lifelong dislike of Hawthorne, all through misprized love, alas! George William Curtis and Charles Dana graduated out of Brook Farm, and went down to New York to make goodly successes in the great game of life.

At Brook Farm they succeeded in the high thinking all right, but the entrepreneur is quite as necessary as the poet — and a little more so. Brook Farm had no business head, and things unfit fall into natural dissolution. But the enterprise did not fail, any more than a rotting log fails when it nourishes a bank of violets. The net results of Brook Farm’s high thinking have passed into the world’s treasury, smelted largely by Emerson and Thoreau, who were not there.

Immanuel Kant has been called the father of modern Transcendentalists: but Socrates and his pupil Plato, so far as we know, were the first of the race.

Neither buzzing bluebottles nor the fall of dynasties disturbed them. “The soul is everything,” said Plato. “The soul knows all things,” says Emerson.

In every century a few men have lived who knew the value of plain living and high thinking, and very often the men who reversed the maxim have passed them the hemlock.

All those sects known as Primitive Christians represent variations of the idea — Quakers, Mennonites, Communists, Shakers and

Dunkards!

A Transcendentalist is a Dukhobortsi with a college education. A Quaker with an artistic bias becomes a Preraphaelite, and lo! we have News from Nowhere, a Dream of John Ball, Merton Abbey, Kelmscott, and half a world is touched and tinted by the simplicity, sterling honesty and genuineness of one man.

George Ripley, Bronson Alcott, and Ralph Waldo Emerson evolved New England Transcendentalism, and very early Henry Thoreau added a few bars of harmonious discords to the symphony. Horace Greeley once contended in a "Tribune" editorial that Sam Staples, the bum bailiff who locked Thoreau behind the bars, was an important factor in the New England renaissance, and as such should be immortalized by a statue made of punk, set up on Boston Common for the delectation of bean-eaters. I fear me Horace was a joker.

California quail are quite different from the quail of New York State, and naturalists tell us that this is caused by a difference in environment — quail being a product of soil and climate.

And man is a product of soil and climate — for only in a certain soil can you produce a certain type of man. As a whole, this world is better adapted for the production of fish than genius — most of the really good climate falls on the sea. Christian Scientists are Transcendentalists whose distinguishing point is that they secrete millinery — California quail with rainbow tints and topknots, Balboaic instincts well defined.

Let this fact stand: it was Emerson who made Concord. He saw it first — he was on the ground, and the place was his by right of discovery, the title strengthened by the fact that four of his ancestors had been Concord clergymen, and the most excellent and venerable Doctor Ripley, a near kinsman.

Concord and Emerson, as early as Eighteen Hundred Forty, when Emerson was thirty-seven years old, were synonymous. He had defied the traditions of Harvard, been excommunicated by his Alma Mater, published his pantheistic Essay on Nature, and his thin little books and sermons had been placed on the Boston Theological Index Expurgatorius.

Through it all he had remained gentle, smiling, sympathetic, unresentful.

The world can never spare the man who does his work and holds his peace. Emerson was being lifted up, and souls were being drawn unto him.

In Eighteen Hundred Forty, Bronson Alcott, the American Socrates, with his interesting family, moved to Concord, drawn thither by the magnet of Emerson's personality. Louisa wore short dresses, and used to pick wild blackberries and sell them to the Emersons and get goodly reward in silver, and kindly smiles, and pats on her brown head by the hand that wrote "Compensation."

Alcott was a great, honest, sincere soul, and a true anarch, for he took his own wherever he saw it. He used to run his wheelbarrow into Emerson's garden and load it up with potatoes, cabbages or turnips, and once in response to a hint that the vegetables were private property, the old man somewhat petulantly exclaimed, "I need them! — I need them!"

And that was all: anything that any man needed was his by divine right. And the consistency of Alcott's philosophy was shown in that he never took anything or any more than he needed, and if he had something that you needed, you were certainly welcome to it. If Alcott helped himself to the thrifty Emerson's vegetables, both Emerson and Thoreau helped themselves to Alcott's ideas.

Once a wagonload of wood broke down in front of Alcott's house, and the farmer unhitched his horses and went on to the village to procure a new wheel. Before he got back, Alcott had carried every stick of the combustibles into his own wood-shed. "Providence remembers us!" he said. His faith was sublime.

When all the world reaches the Alcott stage, there will be no need of soldiers, policemen, night-watchmen, or bolts, bars and locks.

In Eighteen Hundred Forty, Nathaniel Hawthorne came to Concord from Salem, where he had resigned his clerkship in the custom-house, that he might devote all his time to literature. He moved into the Old Manse, which had just been vacated by Doctor Ripley, who had gone a-Brook-Farming — the Old Manse where Emerson himself once lived. Elizabeth Peabody, the talented sister of Hawthorne's wife, lived at a convenient distance, and to her

Hawthorne read most of his manuscript, for I need not explain that literature is not literature until it is read aloud and reflected back by a sympathetic, discerning mind. Literature is a collaboration between the reader and the listener.

Margaret Fuller, with her tragic life-story still unwound, lived hard by, and Hawthorne had already worked her up into copy as "Zenobia." Margaret's sister Ellen had married Ellery Channing, the closest, warmest friend that Henry Thoreau ever knew. The gossips arranged a doublewedding, with Henry and Margaret as the other principals; but when interviewed on the theme, Henry had merely shaken his head and said, "In the first place, Margaret Fuller is not fool enough to marry me; and second, I am not fool enough to marry her."

An Irishman who saw Thoreau in the field making a minute in his notebook took it for granted that he was casting up his wages, and inquired what they came to. It was a peculiar farmhand who cared more for ideas than for wages.

George William Curtis was also a farmhand out on the Lowell Road, but came into town Saturday evenings — taking a swim in the river on the way — to attend the philosophical conferences at Emerson's house, and then went off and made gentle fun of them.

Little Doctor Holmes occasionally drove out from Boston to Concord in a one-horse chaise; James Russell Lowell had walked over from Cambridge; and Longfellow had invited all hands to a birthday fete on his lawn at Cambridge, but Thoreau had declined for himself, saying he had to look after his pond-lilies and the field-mice on Bedford flats.

Thoreau, at this time, was a member of Emerson's household, and in a letter Emerson says, "He has his board for what labor he chooses to do; he is a great benefactor and physician to me, for he is an indefatigable and skilful laborer, besides being a scholar and a poet, and as full of promise as a young apple-tree."

And again, in a letter to Carlyle: "One reader and friend of yours dwells in my household, Henry Thoreau, a poet whom you may one day be proud of — a noble, manly youth, full of melodies and invention. We work together day by day in my garden, and I grow well and strong."

To work and talk is the true way to acquire an education. All of our best things are done incidentally — not in cold blood. Hawthorne says in his Journal that most of Emerson's and Thoreau's farming was done leaning on the hoe-handles, while Alcott sat on the fence and explained the Whyness of the Wherefore.

But we must remember that in Hawthorne's ink-bottle there was a goodly dash of tincture of iron. In his Journal of September First, Eighteen Hundred Forty-two, he writes: "Mr. Thoreau dined with us yesterday. He is a singular character — a young man with much of wild, original nature still remaining in him; and so far as he is sophisticated, it is in a way and method of his own. He is as ugly as sin, long-nosed, queer-mouthed, and with uncouth and somewhat rustic ways, though his courteous manner corresponds very well with such an exterior. But his ugliness is of an honest character and really becomes him better than beauty." Little did Hawthorne's guests imagine they were being basted, roasted, or fricasseed for the edification of posterity.

Prosperity at this time had just begun to smile on Hawthorne, and among other extravagances in which he indulged was a boat, bought from Thoreau — made by the hands of this expert Yankee whittler. Hawthorne quotes a little transcendental advice given to him by the maker of the boat: "In paddling a canoe, all you have to do is to will that your boat shall go in any particular direction, and she will immediately take the course, as if imbued with the spirit of the steersman." Hawthorne then adds this sober postscript: "It may be so with you, but it is certainly not so with me."

Admiration for Thoreau gradually grew very strong with Hawthorne, and he quotes Emerson, who called Thoreau "the young god Pan." And this lends much semblance to the statement that Thoreau served Hawthorne as a model for Donatello, the mysterious wood-sprite in the "Marble Faun."

As to the transformation of Thoreau himself, one of his classmates records this:

Meeting Mr. Emerson one day, I inquired if he saw much of my classmate, Henry D. Thoreau, who was then living in Concord. "Of Thoreau?" replied Mr. Emerson, his face lighting up with a smile of enthusiasm. "Oh, yes, we could not do without him. When Carlyle

comes to America, I expect to introduce Thoreau to him as the man of Concord," and I was greatly surprised at these words. They set an estimate on Thoreau which seemed to be extravagant.... Not long after I happened to meet Thoreau in Mr. Emerson's study at Concord — the first time we had come together after leaving college. I was quite startled by the transformation that had taken place in him. His short figure and general cast of countenance were, of course, unchanged; but in his manners, in the tones of his voice, in his modes of expression, even in the hesitations and pauses of his speech, he had become the counterpart of Mr. Emerson. Thoreau's college voice bore no resemblance to Mr. Emerson's, and was so familiar to my ear that I could have readily identified him by it in the dark. I was so much struck by the change that I took the opportunity, as they sat near together talking, of listening with closed eyes, and I was unable to determine with certainty which was speaking. I do not know to what subtle influences to ascribe it, but after conversing with Mr. Emerson for even a brief time, I always found myself able and inclined to adopt his voice and manner of speaking.

Thoreau had tried schoolteaching, but he had to give up his position because he would not exercise the birch and ferule. "If the scholars once find out the teacher is not goin' to sting 'em up when they need it, that is an end to the skule," said one of the directors, and he spat violently at a fly, ten feet away. The others agreeing with him, Thoreau was asked to resign.

William Emerson, a brother of Ralph Waldo's, a prosperous New York merchant, had lured Ralph Waldo's hired man away from him and taken him down to Staten Island, New York. Here Thoreau acted as private tutor, and imparted the mysteries of woodcraft to boys who cared more for marbles.

Staten Island was about two hundred miles too far from Concord to suit Thoreau.

His loneliness in New York City made Concord and the pine-trees of Walden woods seem paradise enow. There is no heart desolation equal to that which can come to one in a throng.

Margaret Fuller was now in New York City, working for Greeley on the editorial staff of the "Tribune." Greeley was so much pleased

with Thoreau that he offered to set him to work as reporter, for Greeley had guessed the truth that the best city reporters are country boys. They observe and hear — all is curious and wonderful to them: by and by they will become blase — sophisticated — that is, blind and deaf.

Greeley was a great talker, and he had a way of getting others to talk also. He got Thoreau to talking about communal life and life in the woods, and then Horace worked Henry's words up into copy — for that is the way all good newspaper-writers evolve their original ideas.

Thoreau was amazed to pick up a number of the daily "Tribune" and find his conversation of the day before, with Greeley, skilfully transformed into a leader.

Fourierism had been the theme — the Phalanstery versus Individual Housekeeping. Greeley had prophesied that the phalanstery, with one kitchen for forty families, instead of forty kitchens for forty families, would soon come about. Greeley's prophetic vision did not quite anticipate the modern apartment-house, which perhaps is a transitional expedient, moving toward the phalanstery, but he quoted Thoreau by saying, "A woman enslaved by her housekeeping is just as much a chattel as if owned by a man."

This was in Eighteen Hundred Forty-five, and Thoreau was now twenty-eight years of age. He was homesick for the dim pine-woods with their ceaseless lullaby, the winding and placid river, and the great, massive, sullen, self-sufficient boulders of Concord.

He was resolved to follow the example of Brook Farm, and start a community of his own in opposition. His community would be on the shores of Walden Pond, and the only member of the genus homo who would be eligible to membership would be himself; the other members would be the birds and squirrels and bees, and the trees would make up the rest. Brook Farm was a retreat for transcendentalists — a place to meditate, dream and work — a place where one could exist close to Nature, and live a simple, hardy and healthful life.

Thoreau's retreat would be the same, with the disadvantage of personal contact eliminated.

It was in March, Eighteen Hundred Forty-five, that Thoreau began

building his shanty. The spot was in a dense woods, on a hillside that gently sloped down to the clear, cold, deep water of Walden Pond. The land belonged to Emerson, who obligingly gave Thoreau the use of it, rent free, with no conditions. Alcott helped in the carpenter work, and discussed betimes of the Wherefore, and when it came to the raising, a couple of neighboring farmers were hailed and pressed into service. The cabin was twelve by fifteen, and cost — furnished — the sum of twenty-eight dollars, good money, not counting labor, which Thoreau did not calculate as worth anything, since he had had the fun of the thing — something for which men often pay high.

The furniture consisted of a table, a chair, and a bed, all made by the owner. For bedclothes and dishes the Emerson household was put under contribution. On the door was a latch, but no lock.

And Thoreau looked upon his work and pronounced it good.

Stripped of the fact that a man of culture and education built the shanty and lived in it, the incident is scarcely worth noting. Boys passing through the shanty stage, all build shanties, and forage through their mothers' pantries for provender, which they carry off to their robbers' roost. Thoreau was an example of shanty-arrested development.

But as the import of every sentence depends upon who wrote it, and the worth of advice hinges upon who gave it, so does the value of every act depend upon who did it. Thus when a man, who was in degree an inspiration of Emerson, takes to the woods, it is worth our while to follow him afield and see what he does.

Thoreau set to work to clean up two acres of blackberry brambles for a garden-patch. He did not work except when he felt like it. His plan was to go to bed at dusk, with window and door open, and get up at five o'clock in the morning. After a plunge in the lake he would dress and prepare his simple breakfast. Then he would work in his garden, or if the mood struck him, he would sit in the door of his shanty and meditate, or else write. In the arrangement of his home he followed no system or rule, merely allowing the passing inclination to lead.

His provisions were gotten of friends in the village, and were paid for in labor. It was part of Thoreau's philosophy that to accept something for nothing was theft, and that the giving or acceptance of

presents was immoral. For all he received he conscientiously gave an equivalent in labor; and as for ideas, he always considered himself a learner; if he had thoughts they belonged to anybody who could annex them. And that Emerson and Horace Greeley were alike in their capacity to absorb, digest and regurgitate, is everywhere acknowledged. To paraphrase Emerson's famous remark concerning Plato: Say what you will, you will find everything mentioned by Emerson hinted at somewhere in Thoreau. The younger man had as much mind as the elder, but he lacked the capacity for patient effort that works steadily, persistently, and weighs, sifts, decides, classifies and arranges. The voice was the voice of Jacob, but the hand was the hand of Esau. That is to say, Thoreau lacked business instinct. During the Winter at Walden Pond, all the work Thoreau had to do was to gather firewood. There was plenty of time to think and write, and here the better part of "Walden" and "A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers" were written. He had no neighbors, no pets, no domesticated animals — only the squirrels on the roof, a woodchuck under the floor, the scolding blue jays in the pines overhead, the wild ducks on the pond, and the hooting owls that sat on the ridgepole at night.

Thoreau loved solitude more because he prized society — the society of simple men who could talk and tell things. Thoreau was no hermit — at least twice a week he would go to the village and meander along the street, gossiping with all or any. Often he would accept invitations to supper, but on principle refused all invitations to remain overnight, no matter what the weather. Indeed, as Hawthorne hints, there is a trace of the theatrical in the man who leaves a warm fireside at nine or ten o'clock at night and trudges off through the darkness, storm and sleet, feeling his way through the blackness of the woods to a cold and cheerless shanty which he with unconscious humor calls home. Hawthorne hints that Thoreau was a delightful poseur — he posed so naturally that he deceived even himself. On one particular visit to the village, however, he did not go back home for the night. It seems that he had been called upon by the local taxgatherer for his poll-tax, a matter of a dollar and a quarter. Thoreau argued the question at length, and among other things, said, "I will not give money to buy a musket, and hire a man to use this

musket to shoot another." And also, "The best government is not that which governs least, but that which governs not at all."

"But what shall I do?" said the patient publican.

"Resign," said the philosopher.

Thoreau seemed to forget that officeholders seldom die and never resign. In the argument the publican was worsted, but he was not without resource. He went back to town and told the other officials what had happened. Their dignity was at stake. Alcott had been guilty of a like defiance some time before, and now it was the belief that he was putting the younger man up to insurrection.

The next time Thoreau came over to the village for his mail he was arrested and lodged in the local bastile.

Emerson, hearing of the trouble, hastened to the jail, and reaching the presence of the prisoner asked sternly, "Henry, why are you here?"

And the answer was, "Waldo, why are you not here?" Emerson had no use for such finespun theories of duty, and the matter was too near home for a joke, so he turned away and let the culprit spend the night in limbo. The next morning Thoreau was released, the tax having been paid by some unknown person — Emerson, undoubtedly. This was a tame enough ending to what was rather an interesting affair — the hope of the best citizens being that Thoreau would get a goodly sentence for vagrancy. The townfolk looked upon Thoreau and Alcott with suspicious eyes. They both came in for much well-deserved censure, and Emerson did not go unsmirched, since he was guilty of harboring and encouraging these ne'er-do-wells.

Thoreau's cabin-life continued for two Summers and Winters. He had proved that two hours' manual work each day was sufficient to keep a man — twenty cents a day would suffice.

The last year in the woods he had many callers: Agassiz had been to see him, Emerson had often called, Ellery Channing was a frequent visitor, and picnickers were constant. Lowell had made a few cutting remarks to the effect that "as compared with shanty-life, the tub of Diogenes was preferable, as it had a much sounder bottom," and Hawthorne had written of "the beauties of conspicuous solitude."

Thoreau felt that he was attracting too much attention, and that perhaps Hawthorne was right: a recluse who holds receptions is becoming the thing he pretends to despise. Besides that, there was plenty of precedent for quitting — Brook Farm had gone by the board, and was but a memory.

Thoreau's shanty was turned over to a utilitarian Scotchman with red hair. Later the immortal shanty was a useful granary. Thoreau went back to the village to live in a garret and work at odd jobs of boat-building and gardening.

Now only a pile of boulders marks the place where the cabin stood. For some years, each visitor to the spot threw a stone upon the heap, but recently the proposition has been reversed, and each visitor takes a stone away, which reveals not a reversal in the sentiment toward the memory of Thoreau, but a change in the quality of the Concord pilgrim.

Thoreau's early death was the direct result of his reckless lack of common prudence. That which made him live, in a literary way, curtailed his years. The man was improperly and imperfectly nourished, physically. Men who live alone do not cook any more than they have to: men and women, both, cook for emulation. That is to say, we work for each other, and we succeed only as we help each other.

Thoreau was such a pronounced individualist that he cared for no one but himself, and he cared for himself not at all. It is wife, children and home that teach a man prudence, and make him bank against the storm. "At Walden no one bothered me but the State," said Thoreau. If Thoreau had had a family and treated his household as he treated himself, that scorned thing, the State, would have stepped in and sent him to the workhouse, and his children to the Home for the Friendless.

If he had treated dumb animals as he treated himself, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would have interfered. The absence of social ties and of all responsibilities fixed in his peculiar temperament an indifference to hunger, heat, cold, wet, damp, and all bodily discomfort that classes the man with the flagellants. He tells of whole days when he ate nothing but berries and drank only cold

water; and at other times of how he walked all day in a soaking rain and went to bed at night, supperless, under a pine-tree. Emerson records the fact that on long tramps Thoreau would carry only a chunk of plum-cake for food, because it was rich and contained condensed nutriment.

The question is sometimes asked, "How can one eat his cake and keep it too?" but this does not refer to plum-cake.

A few years of plum-cake, cold mince-pie and continual wet feet will put the petard under even the stoutest constitution.

During his shanty-life Thoreau was imperfectly nourished, and for the victim of malassimilation, tuberculosis hunts and needs no spyglass.

It is absurd for a man to make a god of his digestive apparatus, but it is just as bad to forget that the belly is as much the gift of God as the brain.

In childhood, Thoreau was frail and weak. Outdoor life gradually developed on his slight frame a splendid strength and a power to do and endure. He could outrun, outrow, outwalk any of his townsmen. In him developed the confidence of the athlete — the confidence of the athlete who dies young. Thoreau was an athlete, and he died as the athlete dieth. Irregular diet and continued exposure did their work — the vital powers became reduced, the man "caught cold," bronchitis followed, and the tuberculæ laughed.

During Thoreau's life he published but two volumes, and these met with scanty sale. Since his death ten volumes have been issued from his manuscripts and letters, and his fame has steadily increased.

Boston had no recognition for Thoreau as long as he was alive. Among the most popular writers of the time, feted and feasted, invited and exalted, were George S. Hillard, N. P. Willis, Caroline Kirkland, George W. Green, Parke Godwin and Charles F. Briggs. These writers, who had the run of the magazines, would have smiled in derision if told that the name and fame of uncouth Thoreau would outlive them all. They wrote for the people who bought their books, but Thoreau dedicated his work to time. He wrote what he thought, but they wrote what they thought other people thought.

In the publication of "The Dial," Thoreau took a hearty interest,

and was a frequent contributor. The official organ of the transcendentalists, however, paid no honorariums — it was both sincere and serious, and died in due time of too much dignity. The "Atlantic Monthly" accepted one article by Thoreau, and paid for it, but as James Russell Lowell, the editor, used his blue pencil a trifle, without first consulting the author, he never got an opportunity to do so again.

Horace Greeley had interested himself in Thoreau's writings and gotten several articles accepted by Graham's and also Putnam's Magazine. "The Week" had been published on the author's guaranty that enough copies would be sold the first year to cover the cost. After four years, of the edition of one thousand copies only three hundred were disposed of, and these were mostly given away. To pay the publisher for the expense incurred, Thoreau buckled down and worked hard at surveying for a year.

The only man he ever knew, of whom he stood a little in awe, was Walt Whitman. In a letter to Blake he says:

Nineteenth November, Eighteen Hundred Fifty-six. — Alcott has been here, and last Sunday I went with him to Greeley's farm, thirty-six miles north of New York. The next day Alcott and I heard Beecher preach; and what was more, we visited Whitman the next morning, and we were much interested and provoked. He is apparently the greatest democrat the world has seen, kings and aristocracy go by the board at once, as they have long deserved to. A remarkably strong though coarse nature, of a sweet disposition, and much prized by his friends. Though peculiar and rough in his exterior, he is essentially a gentleman. I am still somewhat in a quandary about him — feel that he is essentially strange to me, at any rate; but I am surprised by the sight of him. He is very broad, but, as I have said, not fine.

Seventh December, Eighteen Hundred Fifty-six. — That Walt Whitman, of whom I wrote you, is the most interesting fact to me at present. I have just read his second edition (which he gave me), and it has done me more good than any reading for a long time. Perhaps I remember best the poem of "Walt Whitman an American" and the "Sundown" poem. There are two or three pieces in the book which are disagreeable, to say the least, simply sensual.... As for its

sensuality — and it may turn out to be less sensual than it appears — I do not so much wish that those parts were not written, as that men and women were so pure that they could read them without harm.

On the whole, it sounds to me very brave and American, after whatever deductions. I do not believe that all the sermons, so called, that have been preached in this land, put together, are equal to it for preaching. We ought greatly to rejoice in him. He occasionally suggests something a little more than human. You can't confound him with the other inhabitants of Brooklyn. How they must shudder when they read him!

To be sure, I sometimes feel a little imposed on. By his heartiness and broad generalities he puts me into a liberal frame of mind, prepared to see wonders — as it were, sets me upon a hill or in the midst of a plain — stirs me well up, and then — throws in a thousand of brick. Though rude and sometimes ineffectual, it is a great primitive poem, an alarum or trumpet-note ringing through the American camp. Wonderfully like the Orientals, too, considering that, when I asked him if he had read them, he answered, "No; tell me about them."

Since I have seen him, I find that I am not disturbed by any brag or egoism in his book. He may turn out the least of a braggart of all, having a better right to be confident. Walt is a great fellow.

A lady once asked John Burroughs this question: "What would become of this world if everybody in it patterned after Henry Thoreau?" And Ol' John replied, "It would be much improved."

But your Uncle John is a humorist — he knows that Henry Ward Beecher was right when he said, "God never made but one Thoreau — that was enough, but we are grateful for the one."

Thoreau was a poet-naturalist, and the lesson he taught us is that this is the most beautiful world to know anything about, and there are enough curious and wonderful things right under our feet, and over our heads, and all around us, to amuse, divert, interest and instruct us for a lifetime. We need only a little.

Use your eyes!

"How do you manage to find so many Indian relics?" a friend asked Thoreau. "Just like this," he replied, and stooping over, he picked up an arrowhead under the friend's foot. At dinner once at a

neighbor's he was asked what dish he preferred, and his answer was, "The nearest." To him, everything was good — he uttered no complaints and made no demands.

When asked by a clergyman why he did not go to church, he said, "It is the rafters — I can't stand them — when I look up, I want to gaze straight into the blue sky." Then he turned the tables and asked the interrogator a question: "Did you ever happen, accidentally, to say anything while you were preaching?" Yet preachers of brains were always attracted to him: Harrison Blake, to whom he wrote more letters than to any one else, was a Congregational preacher. And when Horace Greeley took Thoreau to Plymouth Church, Beecher invited him to sit on the platform and quoted him as one who saw God in autumn's every burning bush.

The wit of the man — his direct speech, and all of his beautiful indifference for the good opinion of those whom others follow after and lie in wait for — was sublime. Meanness, hypocrisy, secrecy and subterfuge had no place in Thoreau's nature.

He wanted nothing — nothing but liberty — he did not even ask for your applause or approval. When walking on country roads, laborers would hail him and ask for tobacco — seeing in him only one of their own kind. Farmers would stop and gossip with him about the weather. Children ran to him on the village streets and would cling to his hands and clutch his coat, and ask where the berries grew, or the first spring flowers were to be found. With children he was particularly patient and kind. With them he would converse as freely as did George Francis Train with the children in Madison Square. The children recognized in him something very much akin to themselves — he would play upon his flute for them and whittle out toy boats, regardless of the flight of time.

Imbeciles and mental defectives from the almshouse used occasionally to wander over to his cabin in the woods, and he would treat them with gentle consideration, and accompany them back home.

His lack of worldly prudence, Blake thought, tokened a courage which under certain conditions would have made him as formidable as John Brown. Blake tells this: Once on a lonely road, two miles from Concord, two loafers stopped a girl who was picking berries,

and began to bother her. Thoreau just then happened along, and seeing the young woman's distress, he collared the rogues and marched them into the village, turning them over to that redoubtable transcendentalist, Sam Staples, who locked them up. Thoreau's hook nose and features could be transformed in rare instances into a look of command that no man dare question — it was the look of the fatalist — the benign fanatic — the look of Marat — the look of a man who has nothing but his life to lose, and places small store on that. "A little more ambition, and a trifle less sympathy, and the world would have had a Cæsar to deal with," says Blake.

Cowardice is only caution carried to an extreme. Thoreau exercised no prudence in making money, securing fame, preserving his health, holding his friends or making new ones. This Spartan-like quality, that counts not the cost, is essentially heroic.

But Thoreau was not given to strife; for the most part, he was non-resistant. The chief thing he prized was equanimity, and this you can not secure through struggle and strife. His game was all captured with the spyglass, or carried home in his botanists' drum. For worldly wealth and what we call progress, he had small appreciation — this marks his limitations. But his reasons are surely good literature:

They make a great ado nowadays about hard times; but I think that the community generally, ministers and all, take a wrong view of the matter. This general failure, both private and public, is rather occasion for rejoicing, as reminding us whom we have at the helm — that justice is always done. If our merchants did not most of them fail, and the banks too, my faith in the old laws of the world would be staggered. The statement that ninety-six in a hundred doing such business surely break down, is perhaps the sweetest fact that statistics have revealed — exhilarating as the fragrance of the flowers in the Spring. Does it not say somewhere, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice"? If thousands are thrown out of employment, it suggests that they were not well employed. Why don't they take the hint? It is not enough to be industrious; so are the ants. What are you industrious about?

The merchants and company have long laughed at transcendentalism, higher law, etc., crying, "None of your

moonshine," as if they were anchored to something not only definite, but sure and permanent. If there were any institution which was presumed to rest on a solid and secure basis, and more than any other, represented this boasted commonsense, prudence, and practical talent, it was the bank; and now these very banks are found to be mere reeds shaken by the wind.

Scarcely one in the land has kept its promise. Not merely the Brook Farm and Fourierite communities, but now the community generally has failed. But there is the moonshine still, serene, beneficent and unchanged.

Thoreau was no pessimist. He complained neither of men nor of destiny — he felt that he was getting out of life all that was his due. His remarks might be sharp and his words sarcastic, but in them there was no bitterness. He made life for none more difficult — he added to no one's burdens. Sympathy with Nature, pride, buoyancy, self-sufficiency, were his prevailing traits. The habit of his mind was hopeful.

His wit and good-nature were his to the last, and when asked if he had made his peace with God, he replied, "I have never quarreled with Him."

He died, aged forty-four, in the modest home of his mother. The village school was dismissed that the scholars might attend the funeral, and three hundred children walked in the procession to Sleepy Hollow. Emerson made an address at the grave; Alcott read selections from Thoreau's own writings; and Louisa Alcott read this poem, composed for the occasion:

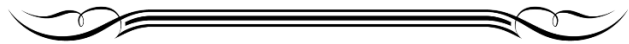
We sighing said, "Our Pan is dead;
His pipe hangs mute beside the river,
Around it wistful sunbeams quiver,
But Music's airy voice is fled.
Spring mourns as for untimely frost:
The bluebird chants a requiem;
The willow-blossom waits for him; —
The Genius of the wood is lost."

Then from the flute, untouched by hands,

There came a low, harmonious breath:
“For such as he there is no death;
His life the eternal life commands;
Above man’s aims his nature rose.
The wisdom of a just content
Made one small spot a continent,
And turned to poetry life’s prose.

“To him no vain regrets belong,
Whose soul, that finer instrument,
Gave to the world no poor lament,
But wood-notes ever sweet and strong.
O lonely friend! he still will be
A potent presence, though unseen —
Steadfast, sagacious, and serene;
Seek not for him — he is with thee.”

THOREAU by Virginia Woolf



A hundred years ago, on July 12th, 1817, was born Henry David Thoreau, the son of a pencil maker in Concord, Massachusetts. He has been lucky in his biographers, who have been attracted to him not by his fame so much as by their sympathy with his views, but they have not been able to tell us a great deal about him that we shall not find in the books themselves. His life was not eventful; he had, as he says, 'a real genius for staying at home'. His mother was quick and voluble, and so fond of solitary rambling that one of her children narrowly escaped coming into the world in an open field. The father, on the other hand, was a 'small, quiet, plodding man', with a faculty for making the best lead pencils in America, thanks to a secret of his own for mixing levigated plumbago with fuller's earth and water, rolling it into sheets, cutting it into strips, and burning it. He could at any rate afford, with much economy and a little help, to send his son to Harvard, although Thoreau himself did not attach much importance to this expensive opportunity. It is at Harvard, however, that he first becomes visible to us. A classmate saw much in him as a boy that we recognize later in the grown man, so that instead of a portrait we will quote what was visible about the year 1837 to the penetrating eye of the Rev. John Weiss:

He was cold and unimpressible. The touch of his hand was moist and indifferent, as if he had taken up something when he saw your hand coming, and caught your grasp on it. How the prominent grey-blue eyes seemed to rove down the path, just in advance of his feet, as his grave Indian stride carried him down to University Hall. He did not care for people; his class-mates seemed very remote. This reverie hung always about him, and not so loosely as the odd garments which the pious household care furnished. Thought had not yet awakened his countenance; it was serene, but rather dull, rather plodding. The lips were not yet firm; there was almost a look of smug satisfaction lurking round their corners. It is plain now that he was preparing to hold his future views with great setness and

personal appreciation of their importance. The nose was prominent, but its curve fell forward without firmness over the upper lip, and we remember him as looking very much like some Egyptian sculpture of faces, large-featured, but brooding, immobile, fixed in a mystic egoism. Yet his eyes were sometimes searching, as if he had dropped, or expected to find, something. In fact his eyes seldom left the ground, even in his most earnest conversations with you ...

He goes on to speak of the 'reserve and inaptness' of Thoreau's life at college.

Clearly the young man thus depicted, whose physical pleasures took the form of walking and camping out, who smoked nothing but 'dried lily stems', who venerated Indian relics as much as Greek classics, who in early youth had formed the habit of 'settling accounts' with his own mind in a diary, where his thoughts, feelings, studies, and experiences had daily to be passed under review by that Egyptian face and searching eye - clearly this young man was destined to disappoint both parents and teachers and all who wished him to cut a figure in the world and become a person of importance. His first attempt to earn his living in the ordinary way by becoming a schoolmaster was brought to an end by the necessity of flogging his pupils. He proposed to talk morals to them instead. When the committee pointed out that the school would suffer from this 'undue leniency' Thoreau solemnly beat six pupils and then resigned, saying that school-keeping 'interfered with his arrangements'. The arrangements that the penniless young man wished to carry out were probably assignations with certain pine trees, pools, wild animals, and Indian arrowheads in the neighbourhood, which had already laid their commands upon him.

But for a time he was to live in the world of men, at least in that very remarkable section of the world of which Emerson was the centre and which professed the Transcendentalist doctrines. Thoreau took up his lodgings in Emerson's house and very soon became, so his friends said, almost indistinguishable from the prophet himself. If you listened to them both talking with your eyes shut you could not be certain where Emerson left off and Thoreau began .. in his manners, in the tones of his voice, in his modes of expression, even in the hesitations and pauses of his speech, he had become the

counterpart of Mr Emerson'. This may well have been so. The strongest natures, when they are influenced, submit the most unreservedly: it is perhaps a sign of their strength. But that Thoreau lost any of his own force in the process, or took on permanently any colours not natural to himself the readers of his books will certainly deny.

The Transcendentalist movement, like most movements of vigour, represented the effort of one or two remarkable people to shake off the old clothes which had become uncomfortable to them and fit themselves more closely to what now appeared to them to be the realities. The desire for readjustment had, as Lowell has recorded and the Memoirs of Margaret Fuller bear witness, its ridiculous symptoms and its grotesque disciples. But of all the men and women who lived in an age when thought was remoulded in common, we feel that Thoreau was the one who had least to adapt himself, who was by nature most in harmony with the new spirit. He was by birth among those people, as Emerson expresses it, who have 'silently given in their several adherence to a new hope, and in all companies do dignify a greater trust in the nature and resources of man than the laws of the popular opinion will well allow'. There were two ways of life which seemed to the leaders of the movement to give scope for the attainment of these new hopes; one in some co-operative community, such as Brook Farm; the other in solitude with nature. When the time came to make his choice Thoreau decided emphatically in favour of the second. 'As for the communities,' he wrote in his journal, 'I think I had rather keep bachelor's quarters in hell than go to board in heaven.' Whatever the theory might be, there was deep in his nature 'a singular yearning to all wildness' which would have led him to some such experiment as that recorded in 'Walden', whether it seemed good to others or not. In truth he was to put in practice the doctrines of the Transcendentalists more thoroughly than any one of them, and to prove what the resources of man are by putting his entire trust in them. Thus, having reached the age of twenty-seven, he chose a piece of land in a wood on the brink of the clear deep green waters of Walden Pond, built a hut with his own hands, reluctantly borrowing an axe for some part of the work, and settled down, as he puts it, 'to front only the essential facts of

life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived'.

And now we have a chance of getting to know Thoreau as few people are known, even by their friends. Few people, it is safe to say, take such an interest in themselves as Thoreau took in himself; for if we are gifted with an intense egoism we do our best to suffocate it in order to live on decent terms with our neighbours. We are not sufficiently sure of ourselves to break completely with the established order. This was Thoreau's adventure; his books are the record of that experiment and its results. He did everything he could to intensify his own understanding of himself, to foster whatever was peculiar, to isolate himself from contact with any force that might interfere with his immensely valuable gift of personality. It was his sacred duty, not to himself alone but to the world; and a man is scarcely an egoist who is an egoist on so grand a scale. When we read 'Walden', the record of his two years in the woods, we have a sense of beholding life through a very powerful magnifying glass. To walk, to eat, to cut up logs, to read a little, to watch the bird on the bough, to cook one's dinner - all these occupations when scraped clean and felt afresh prove wonderfully large and bright. The common things are so strange, the usual sensations so astonishing that to confuse or waste them by living with the herd and adopting habits that suit the greater number is a sin - an act of sacrilege. What has civilization to give, how can luxury improve upon these simple facts? 'Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!' is his cry. 'Instead of three meals a day, if it be necessary eat but one; instead of a hundred dishes, five; and reduce other things in proportion.'

But the reader may ask, what is the value of simplicity? Is Thoreau's simplicity simplicity for its own sake, and not rather a method of intensification, a way of setting free the delicate and complicated machinery of the soul, so that its results are the reverse of simple? The most remarkable men tend to discard luxury because they find that it hampers the play of what is much more valuable to them. Thoreau himself was an extremely complex human being, and he certainly did not achieve simplicity by living for two years in a hut and cooking his own dinner. His achievement was rather to lay bare what was within him - to let life take its own way unfettered by

artificial constraints. ‘I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life ...”Walden’ - all his books, indeed - are packed with subtle, conflicting, and very fruitful discoveries. They are not written to prove something in the end. They are written as the Indians turn down twigs to mark their path through the forest. He cuts his way through life as if no one had ever taken that road before, leaving these signs for those who come after, should they care to see which way he went. But he did not wish to leave ruts behind him, and to follow is not an easy process. We can never lull our attention asleep in reading Thoreau by the certainty that we have now grasped his theme and can trust our guide to be consistent. We must always be ready to try something fresh; we must always be prepared for the shock of facing one of those thoughts in the original which we have known all our lives in reproductions. ‘All health and success does me good, however far off and withdrawn it may appear; all disease and failure helps to make me sad and do me evil, however much sympathy it may have with me or I with it.”Distrust all enterprises that require new clothes.”You must have a genius for charity as well as for anything else.’ That is a handful, plucked almost at random, and of course there are plenty of wholesome platitudes.

As he walked his woods, or sat for hours almost motionless like the sphinx of college days upon a rock watching the birds, Thoreau defined his own position to the world not only with unflinching honesty, but with a glow of rapture at his heart. He seems to hug his own happiness. Those years were full of revelations - so independent of other men did he find himself, so perfectly equipped by nature not only to keep himself housed, fed, and clothed, but also superbly entertained without any help from society. Society suffered a good many blows from his hand. He sets down his complaints so squarely that we cannot help suspecting that society might one of these days have come to terms with so noble a rebel. He did not want churches or armies, post-offices or newspapers, and very consistently he refused to pay his tithes and went into prison rather than pay his poll tax. All getting together in crowds for doing good or procuring pleasure was an intolerable infliction to him. Philanthropy was one of

the sacrifices, he said, that he had made to a sense of duty. Politics seemed to him 'unreal, incredible, insignificant', and most revolutions not so important as the drying up of a river or the death of a pine. He wanted only to be left alone tramping the woods in his suit of Vermont grey, unhampered even by those two pieces of limestone which lay upon his desk until they proved guilty of collecting the dust, and were at once thrown out of the window.

And yet this egoist was the man who sheltered runaway slaves in his hut; this hermit was the first man to speak out in public in defence of John Brown; this self-centred solitary could neither sleep nor think when Brown lay in prison. The truth is that anyone who reflects as much and as deeply as Thoreau reflected about life and conduct is possessed of an abnormal sense of responsibility to his kind, whether he chooses to live in a wood or to become President of the Republic. Thirty volumes of diaries which he would condense from time to time with infinite care into little books prove, moreover, that the independent man who professed to care so little for his fellows was possessed with an intense desire to communicate with them. 'I would fain,' he writes, 'communicate the wealth of my life to men, would really give them what is most precious in my gift ... I have no private good unless it be my peculiar ability to serve the public ... I wish to communicate those parts of my life which I would gladly live again.' No one can read him and remain unaware of this wish. And yet it is a question whether he ever succeeded in imparting his wealth, in sharing his life. When we have read his strong and noble books, in which every word is sincere, every sentence wrought as well as the writer knows how, we are left with a strange feeling of distance; here is a man who is trying to communicate but who cannot do it. His eyes are on the ground or perhaps on the horizon. He is never speaking directly to us; he is speaking partly to himself and partly to something mystic beyond our sight. 'Says I to myself,' he writes, 'should be the motto to my journal', and all his books are journals. Other men and women were wonderful and very beautiful, but they were distant; they were different; he found it very hard to understand their ways. They were as 'curious to him as if they had been prairie dogs'. All human intercourse was infinitely difficult; the distance between one friend and another was unfathomable; human

relationships were very precarious and terribly apt to end in disappointment. But, although concerned and willing to do what he could short of lowering his ideals, Thoreau was aware that the difficulty was one that could not be overcome by taking pains. He was made differently from other people. 'If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.' He was a wild man, and he would never submit to be a tame one. And for us here lies his peculiar charm. He hears a different drummer. He is a man into whom nature has breathed other instincts than ours, to whom she has whispered, one may guess, some of her secrets.

'It appears to be a law,' he says, 'that you cannot have a deep sympathy with both man and nature. Those qualities which bring you near to the one estrange you from the other.' Perhaps that is true. The greatest passion of his life was his passion for nature. It was more than a passion, indeed; it was an affinity; and in this he differs from men like White and Jefferies. He was gifted, we are told, with an extraordinary keenness of the senses; he could see and hear what other men could not; his touch was so delicate that he could pick up a dozen pencils accurately from a box holding a bushel; he could find his way alone through thick woods at night. He could lift a fish out of the stream with his hands; he could charm a wild squirrel to nestle in his coat; he could sit so still that the animals went on with their play round him. He knew the look of the country so intimately that if he had waked in a meadow he could have told the time of year within a day or two from the flowers at his feet. Nature had made it easy for him to pick up a living without effort. He was so skilled with his hands that by labouring forty days he could live at leisure for the rest of the year. We scarcely know whether to call him the last of an older race of men, or the first of one that is to come. He had the toughness, the stoicism, the unspoilt senses of an Indian, combined with the self-consciousness, the exacting discontent, the susceptibility of the most modern. At times he seems to reach beyond our human powers in what he perceives upon the horizon of humanity. No philanthropist ever hoped more of mankind, or set higher and nobler tasks before him, and those whose ideal of passion and of service is

the loftiest are those who have the greatest capacities for giving, although life may not ask of them all that they can give, and forces them to hold in reserve rather than to lavish. However much Thoreau had been able to do, he would still have seen possibilities beyond; he would always have remained, in one sense, unsatisfied. That is one of the reasons why he is able to be the companion of a younger generation.

He died when he was in the full tide of life, and had to endure long illness within doors. But from nature he had learnt both silence and stoicism. He had never spoken of the things that had moved him most in his private fortunes. But from nature, too, he had learnt to be content, not thoughtlessly or selfishly content, and certainly not with resignation, but with a healthy trust in the wisdom of nature, and in nature, as he says, there is no sadness. ‘I am enjoying existence as much as ever,’ he wrote from his deathbed, ‘and regret nothing.’ He was talking to himself of moose and Indian when, without a struggle, he died.

ANOTHER WORD ON THOREAU by John Burroughs

I

After Emerson, the name of no New England man of letters keeps greener and fresher than that of Thoreau. A severe censor of his countrymen, and with few elements of popularity, yet the quality of his thought, the sincerity of his life, and the nearness and perennial interest of his themes, as well as his rare powers of literary expression, win recruits from each generation of readers. He does not grow stale any more than Walden Pond itself grows stale. He is an obstinate fact there in New England life and literature, and at the end of his first centennial his fame is more alive than ever.

Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts, July, 1817, and passed most of his life of forty-five years in his native town, minding his own business, as he would say, which consisted, for the most part, in spending at least the half of each day in the open air, winter and summer, rain and shine, and in keeping tab upon all the doings of wild nature about him and recording his observations in his Journal.

The two race strains that met in Thoreau, the Scottish and the French, come out strongly in his life and character. To the French he owes his vivacity, his lucidity, his sense of style, and his passion for the wild; for the French, with all their urbanity and love of art, turn to nature very easily. To the Scot he is indebted more for his character than for his intellect. From this source come his contrariness, his combativeness, his grudging acquiescence, and his pronounced mysticism. Thence also comes his genius for solitude. The man who in his cabin in the woods has a good deal of company "especially the mornings when nobody calls," is French only in the felicity of his expression. But there is much in Thoreau that is neither Gallic nor Scottish, but pure Thoreau.

The most point-blank and authoritative criticism within my

knowledge that Thoreau has received at the hands of his countrymen came from the pen of Lowell about 1864, and was included in "My Study Windows." It has all the professional smartness and scholarly qualities which usually characterize Lowell's critical essays. Thoreau was vulnerable, both as an observer and as a literary craftsman, and Lowell lets him off pretty easily — too easily — on both counts.

The flaws he found in his nature lore were very inconsiderable: "Till he built his Walden shack he did not know that the hickory grew near Concord. Till he went to Maine he had never seen phosphorescent wood — a phenomenon early familiar to most country boys. At forty he spoke of the seeding [*i. e.*, flowering] of the pine as a new discovery, though one should have thought that its gold-dust of blowing pollen might have earlier caught his eye."

See "Walking" in *Excursions*. He was under thirty-three when he made these observations (June, 1850).

As regards his literary craftsmanship, Lowell charges him only with having revived the age of *concetti* while he fancied himself going back to a preclassical nature, basing the charge on such a far-fetched comparison as that in which Thoreau declares his preference for "the dry wit of decayed cranberry-vines and the fresh Attic salt of the moss-beds" over the wit of the Greek sages as it comes to us in the "Banquet" of Xenophon — a kind of perversity of comparison all too frequent with Thoreau.

But though Lowell lets Thoreau off easily on these specific counts, he more than makes up by his sweeping criticism, on more general grounds, of his life and character. Here one feels that he overdoes the matter.

It is not true, in the sense which Lowell implies, that Thoreau's whole life was a search for the doctor. It was such a search in no other sense than that we are all in search of the doctor when we take a walk, or flee to the mountains or to the seashore, or seek to bring our minds and spirits in contact with "Nature's primal sanities." His search for the doctor turns out to be an escape from the conditions that make a doctor necessary. His wonderful activity, those long walks in all weathers, in all seasons, by night as well as by day, drenched by rain and chilled by frost, suggest a reckless kind of health. A doctor might wisely have cautioned him against such

exposures. Nor was Thoreau a valetudinarian in his physical, moral, or intellectual fiber.

It is not true, as Lowell charges, that it was his indolence that stood in the way of his taking part in the industrial activities in which his friends and neighbors engaged, or that it was his lack of persistence and purpose that hindered him. It is not true that he was poor because he looked upon money as an unmixed evil. Thoreau's purpose was like adamant, and his industry in his own proper pursuits was tireless. He knew the true value of money, and he knew also that the best things in life are to be had without money and without price. When he had need of money, he earned it. He turned his hand to many things — land-surveying, lecturing, magazine-writing, growing white beans, doing odd jobs at carpentering, whitewashing, fence-building, plastering, and brick-laying.

Lowell's criticism amounts almost to a diatribe. He was naturally antagonistic to the Thoreau type of mind. Coming from a man near his own age, and a neighbor, Thoreau's criticism of life was an affront to the smug respectability and scholarly attainments of the class to which Lowell belonged. Thoreau went his own way, with an air of defiance and contempt which, no doubt, his contemporaries were more inclined to resent than we are at our distance. Shall this man in his hut on the shores of Walden Pond assume to lay down the law and the gospel to his elders and betters, and pass unrebuked, no matter on what intimate terms he claims to be with the gods of the woods and mountains? This seems to be Lowell's spirit.

"Thoreau's experiment," says Lowell, "actually presupposed all that complicated civilization which it theoretically abjured. He squatted on another man's land; he borrows an axe; his boards, his nails, his bricks, his mortar, his books, his lamp, his fish-hooks, his plough, his hoe, all turn state's evidence against him as an accomplice in the sin of that artificial civilization which rendered it possible that such a person as Henry D. Thoreau should exist at all." Very clever, but what of it? Of course Thoreau was a product of the civilization he decried. He was a product of his country and his times. He was born in Concord and early came under the influence of Emerson; he was a graduate of Harvard University and all his life availed himself, more or less, of the accumulated benefits of state and

social organizations. When he took a train to Boston, or dropped a letter in, or received one through, the post office, or read a book, or visited a library, or looked in a newspaper, he was a sharer in these benefits. He made no claims to living independently of the rest of mankind. His only aim in his Walden experiment was to reduce life to its lowest terms, to drive it into a corner, as he said, and question and cross-question it, and see, if he could, what it really meant. And he probably came as near cornering it there in his hut on Walden Pond as any man ever did anywhere, certainly in a way more pleasing to contemplate than did the old hermits in the desert, or than did Diogenes in his tub, though Lowell says the tub of the old Greek had a sounder bottom.

Lowell seemed to discredit Thoreau by attacking his philosophy and pointing out the contradictions and inconsistencies of a man who abjures the civilization of which he is the product, overlooking the fact that man's theories and speculations may be very wide of the truth as we view it, and yet his life be noble and inspiring. Now Thoreau did not give us a philosophy, but a life. He gave us fresh and beautiful literature, he gave us our first and probably only nature classic, he gave us an example of plain living and high thinking that is always in season, and he took upon himself that kind of noble poverty that carries the suggestion of wealth of soul.

No matter how much Thoreau abjured our civilization, he certainly made good use of the weapons it gave him. No matter whose lands he squatted on, or whose saw he borrowed, or to whom or what he was indebted for the tools and utensils that made his life at Walden possible, — these things were the mere accidents of his environment, — he left a record of his life and thoughts there which is a precious heritage to his countrymen. The best in his books ranks with the best in the literature of his times. One could wish that he had shown more tolerance for the things other men live for, but this must not make us overlook the value of the things he himself lived for, though with some of his readers his intolerance doubtless has this effect. We cannot all take to the woods and swamps as Thoreau did. He had a genius for that kind of a life; the most of us must stick to our farms and desks and shops and professions.

Thoreau retired to Walden for study and contemplation, and

because, as he said, he had a little private business with himself. He found that by working about six weeks in the year he could meet all his living expenses, and then have all his winter and most of his summers free and clear for study. He found that to maintain one's self on this earth is not a hardship, but a pastime, if one will live simply and wisely. He said, "It is not necessary that a man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow unless he sweats easier than I do." Was not his experiment worth while?

"Walden" is a wonderful and delightful piece of brag, but it is much more than that. It is literature; it is a Gospel of the Wild. It made a small Massachusetts pond famous, and the Mecca of many devout pilgrims.

Lowell says that Thoreau had no humor, but there are many pages in "Walden" that are steeped in a quiet but most delicious humor. His humor brings that inward smile which is the badge of art's felicity. His "Bean-Field" is full of it. I venture to say that never before had a hermit so much fun with a field of white beans.

Both by training and by temperament Lowell was disqualified from entering into Thoreau's character and aims. Lowell's passion for books and academic accomplishments was as strong as was Thoreau's passion for the wild and for the religion of Nature. When Lowell went to Nature for a theme, as in his "Good Word for Winter," his "My Garden Acquaintance," and the "Moosehead Journal," his use of it was mainly to unlock the treasures of his literary and scholarly attainments; he bedecked and be jeweled Nature with gems from all the literatures of the world. In the "Journal" we get more of the flavor of libraries than of the Maine woods and waters. No reader of Lowell can doubt that he was a nature-lover, nor can he doubt that he loved books and libraries more. In all his nature writings the poverty of the substance and the wealth of the treatment are striking. The final truth about Lowell's contributions is that his mind was essentially a prose mind, even when he writes poetry. Emerson said justly that his tone was always that of prose. What is his "Cathedral" but versified prose? Like so many cultivated men, he showed a talent for poetry, but not genius; as, on the other hand, one may say of Emerson that he showed more genius for poetry than talent, his inspiration surpassed his technical

skill.

One is not surprised when he finds that John Brown was one of Thoreau's heroes; he was a sort of John Brown himself in another sphere; but one is surprised when one finds him so heartily approving of Walt Whitman and traveling to Brooklyn to look upon him and hear his voice. He recognized at once the tremendous significance of Whitman and the power of his poetry. He called him the greatest democrat which the world had yet seen. With all his asceticism and his idealism, he was not troubled at all with those things in Whitman that are a stumbling-block to so many persons. Evidently his long intercourse with Nature had prepared him for the primitive and elemental character of Whitman's work. No doubt also his familiarity with the great poems and sacred books of the East helped him. At any rate, in this respect, his endorsement of Whitman adds greatly to our conception of the mental and spiritual stature of Thoreau.

I can hold my criticism in the back of my head while I say with my forehead that all our other nature writers seem tame and insipid beside Thoreau. He was so much more than a mere student and observer of nature; and it is this surplusage which gives the extra weight and value to his nature writing. He was a critic of life, he was a literary force that made for plain living and high thinking. His nature lore was an aside; he gathered it as the meditative saunterer gathers a leaf, or a flower, or a shell on the beach, while he ponders on higher things. He had other business with the gods of the woods than taking an inventory of their wares. He was a dreamer, an idealist, a fervid ethical teacher, seeking inspiration in the fields and woods. The hound, the turtle-dove, and the bay horse which he said he had lost, and for whose trail he was constantly seeking, typified his interest in wild nature. The natural history in his books is quite secondary. The natural or supernatural history of his own thought absorbed him more than the exact facts about the wild life around him. He brings us a gospel more than he brings us a history. His science is only the handmaid of his ethics; his wood-lore is the foil of his moral and intellectual teachings. His observations are frequently at fault, or wholly wide of the mark; but the flower or specimen that

he brings you always "comes laden with a thought." There is a tang and a pungency to nearly everything he published; the personal quality which flavors it is like the formic acid which the bee infuses into the nectar he gets from the flower, and which makes it honey.

I feel that some such statement about Thoreau should precede or go along with any criticism of him as a writer or as an observer. He was, first and last, a moral force speaking in the terms of the literary naturalist.

Thoreau's prayer in one of his poems — that he might greatly disappoint his friends — seems to have been answered. While his acquaintances went into trade or the professions, he cast about to see what he could do to earn his living and still be true to the call of his genius. In his Journal of 1851 he says: "While formerly I was looking about to see what I could do for a living, some sad experiences in conforming to the wishes of friends being fresh in my mind to tax my ingenuity, I thought often and seriously of picking huckleberries; that surely I could do, and its small profits might suffice, so little capital is required, so little distraction from my wonted thoughts." He could range the hills in summer and still look after the flocks of King Admetus. He also dreamed that he might gather the wild herbs and carry evergreens to such villagers as loved to be reminded of the woods. But he soon learned that trade cursed everything, and that "though you trade in messages from heaven, the whole curse of trade attaches to the business." The nearest his conscience would allow him to approach any kind of trade was to offer himself to his townsmen as a land-surveyor. This would take him to the places where he liked to be; he could still walk in the fields and woods and swamps and earn his living thereby. The chain and compass became him well, quite as well as his bean-field at Walden, and the little money they brought him was not entirely sordid.

In one of his happy moods in "Walden" he sets down in a half-facetious, half-mystical, but wholly delightful way, his various avocations, such as his self-appointment as inspector of snow-storms and rain-storms, and surveyor of forest paths and all across-lot routes, and herdsman of the wild stock of the town. He is never more enjoyable than in such passages. His account of going into business

at Walden Pond is in the same happy vein. As his fellow citizens were slow in offering him any opening in which he could earn a living, he turned to the woods, where he was better known, and determined to go into business at once without waiting to acquire the usual capital. He expected to open trade with the Celestial Empire, and Walden was just the place to start the venture. He thought his strict business habits acquired through years of keeping tab on wild Nature's doings, his winter days spent outside the town, trying to hear what was in the wind, and his early spring mornings before his neighbors were astir to hear the croak of the first frog, all the training necessary to ensure success in business with the Celestial Empire. He admits, it is true, that he never assisted the sun materially in his rising, but doubted not that it was of the last importance only to be present at it. All such fooling as this is truly delightful. When he goes about his sylvan business with his tongue in his cheek and a quizzical, good-humored look upon his face in this way, and advertises the hound, the bay horse, and the turtle-dove he lost so long ago, he is the true Thoreau, and we take him to our hearts.

One also enjoys the way in which he magnifies his petty occupations. His brag over his bean-field is delightful. He makes one want to hoe beans with him:

When my hoe tinkled against the stones, that music echoed to the woods and the sky and was an accompaniment to my labor which yielded an instant and immeasurable crop. It was no longer beans that I hoed, nor I that hoed beans; and I remembered with as much pity as pride, if I remembered at all, my acquaintances who had gone to the city to attend the oratorios. The nighthawk circled overhead in the sunny afternoons — for I sometimes made a day of it — like a mote in the eye, or in heaven's eye, falling from time to time with a swoop and a sound as if the heavens were rent, torn at last to very rags and tatters, and yet a seamless cope remained; small imps that fill the air and lay their eggs on the ground on bare sand or rocks on the top of hills, where few have found them; graceful and slender like ripples caught up from the pond, as leaves are raised by the wind to float in the heavens; such kindredship is in nature. The hawk is aërial brother of the wave which he sails over and surveys, those his perfect air-inflated wings answering to the elemental unfledged pinions of

the sea. Or sometimes I watched a pair of hen-hawks circling high in the sky, alternately soaring and descending, approaching and leaving one another, as if they were the embodiment of my own thoughts. Or I was attracted by the passage of wild pigeons from this wood to that, with a slight quivering winnowing sound and carrier haste; or from under a rotten stump my hoe turned up a sluggish portentous and outlandish salamander, a trace of Egypt and the Nile, yet our contemporary. When I paused to lean on my hoe, these sounds and sights I heard and saw anywhere in the row, a part of the inexhaustible entertainment which the country offers.

All this is in his best style. Who, after reading it, does not long for a bean-field? In planting it, too what music attends him!

Near at hand, upon the topmost spray of a birch, sings the brown thrasher — or red mavis, as some love to call him — all the morning, glad of your society, that would find out another farmer's field if yours were not here. While you are planting the seed he cries,— "Drop it, drop it, — cover it up, cover it up, — pull it up, pull it up, pull it up." But this was not corn, and so it was safe from such enemies as he. You may wonder what his rigmarole, his amateur Paganini performances on one string or on twenty, have to do with your planting, and yet prefer it to leached ashes or plaster. It was a cheap sort of top dressing in which I had entire faith.

What lessons he got in botany in the hoeing!

Consider the intimate and curious acquaintance one makes with various kinds of weeds, — it will bear some iteration in the account, for there was no little iteration in the labor, — disturbing their delicate organizations so ruthlessly, and making such invidious distinctions with his hoe, levelling whole ranks of one species, and sedulously cultivating another. That's Roman worm-wood, — that's pigweed, — that's sorrel, — that's pipergrass, — have at him, chop him up, turn his roots upward to the sun, don't let him have a fibre in the shade, if you do he'll turn himself t' other side up and be as green as a leek in two days. A long war, not with cranes, but with weeds, those Trojans who had sun and rain and dews on their side. Daily the beans saw me come to their rescue armed with a hoe, and thin the ranks of their enemies, filling up the trenches with weedy dead. Many a lusty crest-waving Hector, that towered a whole foot above

his crowding comrades, fell before my weapon and rolled in the dust.

I have occasional visits in the long winter evenings, when the snow falls fast and the wind howls in the wood, from an old settler and original proprietor, who is reported to have dug Walden Pond, and stoned it, and fringed it with pine woods; who tells me stories of old time and of new eternity; and between us we manage to pass a cheerful evening with social mirth and pleasant views of things, even without apples or cider, — a most wise and humorous friend, whom I love much, who keeps himself more secret than ever did Goffe or Whalley; and though he is thought to be dead, none can show where he is buried. An elderly dame, too, dwells in my neighborhood, invisible to most persons, in whose odorous herb garden I love to stroll sometimes, gathering simples and listening to her fables; for she has a genius of unequalled fertility, and her memory runs back farther than mythology, and she can tell me the original of every fable, and on what fact every one is founded, for the incidents occurred when she was young. A ruddy and lusty old dame, who delights in all weathers and seasons, and is likely to outlive all her children yet.

Thoreau taxed himself to find words and images strong enough to express his aversion to the lives of the men who were “engaged” in the various industrial fields about him. Everywhere in shops and offices and fields it appeared to him that his neighbors were doing penance in a thousand remarkable ways:

What I have heard of Bramins sitting exposed to four fires and looking in the face of the sun; or hanging suspended, with their heads downward, over flames; or looking at the heavens over their shoulders “until it becomes impossible for them to resume their natural position, while from the twist of the neck nothing but liquids can pass into the stomach”; or dwelling, chained for life, at the foot of a tree; or measuring with their bodies, like caterpillars, the breadth of vast empires; or standing on one leg on the tops of pillars, — even these forms of conscious penance are hardly more incredible and astonishing than the scenes which I daily witness.... I see young men, my townsmen, whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools; for these are more easily acquired than got rid of.

Surely this disciple of the Gospel of the Wild must have disappointed his friends. It was this audacious gift which Thoreau had for making worldly possessions seem ignoble, that gives the tang to many pages of his writings.

Thoreau became a great traveler — in Concord, as he says — and made Walden Pond famous in our literature by spending two or more years in the woods upon its shore, and writing an account of his sojourn there which has become a nature classic. He was a poet-naturalist, as his friend Channing aptly called him, of untiring industry, and the country in a radius of seven or eight miles about Concord was threaded by him in all seasons as probably no other section of New England was ever threaded and scrutinized by any one man. Walking in the fields and woods, and recording what he saw and heard and thought in his Journal, became the business of his life. He went over the same ground endlessly, but always brought back new facts, or new impressions, because he was so sensitive to all the changing features of the day and the season in the landscape about him.

Once he extended his walking as far as Quebec, Canada, and once he took in the whole of Cape Cod; three or four times he made excursions to the Maine woods, the result of which gave the name to one of his most characteristic volumes; but as habitually as the coming of the day was he a walker about Concord, in all seasons, primarily for companionship with untamed Nature, and secondarily as a gleaner in the fields of natural history.

II

Thoreau was not a great philosopher, he was not a great naturalist, he was not a great poet, but as a nature-writer and an original character he is unique in our literature. His philosophy begins and ends with himself, or is entirely subjective, and is frequently fantastic, and nearly always illogical. His poetry is of the oracular kind, and is only now and then worth attention. There are crudities in his writings that make the conscientious literary craftsman shudder; there are mistakes of observation that make the serious naturalist wonder; and there is often an expression of contempt for his fellow countrymen, and the

rest of mankind, and their aims in life, that makes the judicious grieve. But at his best there is a gay symbolism, a felicity of description, and a freshness of observation that delight all readers.

As a person he gave himself to others reluctantly; he was, in truth, a recluse. He stood for character more than for intellect, and for intuition more than for reason. He was often contrary and inconsistent. There was more crust than crumb in the loaf he gave us.

He went about the business of living with his head in the clouds, or with an absolute devotion to the ideal that is certainly rare in our literary history. He declared that he aimed to crow like chanticleer in the morning, if only to wake his neighbors up. Much of his writings have this chanticleerian character; they are a call to wake up, to rub the film from one's eyes, and see the real values of life. To this end he prods with paradoxes, he belabors with hyperboles, he teases with irony, he startles with the unexpected. He finds poverty more attractive than riches, solitude more welcome than society, a sphagnum swamp more to be desired than a flowered field.

Thoreau is suggestive of those antibodies which modern science makes so much of. He tends to fortify us against the dry rot of business, the seductions of social pleasures, the pride of wealth and position. He is antitoxic; he is a literary germicide of peculiar power. He is too religious to go to church, too patriotic to pay his taxes, too fervent a humanist to interest himself in the social welfare of his neighborhood.

Thoreau called himself a mystic, and a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot. But the least of these was the natural philosopher. He did not have the philosophic mind, nor the scientific mind; he did not inquire into the reason of things, nor the meaning of things; in fact, had no disinterested interest in the universe apart from himself. He was too personal and illogical for a philosopher. The scientific interpretation of things did not interest him at all. He was interested in things only so far as they related to Henry Thoreau. He interpreted Nature entirely in the light of his own idiosyncrasies.

Science goes its own way in spite of our likes and dislikes, but Thoreau's likes and dislikes determined everything for him. He was stoical, but not philosophical. His intellect had no free play outside his individual predilection. Truth as philosophers use the term, was

not his quest but truth made in Concord.

Thoreau writes that when he was once asked by the Association for the Advancement of Science what branch of science he was especially interested in, he did not reply because he did not want to make himself the laughing-stock of the scientific community, which did not believe in a science which deals with the higher law — his higher law, which bears the stamp of Henry Thoreau.

He was an individualist of the most pronounced type. The penalty of this type of mind is narrowness; the advantage is the personal flavor imparted to the written page. Thoreau's books contain plenty of the pepper and salt of character and contrariness; even their savor of whim and prejudice adds to their literary tang. When his individualism becomes aggressive egotism, as often happens, it is irritating; but when it gives only that pungent and personal flavor which pervades much of "Walden," it is very welcome.

Thoreau's critics justly aver that he severely arraigns his countrymen because they are not all Thoreaus — that they do not desert their farms and desks and shops and take to the woods. What unmeasured contempt he pours out upon the lives and ambitions of most of them! Need a nature-lover, it is urged, necessarily be a man-hater? Is not man a part of nature? — averaging up quite as good as the total scheme of things out of which he came? Cannot his vices and shortcomings be matched by a thousand cruel and abortive things in the fields and the woods? The fountain cannot rise above its source, and man is as good as is the nature out of which he came, and of which he is a part. Most of Thoreau's harsh judgments upon his neighbors and countrymen are only his extreme individualism gone to seed.

An extremist he always was. Extreme views commended themselves to him because they were extreme. His aim in writing was usually "to make an extreme statement." He left the middle ground to the school committees and trustees. He had in him the stuff of which martyrs and heroes are made. In John Brown he recognized a kindred soul. But his literary bent led him to take his own revolutionary impulses out in words. The closest he came to imitation of the hero of Harper's Ferry and to defying the Government was on one occasion when he refused to pay his poll-tax

and thus got himself locked in jail overnight. It all seems a petty and ignoble ending of his fierce denunciation of politics and government, but it no doubt helped to satisfy his imagination, which so tyrannized over him throughout life. He could endure offenses against his heart and conscience and reason easier than against his imagination.

He presents that curious phenomenon of a man who is an extreme product of culture and civilization, and yet who so hungers and thirsts for the wild and the primitive that he is unfair to the forces and conditions out of which he came, and by which he is at all times nourished and upheld. He made his excursions into the Maine wilderness and lived in his hut by Walden Pond as a scholar and philosopher, and not at all in the spirit of the lumbermen and sportsmen whose wildness he so much admired. It was from his vantage-ground of culture and of Concord transcendentalism that he appraised all these types. It was from a community built up and sustained by the common industries and the love of gain that he decried all these things. It was from a town and a civilization that owed much to the pine tree that he launched his diatribe against the lumbermen in the Maine woods: "The pine is no more lumber than man is; and to be made into boards and houses no more its true and highest use than the truest use of man is to be cut down and made into manure." Not a happy comparison, but no matter. If the pine tree had not been cut down and made into lumber, it is quite certain that Thoreau would never have got to the Maine woods to utter this protest, just as it is equally certain that had he not been a member of a thrifty and industrious community, and kept his hold upon it, he could not have made his Walden experiment of toying and coquetting with the wild and the non-industrial. His occupations as land-surveyor, lyceum lecturer, and magazine writer attest how much he owed to the civilization he was so fond of decrying. This is Thoreau's weakness — the half-truths in which he plumes himself, as if they were the whole law and gospel. His Walden bean-field was only a pretty piece of play-acting; he cared more for the ringing of his hoe upon the stones than for the beans. Had his living really depended upon the product, the sound would not have pleased him so, and the botany of the weeds he hoed under would not have so interested him.

Thoreau's half-truths titillate and amuse the mind. We do not nod over his page. We enjoy his art while experiencing an undercurrent of protest against his unfairness. We could have wished him to have shown himself in his writings as somewhat sweeter and more tolerant toward the rest of the world, broader in outlook, and more just and charitable in disposition — more like his great prototype, Emerson, who could do full justice to the wild and the spontaneous without doing an injustice to their opposites; who could see the beauty of the pine tree, yet sing the praises of the pine-tree State House; who could arraign the Government, yet pay his taxes; who could cherish Thoreau, and yet see all his limitations. Emerson affirmed more than he denied, and his charity was as broad as his judgment. He set Thoreau a good example in bragging, but he bragged to a better purpose. He exalted the present moment, the universal fact, the omnipotence of the moral law, the sacredness of private judgment; he pitted the man of to-day against all the saints and heroes of history; and, although he decried traveling, he was yet considerable of a traveler, and never tried to persuade himself that Concord was an epitome of the world. Emerson comes much nearer being a national figure than does Thoreau, and yet Thoreau, by reason of his very narrowness and perversity, and by his intense local character, united to the penetrating character of his genius, has made an enduring impression upon our literature.

III

Thoreau's life was a search for the wild. He was the great disciple of the Gospel of Walking. He elevated walking into a religious exercise. One of his most significant and entertaining chapters is on "Walking." No other writer that I recall has set forth the Gospel of Walking so eloquently and so stimulatingly. Thoreau's religion and his philosophy are all in this chapter. It is his most mature, his most complete and comprehensive statement. He says:

I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks — who had a genius, so to speak, for *sauntering*, which word is beautifully derived "from idle people who roved about the country, in the

Middle Ages, and asked charity, under pretence of going *à la Sainte Terre*," to the Holy Land, till the children exclaimed, "There goes a *Sainte-Terrer*," — a Saunterer, a Holy-Lander. They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds; but they who do go there are saunterers in the good sense, such as I mean.... For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us, to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels.

Thoreau was the first man in this country, or in any other, so far as I know, who made a religion of walking — the first to announce a Gospel of the Wild. That he went forth into wild nature in much the same spirit that the old hermits went into the desert, and was as devout in his way as they were in theirs, is revealed by numerous passages in his Journal. He would make his life a sacrament; he discarded the old religious terms and ideas, and struck out new ones of his own:

What more glorious condition of being can we imagine than from impure to become pure? May I not forget that I am impure and vicious! May I not cease to love purity! May I go to my slumbers as expecting to arise to a new and more perfect day! May I so live and refine my life as fitting myself for a society ever higher than I actually enjoy!

To watch for and describe all the divine features which I detect in nature! My profession is to be always on the alert to find God in nature, to know his lurking-place, to attend all the oratorios, the operas, in nature.

Ah! I would walk, I would sit, and sleep, with natural piety. What if I could pray aloud or to myself as I went along the brooksides a cheerful prayer like the birds? For joy I could embrace the earth. I shall delight to be buried in it.

I do not deserve anything. I am unworthy the least regard, and yet I am made to rejoice. I am impure and worthless, and yet the world is gilded for my delight and holidays are prepared for me, and my path is strewn with flowers. But I cannot thank the Giver; I cannot even whisper my thanks to the human friends I have.

In the essay on "Walking," Thoreau says that the art of walking "comes only by the grace of God. It requires a direct dispensation from Heaven to become a walker. You must be born into the family of the Walkers." "I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least, — it is commonly more than that, — sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements."

Thoreau made good his boast. He was a new kind of walker, a Holy-Lander. His walks yielded him mainly spiritual and ideal results. The fourteen published volumes of his Journal are mainly a record of his mental reactions to the passing seasons and to the landscape he sauntered through. There is a modicum of natural history, but mostly he reaps the intangible harvest of the poet, the saunterer, the mystic, the super-sportsman.

With his usual love of paradox Thoreau says that the fastest way to travel is to go afoot, because, one may add, the walker is constantly arriving at his destination; all places are alike to him, his harvest grows all along the road and beside every path, in every field and wood and on every hilltop.

All of Thoreau's books belong to the literature of Walking, and are as true in spirit in Paris or London as in Concord. His natural history, for which he had a passion, is the natural history of the walker, not always accurate, as I have pointed out, but always graphic and interesting.

Wordsworth was about the first poet-walker — a man of letters who made a business of walking, and whose study was really the open air. But he was not a Holy-Lander in the Thoreau sense. He did not walk to get away from people as Thoreau did, but to see a greater variety of them, and to gather suggestions for his poems. Not so much the wild as the human and the morally significant were the objects of Wordsworth's quest. He haunted waterfalls and fells and rocky heights and lonely tarns, but he was not averse to footpaths and highways, and the rustic, half-domesticated nature of rural England. He was a nature-lover; he even calls himself a nature-worshiper; and he appears to have walked as many, or more, hours each day, in all seasons, as did Thoreau; but he was hunting for no lost paradise of the wild; nor waging a war against the arts and

customs of civilization. Man and life were at the bottom of his interest in Nature.

Wordsworth never knew the wild as we know it in this country — the pitilessly savage and rebellious; and, on the other hand, he never knew the wonderfully delicate and furtive and elusive nature that we know; but he knew the sylvan, the pastoral, the rustic-human, as we cannot know them. British birds have nothing plaintive in their songs; and British woods and fells but little that is disorderly and cruel in their expression, or violent in their contrasts.

Wordsworth gathered his finest poetic harvest from common nature and common humanity about him — the wayside birds and flowers and waterfalls, and the wayside people. Though he called himself a worshiper of Nature, it was Nature in her half-human moods that he adored — Nature that knows no extremes, and that has long been under the influence of man — a soft, humid, fertile, docile Nature, that suggests a domesticity as old and as permanent as that of cattle and sheep. His poetry reflects these features, reflects the high moral and historic significance of the European landscape, while the poetry of Emerson, and of Thoreau, is born of the wildness and elusiveness of our more capricious and unkempt Nature.

The walker has no axe to grind; he sniffs the air for new adventure; he loiters in old scenes, he gleans in old fields. He only seeks intimacy with Nature to surprise her preoccupied with her own affairs. He seeks her in the woods, the swamps, on the hills, along the streams, by night and by day, in season and out of season. He skims the fields and hillsides as the swallow skims the air, and what he gets is intangible to most persons. He sees much with his eyes, but he sees more with his heart and imagination. He bathes in Nature as in a sea. He is alert for the beauty that waves in the trees, that ripples in the grass and grain, that flows in the streams, that drifts in the clouds, that sparkles in the dew and rain. The hammer of the geologist, the notebook of the naturalist, the box of the herbalist, the net of the entomologist, are not for him. He drives no sharp bargains with Nature, he reads no sermons in stones, no books in running brooks, but he does see good in everything. The book he reads he reads through all his senses — through his eyes, his ears, his nose, and also through his feet and hands — and its pages are open everywhere; the

rocks speak of more than geology to him, the birds of more than ornithology, the flowers of more than botany, the stars of more than astronomy, the wild creatures of more than zoölogy.

The average walker is out for exercise and the exhilarations of the road, he reaps health and strength; but Thoreau evidently impaired his health by his needless exposure and inadequate food. He was a Holy-Lander who falls and dies in the Holy Land. He ridiculed walking for exercise — taking a walk as the sick take medicine; the walk itself was to be the "enterprise and adventure of the day." And "you must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates while walking."

IV

Thoreau's friends and neighbors seem to have persuaded themselves that his natural-history lore was infallible, and, moreover, that he possessed some mysterious power over the wild creatures about him that other men did not possess. I recall how Emerson fairly bristled up when on one occasion while in conversation with him I told him I thought Thoreau in his trips to the Maine woods had confounded the hermit thrush with the wood thrush, as the latter was rarely or never found in Maine. As for Thoreau's influence over the wild creatures, Emerson voiced this superstition when he said, "Snakes coiled round his leg, the fishes swam into his hand, and he took them from the water; he pulled the woodchuck out of its hole by the tail, and took the foxes under his protection from the hunters." Of course Thoreau could do nothing with the wild creatures that you or I could not do under the same conditions. A snake will coil around any man's leg if he steps on its tail, but it will not be an embrace of affection; and a fish will swim into his hands under the same conditions that it will into Thoreau's. As for pulling a woodchuck out of its hole by the tail, the only trouble is to get hold of the tail. The 'chuck is pretty careful to keep his tail behind him, but many a farm boy, aided by his dog, has pulled one out of the stone wall by the tail, much against the 'chuck's will. If Thoreau's friends were to claim that he could carry *Mephitis mephitica* by the tail with impunity, I can say I have done the same thing, and had my photograph taken in the act. The skunk is

no respecter of persons, and here again the trouble is to get hold of the tail at the right moment — and, I may add, to let go of it at the right moment.

Thoreau's influence over the wild creatures is what every man possesses who is alike gentle in his approach to them. Bradford Torrey succeeded, after a few experiments, in so dispelling the fears of an incubating red-eyed vireo that she would take insect food from his hand, and I have known several persons to become so familiar with the chickadees that they would feed from the hand, and in some instances even take food from between the lips. If you have a chipmunk for a neighbor, you may soon become on such intimate terms with him that he will search your pockets for nuts and sit on your knee and shoulder and eat them. But why keep alive and circulate as truth these animal legends of the prescientific ages?

Thoreau was not a born naturalist, but a born supernaturalist. He was too intent upon the bird behind the bird always to take careful note of the bird itself. He notes the birds, but not too closely. He was at times a little too careless in this respect to be a safe guide to the bird-student. Even the saunterer to the Holy Land ought to know the indigo bunting from the black-throated blue warbler, with its languid, midsummery, "Zee, zee, zee-eu."

Many of his most interesting natural-history notes Thoreau got from his farmer friends — Melvin, Minott, Miles, Hubbard, Wheeler. Their eyes were more single to the life around them than were his; none of them had lost a hound, a turtle-dove, and a bay horse, whose trail they were daily in quest of.

A haunter of swamps and river marshes all his life, he had never yet observed how the night bittern made its booming or pumping sound, but accepted the explanation of one of his neighbors that it was produced by the bird thrusting its bill in water, sucking up as much as it could hold, and then pumping it out again with four or five heaves of the neck, throwing the water two or three feet — in fact, turning itself into a veritable pump! I have stood within a few yards of the bird when it made the sound, and seen the convulsive movement of the neck and body, and the lifting of the head as the sound escaped. The bird seems literally to vomit up its notes, but it does not likewise emit water.

Every farmer and fox-hunter would smile if he read Thoreau's statement, made in his paper on the natural history of Massachusetts, that "when the snow lies light and but five or six inches deep, you may give chase and come up with the fox on foot." Evidently Thoreau had never tried it. With a foot and a half, or two feet of snow on the ground, and traveling on snowshoes, you might force a fox to take to his hole, but you would not come up to him. In four or five feet of soft snow hunters come up with the deer, and ride on their backs for amusement, but I doubt if a red fox ever ventures out in such a depth of snow. In one of his May walks in 1860, Thoreau sees the trail of the musquash in the mud along the river-bottoms, and he is taken by the fancy that, as our roads and city streets often follow the early tracks of the cow, so "rivers in another period follow the trail of the musquash." As if the river was not there before the musquash was!

Again, his mysterious "night warbler," to which he so often alludes, was one of our common everyday birds which most school-children know, namely, the oven-bird, or wood-accentor, yet to Thoreau it was a sort of phantom bird upon which his imagination loved to dwell. Emerson told him he must beware of finding and booking it, lest life should have nothing more to show him. But how such a haunter of woods escaped identifying the bird is a puzzle.

In his walks in the Maine woods Thoreau failed to discriminate the song of the hermit thrush from that of the wood thrush. The melody, no doubt, went to his heart, and that was enough. Though he sauntered through orchards and rested under apple trees, he never observed that the rings of small holes in the bark were usually made by the yellow-bellied woodpecker, instead of by Downy, and that the bird was not searching for grubs or insects, but was feeding upon the milky cambium layer of the inner bark.

But Thoreau's little slips of the kind I have called attention to count as nothing against the rich harvest of natural-history notes with which his work abounds. He could describe bird-songs and animal behavior and give these things their right emphasis in the life of the landscape as no other New England writer has done. His account of the battle of the ants in Walden atones an hundred-fold for the lapses I have mentioned.

One wonders just what Thoreau means when he says in "Walden," in telling of his visit to "Baker Farm": "Once it chanced that I stood in the very abutment of a rainbow's arch, which filled the lower stratum of the atmosphere, tinging the grass and leaves around, and dazzling me as if I looked through colored crystal." Is it possible, then, to reach the end of the rainbow? Why did he not dig for the pot of gold that is buried there? How he could be aware that he was standing at the foot of one leg of the glowing arch is to me a mystery. When I see a rainbow, it is always immediately in front of me. I am standing exactly between the highest point of the arch and the sun, and the laws of optics ordain that it can be seen in no other way. You can never see a rainbow at an angle. It always faces you squarely. Hence no two persons see exactly the same bow, because no two persons can occupy exactly the same place at the same time. The bow you see is directed to you alone. Move to the right or the left, and it moves as fast as you do. You cannot flank it or reach its end. It is about the most subtle and significant phenomenon that everyday Nature presents to us. Unapproachable as a spirit, like a visitant from another world, yet the creation of the familiar sun and rain!

How Thoreau found himself standing in the bow's abutment will always remain a puzzle to me. Observers standing on high mountains with the sun low in the west have seen the bow as a complete circle. This one can understand.

We can point many a moral and adorn many a tale with Thoreau's shortcomings and failures in his treatment of nature themes. Channing quotes him as saying that sometimes "you must see with the inside of your eye." I think that Thoreau saw, or tried to see, with the inside of his eye too often. He does not always see correctly, and many times he sees more of Thoreau than he does of the nature he assumes to be looking at. Truly it is "needless to travel for wonders," but the wonderful is not one with the fantastic or the far-fetched. Forcible expression, as I have said, was his ruling passion as a writer. Only when he is free from its thrall, which in his best moments he surely is, does he write well. When he can forget Thoreau and remember only nature, we get those delightful descriptions and reflections in "Walden." When he goes to the Maine woods or to Cape Cod or to Canada, he leaves all his fantastic rhetoric behind

him and gives us sane and refreshing books. In his walks with Channing one suspects he often let himself go to all lengths, did his best to turn the world inside out, as he did at times in his Journals, for his own edification and that of his wondering disciple.

To see analogies and resemblances everywhere is the gift of genius, but to see a resemblance to volcanoes in the hubs or gnarls on birch or beech trees, or cathedral windows in the dead leaves of the andromeda in January, or a suggestion of Teneriffe in a stone-heap, does not indicate genius. To see the great in the little, or the whole of Nature in any of her parts, is the poet's gift, but to ask, after seeing the andropogon grass, "Are there no purple reflections from the culms of thought in my mind?" — a remark which Channing quotes as very significant — is not to be poetical. Thoreau is full of these impossible and fantastic comparisons, thinking only of striking expressions and not at all about the truth. "The flowing of the sap under the dull rind of the trees" is suggestive, but what suggestion is there in the remark, "May I ever be in as good spirits as a willow"? The mood of the scrub oak was more habitual with him.

Thoreau was in no sense an interpreter of nature; he did not draw out its meanings or seize upon and develop its more significant phases. Seldom does he relate what he sees or thinks to the universal human heart and mind. He has rare power of description, but is very limited in his power to translate the facts and movements of nature into human emotion. His passage on the northern lights, which Channing quotes from the Journals, is a good sample of his failure in this respect:

Now the fire in the north increases wonderfully, not shooting up so much as creeping along, like a fire on the mountains of the north seen afar in the night. The Hyperborean gods are burning brush, and it spread, and all the hoes in heaven couldn't stop it. It spread from west to east over the crescent hill. Like a vast fiery worm it lay across the northern sky, broken into many pieces; and each piece, with rainbow colors skirting it, strove to advance itself toward the east, worm-like, on its own annular muscles. It has spread into their choicest wood-lots. Now it shoots up like a single solitary watch-fire or burning bush, or where it ran up a pine tree like powder, and still it continues to gleam here and there like a fat stump in the burning,

and is reflected in the water. And now I see the gods by great exertions have got it under, and the stars have come out without fear, in peace.

I get no impression of the mysterious almost supernatural character of the aurora from such a description in terms of a burning wood-lot or a hay-stack; it is no more like a conflagration than an apparition is like solid flesh and blood. Its wonderful, I almost said its spiritual, beauty, its sudden vanishings and returnings, its spectral, evanescent character — why, it startles and awes one as if it were the draperies around the throne of the Eternal. And then his mixed metaphor — the Hyperborean gods turned farmers and busy at burning brush, then a fiery worm, and then the burning wood-lots! But this is Thoreau — inspired with the heavenly elixir one moment, and drunk with the brew in his own cellar the next.

V

Thoreau's faults as a writer are as obvious as his merits. Emerson hit upon one of them when he said, "The trick of his rhetoric is soon learned; it consists in substituting for the obvious word and thought, its diametrical antagonist." He praises wild mountains and winter forests for their domestic air, snow and ice for their warmth, and so on. (Yet Emerson in one of his poems makes frost burn and fire freeze.) One frequently comes upon such sentences as these: "If I were sadder, I should be happier"; "The longer I have forgotten you, the more I remember you." It may give a moment's pleasure when a writer takes two opposites and rubs their ears together in that way, but one may easily get too much of it. Words really mean nothing when used in such a manner. When Emerson told Channing that if he (Emerson) could write as well as he did, he would write a great deal better, one readily sees what he means. And when Thoreau says of one of his callers, "I like his looks and the sound of his silence," the contradiction pleases one. But when he tells his friend that hate is the substratum of his love for him, words seem to have lost their meaning. Now and then he is guilty of sheer bragging, as when he says, "I would not go around the corner to see the world blow up."

He often defies all our sense of fitness and proportion by the

degree in which he magnifies the little and belittles the big. He says of the singing of a cricket which he heard under the border of some rock on the hillside one mid-May day, that it "makes the finest singing of birds outward and insignificant." "It is not so wildly melodious, but it is wiser and more mature than that of the wood thrush." His forced and meaningless analogies come out in such a comparison as this: "Most poems, like the fruits, are sweetest toward the blossom end." Which *is* the blossom end of a poem?

Thoreau advised one of his correspondents when he made garden to plant some Giant Regrets — they were good for sauce. It is certain that he himself planted some Giant Exaggerations and had a good yield. His exaggeration was deliberate. "Walden" is from first to last a most delightful sample of his talent. He belittles everything that goes on in the world outside his bean-field. Business, politics, institutions, governments, wars and rumors of wars, were not so much to him as the humming of a mosquito in his hut at Walden: "I am as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it." One wonders what he would have made of a blow-fly buzzing on the pane.

He made Walden Pond famous because he made it the center of the universe and found life rich and full without many of the things that others deem necessary. There is a stream of pilgrims to Walden at all seasons, curious to see where so much came out of so little — where a man had lived who preferred poverty to riches, and solitude to society, who boasted that he could do without the post office, the newspapers, the telegraph, and who had little use for the railroad, though he thought mankind had become a little more punctual since its invention.

Another conspicuous fault as a writer is his frequent use of false analogies, or his comparison of things which have no ground of relationship, as when he says: "A day passed in the society of those Greek sages, such as described in the Banquet of Xenophon, would not be comparable with the dry wit of decayed cranberry-vines, and

the fresh Attic salt of the moss-beds." The word "wit" has no meaning when thus used. Or again where he says: "All great enterprises are self-supporting. The poet, for instance, must sustain his body by his poetry, as a steam planing-mill feeds its boilers with the shavings it makes." Was there ever a more inept and untruthful comparison? To find any ground of comparison between the two things he compared, he must make his poet sustain his body by the scraps and lines of his poem which he rejects, or else the steam planing-mill consume its finished product.

"Let all things give way to the impulse of expression," he says, and he assuredly practiced what he had preached.

One of his tricks of self-justification was to compare himself with inanimate objects, which is usually as inept as to compare colors with sounds or perfumes: "My acquaintances sometimes imply that I am too cold," he writes, "but each thing is warm enough of its kind. Is the stone too cold which absorbs the heat of the summer sun and does not part with it during the night? Crystals, though they be of ice are not too cold to melt.... Crystal does not complain of crystal any more than the dove of its mate."

He strikes the same false note when, in discussing the question of solitude at Walden he compares himself to the wild animals around him, and to inanimate objects, and says he was no more lonely than the loons on the pond, or than Walden itself: "I am no more lonely than a single mullein or dandelion in a pasture, or a bean leaf, or a sorrel, or a house-fly, or a humble-bee. I am no more lonely than the Mill Brook, or a weather-cock, or the North Star, or the South Wind, or an April Shower, or a January Thaw, or the first spider in a new house." Did he imagine that any of these things were ever lonely? Man does get lonely, but Mill Brook and the North Star probably do not.

If he sees anything unusual in nature, like galls on trees and plants, he must needs draw some moral from it, usually at the expense of the truth. For instance, he implies that the beauty of the oak galls is something that was meant to bloom in the flower, that the galls are the scarlet sins of the tree, the tree's Ode to Dejection, yet he must have known that they are the work of an insect and are as healthy a growth as is the regular leaf. The insect gives the magical

touch that transforms the leaf into a nursery for its young. Why deceive ourselves by believing that fiction is more interesting than fact? But Thoreau is full of this sort of thing; he must have his analogy, true or false.

He says that when a certain philosophical neighbor came to visit him in his hut at Walden, their discourse expanded and racked the little house: "I should not dare to say how many pounds' weight there was above the atmospheric pressure on every circular inch; it opened its seams so that they had to be calked with much dulness thereafter to stop the consequent leak — but I had enough of that kind of oakum already picked." At the beginning of the paragraph he says that he and his philosopher sat down each with "some shingles of thoughts well dried," which they whittled, trying their knives and admiring the clear yellowish grain of the pumpkin pine. In a twinkling the three shingles of thought are transformed into fishes of thought in a stream into which the hermit and the philosopher gently and reverently wade, without scaring or disturbing them. Then, presto! the fish become a force, like the pressure of a tornado that nearly wrecks his cabin! Surely this is tipsy rhetoric, and the work that can stand much of it, as "Walden" does, has a plus vitality that is rarely equaled.

VI

In "Walden" Thoreau, in playfully naming his various occupations, says, "For a long time I was reporter to a journal, of no very wide circulation, whose editor has never yet seen fit to print the bulk of my contributions, and, as is too common with writers, I got only my labor for my pains. However, in this case my pains were their own reward." If he were to come back now, he would, I think, open his eyes in astonishment, perhaps with irritation, to see the whole bulk of them at last in print.

His Journal was the repository of all his writings, and was drawn upon during his lifetime for all the material he printed in books and contributed to the magazines. The fourteen volumes, I venture to say, form a record of the most minute and painstaking details of what one man saw and heard on his walks in field and wood, in a single

township, that can be found in any literature.

It seems as though a man who keeps a Journal soon becomes its victim; at least that seems to have been the case with Thoreau. He lived for that Journal, he read for it, he walked for it; it was like a hungry, omnivorous monster that constantly called for more. He transcribed to its pages from the books he read, he filled it with interminable accounts of the commonplace things he saw in his walks, tedious and minute descriptions of everything in wood, field, and swamp. There are whole pages of the Latin names of the common weeds and flowers. Often he could not wait till he got home to write out his notes. He walked by day and night, in cold and heat, in storm and sunshine, all for his Journal. All was fish that came to that net; nothing was too insignificant to go in. He did not stop to make literature of it, or did not try, and it is rarely the raw material of literature. Its human interest is slight, its natural history interest slight also. For upwards of twenty-five years Thoreau seemed to have lived for this Journal. It swelled to many volumes. It is a drag-net that nothing escapes. The general reader reads Thoreau's Journal as he does the book of Nature, just to cull out the significant things here and there. The vast mass of the matter is merely negative, like the things that we disregard in our walk. Here and there we see a flower, or a tree, or a prospect, or a bird, that arrests attention, but how much we pass by or over without giving it a thought! And yet, just as the real nature-lover will scan eagerly the fine print in Nature's book, so will the student and enthusiast of Thoreau welcome all that is recorded in his Journals.

Thoreau says that Channing in their walks together sometimes took out his notebook and tried to write as he did, but all in vain. "He soon puts it up again, or contents himself with scrawling some sketch of the landscape. Observing me still scribbling, he will say that he confines himself to the ideal, purely ideal remarks; he leaves the facts to me. Sometimes, too, he will say, a little petulantly, 'I am universal; I have nothing to do with the particular and definite.'" The truth was Channing had no Journal calling, "More, more!" and was not so inordinately fond of composition. "I, too," says Thoreau, "would fain set down something beside facts. Facts should only be as the frame to my pictures; they should be material to the mythology

which I am writing." But only rarely are his facts significant, or capable of an ideal interpretation. Felicitous strokes like that in which he says, "No tree has so fair a bole and so handsome an instep as the birch," are rare.

Thoreau evidently had a certain companionship with his Journal. It was like a home-staying body to whom he told everything on his return from a walk. He loved to write it up. He made notes of his observations as he went along, night or day. One time he forgot his notebook and so substituted a piece of birch-bark. He must bring back something gathered on the spot. He skimmed the same country over and over; the cream he was after rose every day and all day, and in all seasons.

He evidently loved to see the pages of his Journal sprinkled with the Latin names of the plants and animals that he saw in his walk. A common weed with a long Latin name acquired new dignity. Occasionally he fills whole pages with the scientific names of the common trees and plants. He loved also a sprinkling of Latin quotations and allusions to old and little known authors. The pride of scholarship was strong in him. Suggestions from what we call the heathen world seemed to accord with his Gospel of the Wild.

Thoreau loved to write as well as John Muir loved to talk. It was his ruling passion. He said time never passed so quickly as when he was writing. It seemed as if the clock had been set back. He evidently went to Walden for subject-matter for his pen; and the remarkable thing about it all is that he was always keyed up to the writing pitch. The fever of expression was always upon him. Day and night, winter and summer, it raged in his blood. He paused in his walks and wrote elaborately. The writing of his Journal must have taken as much time as his walking.

Only Thoreau's constant and unquenchable thirst for intellectual activity, and to supply material for that all-devouring Journal, can, to me, account for his main occupation during the greater part of the last two years of his life, which consisted in traversing the woods and measuring the trees and stumps and counting their rings. Apparently not a stump escaped him — pine, oak, birch, chestnut, maple, old or new, in the pasture or in the woods; he must take its measure and know its age. He must get the girth of every tree he passed and some

hint of all the local conditions that had influenced its growth. Over two hundred pages of his Journal are taken up with barren details of this kind. He cross-questions the stumps and trees as if searching for the clue to some important problem, but no such problem is disclosed. He ends where he begins. His vast mass of facts and figures was incapable of being generalized or systematized. His elaborate tables of figures, so carefully arranged, absolutely accurate, no doubt, are void of interest, because no valuable inferences can be drawn from them.

"I have measured in all eight pitch pine stumps at the Tommy Wheeler hollow, sawed off within a foot of the ground. I measured the longest diameter and then at right angles with that, and took the average, and then selected the side of the stump on which the radius was of average length, and counted the number of rings in each inch, beginning at the center, thus:" And then follows a table of figures filling a page. "Of those eight, average growth about one seventh of an inch per year. Calling the smallest number of rings in an inch in each tree one, the comparative slowness of growth of the inches is thus expressed." Then follows another carefully prepared table of figures. Before one is done with these pages one fairly suspects the writer is mad, the results are so useless, and so utterly fail to add to our knowledge of the woods. Would counting the leaves and branches in the forest, and making a pattern of each, and tabulating the whole mass of figures be any addition to our knowledge? I attribute the whole procedure, as I have said, to his uncontrollable intellectual activity, and the imaginary demands of this Journal, which continued to the end of his life. The very last pages of his Journal, a year previous to his death, are filled with minute accounts of the ordinary behavior of kittens, not one item novel or unusual, or throwing any light on the kitten. But it kept his mind busy, and added a page or two to the Journal.

In his winter walks he usually carried a four-foot stick, marked in inches, and would measure the depth of the snow over large areas, every tenth step, and then construct pages of elaborate tables showing the variations according to locality, and then work out the average — an abnormal craving for exact but useless facts. Thirty-four measurements on Walden disclosed the important fact that the

snow averaged five and one sixth inches deep. He analyzes a pensile nest which he found in the woods — doubtless one of the vireo's — and fills ten pages with a minute description of the different materials which it contained. Then he analyzes a yellow-bird's nest, filling two pages. That Journal shall not go hungry, even if there is nothing to give it but the dry material of a bird's nest.

VII

The craving for literary expression in Thoreau was strong and constant, but, as he confesses, he could not always select a theme. "I am prepared not so much for contemplation as for forceful expression." No matter what the occasion, "forceful expression" was the aim. No meditation, or thinking, but sallies of the mind. All his paradoxes and false analogies and inconsistencies come from this craving for a forceful expression. He apparently brought to bear all the skill he possessed of this kind on all occasions. One must regard him, not as a great thinker, nor as a disinterested seeker after the truth, but as a master in the art of vigorous and picturesque expression. To startle, to wake up, to communicate to his reader a little wholesome shock, is his aim. Not the novelty and freshness of his subject-matter concerns him but the novelty and unhackneyed character of his literary style. That throughout the years a man should keep up the habit of walking, by night as well as by day, and bring such constant intellectual pressure to bear upon everything he saw, or heard, or felt, is remarkable. No evidence of relaxation, or of abandonment to the mere pleasure of the light and air and of green things growing, or of sauntering without thoughts of his Journal. He is as keyed up and strenuous in his commerce with the Celestial Empire as any tradesman in world goods that ever amassed a fortune. He sometimes wrote as he walked, and expanded and elaborated the same as in his study. On one occasion he dropped his pencil and could not find it, but he managed to complete the record. One night on his way to Conantum he speculates for nearly ten printed pages on the secret of being able to state a fact simply and adequately, or of making one's self the free organ of truth — a subtle and ingenious discussion with the habitual craving for forceful expression. In vain I

try to put myself in the place of a man who goes forth into wild nature with malice prepense to give free swing to his passion for forcible expression. I suppose all nature-writers go forth on their walks or strolls to the fields and woods with minds open to all of Nature's genial influences and significant facts and incidents, but rarely, I think, with the strenuousness of Thoreau — grinding the grist as they go along.

Thoreau compares himself to the bee that goes forth in quest of honey for the hive: "How to extract honey from the flower of the world. That is my everyday business. I am as busy as the bee about it. I ramble over all fields on that errand and am never so happy as when I feel myself heavy with honey and wax." To get material for his Journal was as much his business as it was the bee's to get honey for his comb. He apparently did not know that the bee does not get honey nor wax directly from the flowers, but only nectar, or sweet water. The bee, as I have often said, makes the honey and the wax after she gets home to the swarm. She puts the nectar through a process of her own, adds a drop of her own secretion to it, namely, formic acid, the water evaporates, and lo! the tang and pungency of honey!

VIII

There can be little doubt that in his practical daily life we may credit Thoreau with the friendliness and neighborliness that his friend Dr. Edward W. Emerson claims for him. In a recent letter to me, Dr. Emerson writes: "He carried the old New England undemonstrativeness very far. He was also, I believe, really shy, prospered only in monologue, except in a walk in the woods with one companion, and his difficulties increased to impossibility in a room full of people." Dr. Emerson admits that Thoreau is himself to blame for giving his readers the impression that he held his kind in contempt, but says that in reality he had neighborliness, was dutiful to parents and sisters, showed courtesy to women and children and an open, friendly side to many a simple, uncultivated townsman.

This practical helpfulness and friendliness in Thoreau's case seems to go along with the secret contempt he felt and expressed in

his Journal toward his fellow townsmen. At one time he was chosen among the selectmen to perambulate the town lines — an old annual custom. One day they perambulated the Lincoln line, the next day the Bedford line, the next day the Carlisle line, and so on, and kept on their rounds for a week. Thoreau felt soiled and humiliated. "A fatal coarseness is the result of mixing in the trivial affairs of men. Though I have been associating even with the select men of this and adjoining towns, I feel inexpressibly begrimed." How fragile his self-respect was! Yet he had friends among the surrounding farmers, whose society and conversation he greatly valued.

That Thoreau gave the impression of being what country folk call a crusty person — curt and forbidding in manner — seems pretty well established. His friend Alcott says he was deficient in the human sentiments. Emerson, who, on the whole, loved and admired him, says: "Thoreau sometimes appears only as a *gendarme*, good to knock down a cockney with, but without that power to cheer and establish which makes the value of a friend." Again he says: "If I knew only Thoreau, I should think coöperation of good men impossible. Must we always talk for victory, and never once for truth, for comfort, and joy? Centrality he has, and penetration, strong understanding, and the higher gifts, — the insight of the real, or from the real, and the moral rectitude that belongs to it; but all this and all his resources of wit and invention are lost to me, in every experiment, year after year, that I make, to hold intercourse with his mind. Always some weary captious paradox to fight you with, and the time and temper wasted." "It is curious," he again says, "that Thoreau goes to a house to say with little preface what he has just read or observed, delivers it in a lump, is quite inattentive to any comment or thought which any of the company offer on the matter, nay, is merely interrupted by it, and when he has finished his report departs with precipitation."

It is interesting in this connection to put along-side of these rather caustic criticisms a remark in kind recorded by Thoreau in his Journal concerning Emerson: "Talked, or tried to talk, with R. W. E. Lost my time — nay, almost my identity. He, assuming a false opposition where there was no difference of opinion, talked to the wind — told me what I knew — and I lost my time trying to imagine

myself somebody else to oppose him."

Evidently Concord philosophers were not always in concord.

More characteristic of Emerson is the incident Thoreau relates of his driving his own calf, which had just come in with the cows, out of the yard, thinking it belonged to a drove that was then going by. From all accounts Emerson was as slow to recognize his own thoughts when Alcott and Channing aired them before him as he was to recognize his own calf.

"I have got a load of great hardwood stumps," writes Thoreau, and then, as though following out a thought suggested by them, he adds: "For sympathy with my neighbors I might about as well live in China. They are to me barbarians with their committee works and gregariousness."

Probably the stumps were from trees that grew on his neighbors' farms and were a gift to him. Let us hope the farmers did not deliver them to him free of charge. He complained that the thousand and one gentlemen that he met were all alike; he was not cheered by the hope of any rudeness from them: "A cross man, a coarse man, an eccentric man, a silent man who does not drill well — of him there is some hope," he declares. Herein we get a glimpse of the Thoreau ideal which led his friend Alcott to complain that he lacked the human sentiment. He may or may not have been a "cross man," but he certainly did not "drill well," for which his readers have reason to be thankful. Although Thoreau upholds the cross and the coarse man, one would really like to know with what grace he would have put up with gratuitous discourtesy or insult. I remember an entry in his Journal in which he tells of feeling a little cheapened when a neighbor asked him to take some handbills and leave them at a certain place as he passed on his walk.

A great deal of the piquancy and novelty in Thoreau come from the unexpected turn he gives to things, upsetting all our preconceived notions. His trick of exaggeration he rather brags of: "Expect no trivial truth from me," he says, "unless I am on the witness stand." He even exaggerates his own tendency to exaggeration. It is all a part of his scheme to startle and wake people up. He exaggerates his likes, and he exaggerates his dislikes, and he exaggerates his indifference. It is a way he has of bragging. The moment he puts pen

to paper the imp of exaggeration seizes it. He lived to see the beginning of the Civil War, and in a letter to a friend expressed his indifference in regard to Fort Sumter and "Old Abe," and all that, yet Mr. Sanborn says he was as zealous about the war as any soldier. The John Brown tragedy made him sick, and the war so worked upon his feelings that in his failing state of health he said he could never get well while it lasted. His passion for Nature and the wild carried him to the extent of looking with suspicion, if not with positive dislike, upon all of man's doings and institutions. All civil and political and social organizations received scant justice at his hands. He instantly espoused the cause of John Brown and championed him in the most public manner because he (Brown) defied the iniquitous laws and fell a martyr to the cause of justice and right. If he had lived in our times, one would have expected him, in his letters to friends, to pooh-pooh the World War that has drenched Europe with blood, while in his heart he would probably have been as deeply moved about it as any of us were.

Thoreau must be a stoic, he must be an egotist, he must be illogical, whenever he puts pen to paper. This does not mean that he was a hypocrite, but it means that on his practical human side he did not differ so much from the rest of us, but that in his mental and spiritual life he pursued ideal ends with a seriousness that few of us are equal to. He loved to take an air-line. In his trips about the country to visit distant parts, he usually took the roads and paths or means of conveyance that other persons took, but now and then he would lay down his ruler on the map, draw a straight line to the point he proposed to visit, and follow that, going through the meadows and gardens and door-yards of the owners of the property in his line of march. There is a tradition that he and Channing once went through a house where the front and back door stood open. In his mental flights and excursions he follows this plan almost entirely; the hard facts and experiences of life trouble him very little. He can always ignore them or sail serenely above them.

How is one to reconcile such an expression as this with what his friends report of his actual life: "My countrymen are to me foreigners. I have but little more sympathy with them than with the mobs of India or China"? Or this about his Concord neighbors, as he

looks down upon them from a near-by hill: “On whatever side I look off, I am reminded of the mean and narrow-minded men whom I have lately met there. What can be uglier than a country occupied by grovelling, coarse, and low-minded men? — no scenery can redeem it. Hornets, hyenas, and baboons are not so great a curse to a country as men of a similar character.” Tried by his ideal standards, his neighbors and his countrymen generally were, of course, found wanting, yet he went about among them helpful and sympathetic and enjoyed his life to the last gasp. These things reveal to us what a gulf there may be between a man’s actual life and the high altitudes in which he disports himself when he lets go his imagination.

IX

In his paper called “Life without Principle,” his radical idealism comes out: To work for money, or for subsistence alone, is life without principle. A man must work for the love of the work. Get a man to work for you who is actuated by love for you or for the work alone. Find some one to beat your rugs and carpets and clean out your well, or weed your onion-patch, who is not influenced by any money consideration. This were ideal, indeed; this suggests paradise. Thoreau probably loved his lecturing, and his surveying, and his magazine writing, and the money these avocations brought him did not seem unworthy, but could the business and industrial world safely adopt that principle?

So far as I understand him, we all live without principle when we do anything that goes against the grain, or for money, or for bread alone. “To have done anything by which you earned money is to have been truly idle or worse.” “If you would get money as a writer or lecturer, you must be popular, which is to go down perpendicularly.” Yet his neighbor Emerson was in much demand as a lecturer, and earned a good deal of money in that way. Truly idealists like Thoreau are hard to satisfy. Agassiz said he could not afford to give his time to making money, but how many Agassiz are there in the world at any one time? Such a man as our own Edison is influenced very little by the commercial value of his inventions. This is as it should be, but only a small fraction of mankind do or can live

to ideal ends. Those who work for love are certainly the lucky ones, and are exceptionally endowed. It is love of the sport that usually sends one a-fishing or a-hunting, and this gives it the sanction of the Gospel according to Thoreau. Bradford Torrey saw a man sitting on a log down in Florida who told him, when he asked about his occupation, that he had no time to work! It is to be hoped that Thoreau enjoyed his surveying, as he probably did, especially when it took him through sphagnum swamps or scrub-oak thickets or a tangle of briers and thorns. The more difficult the way, the more he could summon his philosophy. "You must get your living by loving." It is a hard saying, but it is a part of his gospel. But as he on one occasion worked seventy-six days surveying, for only one dollar a day, the money he received should not be laid up against him.

As a matter of fact we find Thoreau frequently engaging in manual labor to earn a little money. He relates in his Journal of 1857 that while he was living in the woods he did various jobs about town — fence-building, painting, gardening, carpentering:

One day a man came from the east edge of the town and said that he wanted to get me to brick up a fireplace, etc., etc., for him. I told him that I was not a mason, but he knew that I had built my own house entirely and would not take no for an answer. So I went.

It was three miles off, and I walked back and forth each day, arriving early and working as late as if I were living there. The man was gone away most of the time, but had left some sand dug up in his cow-yard for me to make mortar with. I bricked up a fireplace, papered a chamber, but my principal work was whitewashing ceilings. Some were so dirty that many coats would not conceal the dirt. In the kitchen I finally resorted to yellow-wash to cover the dirt. I took my meals there, sitting down with my employer (when he got home) and his hired men. I remember the awful condition of the sink, at which I washed one day, and when I came to look at what was called the towel I passed it by and wiped my hands on the air, and thereafter I resorted to the pump. I worked there hard three days, charging only a dollar a day.

About the same time I also contracted to build a wood-shed of no mean size, for, I think, exactly six dollars, and cleared about half of it by a close calculation and swift working. The tenant wanted me to

throw in a gutter and latch, but I carried off the board that was left and gave him no latch but a button. It stands yet, — behind the Kettle house. I broke up Johnny Kettle's old "trow," in which he kneaded his bread, for material. Going home with what nails were left in a flower [*sic!*] bucket on my arm, in a rain, I was about getting into a hay-rigging, when my umbrella frightened the horse, and he kicked at me over the fills, smashed the bucket on my arm, and stretched me on my back; but while I lay on my back, his leg being caught under the shaft, I got up, to see him sprawling on the other side. This accident, the sudden bending of my body backwards, sprained my stomach so that I did not get quite strong there for several years, but had to give up some fence-building and other work which I had undertaken from time to time.

I built the common slat fence for $1.50 per rod, or worked for $1.00 per day. I built six fences.

These homely and laborious occupations show the dreamer and transcendentalist of Walden in a very interesting light. In his practical life he was a ready and resourceful man and could set his neighbors a good example, and no doubt give them good advice. But what fun he had with his correspondents when they wrote him for practical advice about the conduct of their lives! One of them had evidently been vexing his soul over the problem of Church and State: "Why not make a very large mud pie and bake it in the sun? Only put no Church nor State into it, nor upset any other pepper box that way. Dig out a woodchuck — for that has nothing to do with rotting institutions. Go ahead."

Dear, old-fashioned Wilson Flagg, who wrote pleasantly, but rather tamely, about New England birds and seasons, could not profit much from Thoreau's criticism: "He wants stirring up with a pole. He should practice turning a series of summer-sets rapidly, or jump up and see how many times he can strike his feet together before coming down. Let him make the earth turn round now the other way, and whet his wits on it as on a grindstone; in short, see how many ideas he can entertain at once."

Expect no Poor Richard maxims or counsel from Thoreau. He would tell you to invest your savings in the bonds of the Celestial Empire, or plant your garden with a crop of Giant Regrets. He says

these are excellent for sauce. He encourages one of his correspondents with the statement that he "never yet knew the sun to be knocked down and rolled through a mud puddle; he comes out honor bright from behind every storm."

X

All Thoreau's apparent inconsistencies and contradictions come from his radical idealism. In all his judgments upon men and things, and upon himself, he is an uncompromising idealist. All fall short. Add his habit of exaggeration and you have him saying that the pigs in the street in New York (in 1843) are the most respectable part of the population. The pigs, I suppose, lived up to the pig standard, but the people did not live up to the best human standards. Wherever the ideal leads him, there he follows. After his brother John's death he said he did not wish ever to see John again, but only the ideal John — that other John of whom he was but the imperfect representative. Yet the loss of the real John was a great blow to him, probably the severest in his life. But he never allows himself to go on record as showing any human weakness.

"Comparatively," he says, "we can excuse any offense against the heart, but not against the imagination." Thoreau probably lived in his heart as much as most other persons, but his peculiar gospel is the work of his imagination. He could turn his idealism to practical account. A man who had been camping with him told me that on such expeditions he carried a small piece of cake carefully wrapped up in his pocket and that after he had eaten his dinner he would take a small pinch of this cake. His imagination seemed to do the rest.

The most unpromising subject would often kindle the imagination of Thoreau. His imagination fairly runs riot over poor Bill Wheeler, a cripple and a sot who stumped along on two clumps for feet, and who earned his grog by doing chores here and there. One day Thoreau found him asleep in the woods in a low shelter which consisted of meadow hay cast over a rude frame. It was a rare find to Thoreau. A man who could turn his back upon the town and civilization like that must be some great philosopher, greater than Socrates or Diogenes, living perhaps "from a deep principle,"

"simplifying life, returning to nature," having put off many things,— "luxuries, comforts, human society, even his feet, — wrestling with his thoughts." He outdid himself. He out-Thoreaued Thoreau: "Who knows but in his solitary meadow-hay bunk he indulges, in thought, only in triumphant satires on men? [More severe than those of the Walden hermit?] I was not sure for a moment but here was a philosopher who had left far behind him the philosophers of Greece and India, and I envied him his advantageous point of view— " with much more to the same effect.

Thoreau's reaction from the ordinary humdrum, respectable, and comfortable country life was so intense, and his ideal of the free and austere life he would live so vivid, that he could thus see in this besotted vagabond a career and a degree of wisdom that he loved to contemplate.

One catches eagerly at any evidence of tender human emotions in Thoreau, his stoical indifference is so habitual with him: "I laughed at myself the other day to think that I cried while reading a pathetic story." And he excuses himself by saying, "It is not I, but Nature in me, which was stronger than I."

It was hard for Thoreau to get interested in young women. He once went to an evening party of thirty or forty of them, "in a small room, warm and noisy." He was introduced to two of them, but could not hear what they said, there was such a cackling. He concludes by saying: "The society of young women is the most unprofitable I have ever tried. They are so light and flighty that you can never be sure whether they are there or not."

XI

As a philosopher or expositor and interpreter of a principle, Thoreau is often simply grotesque. His passion for strong and striking figures usually gets the best of him. In discussing the relation that exists between the speaker or lecturer and his audience he says, "The lecturer will read best those parts of his lecture which are best heard," as if the reading did not precede the hearing! Then comes this grotesque analogy: "I saw some men unloading molasses-hogsheads from a truck at a depot the other day, rolling them up an inclined

plane. The truckman stood behind and shoved, after putting a couple of ropes, one round each end of the hogshead, while two men standing in the depot steadily pulled at the ropes. The first man was the lecturer, the last was the audience." I suppose the hogshead stands for the big thoughts of the speaker which he cannot manage at all without the active coöperation of the audience. The truth is, people assemble in a lecture hall in a passive but expectant frame of mind. They are ready to be pleased or displeased. They are there like an instrument to be played upon by the orator. He may work his will with them. Without their sympathy his success will not be great, but the triumph of his art is to win their sympathy. Those who went to scoff when the Great Preacher spoke, remained to pray. No man could speak as eloquently to empty seats, or to a dummy audience, as to a hall filled with intelligent people, yet Thoreau's ropes and hogsheads and pulling and pushing truckmen absurdly misrepresent the true relation that exists between a speaker and his hearers. Of course a speaker finds it uphill work if his audience is not with him, but that it is not with him is usually his own fault.

Thoreau's merits as a man and a writer are so many and so great that I have not hesitated to make much of his defects. Indeed, I have with malice aforethought ransacked his works to find them. But after they are all charged up against him, the balance that remains on the credit side of the account is so great that they do not disturb us.

There has been but one Thoreau, and we should devoutly thank the gods of New England for the precious gift. Thoreau's work lives and will continue to live because, in the first place, the world loves a writer who can flout it and turn his back upon it and yet make good; and again because the books which he gave to the world have many and very high literary and ethical values. They are fresh, original, and stimulating. He drew a gospel out of the wild; he brought messages from the wood gods to men; he made a lonely pond in Massachusetts a fountain of the purest and most elevating thoughts, and, with his great neighbor Emerson, added new luster to a town over which the muse of our colonial history had long loved to dwell.

The Biography



Thoreau, 1856

THOREAU: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH by Ralph Waldo Emerson

HENRY DAVID THOREAU was the last male descendant of a French ancestor who came to this country from the Isle of Guernsey. His character exhibited occasional traits drawn from this blood in singular combination with a very strong Saxon genius.

He was born in Concord, Massachusetts, on the 12th of July, 1817. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1837, but without any literary distinction. An iconoclast in literature, he seldom thanked colleges for their service to him, holding them in small esteem, whilst yet his debt to them was important. After leaving the University, he joined his brother in teaching a private school, which he soon renounced. His father was a manufacturer of lead-pencils, and Henry applied himself for a time to this craft, believing he could make a better pencil than was then in use. After completing his experiments, he exhibited his work to chemists and artists in Boston, and having obtained their certificates to its excellence and to its equality with the best London manufacture, he returned home contented. His friends congratulated him that he had now opened his way to fortune. But he replied, that he should never make another pencil. “Why should I? I would not do again what I have done once.” He resumed his endless walks and miscellaneous studies, making every day some new acquaintance with Nature, though as yet never speaking of zoölogy or botany, since, though very studious of natural facts, he was incurious of technical and textual science.

At this time, a strong, healthy youth, fresh from college, whilst all his companions were choosing their profession, or eager to begin some lucrative employment, it was inevitable that his thoughts should be exercised on the same question, and it required rare decision to refuse all the accustomed paths, and keep his solitary freedom at the cost of disappointing the natural expectations of his family and friends: all the more difficult that he had a perfect probity, was exact in securing his own independence, and in holding every

man to the like duty. But Thoreau never faltered. He was a born protestant. He declined to give up his large ambition of knowledge and action for any narrow craft or profession, aiming at a much more comprehensive calling, the art of living well. If he slighted and defied the opinions of others, it was only that he was more intent to reconcile his practice with his own belief. Never idle or self-indulgent, he preferred, when he wanted money, earning it by some piece of manual labor agreeable to him, as building a boat or a fence, planting, grafting, surveying, or other short work, to any long engagements. With his hardy habits and few wants, his skill in wood-craft, and his powerful arithmetic, he was very competent to live in any part of the world. It would cost him less time to supply his wants than another. He was therefore secure of his leisure.

A natural skill for mensuration, growing out of his mathematical knowledge, and his habit of ascertaining the measures and distances of objects which interested him, the size of trees, the depth and extent of ponds and rivers, the height of mountains, and the air-line distance of his favorite summits, — this, and his intimate knowledge of the territory about Concord, made him drift into the profession of land-surveyor. It had the advantage for him that it led him continually into new and secluded grounds, and helped his studies of Nature. His accuracy and skill in this work were readily appreciated, and he found all the employment he wanted.

He could easily solve the problems of the surveyor, but he was daily beset with graver questions, which he manfully confronted. He interrogated every custom, and wished to settle all his practice on an ideal foundation. He was a protestant *à l'outrance*, and few lives contain so many renunciations. He was bred to no profession; he never married; he lived alone; he never went to church; he never voted; he refused to pay a tax to the State: he ate no flesh, he drank no wine, he never knew the use of tobacco; and, though a naturalist, he used neither trap nor gun. He chose, wisely, no doubt, for himself, to be the bachelor of thought and Nature. He had no talent for wealth, and knew how to be poor without the least hint of squalor or inelegance. Perhaps he fell into his way of living without forecasting it much, but approved it with later wisdom.

"I am often reminded," he wrote in his journal, "that, if I had

bestowed on me the wealth of Croesus, my aims must be still the same, and my means essentially the same." He had no temptations to fight against, — no appetites, no passions, no taste for elegant trifles. A fine house, dress, the manners and talk of highly cultivated people were all thrown away on him. He much preferred a good Indian, and considered these refinements as impediments to conversation, wishing to meet his companion on the simplest terms. He declined invitations to dinner-parties, because there each was in every one's way, and he could not meet the individuals to any purpose. "They make their pride," he said, "in making their dinner cost much; I make my pride in making my dinner cost little." When asked at table what dish he preferred, he answered, "The nearest." He did not like the taste of wine, and never had a vice in his life. He said,— "I have a faint recollection of pleasure derived from smoking dried lily-stems, before I was a man. I had commonly a supply of these. I have never smoked anything more noxious."

He chose to be rich by making his wants few, and supplying them himself. In his travels, he used the railroad only to get over so much country as was unimportant to the present purpose, walking hundreds of miles, avoiding taverns, buying a lodging in farmers' and fishermen's houses, as cheaper, and more agreeable to him, and because there he could better find the men and the information he wanted.

There was somewhat military in his nature not to be subdued, always manly and able, but rarely tender, as if he did not feel himself except in opposition. He wanted a fallacy to expose, a blunder to pillory, I may say required a little sense of victory, a roll of the drum, to call his powers into full exercise. It cost him nothing to say No; indeed, he found it much easier than to say Yes. It seemed as if his first instinct on hearing a proposition was to controvert it, so impatient was he of the limitations of our daily thought. This habit, of course, is a little chilling to the social affections; and though the companion would in the end acquit him of any malice or untruth, yet it mars conversation. Hence, no equal companion stood in affectionate relations with one so pure and guileless. "I love Henry," said one of his friends, "but I cannot like him; and as for taking his arm, I should as soon think of taking the arm of an elm-tree."

Yet, hermit and stoic as he was, he was really fond of sympathy, and threw himself heartily and childlike into the company of young people whom he loved, and whom he delighted to entertain, as he only could, with the varied and endless anecdotes of his experiences by field and river. And he was always ready to lead a huckleberry party or a search for chestnuts or grapes. Talking, one day, of a public discourse, Henry remarked, that whatever succeeded with the audience was bad. I said, "Who would not like to write something which all can read, like 'Robinson Crusoe'? and who does not see with regret that his page is not solid with a right materialistic treatment, which delights everybody?" Henry objected, of course, and vaunted the better lectures which reached only a few persons. But, at supper, a young girl, understanding that he was to lecture at the Lyceum, sharply asked him, "whether his lecture would be a nice, interesting story, such as she wished to hear, or whether it was one of those old philosophical things that she did not care about." Henry turned to her, and bethought himself, and, I saw, was trying to believe that he had matter that might fit her and her brother, who were to sit up and go to the lecture, if it was a good one for them.

He was a speaker and actor of the truth, — born such, — and was ever running into dramatic situations from this cause. In any circumstance, it interested all bystanders to know what part Henry would take, and what he would say; and he did not disappoint expectation, but used an original judgment on each emergency. In 1845 he built himself a small framed house on the shores of Walden Pond, and lived there two years alone, a life of labor and study. This action was quite native and fit for him. No one who knew him would tax him with affectation. He was more unlike his neighbors in his thought than in his action. As soon as he had exhausted the advantages of that solitude, he abandoned it. In 1847, not approving some uses to which the public expenditure was applied, he refused to pay his town tax, and was put in jail. A friend paid the tax for him, and he was released. The like annoyance was threatened the next year. But, as his friends paid the tax, notwithstanding his protest, I believe he ceased to resist. No opposition or ridicule had any weight with him. He coldly and fully stated his opinion without affecting to believe that it was the opinion of the company. It was of no

consequence, if every one present held the opposite opinion. On one occasion he went to the University Library to procure some books. The librarian refused to lend them. Mr. Thoreau repaired to the President, who stated to him the rules and usages, which permitted the loan of books to resident graduates, to clergymen who were alumni, and to some others resident within a circle of ten miles' radius from the College. Mr. Thoreau explained to the President that the railroad had destroyed the old scale of distances, — that the library was useless, yes, and President and College useless, on the terms of his rules, — that the one benefit he owed to the College was its library, — that, at this moment, not only his want of books was imperative, but he wanted a large number of books, and assured him that he, Thoreau, and not the librarian, was the proper custodian of these. In short, the President found the petitioner so formidable, and the rules getting to look so ridiculous, that he ended by giving him a privilege which in his hands proved unlimited thereafter.

No truer American existed than Thoreau. His preference of his country and condition was genuine, and his aversation from English and European manners and tastes almost reached contempt. He listened impatiently to news or *bon mots* gleaned from London circles; and though he tried to be civil, these anecdotes fatigued him. The men were all imitating each other, and on a small mould. Why can they not live as far apart as possible, and each be a man by himself? What he sought was the most energetic nature; and he wished to go to Oregon, not to London. "In every part of Great Britain," he wrote in his diary, "are discovered traces of the Romans, their funereal urns, their camps, their roads, their dwellings. But New England, at least, is not based on any Roman ruins. We have not to lay the foundations of our houses on the ashes of a former civilization."

But, idealist as he was, standing for abolition of slavery, abolition of tariffs, almost for abolition of government, it is needless to say he found himself not only unrepresented in actual politics, but almost equally opposed to every class of reformers. Yet he paid the tribute of his uniform respect to the Anti-Slavery Party. One man, whose personal acquaintance he had formed, he honored with exceptional regard. Before the first friendly word had been spoken for Captain

John Brown, after the arrest, he sent notices to most houses in Concord, that he would speak in a public hall on the condition and character of John Brown, on Sunday evening, and invited all people to come. The Republican Committee, the Abolitionist Committee, sent him word that it was premature and not advisable. He replied,— "I did not send to you for advice, but to announce that I am to speak." The hall was filled at an early hour by people of all parties, and his earnest eulogy of the hero was heard by all respectfully, by many with a sympathy that surprised themselves.

It was said of Plotinus that he was ashamed of his body, and 'tis very likely he had good reason for it, — that his body was a bad servant, and he had not skill in dealing with the material world, as happens often to men of abstract intellect. But Mr. Thoreau was equipped with a most adapted and serviceable body. He was of short stature, firmly built, of light complexion, with strong, serious blue eyes, and a grave aspect, — his face covered in the late years with a becoming beard. His senses were acute, his frame well-knit and hardy, his hands strong and skilful in the use of tools. And there was a wonderful fitness of body and mind. He could pace sixteen rods more accurately than another man could measure them with rod and chain. He could find his path in the woods at night, he said, better by his feet than his eyes. He could estimate the measure of a tree very well by his eyes; he could estimate the weight of a calf or a pig, like a dealer. From a box containing a bushel or more of loose pencils, he could take up with his hands fast enough just a dozen pencils at every grasp. He was a good swimmer, runner, skater, boatman, and would probably outwalk most countrymen in a day's journey. And the relation of body to mind was still finer than we have indicated. He said he wanted every stride his legs made. The length of his walk uniformly made the length of his writing. If shut up in the house, he did not write at all.

He had a strong common sense, like that which Rose Flammock, the weaver's daughter, in Scott's romance, commends in her father, as resembling a yardstick, which, whilst it measures dowlas and diaper, can equally well measure tapestry and cloth of gold. He had always a new resource. When I was planting forest-trees, and had procured half a peck of acorns, he said that only a small portion of

them would be sound, and proceeded to examine them, and select the sound ones. But finding this took time, he said, "I think, if you put them all into water, the good ones will sink;" which experiment we tried with success. He could plan a garden, or a house, or a barn; would have been competent to lead a "Pacific Exploring Expedition"; could give judicious counsel in the gravest private or public affairs.

He lived for the day, not cumbered and mortified by his memory. If he brought you yesterday a new proposition, he would bring you to-day another not less revolutionary. A very industrious man, and setting, like all highly organized men, a high value on his time, he seemed the only man of leisure in town, always ready for any excursion that promised well, or for conversation prolonged into late hours. His trenchant sense was never stopped by his rules of daily prudence, but was always up to the new occasion. He liked and used the simplest food, yet, when some one urged a vegetable diet, Thoreau thought all diets a very small matter, saying that "the man who shoots the buffalo lives better than the man who boards at the Graham House." He said,— "You can sleep near the railroad, and never be disturbed: Nature knows very well what sounds are worth attending to, and has made up her mind not to hear the railroad-whistle. But things respect the devout mind, and a mental ecstasy was never interrupted." He noted, what repeatedly befell him, that, after receiving from a distance a rare plant, he would presently find the same in his own haunts. And those pieces of luck which happen only to good players happened to him. One day, walking with a stranger, who inquired where Indian arrow-heads could he found, he replied, "Everywhere," and, stooping forward, picked one on the instant from the ground. At Mount Washington, in Tuckerman's Ravine, Thoreau had a bad fall, and sprained his foot. As he was in the act of getting up from his fall, he saw for the first time the leaves of the *Arnica mollis*.

His robust common sense, armed with stout hands, keen perceptions, and strong will, cannot yet account for the superiority which shone in his simple and hidden life. I must add the cardinal fact, that there was an excellent wisdom in him, proper to a rare class of men, which showed him the material world as a means and

symbol. This discovery, which sometimes yields to poets a certain casual and interrupted light, serving for the ornament of their writing, was in him an unsleeping insight; and whatever faults or obstructions of temperament might cloud it, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. In his youth, he said, one day, "The other world is all my art: my pencils will draw no other; my jack-knife will cut nothing else; I do not use it as a means." This was the muse and genius that ruled his opinions, conversation, studies, work, and course of life. This made him a searching judge of men. At first glance he measured his companion, and, though insensible to some fine traits of culture, could very well report his weight and calibre. And this made the impression of genius which his conversation often gave.

He understood the matter in hand at a glance, and saw the limitations and poverty of those he talked with, so that nothing seemed concealed from such terrible eyes. I have repeatedly known young men of sensibility converted in a moment to the belief that this was the man they were in search of, the man of men, who could tell them all they should do. His own dealing with them was never affectionate, but superior, didactic, — scorning their petty ways, — very slowly conceding, or not conceding at all, the promise of his society at their houses, or even at his own. "Would he not walk with them?" "He did not know. There was nothing so important to him as his walk; he had no walks to throw away on company." Visits were offered him from respectful parties, but he declined them. Admiring friends offered to carry him at their own cost to the Yellow-Stone River, — to the West Indies, — to South America. But though nothing could be more grave or considered than his refusals, they remind one in quite new relations of that fop Brummel's reply to the gentleman who offered him his carriage in a shower, "But where will *you* ride, then?" — and what accusing silences, and what searching and irresistible speeches, battering down all defences, his companions can remember!

Mr. Thoreau dedicated his genius with such entire love to the fields, hills, and waters of his native town, that he made them known and interesting to all reading Americans, and to people over the sea. The river on whose banks he was born and died he knew from its

springs to its confluence with the Merrimack. He had made summer and winter observations on it for many years, and at every hour of the day and the night. The result of the recent survey of the Water Commissioners appointed by the State of Massachusetts he had reached by his private experiments, several years earlier. Every fact which occurs in the bed, on the banks, or in the air over it; the fishes, and their spawning and nests, their manners, their food; the shad-flies which fill the air on a certain evening once a year, and which are snapped at by the fishes so ravenously that many of these die of repletion; the conical heaps of small stones on the river-shallows, one of which heaps will sometimes overfill a cart, — these heaps the huge nests of small fishes; the birds which frequent the stream, heron, duck, sheldrake, loon, osprey; the snake, musk-rat, otter, woodchuck, and fox, on the banks; the turtle, frog, hyla, and cricket, which make the banks vocal, — were all known to him, and, as it were, townsmen and fellow-creatures; so that he felt an absurdity or violence in any narrative of one of these by itself apart, and still more of its dimensions on an inch-rule, or in the exhibition of its skeleton, or the specimen of a squirrel or a bird in brandy. He liked to speak of the manners of the river, as itself a lawful creature, yet with exactness, and always to an observed fact. As he knew the river, so the ponds in this region.

One of the weapons he used, more important than microscope or alcohol-receiver to other investigators, was a whim which grew on him by indulgence, yet appeared in gravest statement, namely, of extolling his own town and neighborhood as the most favored centre for natural observation. He remarked that the Flora of Massachusetts embraced almost all the important plants of America, — most of the oaks, most of the willows, the best pines, the ash, the maple, the beech, the nuts. He returned Kane's "Arctic Voyage" to a friend of whom he had borrowed it, with the remark, that "most of the phenomena noted might be observed in Concord." He seemed a little envious of the Pole, for the coincident sunrise and sunset, or five minutes' day after six months: a splendid fact, which Annursnuc had never afforded him. He found red snow in one of his walks, and told me that he expected to find yet the *Victoria regia* in Concord. He was the attorney of the indigenous plants, and owned to a preference of

the weeds to the imported plants, as of the Indian to the civilized man, — and noticed, with pleasure, that the willow bean-poles of his neighbor had grown more than his beans. “See these weeds,” he said, “which have been hoed at by a million farmers all spring and summer, and yet have prevailed, and just now come out triumphant over all lanes, pastures, fields, and gardens, such is their vigor. We have insulted them with low names, too, — as Pigweed, Wormwood, Chickweed, Shad-Blossom.” He says, “They have brave names, too, — Ambrosia, Stellaria, Amelanchia, Amaranth, etc.”

I think his fancy for referring everything to the meridian of Concord did not grow out of any ignorance or depreciation of other longitudes or latitudes, but was rather a playful expression of his conviction of the indifferency of all places, and that the best place for each is where he stands. He expressed it once in this wise:— “I think nothing is to be hoped from you, if this bit of mould under your feet is not sweeter to you to eat than any other in this world, or in any world.”

The other weapon with which he conquered all obstacles in science was patience. He knew how to sit immovable, a part of the rock he rested on, until the bird, the reptile, the fish, which had retired from him, should come back, and resume its habits, nay, moved by curiosity, should come to him and watch him.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to walk with him. He knew the country like a fox or a bird, and passed through it as freely by paths of his own. He knew every track in the snow or on the ground, and what creature had taken this path before him. One must submit abjectly to such a guide, and the reward was great. Under his arm he carried an old music-book to press plants; in his pocket, his diary and pencil, a spy-glass for birds, microscope, jack-knife, and twine. He wore straw hat, stout shoes, strong gray trousers, to brave shrub-oaks and smilax, and to climb a tree for a hawk’s or a squirrel’s nest. He waded into the pool for the water-plants, and his strong legs were no insignificant part of his armor. On the day I speak of he looked for the Menyanthes, detected it across the wide pool, and, on examination of the florets, decided that it had been in flower five days. He drew out of his breast-pocket his diary, and read the names of all the plants that should bloom on this day, whereof he kept

account as a banker when his notes fall due. The Cypripedium not due till to-morrow. He thought, that, if waked up from a trance, in this swamp, he could tell by the plants what time of the year it was within two days. The redstart was flying about, and presently the fine grosbeaks, whose brilliant scarlet makes the rash gazer wipe his eye, and whose fine clear note Thoreau compared to that of a tanager which has got rid of its hoarseness. Presently he heard a note which he called that of the night-warbler, a bird he had never identified, had been in search of twelve years, which always, when he saw it, was in the act of diving down into a tree or bush, and which it was vain to seek; the only bird that sings indifferently by night and by day. I told him he must beware of finding and booking it, lest life should have nothing more to show him. He said, "What you seek in vain for, half your life, one day you come full upon all the family at dinner. You seek it like a dream, and as soon as you find it you become its prey."

His interest in the flower or the bird lay very deep in his mind, was connected with Nature, — and the meaning of Nature was never attempted to be defined by him. He would not offer a memoir of his observations to the Natural History Society. "Why should I? To detach the description from its connections in my mind would make it no longer true or valuable to me: and they do not wish what belongs to it." His power of observation seemed to indicate additional senses. He saw as with microscope, heard as with ear-trumpet, and his memory was a photographic register of all he saw and heard. And yet none knew better than he that it is not the fact that imports, but the impression or effect of the fact on your mind. Every fact lay in glory in his mind, a type of the order and beauty of the whole. His determination on Natural History was organic. He confessed that he sometimes felt like a hound or a panther, and, if born among Indians, would have been a fell hunter. But, restrained by his Massachusetts culture, he played out the game in this mild form of botany and ichthyology. His intimacy with animals suggested what Thomas Fuller records of Butler the apiologist, that "either he had told the bees things or the bees had told him." Snakes coiled round his leg; the fishes swam into his hand, and he took them out of the water; he pulled the woodchuck out of its hole by the tail, and took the foxes under his protection from the hunters. Our

naturalist had perfect magnanimity; he had no secrets: he would carry you to the heron's haunt, or even to his most prized botanical swamp, — possibly knowing that you could never find it again, yet willing to take his risks.

No college ever offered him a diploma, or a professor's chair; no academy made him its corresponding secretary, its discoverer, or even its member. Whether these learned bodies feared the satire of his presence. Yet so much knowledge of Nature's secret and genius few others possessed, none in a more large and religious synthesis. For not a particle of respect had he to the opinions of any man or body of men, but homage solely to the truth itself; and as he discovered everywhere among doctors some leaning of courtesy, it discredited them. He grew to be revered and admired by his townsmen, who had at first known him only as an oddity. The farmers who employed him as a surveyor soon discovered his rare accuracy and skill, his knowledge of their lands, of trees, of birds, of Indian remains, and the like, which enabled him to tell every farmer more than he knew before of his own farm; so that he began to feel as if Mr. Thoreau had better rights in his land than he. They felt, too, the superiority of character which addressed all men with a native authority.

Indian relics abound in Concord, — arrow-heads, stone chisels, pestles, and fragments of pottery; and on the river-bank, large heaps of clam-shells and ashes mark spots which the savages frequented. These, and every circumstance touching the Indian, were important in his eyes. His visits to Maine were chiefly for love of the Indian. He had the satisfaction of seeing the manufacture of the bark-canoe, as well as of trying his hand in its management on the rapids. He was inquisitive about the making of the stone arrow-head, and in his last days charged a youth setting out for the Rocky Mountains to find an Indian who could tell him that: "It was well worth a visit to California to learn it." Occasionally, a small party of Penobscot Indians would visit Concord, and pitch their tents for a few weeks in summer on the river-bank. He failed not to make acquaintance with the best of them; though he well knew that asking questions of Indians is like catechizing beavers and rabbits. In his last visit to Maine he had great satisfaction from Joseph Polis, an intelligent

Indian of Oldtown, who was his guide for some weeks.

He was equally interested in every natural fact. The depth of his perception found likeness of law throughout Nature, and I know not any genius who so swiftly inferred universal law from the single fact. He was no pedant of a department. His eye was open to beauty, and his ear to music. He found these, not in rare conditions, but wheresoever he went. He thought the best of music was in single strains; and he found poetic suggestion in the humming of the telegraph-wire.

His poetry might be bad or good; he no doubt wanted a lyric facility and technical skill; but he had the source of poetry in his spiritual perception. He was a good reader and critic, and his judgment on poetry was to the ground of it. He could not be deceived as to the presence or absence of the poetic element in any composition, and his thirst for this made him negligent and perhaps scornful of superficial graces. He would pass by many delicate rhythms, but he would have detected every live stanza or line in a volume, and knew very well where to find an equal poetic charm in prose. He was so enamored of the spiritual beauty that he held all actual written poems in very light esteem in the comparison. He admired Aeschylus and Pindar; but, when some one was commending them, he said that "Aeschylus and the Greeks, in describing Apollo and Orpheus, had given no song, or no good one. They ought not to have moved trees, but to have chanted to the gods such a hymn as would have sung all their old ideas out of their heads, and new ones in." His own verses are often rude and defective. The gold does not yet run pure, is drossy and crude. The thyme and marjoram are not yet honey. But if he want lyric fineness and technical merits, if he have not the poetic temperament, he never lacks the causal thought, showing that his genius was better than his talent. He knew the worth of the Imagination for the uplifting and consolation of human life, and liked to throw every thought into a symbol. The fact you tell is of no value, but only the impression. For this reason his presence was poetic, always piqued the curiosity to know more deeply the secrets of his mind. He had many reserves, an unwillingness to exhibit to profane eyes what was still sacred in his own, and knew well how to throw a poetic veil over his experience.

All readers of “Walden” will remember his mythical record of his disappointments: —

“I long ago lost a hound, a bay horse, and a turtledove, and am still on their trail. Many are the travellers I have spoken concerning them, describing their tracks, and what calls they answered to. I have met one or two who had heard the hound, and the tramp of the horse, and even seen the dove disappear behind a cloud; and they seemed as anxious to recover them as if they had lost them themselves.” [“Walden” p.20]

His riddles were worth the reading, and I confide, that, if at any time I do not understand the expression, it is yet just. Such was the wealth of his truth that it was not worth his while to use words in vain. His poem entitled “Sympathy” reveals the tenderness under that triple steel of stoicism, and the intellectual subtilty it could animate. His classic poem on “Smoke” suggests Simonides, but is better than any poem of Simonides. His biography is in his verses. His habitual thought makes all his poetry a hymn to the Cause of causes, the Spirit which vivifies and controls his own.

”I hearing get, who had but ears,
And sight, who had but eyes before;
I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern, who knew but learning’s lore.”

And still more in these religious lines: —

”Now chiefly is my natal hour,
And only now my prime of life;
I will not doubt the love untold,
Which not my worth or want hath bought,
Which wooed me young, and wooes me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.”

Whilst he used in his writings a certain petulance of remark in reference to churches or churchmen, he was a person of a rare, tender, and absolute religion, a person incapable of any profanation, by act or by thought. Of course, the same isolation which belonged to

his original thinking and living detached him from the social religious forms. This is neither to be censured nor regretted. Aristotle long ago explained it, when he said, “One who surpasses his fellow-citizens in virtue is no longer a part of the city. Their law is not for him, since he is a law to himself.”

Thoreau was sincerity itself, and might fortify the convictions of prophets in the ethical laws by his holy living. It was an affirmative experience which refused to be set aside. A truth-speaker he, capable of the most deep and strict conversation; a physician to the wounds of any soul; a friend, knowing not only the secret of friendship, but almost worshipped by those few persons who resorted to him as their confessor and prophet, and knew the deep value of his mind and great heart. He thought that without religion or devotion of some kind nothing great was ever accomplished: and he thought that the bigoted sectarian had better bear this in mind.

His virtues, of course, sometimes ran into extremes. It was easy to trace to the inexorable demand on all for exact truth that austerity which made this willing hermit more solitary even than he wished. Himself of a perfect probity, he required not less of others. He had a disgust at crime, and no worldly success could cover it. He detected paltering as readily in dignified and prosperous persons as in beggars, and with equal scorn. Such dangerous frankness was in his dealing that his admirers called him “that terrible Thoreau,” as if he spoke when silent, and was still present when he had departed. I think the severity of his ideal interfered to deprive him of a healthy sufficiency of human society.

The habit of a realist to find things the reverse of their appearance inclined him to put every statement in a paradox. A certain habit of antagonism defaced his earlier writings, — a trick of rhetoric not quite outgrown in his later, of substituting for the obvious word and thought its diametrical opposite. He praised wild mountains and winter forests for their domestic air, in snow and ice he would find sultriness, and commended the wilderness for resembling Rome and Paris. “It was so dry, that you might call it wet.”

The tendency to magnify the moment, to read all the laws of Nature in the one object or one combination under your eye, is of course comic to those who do not share the philosopher’s perception

of identity. To him there was no such thing as size. The pond was a small ocean; the Atlantic, a large Walden Pond. He referred every minute fact to cosmical laws. Though he meant to be just, he seemed haunted by a certain chronic assumption that the science of the day pretended completeness, and he had just found out that the *savans* had neglected to discriminate a particular botanical variety, had failed to describe the seeds or count the sepals. "That is to say," we replied, "the blockheads were not born in Concord; but who said they were? It was their unspeakable misfortune to be born in London, or Paris, or Rome; but, poor fellows, they did what they could, considering that they never saw Bateman's Pond, or Nine-Acre Corner, or Becky-Stow's Swamp. Besides, what were you sent into the world for, but to add this observation?"

Had his genius been only contemplative, he had been fitted to his life, but with his energy and practical ability he seemed born for great enterprise and for command; and I so much regret the loss of his rare powers of action, that I cannot help counting it a fault in him that he had no ambition. Wanting this, instead of engineering for all America, he was the captain of a huckleberry party. Pounding beans is good to the end of pounding empires one of these days; but if, at the end of years, it is still only beans!

But these foibles, real or apparent, were fast vanishing in the incessant growth of a spirit so robust and wise, and which effaced its defeats with new triumphs. His study of Nature was a perpetual ornament to him, and inspired his friends with curiosity to see the world through his eyes, and to hear his adventures. They possessed every kind of interest.

He had many elegances of his own, whilst he scoffed at conventional elegance. Thus, he could not bear to hear the sound of his own steps, the grit of gravel; and therefore never willingly walked in the road, but in the grass, on mountains and in woods. His senses were acute, and he remarked that by night every dwelling-house gives out bad air, like a slaughter-house. He liked the pure fragrance of melilot. He honored certain plants with special regard, and, over all, the pond-lily, — then, the gentian, and the *Mikania scandens*, and "life-everlasting," and a bass-tree which he visited every year when it bloomed, in the middle of July. He thought the

scent a more oracular inquisition than the sight, — more oracular and trustworthy. The scent, of course, reveals what is concealed from the other senses. By it he detected earthiness. He delighted in echoes, and said they were almost the only kind of kindred voices that he heard. He loved Nature so well, was so happy in her solitude, that he became very jealous of cities, and the sad work which their refinements and artifices made with man and his dwelling. The axe was always destroying his forest. "Thank God," he said, "they cannot cut down the clouds!" "All kinds of figures are drawn on the blue ground with this fibrous white paint."

I subjoin a few sentences taken from his unpublished manuscripts, not only as records of his thought and feeling, but for their power of description and literary excellence.

"Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in the milk."

"The chub is a soft fish, and tastes like boiled brown paper salted."

"The youth gets together his materials to build a bridge to the moon, or, perchance, a palace or temple on the earth, and at length the middle-aged man concludes to built a wood-shed with them."

"The locust z-ing."

"Devil's-needles zigzagging along the Nut-Meadow brook."

"Sugar is not so sweet to the palate as sound to the healthy ear."

"I put on some hemlock-boughs, and the rich salt crackling of their leaves was like mustard to the ear, the crackling of uncountable regiments. Dead trees love the fire."

"The bluebird carries the sky on his back."

"The tanager flies through the green foliage as if it would ignite the leaves."

"If I wish for a horse-hair for my compass-sight, I must go to the stable; but the hair-bird, with her sharp eyes, goes to the road."

"Immortal water, alive even to the superficies."

"Fire is the most tolerable third party."

"Nature made ferns for pure leaves, to show what she could do in that line."

"No tree has so fair a bole and so handsome an instep as the beech."

"How did these beautiful rainbow-tints get into the shell of the fresh-water clam, buried in the mud at the bottom of our dark river?"

"Hard are the times when the infant's shoes are second-foot."

"We are strictly confined to our men to whom we give liberty."

"Nothing is so much to be feared as fear. Atheism may comparatively be popular with God himself."

"Of what significance the things you can forget? A little thought is sexton to all the world."

"How can we expect a harvest of thought who have not had a seed-time of character?"

"Only he can be trusted with gifts who can present a face of bronze to expectations."

"I ask to be melted. You can only ask of the metals that they be tender to the fire that melts them. To nought else can they be tender."

* * * * *

There is a flower known to botanists, one of the same genus with our summer plant called "Life-Everlasting," a *Gnaphalium* like that, which grows on the most inaccessible cliffs of the Tyrolese mountains, where the chamois dare hardly venture, and which the hunter, tempted by its beauty, and by his love, (for it is immensely valued by the Swiss maidens,) climbs the cliffs to gather, and is sometimes found dead at the foot, with the flower in his hand. It is called by botanists the *Gnaphalium leontopodium*, but by the Swiss *Edelweisse*, which signifies *Noble Purity*. Thoreau seemed to me living in the hope to gather this plant, which belonged to him of right. The scale on which his studies proceeded was so large as to require longevity, and we were the less prepared for his sudden disappearance. The country knows not yet, or in the least part, how great a son it has lost. It seems an injury that he should leave in the midst his broken task, which none else can finish, — a kind of indignity to so noble a soul, that it should depart out of Nature before yet he has been really shown to his peers for what he is. But he, at least, is content. His soul was made for the noblest society; he had in a short life exhausted the capabilities of this world; wherever there is knowledge, wherever there is virtue, wherever there is beauty, he

will find a home.



Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Concord, Massachusetts — Thoreau's final resting place



The Thoreau family gravesite. The small gravestones are, from left, Father (John), Henry, Sophia, Mother (Cynthia); not visible are Henry's siblings Helen and John.